



**CAYMAN ISLANDS  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT  
ELECTRONIC VERSION**

**2014/15 SESSION**

**4 June 2014**

*Fifth Sitting of the First Meeting  
Throne Speech and Budget Meeting  
(pages 177-224)*

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

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PRESENT WERE:

**SPEAKER**

Hon Juliana Y O'Connor- Connolly  
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

**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**

Dr the Hon Dax Basdeo	Temporary 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  
WEDNESDAY  
4 JUNE 2014  
10:24 AM  
Fifth Sitting**

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

**The Speaker:** I will ask the Honourable Member for the district of East End to say Prayers.

### PRAYERS

**Mr. V. Arden McLean:** 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.  
Proceedings are resumed.

### ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS OR AFFIRMATIONS

**The Speaker:** I call on the Honourable Acting Deputy Governor to come to the dais.

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**  
*[Administered by the Clerk]*

**Dr. the Hon. Dax K. Basdeo, Acting Deputy Governor:** I, Dax Krishna Basdeo, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, her heirs and successors, according to law, so help me God.

**OATH OF DUE EXECUTION**  
*[Administered by the Clerk]*

**Dr. the Hon. Dax K. Basdeo, Acting Deputy Governor:** I, Dax Krishna Basdeo, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will well and truly serve Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, her heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands in the Office of Ex-Officio Member of the Legislative Assembly, so help me God.

**The Deputy Speaker:** On behalf of this honourable House, I welcome you, Acting Deputy Governor. I now invite you take your seat.

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

#### APOLOGIES

**The Speaker:** I have received apologies from the Honourable Deputy Premier; the Councillor of the Ministry of Home and Community Affairs, Mr. Alva Suckoo, who is ill. And apologies received also from the Honourable Leader of the Opposition who is off island for medical reasons.

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

**The Speaker:** I have received notice and have given approval for two statements: one by the Honourable Minister of Education; to be followed by a statement from the Honourable Minister of Health.  
Honourable Minister of Education.

## DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR AND PENSIONS UPDATE

**Hon. Tara A. Rivers, Minister of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to update this honourable House on the developments within a very important area of my Ministry—labour and pensions enforcement and regulation—which is the remit of the Department of Labour and Pensions (“DLP”). The Department of Labour and Pensions has provided all of the statistical and other information I am about to discuss.

For the nine-month period June 1 2013, to 31 March 2014, the Labour Unit of the Department of Labour and Pensions received 715 complaints cases, of which 518 have been resolved and closed. Thirty-five cases were referred to the Labour Tribunal. As at May 2014, 91 Inspections (On-site and Off-site/Information Audits) were conducted. Of these, 56 involved general workplace and compliance Inspections, and 35 Occupational Health & Safety (OS&H) Inspections were completed, as well as a number of gratuities audits.

Top findings in the workplace audits were: overtime pay was not in compliance with the Labour Law, there were insufficient employment contracts, there is a lack of awareness of gratuities protocols and distribution regulations, and there were inconsistencies in pensions contributions.

Top findings in OS&H inspections include the lack of awareness of the safety requirements of the Labour Law and the Construction Safety Regulations, as well as a general lack of appreciation for the importance of PPE (personal protective equipment), particularly for the construction industry and related professions.

In September 2013, a new Inspections Unit was formed at the DLP and that Unit is making a positive contribution as it becomes adequately staffed, and is more proactive with a robust and detail-oriented approach to inspections in both the labour and pensions sectors.

During the period July 2013 to April 2014 the Pensions Unit (including the National Pensions Office) of the Department of Labour and Pensions received 259 new employee complaints, and a total of 674 cases were resolved, including a significant amount on long-overdue backlogged cases. From July 2013 to April 2014, a total of 2,670 pension investigation activities were conducted by the NPO, including the backlog file/cases investigation and resolution (where possible) or closing some where necessary, as well as ongoing and new complaints; the processing and resolution of delinquencies/arrears; follow-up investigations and meetings; entering into payment plans; database maintenance and updating, compliance checks, and other special projects.

These investigation activities were directly responsible for approximately 500 new or backlogged pension complaints being resolved during the year. Five cases for prosecution were filed by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions on behalf of the Superintendent of Pensions. There are currently 15 ongoing cases in court, and during the fiscal year 2 cases were resolved with approximately CI\$150,000.00 being paid into the pensions funds of the employees of those two defendant employers.

During the year, 83 Pension Plan Delinquency Reports have been processed, with several hundred demand letters dispatched to employers who are in arrears in their pension contributions for more than 45 days.

The National Pensions Board continues to perform valuable voluntary service, and advises the Government on important technical matters. During the 2014/15 fiscal year the Government intends to bring forward new Pension Investment Regulations to replace the 1998 Regulations which have not changed since the Pensions Law was first enacted. There will be a period of public consultation which will precede any finalisation and presenting of the Regulations in the Legislative Assembly for adoption.

To assist in public awareness, the Department of Labour and Pensions initiated a live radio show styled “Workplace Excellence Clinic” which is held once per month on Radio Cayman, and has completed 20 hours of live discussion on labour and pension matters during the 2013/14 financial year. Additionally, 13 courses and public awareness workshops were held during the year: 3 on pensions, held at UCCI, at the DCI [Department of Commerce and Investment] Small Business Forum, and at various business entities by Pension Officers; 3 on the Fundamentals of the Labour Law; 2 on Employment Contracts, and 5 on Occupational Safety & Health.

The Labour Tribunals Secretariat continues to coordinate the work of the Labour Tribunals and the Labour Appeals Tribunal. With the commitment of new members of the Tribunals, and the cooperation of complainants and respondents, the Department is seeking to reduce the number of cases going to Tribunals. However when this is unavoidable, the Department works closely with the volunteer tribunal members with an aim to providing quality and timely rulings and equitable resolutions to disputes of rights under the Labour Law.

The Department of Labour and Pensions continues to position itself as a critical friend of business, while staunchly advocating for the rights of the employee. The Department is currently conducting an internal review to better align its capabilities and competencies to focus on achieving the strategic goals of the Government in relation to compliance with the Labour Law and National Pensions Law, particularly with a view to fostering a culture of compliance, workplace

excellence, and dignity for retired pension contributors.

The Department of Labour and Pensions is currently engaged in, and will continue ongoing projects in the 2014/15 fiscal year that include:

- an intensification of training and awareness, particularly in the important area of occupational safety and health, especially as the construction sector begins to emerge from the building doldrums;
- the new Inspections Unit is embarking on an active schedule of offsite and onsite workplace Inspections;
- a new “client pre-screening and resolution” system is being rolled-out at the DLP’s Reception to help improve efficiency, and to better recognise and respond to time-sensitive matters; and
- the new Labour Tribunals are endeavoring to meet more often and deliver their decisions on a more timely basis.

The challenging legacy issues affecting the National Pensions Office are being systematically tackled, with various special projects ongoing simultaneously, along with the daily workload of the Department. Key amongst this is the supervision and regulation of Pension Administrators and Trustees, including a new governance compliance review of all pension plans. The National Pensions Office has invested considerable time in the past year to improve the level of communication, protocols, and due diligence with the pension administrators, while at the same time improving the working relationships with the administrators and other stakeholders.

Since the passage of the National Pensions legislation in 1998, approximately 50,000 employees have been enrolled in pensions plans in the Islands, and assets under management by the 15 registered pension plans is now approaching US\$1 billion.

In the 2014/2015 financial year, the Labour Law, the National Pensions Law, and the Pensions Investment Regulations will all be reviewed and amended, to ensure that they are strengthened and clarified. In fact, drafting of these amendments are already well on their way with the Legislative Drafting department.

Through improved investigative and complaints resolution techniques, including communication, conciliation, training, and awareness, the DLP is seeing an increased rate of resolution of complaints/cases, without the need for referral to the Labour Tribunals. The Department is seeking, through public education on “best practices”, to see an overall decline in complaints over time. However, simultaneously the Department is establishing systems, protocols, and relationships with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Solicitor General’s Of-

fice in order to exercise the Tribunals or prosecution options as and when necessary.

**The Speaker:** I recognise the Member for East End.

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

Madam Speaker, I wonder if you would allow me, under Standing Order 30(2) to ask the Minister a question for clarification.

**The Speaker:** You may proceed with your brief questions, Member.

### SHORT QUESTIONS [Standing Order 30(2)]

**Mr. V. Arden McLean:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, what I would like the Minister to tell us is that of the 91 onsite and offsite inspection information audits that were conducted with 56 involved, general workplace compliance inspection, and then the 35 occupational health and safety . . . there are a number of things that were found where these 91 inspections revealed that they were not in compliance . . .

**The Speaker:** Member, have you completed your question?

**Mr. V. Arden McLean:** She was standing so I didn’t know . . .

**The Speaker:** Oh.

**Mr. V. Arden McLean:** I’m sorry. I didn’t know she was going to try to respond.

In the 91 inspections there were a number of areas that were found to be not in compliance with the Labour Law. I wonder if the Minister can tell us what has been done, what will the Labour Unit do to . . . or, what did they do to rectify those non-compliance areas?

**The Speaker:** I recognise the Honourable Minister of Education.

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

As I indicated initially, the actual detail of what has been done with respect to each of these, I don’t have at hand currently. I do endeavor to get a more specific answer, if necessary. But based on the information which I have been provided by the Department and the political steer that they have been given to me, or that I have given to them as Minister responsible, is that to promote a culture of compliance. And I will endeavor to get a response [from] them to your questions in writing.

**The Speaker:** If there are no further brief questions we will move on to the next statement.

Honourable Minister.

### CAYMAN ISLANDS PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE UPDATE

**Hon. Tara A. Rivers:** I am happy to report to this honourable House that during the 2013 calendar year the use of the Public Library Service, as reported to me by the Director of Public Libraries, has increased as compared to the previous year. During the calendar year from January 1, 2013 through December 2013, the total circulation for all library branches was reported to be 91,034. The average weekly circulation of 1,821 (based on 50 operational weeks per year) represents an increase of 750 that was reported for the period of January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012.

Again, Madam Speaker, these statistics have been provided to me by the Public Library Service and I am happy to report them to this honourable House for its information.

Over the 2013/2014 financial year the Public Library Service has been focused on creating opportunities that position the library to play an important role in human capital development and lifelong learning. The introduction of the new Computer Assisted Literacy Programme, which was initiated in partnership with Rotary Sunrise, now has five full-time students who attend three days per week. To support retooling and up skilling of persons who want to partake in the 21<sup>st</sup> century labour market, Techbyte computer courses were launched in 2013, delivered by Library Services, and are designed to help adult learners feel more comfortable and confident with computer technology and covers the essential functions that are most commonly used.

The course topics include hardware identification, mouse and keyboard familiarisation along with an intro to Windows, Internet usage and Microsoft Office Software. To date, 26 persons throughout the community have successfully passed this course. The Public Library Service will continue to offer the courses throughout the summer at each of the library branch locations.

Over the 2014/15 financial year, the Public Library Service is committed to continuing to promote local authors and their published works, by acquiring all full collections of all local titles and making them available at each of our branches. It will also continue to offer intermittent language courses such as Spanish and Mandarin Chinese lessons, which were conducted in February 2014, and to celebrate cultures by promoting workshops, lessons, cultural events, displays and histories of various nationalities represented in the Cayman Islands.

The Public Library Services looks forward to developing strong library-related organisations such as Friends of the Library and library community com-

mittees and volunteer organisations that focus on collection building and programme delivery. Work is currently taking place to offer a collection of over 33,000 eBooks and 1,700 magazines online as an alternative source of reading for entertainment, information, educational, employment and academic information. In the 2014/2015 financial year, library members will be able to easily access eBooks and magazines from virtually any device that is connected to the Internet.

As we move into the next financial year, the Public Library Services will be expanding the early years Read/Play/Learn programme to include every library branch. They will continue to promote reading by initiating a variety of literacy and reading awareness activities such as weekly and monthly story times; Battle of the books; Book/Poster Competitions, International Literacy Events, and more. Through the Public Library Services, the community will benefit from continued efforts to support the needs of our young citizens by offering after-school homework help at every library branch and strengthening the partnerships with schools by providing each school with the Student Information Research (SIRS) academic database that supports and supplement learning.

**The Speaker:** I recognise the Member for East End.

**Mr. V. Arden McLean:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I was just waiting, it appears like there was another little piece on ours, another paragraph anyway. But, Madam Speaker, and if the Minister prefers to answer this this question in Finance Committee—

**The Speaker:** Sorry. Member for East End, perhaps the honourable Minister would indicate whether she wishes to complete the statement.

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

In the 2014/2015 financial year, the Ministry of EE&GA will continue to support the further development of the Public Library Service as a critical community resource for personal enrichment, enjoyment and educational needs and, as an important component of the national workforce development and training agenda. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** I recognise the Member for East End.

### SHORT QUESTIONS

*[Standing Order 30(2)]*

**Mr. V. Arden McLean:** Thank you.

I was just wondering . . . and if the Minister prefers to answer this this question in Finance Committee I will satisfy with that. I cannot speak for the other Libraries but the one in East End, the design is not practical. And I met with her assistant chief officer recently and

we were talking about the layout of it to make it more practical. I don't know if the Minister is aware of it, but if she wants to . . . I would like to know if anything is going to be done about it. And if she prefers to answer this in Finance Committee I will accept that as well.

**The Speaker:** Honourable Minister of Education.

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

And yes, to the Member for East End, I would prefer to have a more detailed discussion of the libraries at Finance Committee. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** If there are no other questions from the Member for East End, I will move to recognise the Honourable Minister responsible for Health.

**EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCE  
APPROPRIATION CHANGE**  
(Cabinet Paper 468/14)

**Hon. Osbourne V. Bodden:** Madam Speaker, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to bring to the attention of this Honourable House the details of the Exceptional Circumstance Appropriation Change approved by Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2014, in reference to Cabinet Paper 468/14.

Madam Speaker the request for Cabinet Approval was made and granted under section 11(5) of the Public Finance and Management Law (2013 Revision) for the reallocation of funds from EI 23 to EI 53 and from NGS 47 to TP 53.

The reallocation of funds within the 2013/14 budget was made, Madam Speaker, to meet certain costs associated with the George Town landfill and to support the Junior Batabano event. The Ministry of Health, Sports, Youth & Culture sought advice from the Ministry of Finance & Economic Development. Madam Speaker the advice relayed was that there will be no impact on the Government's forecast financial position to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014 as the reallocation of funds are corresponding and of equal amounts.

Madam Speaker, an allocation of \$240,000.00 was made to the Cayman Islands National Museum under EI 23 to go toward securing a facility to house the Museum's support function and its collection of artefacts. Due to current conditions and incidents of fire at the landfill, of which this Honourable House is aware, Madam Speaker, a decision to reprioritise this funding was made by the Ministry of Health, Sports, Youth & Culture. Madam Speaker these funds were therefore reallocated from EI 23 to EI 53 for use at the George Town landfill.

Madam Speaker, an allocation of \$10,426.00 was made to the Cayman Islands Chamber of Commerce under budget head NGS 47 for the Mentoring Cayman Programme. The Chamber of Commerce indicated that they will not conduct this programme this year as expected. Madam Speaker, the Ministry

responsible for Culture has supported the Cayman Carnival Batabano for many years, for the Junior Batabano event. This support has been reduced over the years from \$20,000.00 in 2011/12 to \$15,000.00 last year, Madam Speaker.

The funds for support are usually taken from TP 53 "Other Youth, Sports and Cultural Programme Assistance". However, Madam Speaker, funds remaining under this budget head were insufficient to meet the Ministry objective of ensuring that this cultural event for our young people can occur. These funds, Madam Speaker, were therefore transferred from NGS 47 to TP 53, in order to support Junior Batabano.

Thank you Madam Speaker.

**GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

**BILLS**

**SECOND READING**

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

*[Continuation of Debate on the Budget Address and the Throne Speech together with the Government's Policy Statement]*

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

I recognise the Honourable Deputy Speaker, First Elected Member for Bodden Town.

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

I must say it is good to have you back in the Chair. And I am pleased to report that my colleagues were at their best behavior in your absence.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** And I was very appreciative to them for the respect they showed the Chair, with me as a freshman there.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** You did pretty good.

Madam Speaker, as you are probably aware, this is the 22<sup>nd</sup> budget for the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and me. I must say that as I come into this Parliament, the quality and calibre of representatives that we now have here is quite outstanding. As I work along with them I see their abilities, their thought process in putting forward ideas. It has been so very helpful to us older veterans to bring a younger and a

better perspective that business is not as usual. There are changes that can be made.

I acknowledge Her Excellency in the presentation of the Throne Speech, and also the outstanding job done by the Minister of Finance who has brought a breath of fresh air to that part of Government; and the uplifting Policy Statement delivered by our Honourable Premier. There are some good things in there, Madam Speaker, not the least of which at this time is the 2.5 per cent increase to the committed and dedicated civil servants who have worked so hard to deal with the different aspects within government, and have been neglected for some time. I feel this is a first step forward. And as we continue to build up reserves we can once again restore the 3.2 per cent.

At this time, Madam Speaker, I would like to specifically mention our healthcare workers (although they fall under an Authority) and our teachers. Madam Speaker, when we see what they have to do in both departments (Health and Education), we entrust our children to these teachers for the major part of the day and some of them, the commitment that they have . . . and I guess I should declare a personal interest since my daughter-in-law is one of the teachers at one of the primary schools. But this is not just on her behalf. I am speaking for all of the teachers and the medical care providers in the Cayman Islands.

They are in a position, Madam Speaker, to bring our children up into an area that is of great importance for the future of these Islands. Without their guidance and leading we are in big trouble.

Madam Speaker, as I am on the area of Education, I just want to speak briefly to the new approach and the frankness and the commitment of our new Education Minister. The ridiculous criticism that she has been taking from the press is so unfortunate. She is a young Caymanian well trained and, from the time I knew her, she had the concern of our children, not to mention the other areas of responsibility in her Ministry, Labour, Pension, Women Affairs, et cetera. And she is eminently qualified. Please give her a chance!

As we saw yesterday when she shared with us the progress report, there are outlines. She has made the commitment to share, not only with us here in the Legislative Assembly, but also for the public to know what is going on, which has not happened often in the past. And it was pleased to hear her indicate that she is following on what happened with the past Minister of Education (our present Premier). I want to give credit to her, Madam Speaker, and say to her not to make them turn you off. Keep faithful. Good things come to those who wait. Sometimes you have to wait a little while, as we all know in here.

The other area I want to touch on in that, and it is so convenient to have the Councillor for Education sitting next to me and the Minister of Education in the front of me, a number of the people have brought up to me the situation with the bus wardens and just to share with the public as they have shared with me,

first of all I will just read a short letter in the paper the other day, with your permission.

**The Speaker:** Please proceed.

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It says: "I think that as a society we have taken the parents rule out of the classroom and turned it into the teachers' responsibility to educate and raise our children.

"More than once after being reprimanded at school I got a pretty good reminder as to why I was going to school via an [expletive] whipping.

"There is no structure in the homes anymore" (That's a broad statement, Madam Speaker. There are many, many parents who have that structure but they go on to say) "as parents are told, that should they spank or reprimand their child, they themselves could be charged for some crime."

I have a major problem with that, Madam Speaker, in the name of human rights. And I tell you, Madam Speaker, when I was raising my children it is a good thing that it was not in this day and age because I would have done what I had to do.

"It is time for us to wake up without structure and a basic law of physics 'action reaction'. Our children are lost."

I don't believe they are lost because there is still hope. We, too many times, focus on the handful of negatives. We have such wonderful children and when we go to the National Festival of Arts and the other programmes, when we see how the children are occupied, there is hope for our children. It just takes the commitment of parents, and also, I will add, teachers.

"Monitoring of children today is deemed necessary and as violence among young people has risen, we need someone on hand to make sure all children are safe going to and whilst in school a sad note on our society." [UNVERIFIED QUOTE]

That was the end of that letter, Madam Speaker.

I will just interject to say that I spoke to the Councillor and the Minister in regard to the ridiculous posting on social media about the negative and unfortunate fight at one of the schools. Some of the people just seem to enjoy that kind of thing. But our Education Minister and her department have committed to deal with these things, but they cannot do it by themselves. We parents must get involved.

This does not just happen at the schools. Children are in school five, six, seven hours a day, maximum. The rest of the time parents need to be trying their best to give guidance to the children that this is not a way of life, that violence is not a way of life. And until we get back to the basics of which you and I and most of the senior people here were raised . . . the discipline was there. The tamarind switch was there, Madam Speaker. The strap and the belt from

the teacher were there, and respect was given. We must, somehow or the other, for whatever it costs under the human rights situation, deal with these children, or we will lose a number of them through lack of proper discipline.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Thank you. I am reminded not only the senior ones.

This was another letter in that same paper, Madam Speaker, just a couple of lines.

“What has not been mentioned, wardens are a full scale knock-down drag-out fight which distracts the driver mentally or physically to such an extent that he loses control and it results in a major crash.”

Just this morning I spoke with the Education Minister and Councillor in regard to the bus wardens when it first started out. And just to share briefly with you the comments that they will probably share later in the budget. This is in regard to the bus wardens, Madam Speaker: “The Department of Education Services is making no move to phase out bus wardens on our buses. We are, however, moving to transition the provision of bus wardens into the private sector as part of our response to public sector initiatives focused on improving efficiencies.

“As bus wardens currently working with the civil service reach retirement these posts are being transitioned to the private sector. This transition programme started last year, 2013, and bus wardens reaching retirement [have] the opportunity to move into a job with a bus contractor, thus building in the possibility of continued employment after retirement.”[UNVERIFIED QUOTE]

There has been some discussion and I am pleased to understand and learn of this about installing cameras on buses. But the decision has been taken that even if we move ahead with this, we will continue to utilise the service of bus wardens.

I shared this with them, and both of them remembered (I know my colleague, the Member for East End will remember) an unfortunate accident several years ago when a young child came off the bus, probably a bit sleepy, or was dozing, leaned on one of the tires and a tragic accident occurred where the child lost his life. This is one of the areas that I am most concerned about. With these young children, I see the wardens, by the schools or dropping children off, stop the traffic and allow the children to cross while keeping the traffic from going through.

As I reflect, Madam Speaker, there are still violations of vehicular traffic across these schools. There is one specific area, and probably the closet one to the main road in Grand Cayman—the one in Savannah. There are times in September when school first starts that there are police, and they do an able job in trying to control them. But it amazes me. Madam Speaker, the signs are there, the blinking

lights are there for the period when they must go slow, 15 miles an hour. I see when I am going through there some of them pass me like I am standing still.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** This is Savannah.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Yes, it is amazing.

I call on the traffic department (which leads me into my next topic that I wanted to talk about, Madam Speaker, the traffic department) . . . I understand that this Commissioner does not necessarily share my views or the view of many of my colleagues in here about the traffic department. But we need to do something about that, Madam Speaker. As I come down many mornings and many evenings on that straight road, some of these vehicles pass me as if I am standing still.

Another area of grave concern, Madam Speaker, specifically in my district, is coming out of Newlands by the stop sign there right across from Tall Tree. Very, very few people observe that, Madam Speaker. They seem to think that by coming out of Newlands that they have the right of way. I do remember several years ago someone did the same thing. My wife was coming from town, ran right over the car. She was blessed that there was no serious injury, except some whiplash.

Madam Speaker, we need to see more of these police cars on the road. When I see the amount of vehicles with expired coupons, with tint on some of the cars, I do not quite understand how they are able to pass inspection. They say that these police can be better deployed in solving other crimes. Well, that is an answer that we have to look at ourselves and see the percentage of success that that draws.

There are so many mysteries out there, murders, people disappearing. And this goes back to ‘way back when’, Madam Speaker, not of recent times. But in this day and age it would be nice if we could get some of these crimes solved.

Madam Speaker, I will now talk about the Department of Children and Family Services and the difficulties that they have. I encourage as soon as possible, that we get some of the staff in there increased, especially the Needs Assessment Unit. I see my colleagues’ emails about how they refer people there. Some are in desperate need, Madam Speaker. It seems that just one or two people . . . and I must take my hat off to the lady that heads that up, Ms. Hurlston. She and her people work diligently. But we need to be able to provide some help for them, Madam Speaker.

I remember a few weeks ago [there was] a young child who needed to be referred overseas. Eventually the referral got sorted out. But it took a couple of weeks, almost. And this is the area, Madam

Speaker, where I think we need to be able to expedite, for whatever reason. And, God forbid, at some time or the other all of us get into financial difficulties. But when it comes to young children we need to be able to expedite these things and get them the help that they need.

Madam Speaker, just to go back to some of the stuff that I see in the newspapers, and these are cartoons which I think are in very poor taste. There always seem to be a negative spin. This one, Madam Speaker, was on Friday, a week ago: "Safer schools by Cayman Man". It says: "Okay teachers you are looking good. When I finish with you our schools will be a much safer place." And on the blackboard is written: "Teacher training for safer schools—boxing, karate, incompetent parents, spineless politicians," (which is the whipping boy of the day) "bring back that paddle". [UNVERIFIED QUOTE] I just wish, Madam Speaker, that some of these publishers would have some respect for the schools and the children because they are children of different ages.

**Mr. V. Arden McLean:** Got to revoke his status and kick him out.

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** I hear some interesting things that I can't say I would not support, coming from across.

I revert back to my colleague, the Minister for Bodden Town. Boy I tell you, he is made out of good stuff, some of the licks I see him taking, not only from the papers but the famous web or whatever it is. I can't turn on a computer so it does not matter to me. They can put what they want there.

Madam Speaker, I don't know if some of these people forgot that in the campaign leading up to the last election we in Bodden Town ran, and the promise, if we were returned, was that we were not putting a dump up in Midland acres—no matter how much land the proponents of that put in place (500 acres). What I tried to explain to them, Madam Speaker, was that if you put that up there—and we knew what it was going to be no matter how much lining and stuff they said they were going to put on it—it was not only going to affect the immediate area. With the nor'westers, southwesters, it was going to go North Side, it was going East End, and then when coming from east, it was going right over Bodden Town on to George Town.

My colleague Minister, the Minister of Health, has indicated that he has plans, he is working on this and we look forward to the day. I didn't realise that we actually have 71 acres of land there to develop. These people knew when they went and built next to it what was there. I would like to see them work along with our Minister and his department to bring resolution to this area that has suffered for so long, for whatever reason. And most of us know, Madam Speaker, it was because of the lack of funds.

I know the effort that my colleague from East End put into it when he was there. He used, not only Government backbench members, but he also took members from the UDP at that time to the different sites to look at getting resolution to this. We were almost there to getting that sorted out. But I am optimistic and I know that my colleague, our Bodden Town "action man," as I call him, will deal with this.

Madam Speaker, the other abuse that I see, especially going to office buildings, supermarkets, is the violation of handicapped parking. It's most unfortunate. I see young people pull in there with radios blasting, doors open. I am not sure what is holding up the legislation, if it is now ready or what we are doing with that. Let us try to get this sorted out once and for all. I have heard so many reasons why. But it must somehow or the other be enforced. Most of these people have their security and maybe they could at least tell the people when they park in these lots to move the vehicle or have it towed away or something. When I see some people limping from distances away, I just don't quite understand, Madam Speaker, how that happens.

Madam Speaker, the other area I am concerned about, and hope that in due course we can find some funds for, is housing repairs. Almost daily, weekly, someone is coming to me, and I am sure it is the same thing with my other colleagues.

There is an individual lady that lives up in the Frank Sound area. I went there one night, Madam Speaker. It is hard to believe that after [Hurricane] Ivan, the way that she and her children are existing.

Whatever sacrifice we need to make . . . I know under the FFR [Fiscal Framework for Responsibility] there are restrictions. There are so many of our people out there that need some help. I've never, Madam Speaker, in my 22 years seen so many people hurting. People want money for some food, lunch money for their children, the elderly . . . Madam Speaker, it is painful when I see this. And those who are most vulnerable seem to be most affected.

Madam Speaker, I spoke to my colleague, the Minister of Works yesterday, just bringing to his attention some of the road works up on the eastern part of the Island. One specific area that people have spoken to me [about], which I have driven many times like my two colleagues from the eastern districts, is the area right there below Breakers. It is starting to eat out in spots. And the other area I recall is the area right across from where Dr. Tomlinson's home is, the Jackson Homestead. They keep patching and they keep patching and the holes keep coming back. But he has assured me (and there is no doubt in my mind) that these will be dealt with in due course. As a matter of fact, they are on the list. It is just a matter of time to get there and get them fixed.

Madam Speaker, I want to take my hat off to the Chief Officer in the Premier's Ministry, Mr. Eric Bush, as he continues to advocate and plan bring fur-

ther improvement to the immigration process to expedite work permits so that we don't have that long, long haul. Some people have to wait and they get frustrated. As you and I, Madam Speaker, and the rest of my colleagues know, the business sector cannot wait if they need to get something done. And if everything is up and in the right order there is no reason why these things cannot be dealt with.

Madam Speaker, as you and all of my other colleagues are aware, there is the situation with CINICO about insurance for some of our people who are having a rough time. And I know my colleague, the Minister of Health, has been looking at this diligently. There are so many, especially the older people at this time seems to be in dire need of some help. And I have said many, many times, when the honourable Member for North Side first introduced the idea of health insurance that he had in the process, the insurance companies not only take those who are in good health but they have to take everybody. As I have said on numerous occasions, if we had stuck to that process we would not be struggling the way we are now, where some of these insurance companies are what I call cherry picked. If you are not feeling good, get two doctors and then poor old CINICO is laden with that. And I am sure that the Minister of Finance who is now responsible for CINICO is looking at avenues to try to improve this.

The help to the seamen and veterans, Madam Speaker, has been outstanding. I remember how the last Government (in 2005/09), my colleagues the Minister of Works and the Premier, assisted those groups. We took out a special policy for them. As a matter of fact, at that time I think the premium was around \$3 million and rarely did they ever go over it. Now it has exploded. But we have to do what we have to do to take care of our seniors. They are the people who put these Islands where we are, enjoying one of the highest standards of living today. And we owe it to them, Madam Speaker.

Cayman Brac, Madam Speaker, your beloved Island. As we spent a number of days over there earlier this year we saw the struggles that they are going through. We need to do what we can to help them. There are certain proposals, and I am pleased to know that finally they are getting a committee together that may action what needs to be done, one way or the other. But there is nothing worse than just sitting and waiting and waiting and waiting weeks and months and it just seems as though nothing is happens. I don't know if that is par for the course in the Cayman Islands in some areas. But we cannot allow those people to just barely subsist at times. And I can imagine what you and the First Elected Member have to go through to help those people. I am asking the powers that be to try our best to get something positive for Cayman Brac organised.

Madam Speaker, I see that my colleague, the Minister of Health and Environment, is once again

cleaning up around the roadsides. I know the machinery was down for a while but it is good to see that that is getting going. I know that one of my former colleagues here, Ms. Heather Bodden, is keen to help and assist where she can. She always talks about the beautification, not only in our Bodden Town district, Madam Speaker, but throughout the Cayman Islands.

It amazes me how people just drive along and throw their stuff out. Maybe we need to put some more teeth. Instead of \$500 put it up to \$1,000 for littering. It is amazing to see how some people throw their bags of garbage from home out on the side of the road. How unfortunate.

Madam Speaker, my favourite topic: the Public Management and Finance Law (PMFL). I think 2009 was when the honourable Member for North Side and I brought a motion for the revision of this. I understand that one of our councillors is now dealing with that—finally. I beg and plead, Madam Speaker, that we expedite this. It is no nuclear secret that what is causing some of the major problems of Government right now is the staff that we had to add on to satisfy the requirements (and I am referring to the extra HR and finance and treasury).

Whatever we need to do, Madam Speaker, to make these amendments, let us expedite and get them down to the Legislative Assembly because we will continue to struggle and struggle. And I am not saying, Madam Speaker, to lay off any Caymanians. There must be a way that we can deal with this, set them up to move on, especially those who are not Caymanians. Replace them with Caymanians and start to phase out this incredible weight that is on the burden of the Treasury of these Islands.

I saw it, Madam Speaker, 15, 16 years ago when it was first introduced. I told at that time, I think, the Honourable Tom Jefferson, "beware." I told the Honourable George McCarthy, "watch out." One of these days we will curse the hour and damn the day that we started to put some of this into force.

As I look at this pile of budget documents, Madam Speaker, I forgot how many multiple thousands and thousands of pages times a minimum of 30, especially for people like me. And I guess I will take some blame for that. I couldn't live long enough to read everything that I see on a computer, which my wife will help me with. There has to be a simpler way to provide a financial document.

Madam Speaker, I long for and await that day when we can make those . . . and I know that the commitment is in this Government that I am—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** I am reliably informed that the report is being made now.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Well I will get to row more if it is not how I think it should be, and I know my colleague for North Side will be right there.

**Mr. D. Ezzard Miller:** Yes sir.

**Mr. V. Arden McLean:** Me too with you, old buddy.

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Okay. Thank you.

**Mr. V. Arden McLean:** I got your back at all times [INAUDIBLE]

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Madam Speaker, I now turn to my beloved district of Bodden Town. I just want to sing some praise and I know my colleague, the Minister of Health, paid credence to them and thanks, and also the Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town, in regard to our Heritage Committee.

Madam Speaker, what we witnessed there on that holiday in May was just absolutely fantastic. It was what the senior and Heritage group call "May-fest." Madam Speaker, if you saw some of the displays done, there was a number of countries. Some of the most outstanding, Madam Speaker, were the Filipinos, the Jamaicans, the Nicaraguans, the Indians (just to name a few).

What so touched my colleagues for Bodden Town and I, was the way that these nationalities worked together. Madam Speaker, it was amazing the cohesion that was there. Each one knew what they had to do and you saw their dresses. They actually made a drawing of a waterfall from the Philippines. They took two sheets of plywood and the artistic rendering on that . . . and they actually got a pump that circulated the water which actually looked like a real . . . you had to see. I cannot describe it to you, Madam Speaker. The Minister of Health can tell you what it was like. It was amazing.

And for those who ate the pig, there they were on a slow process roasting two pigs. It started at nine o'clock and by noon it was ready. It was really a lesson. And this is the kind of things we have to encourage amongst our Caymanians, especially, Madam Speaker, working together.

I know my colleague did this already but just for emphasis I will name the Honourable Mary Lawrence, who was the chairperson; Mr. Robert Wood, I think, was the deputy; Ms. Betty Wood, Ms. Florence Wood, Ms. Agnes McCoy, Ms. Edith Webb, Ms. Claudette Eden, and our old friend Freddy and Emilio. I can't say enough for Emilio. Literally any hour, day or night you go there, he is there. And I look forward to the day when he can be compensated for the effort. If you could see the natural talent that this young man has, Madam Speaker. Just drive right down on the road going to the Mission House and you will see the talent that this young man has.

The other person, whom the Centre is really named after, is Nurse Josie Solomon. When you go into those homes there, I am certain that there is no other place in the Cayman Islands that has the display of culture and heritage. And I will always thank Minister Chuckie [former minister, Charles Clifford] when he bought the other house to complete that.

What we are working on now, Madam Speaker, and I know that my colleague, the Minister of Works is exploring what we can do, and that is to get an access from Anton Bodden Drive through the back there. I noticed the other day when I went up there behind the old Mission House, they had ripped up all of that sawgrass, or whatever, with the birds flying all over the place in nesting season. I was almost devastated. I shared with my other colleague, the Minister of Environment.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** The poor little birds are flying about there. And we don't plan to do that kind of devastation, Madam Speaker. We just want a little bridge over the area of the pond so that we can get access so that when we have our functions they can come from the Anton Bodden Park over there where government has significant amount of land.

There is no doubt in my mind that this can be easily done. And I have seen a sketch done by some of the Filipino people who work here. I am sure if we can do whatever we have to do to get that done it would be wonderful.

Madam Speaker, what I want to speak on now is quite disturbing to me. It came out on Tuesday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, in the [Cayman Compass](#). It is entitled "Attorney: Basis for rollover policy 'did not apply' to Cayman Islands."

I would ask that either the Deputy Governor or the Honourable Premier or the Honourable Attorney General, whoever . . . this sort of confuses me. And everyone in here knew how I felt about that situation back in October last year. But that is history, it has been done, but just to say what was reported, with your permission, Madam Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Please proceed.

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** "Attorney: Basis for Rollover Policy 'did not apply' to Cayman Islands".

**"That bombshell was delivered last week in a lecture at the VC Tutorial Centre by attorney Sophia Harris, one of the Island's foremost authorities on Immigration Law and Chairman of the territory's Immigration Appeals Tribunal.**

**"In open and public statements, the public was advised that under the European Convention and Nationality, which we were told was applicable to the Cayman Islands, third-party residents in a country for 10 years or more were entitled to cit-**

izenship...” (I never did believe that) **“Mrs. Harris told about 25 people attending the speech at the Pasadora Place Business on May 13.**

**“It appears that this was, in fact, never the case and the convention did not apply to Cayman,” said Mrs. Harris, who is also the Managing Partner of the Solomon Harris Law Firm.”**

All I would like to say, Madam Speaker, to us as legislators, everyone knows about human rights. Let’s not jump the gun until we have to deal with some of these things. Because what has transpired way-back-when, Madam Speaker, when over 3,000 Caymanian statuses were given out, will have a long ramification on these Islands. I will leave it there. It has been done, but I would like to hear some explanation of it.

Madam Speaker, I now leave the Cayman Islands and go to our neighbours to the north, which I always try to do towards the end of my debate. We have a wonderful budget coming here. But I am not sure if we all realise the ticking time bomb sitting to the north of us. Are we aware that China and Russia just signed a \$400 billion gas and energy agreement, and to settle their transaction in their own currencies? This is being done through the Russian energy company “Gazprom”.

Since September 2008, the United States spent [\$]3.4 trillion—T-R-I-L-L-I-O-N—to boost the economy and the evidence that just came out is that the economy shrunk by .5 per cent, which now brings the Federal debt to approximately \$17.5 trillion.

Just to share with this honourable House, Madam Speaker: **“ . . . every single hour of every single day the US Government spends about \$200 million that it does not have.”**

To compare, the government borrows more money than the combined annual profits of the 100<sup>th</sup> biggest publicly traded companies in the US. Today, Madam Speaker, the US Government has more debt than any country in the history of the world. They have more debt than every country in the European Union combined.

**“Various other government agencies and private companies taken over by the Government also have obligations of another \$5 trillion. [We’ve] already completed loses on [\$]140 billion worth of obligations that is not even on the Federal balance sheet.**

**“When you add these other, genuine, federal obligations that now exist [right now, today], it comes up with a total debt [figure that’s much] more than \$20 trillion. [Far] more than half of these debts were assumed under President, Obama.”**

Madam Speaker, all of **“these debts will not be free. They will carry a large burden.**

**“With each additional commitment [we] sink further and further into debt . . . closing in upon the moment that [we] can simply no longer**

**afford even the interest payments on [our] obligations.**[\[Porterstansberryresearch.com\]](http://Porterstansberryresearch.com)

There is an example drawn of what happens when interest rates go up at just say 4 per cent annual rate. They will have to repay over a period of time about \$34 trillion. And they have estimated, Madam Speaker, that if there is a 6 per cent increase, it would be over \$40 trillion. How long will this once great nation last?

The US dollar is what is known (what we all know in here, Madam Speaker) as the “world reserved currency.” What happens when the world’s largest trading countries no longer accepts the US dollar as China is now considering? As we know, China holds trillions of treasury bills. The day that they decide to call them in, Madam Speaker . . .

Madam Speaker, recently an article in the *New York Post* reported that: **“The US dollar is getting perilously close to losing its status of the world’s reserve currency.”** And for the public listening, that is the money that is used to buy oil and the different things from all of the different countries. That is what is traded. The report says: **“Should it cross the line, the 2008 financial crisis could look like a summer storm.”**

Many of us may remember a similar situation in Great Britain, Madam Speaker. Some people may not even know, but Britain’s Sterling was once the world’s reserve currency for almost 200 years, until the government implemented a socialist, nationalist agenda like what is now happening the great United States today. They are calling it “Spreading the Wealth.” It’s scary, Madam Speaker, and I suggest that we be wary of what is happening to the north of us. If we live as long as Methuselah’s ram cat, they cannot repay those trillions of dollars in debt.

Madam Speaker, being a person who served in the military I was taken aback as most of the United States was a few days ago, including Democrats, Republicans and everyone else, when there was the exchange of a prisoner of war, the five Taliban at Guantanamo Bay. It was reported that at least six US soldiers lost their lives in trying to find this young man who, it is being alleged, was a deserter. President Obama himself said that some of these terrorists could possibly (he admitted) come back at the United States again.

It is a scary thought, Madam Speaker. And we must remember what happened on September 11<sup>th</sup>. These are not Sunday school children we are dealing with, Madam Speaker. And I hope with God’s help that this never happens.

The other scary thing, Madam Speaker, was when Mr. [John] Kerry, Secretary of State, said that he is considering recognising the Hamas led Palestinian group. We know that their dedication and commitment is to destroy Israel, and the United States. When Ahmadinejad was there in Iran he made no bones about it. These people are used to war. We have to tread . .

. because you see what a lot of people do not realise, and, Madam Speaker, you will when you read about Israel in the Bible. Israel was chosen as God's people.

And he himself said: **"I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you;"**

In winding down, Madam Speaker, in this same vein, as you know, there are dozens of Bible prophecies revealed. The serious consequences will come, especially on Israelite nations that God has blessed so abundantly. Long ago, Madam Speaker, God warned his chosen people that if they disobeyed his laws they would reap what they sowed. Moses warned the ancient Israelites: **"If you do not obey me and if you despise my statutes, I will even appoint terror over you. You shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you will reign over you. I will even break the pride of your power.** Leviticus 26:14 and 33.

For those who thought that was the olden days, he goes on to say looking far into the future, Moses warned: **"For I know that after my death you are sure to become utterly corrupt"** (I need not to tell you about the great United States. It is probably the most corrupt nation in the universe.) **"and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because you will do evil in the sight of the LORD to provoke him to anger . . ."** That is Deuteronomy 31:29, Madam Speaker. All of this is going to happen because the in-time leaders are once professing Christian nations have chosen to scoff of the laws of God, ignore Bible prophecies and defy the God of the universe.

Let us all wake up, Madam Speaker. Let us not sit here in the little Cayman Islands and think that if anything happens to the great United States, what will happen to us here. For those of you who know the Bible and Bible prophecies, we see daily things that are unfolding towards the end time. And I urge whatever we can, to prepare towards that end.

I want to close with a little reading from "Grace for the Moment" by Max Lucado. It lifts me up every day when I read it. And this was on February 18<sup>th</sup>. Matthew 6 verse 26 says: **"Look at the birds in the air - they do not plant or harvest or store food in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them."**

This is for those who do not believe in a Supreme Being: "Consider the earth. **"Our globe's weight has been estimated at sextillion tons (a six with twenty one zeros). Yet it is precisely tilted at twenty three degrees; any more or any less and our seasons would be lost in a melted polar flood."**

Stick a pin there, Madam Speaker, as I was reading another article where they talked about global warming. I was sharing it with the Honourable Attorney General this morning.

Back in 2014 the proponents of global warming said that in due course all of these little islands down here were going to be flooded. One hundred years later, Madam Speaker—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Sorry. Thanks for the correction; 1914.

So, when we see people like Mr. Al Gore and all of those big guys out there, and it was found out that they just shut down all of a sudden. A lot of stuff that they were putting out was incorrect. So, just take warning, Madam Speaker, when they talk about these things, as they alluded, that we would be lost in a melted polar flood.

**"Though our globe revolves at a rate of one thousand miles per hour, or twenty-five thousand miles per day or nine million miles per year, none of us tumbles into orbit.**

**"As you stand... observing God's workshop, let me pose a few questions. If he is able to place the stars in their sockets and suspend the sky like a curtain, do you think it is remotely possible that God is mighty enough to guide your life?"**

**"If God is mighty enough to ignite the sun, could it be that he is mighty enough to light your path? If he cares enough about the planet Saturn to give it rings, or Venus to make it sparkle, is there an outside chance that he cares enough about you to meet your needs?"**

Madam Speaker, I pray for peace and guidance for these Islands and our people. And I encourage us, as parents, those who are listening, above all in these difficult times, take care of those young children. Watch who they are keeping company with, spend time with them. And I can tell you, Madam Speaker, I know what it means. The greatest investment that a parent can make is that time with those young children at that formative stage. We cannot wait, Madam Speaker, until they get into Middle School and High School. We have to guide and lead them and spend that time. And I know all of my colleagues here have done that. I know from experience. I have been blessed in so many ways.

Madam Speaker, I thank you and I wish the best on all of us as legislators, to do above all that which is right in God's Name. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Today is also the birthday of the Deputy Speaker, and though we have good orators in the House, I believe I am safe to say without fear of contradiction that perhaps one of our most notable speakers is a fellow Bracker. I will call upon the Minister responsible for Planning to give him a 'Happy Birthday' rendition.

I could have asked for “I Did It My Way” but I thought that was a bit too much of a surprise.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts, Minister of Planning, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure:** Madam Speaker, I will try. *[Singing]*

*Happy Birthday to you,  
Happy Birthday to you,  
Happy Birthday dear Tony  
Happy Birthday to you.*

*[Applause]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Thank you colleagues.

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much. And for those of you who can still figure out in your heads, I am told that he is 100 minus 32 today.

Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause]. Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause]. Final call—does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Minister responsible for Agriculture.

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, that did not sound like me, and if I didn't sound like me, forgive me. Something is with me that I would wish to be rid of.

Madam Speaker, I rise to give my contribution to the debate that has been ongoing. First of all, let me say hearty congratulations to the Honourable Minister of Finance and his team for what I know was a long and fairly arduous journey. Although, at the end of the day it seemed like it was easy, I certainly know that it was not easy just for myself and my Ministry staff and the departments and the government authorities that are subjects of mine, to be able to meet the budget demands, that is, to decrease operational expenditure from last year's budget, just as last year's budget operationally had to be decreased from the year before. It is a bit difficult, Madam Speaker, hence my congratulatory remarks to the Minister and his team.

I also wish to pay homage to my staff in the Ministry and the departments because, to be truthful, Madam Speaker, they were warned in advance and they rose to the challenge and they delivered. So, here we are, and perhaps in Finance Committee, hopefully, it won't be too difficult to move through that.

Madam Speaker, I just want to make a quick mention, because I think in his wrap-up, the Honourable Premier will speak to this, everyone knows that the Government has been in several meetings with the Dart Group regarding the NRA Agreement and certain aspects of it, which we consider to be unsatisfactory.

Madam Speaker, we have been back and forth for a year now. But the Premier will expound on recent communications.

Madam Speaker, I also want to mention quickly the ongoing work with regard to the East/West Arterial, that is, the proposed extension from Newlands to Frank Sound. Just to give an update of where that is at, most will know by now that there has been an MOU [Memorandum of Understanding] arrived at by the group called Ironwood Development and the Government, which was an agreement on the route of the road corridor. We also know that there was a bit of a difficulty when the original corridor was going through land which is now owned by the National Trust. But I think when the original corridor was gazetted, not all of that land was owned by the National Trust. I think they acquired a lot of it since then.

But be that as it may, there has been agreement reached between Government, the NRA, and the National Trust with regard to some adjustments to the corridor. So, we no longer have that as an impediment and certainly the FCO [Foreign and Commonwealth Office] is aware of the agreement thus far. The next step that we have to get to is to secure a strategic business analysis and value for money report. And an RFP [Request for Proposal] is being developed to procure a suitable company to undertake this strategic business analysis.

Madam Speaker, the premise on which these discussions have taken place, and understanding the Framework for Fiscal Responsibility that we have to abide by, is the cost of the road will be paid for by duties and tax generated by the development. Of course, besides the developers wanting the road to become a reality, because they think that that is very important and the success of the development will hinge on that, we believe that it certainly will benefit the country and will spur other developments along that corridor. Barring any unforeseen events, Madam Speaker, we would hope that in the latter part of the fiscal year coming, we will be able to commence those road works.

Madam Speaker, I want to speak a little bit about what we (that is, this Government) have termed the George Town Revitalisation Project. It is something that has been worked on now for several months, for quite some time actually. Mr. Kenneth Ebanks and others, who may have been called on to help on an 'as needed' basis, and staff from my Ministry, have been working on this. There was a presentation to Cabinet just yesterday, because there is just some fine tuning to be done now and, once that is completed, the plan will be presented to Cabinet.

It was not only presented to Cabinet, it was also presented to caucus. But paper will go to Cabinet seeking the Government's blessing and, thereafter, we will move on with that project.

Just to speak a bit about it, Madam Speaker. This is not just a project that is seeking beautification

of George Town. It is a plan which is geared to invigorate the Capital to what it was; what we knew it to be. That is a thriving capital. Madam Speaker, this plan is independent of the cruise berthing facility or the planned airport expansion. But while it is independent, it takes into consideration both of those plans so that the infrastructure that is needed will dovetail with all three, that is, the airport expansion, the cruise berthing facility and the revitalisation of George Town.

When we look at it, Madam Speaker, and think of George Town, both tourists and local elements are vital to the success and for the district to thrive. This project will seek, for instance, to bring festivals and markets to the heart of downtown; conventions from the financial industry; we intend to create parks and public spaces, mixed-use spaces for both residential and commercial activities.

Now, when I speak and use that language people might begin to wonder what grand plan this is. Madam Speaker, this is something that is not going to be done in a day, and we know that. But the town is dying. And we know that too. So, something has to be done. And we believe that this plan is viable and it is practical, although we know that it will take several years to complete. Most plans of this nature do take several years to complete. And, Madam Speaker, it is no sense for us to try to make it be different because the nature of it calls for a fairly extended period of time before it can be completed.

Needless to say, Madam Speaker—and I will speak to that in a little bit—it will also have to include private sector because this is not something that Government has the resources on its own to be able to do. And besides that, you would private sector involved because much of the commercial activity, if not all of it, will be private sector activity.

Madam Speaker, the area that we speak to, so that people do not get the wrong impression, the area that we are concentrating on for this revitalisation is not what we know as the entire electoral district of George Town. We are speaking central George Town, and we are probably talking about 1,000 acres or somewhere in that vicinity, perhaps of a couple of square miles. But as we know geographically it will encompass from Godfrey Nixon Way and Eastern Avenue, west to North Church Street, which will be in the general vicinity of what we know now as the Fish Shack, and then south to Elgin Avenue and then to South Church Street, somewhere in the vicinity of what we know as Eden Rock. So, that is the geographical of what we are talking about.

So, we go from Eden Rock straight across to Godfrey Nixon Way, Eastern Avenue and come down to North Church Street where the Fish Shack is and back up. That is the area that we are speaking to. It does not mean that as things begin to happen within that prescribed area, that there won't be spillover activity. We expect that to happen but that is the area that we are concentrating on.

Madam Speaker, the technocrats have developed this plan based on what they term as the philosophies and principles of new urbanism. And the whole idea behind this approach that they have taken is to create compact walkable mix-juice communities.

Some of the principles that they have applied in developing the parameters for this plan are: 1) walkability and connectivity. Most things within a ten minute walk of home and work is what they are looking to create. Pedestrian friendly street designs (that is buildings which are close to the street); porches, windows, doors, tree lined streets, on-street parking, hidden parking lots, garages in the rear lane, narrow, slow speed streets; an interconnected street grid-work which disperses traffic and eases walking.

Also, Madam Speaker, in some instances what we would be looking at are streets that are only pedestrianised, no cars. So, when I talk like this I know . . . because when I heard it first, it seemed very farfetched to me. It really did. But once everybody gets to understand it and understand what the plan is and understand that we all know it cannot happen in a day but if we head towards it we can make it happen, it is something that is real and is perhaps the best way forward to achieve the revitalisation of the downtown George Town.

The plan, Madam Speaker, will also include a hierarchy of mixed-use within that area. A mix of shops, offices, apartments and homes within neighbourhoods within blocks and within buildings; a diversity of people—ages, income levels, cultures and backgrounds.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts:** No, Madam Speaker, I really don't want to use the term "social engineering" for this one.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts:** Madam Speaker, there are several other ingredients to this whole plan with regard to the architecture and the urban design, traditional neighbourhood structure, and what they term 'green transportation,' meaning a network of high quality environmentally friendly buses, trollies, connecting the area; a pedestrian design that encourages a greater use of alternative modes of transport. That is why they speak to 'green'.

Of course, the whole idea is sustainability. Madam Speaker, sustainability for that to occur will call for minimal environmental impact of developments and the operations. Ecofriendly technology is involved in everything that is being done; energy efficiency, more local elements, more walking less driving.

Madam Speaker, and I won't deal with it too much more, but I just wanted to give a flavour of the plan because this is a policy that the Government has

agreed on as one of our main policies for this term to get going, understanding that it will not be completed, but it will be ongoing.

Madam Speaker, we believe that in creating the various market spaces, green areas, parks, mixed-use (that is, office accommodation downstairs and living quarters upstairs), and all of these different ingredients will gradually reavitalise the district and bring more business to the district. And, Madam Speaker, we are basing all that we are saying and doing on the premise that we cannot lose the district of George Town as the Capital. It is as simple as that. This, of course, will mean more business opportunities for Caymanians, more development opportunities and the private sector will, I believe, buy in and certainly make this become a reality.

So, in going forward with this plan, Madam Speaker, the plan will go to Cabinet and will call for some short-term actions and lay out the plans for the medium- and the long-term goals that will make this become a reality. As I said before, it is a multiyear programme and it is going to commence this coming fiscal year, 2014/15 coming, and most of what will be started then, while all of the other stuff is going on, will be infrastructure. That is, new or improved road works.

Those that are being considered will be new connector roads from Elgin Avenue to Eastern Avenue; from Elgin Avenue to Smith Road; from the Godfrey Nixon Way extension into North Church Street; and the Fort Street extension going north. Also slated are improvements to Smith Road. We know that Smith Road desperately needs a whole redoing, and also Godfrey Nixon Way, and Edward and Fort Streets with proper sidewalks and all of the other attachments.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry will seek input from the public and the relevant stakeholders. And they have asked me to take this opportunity to thank all parties that have participated in the project thus far, and just to mention a few: the Cayman Islands Chamber of Commerce. There is a young architect, Mr. Robert Johnson who has volunteered his time and expertise to spearhead the George Town boardwalk project which is ongoing as we speak. And, in fact, we just received correspondence from him a day or two ago saying that there are two other properties headed north that will engage in this boardwalk project which is on the iron shore, creating boardwalks that are a continuing boardwalk where people can just simply walk and enjoy the scenery. He has also assisted with some conceptual renderings.

Madam Speaker, we also have another young Caymanian, Mr. James Whittaker, who is with strong support for a P-3 arrangement on the revitalisation and certainly we will see how best all of the thoughts that are put together can be accommodated.

So, the next step after going to Cabinet is that there will be a committee set up to manage the development, and I foresee several subcommittees ema-

nating from that main committee that will have responsibility for specific areas of the plan, moving it forward. Again, I want to reiterate that while it is a Government initiated project, it must be a public/private partnership for this to be successful. And the Ministry will be publicly seeking interested developers to come forward with their ideas and financial support to bring this to fruition.

Madam Speaker, I now want to go on and speak a bit about the Department of Agriculture. The first thing, Madam Speaker, is that I know that in recent times (and you would be familiar with this one) there has been great interest expressed in what was known as the Furtherland Farmland in East End which is government owned. I have to tell you this, Madam Speaker, just after going back into Government I wondered why nothing had been done when we had talked about this for so long, about this project itself.

Madam Speaker, it is (I want to say this the correct way) . . . I understand because it is much more to this project than what would appear on the surface when it comes to how easy it is to make it all happen. We all know what the end result is that is desired. But, nevertheless, Madam Speaker, we have taken the challenge on and simply because we believe it is the right thing to do and I am sure that you will agree with me because I know that your heart was there also to make it happen. But it involves a fair amount of time-consuming effort.

The Kearney Gomez Doppler radar is there. So, what is happening now is they are determining the area of land that has to be cordoned off to separate that, because that is plunked in the middle of the site. It is more than one parcel of land.

Also, Madam Speaker, physically what has to happen, which they are just about ready to embark on, is all of those properties have to be surveyed with precise boundary surveys. That is the first thing. And that is not one day's work, because we are speaking in total to some 282 acres of land. But that is not something that is insurmountable. It just takes a little bit of time. And, of course, Madam Speaker, when the precise boundary survey is completed we then have to turn around and survey off the various sections of it. So, it is going to take some time.

But what the Agriculture Department is actually doing right now, as we speak, is physically examining the land because not all of it is very good arable land. Some of it is wet, some of it is cliff, some of it is mould pockets, and some of it is a mixture of all of the above. But you see, there are various uses which can still be called farming purposes. In talking to several of the people from the Agriculture Society and the farmers, some of the land that we would normally say can't be used, they believe firmly that with just a little bit of work it can be used for grazing land, grass land, when you would normally just condemn it and say you can't plant. But, of course, there is also a huge need nowadays for pasture land, and that is because there has

been a tremendous increase in cattle production because of local demand increasing, supermarkets being with a desire to . . . I mean the larger cattle farmers each of the supermarkets to the point where they cannot keep up with the demand now. And there was a time when they could not get any of them to buy it. Times have changed. It is wonderful.

In just speaking about this project itself, I am not trying to dampen anyone's spirit. I am just explaining that it is going to take a little while before we can actually say *Okay, here we are; let's start getting people to come in to use it.*

Madam Speaker, the committee that we are putting together now will also have to decide on various policy issues. Because, for instance, Madam Speaker, when we get to the point where someone can get a peppercorn lease on a piece of this property, nobody might have said it yet, but we are going to need electricity. So, all of that has to be arranged. And I do not think we can simply do it in a way that each individual will begin to deal with Caribbean Utilities about that. We have to make an arrangement that is going to take care of the whole thing as we go along. So, those are matters that have to be agreed on.

Also, we have to determine if any individuals will be allowed to stay on the properties and under what conditions they will be allowed to stay on the properties because we know where that can lead without me going into any details. So, we have to make sure that all of those things are dealt with and taken care of. And I only wanted to point that out to say that we are aware of all of this and we are working through all of this to make it happen. It is just that it is going to be a bit longer than I originally anticipated.

But I think once we get to the point where we can begin to do that, I believe that there will be a fairly large amount of land that just about everybody in the farming community who really wants to utilise it will be able to get some.

The other thing that I just want to take this opportunity to mention as I move on is that I do not want people to build up their hopes now that I am going to get a big five-acre plot when I can only use one acre. The truth of the matter is that you do not want to have it like that because you want to have as many people getting the opportunity to use the land as possibly can. So, we have to be realistic about expectations and what we can actually use.

So, Madam Speaker, that is ongoing and I can only say to you that we are pressing as fast as we can to get the various tasks accomplished.

Madam Speaker, since its inception some six years ago, the Market at the Grounds has proven to be a success, and it has had significant positive impacts on the growth and development of the agricultural sector, as well as on other local artisans. Now, where the old Farmers Market is, or was, Madam Speaker, which is near the Smith Road Cricket Oval, some of the farmers have developed a plan to rede-

velop that site. Madam Speaker, that is going to create yet another avenue which will be . . . the plan is to have that open all week instead of simply the Lower Valley Saturday at the Grounds. You have Camana Bay, which I think is on Wednesdays, and maybe another day. And while the Lower Valley site has proven to be successful because of the mere fact that people could go there on a Saturday morning and pick up their local produce and other items, the fact of the matter is, Madam Speaker, that the farming community is growing and production is increasing.

While several farmers are able to wholesale their products to the supermarkets and some restaurants, the fact of the matter is that they are seeking an outlet, not only for produce and herbs and spices and everything else, but for the artisans and the cottage industries to be able to thrive, and also for it to be in a location where it will get steady traffic. Hence, the plan to redevelop the Old Farmers Market site by the Smith Road Oval at the roundabout by Thomas Russell Way.

So once we can get that done . . . and plans have been approved and are now in the process of seeking construction estimates. The Government is assisting and we are also assisting for them to beg material. I think when that is over there will be some 30 kiosks where people can have their own stalls and it will be something that is not Government run. They are going to operate it on their own. They will have proper management in place but the Government is giving them the helping hand to help themselves. And I think that will make a difference, because, Madam Speaker, that is all in the grand scheme of things when I speak about the George Town revitalisation and we speak of the airport expansion and the cruise berthing facility. We expect that that will be one of the first stops for tours that will be heading to the eastern districts. So, those are some of the plans which are unfolding. And, Madam Speaker, I would be grateful.

**The Speaker:** We will now take the luncheon break and reconvene at 2:00 pm this afternoon.

**Proceedings suspended at 12:32 pm**

**Proceedings resumed at 2:24 pm**

**BILL**

**SECOND READING**

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

*[Continuation of Debate on the Budget Address and the Throne Speech together with the Government's Policy Statement]*

**The Speaker:** Please be seated.

Before we took the luncheon break the Honourable Minister responsible for Agriculture was engaged in his presentation. And I recognise him for the continuation of his debate thereon.

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, when we broke for lunch I was speaking about the Market at the Grounds and the new plans for the redevelopment of the old Farmers Market site.

Madam Speaker, in speaking about Market at the Grounds and this new site and how it ties in with our tourism product, I just want to take a couple of minutes to reflect on just over probably a six- to maybe eight-year span where we have come from and where we have reached.

Madam Speaker, I can remember not that long ago . . . and I think the tale is worth telling because it certainly shows what perseverance can achieve. I can remember not very long ago, just a few years back, it was a rare occasion to find local produce or local livestock in our supermarkets.

**The Speaker:** Honourable Minister, if I may interject, you have one hour and twenty-two minutes remaining.

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts:** Thank you Ma'am.

And gradually, slowly but surely, by way of continued dialogue and the owners of supermarkets being willing to cooperate, we have now come to the stage where there are supermarkets that have their regular suppliers whom they will call and ask, *When can you bring me some more?* And that is certainly heartwarming when you think of that, especially the cattle farmers. They cannot keep up with the demand from the supermarkets. And for the supermarkets to be asking for all of this stuff it must mean that their discerning customers are buying it.

Now, Madam Speaker, that is a very good incentive for the farmers and certainly it gives them all the reason to produce high quality produce and meats and also to be more consistent with their supply.

Madam Speaker, the other area that I wish to speak to briefly with regard to the Department of Agriculture, is the proposed formal opening of the CARDI [Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute] Office which is expected to take place in July. We, as a Government, have always placed a great deal of significance on supporting the agriculture sector as can be seen by the consistent commitment of current and past Governments and ministers in supporting the Department of Agriculture in providing financial support for the farmers, support of the annual Agricultural Shows that we have, and also developing a very strong national quarantine system.

Government's active support for agriculture has contributed, I believe, directly to the growing success of that sector in our Islands. Now, the fact that the Government has resuscitated the efforts to join

CARDI, in my view also speaks volumes. Government recognises that the Department of Agriculture needs now and will always need additional support to further develop the agricultural sector in these Islands. In these times when budgetary constraints are the norm, the Government's view is that this is certainly an opportunity to obtain such support through partnership with a regional organisation of excellence.

As a regional centre of excellence CARDI can offer a range of much needed support to the ongoing development of agriculture here in these Islands through access to technical information, responding to the needs of farmers, forging strategic linkages with other international organisations, and, certainly, access to agricultural experts throughout the region. Several of CARDI's commodity and fame areas, as described in the organisation's current mandate, are certainly, in my view, very pertinent to the development of agriculture in the Cayman Islands. These areas include roots and tubers, fruits and vegetables, small ruminants, protected agriculture and climate change for agriculture development.

Madam Speaker, access to CARDI's wealth of technical information in terms of fact sheets, technical publications and proceedings of regional conferences developed over its many years of working in the region, I believe will prove to be an invaluable resource which can be utilised to further agriculture locally.

CARDI's institutional links, both regionally and indeed internationally will enable the Government, and, by extension, the agricultural sector to gain access to projects and programmes that as an overseas territory we in the Cayman Islands would otherwise not normally have the opportunity to be part of.

CARDI also provides the opportunity for a wide range of technical assistance and services by enabling the Cayman Islands to tap into its pool of technical expertise, both in house and within the region.

You see, Madam Speaker, as a small department the Cayman Islands Department of Agriculture simply does not have the resources to hire the range of staff to address all of the challenges which confront the sector. But through this pool of technical expertise we would be able to access human and other resources which are needed to address identified challenges and to take advantage of opportunities to further develop the sector. Such support would be invaluable in a multitude of areas, including assistance with production issues, crop protection, animal health, market research and analysis, agri-business support and programmes and policy development, such as the creation of a national food and nutrition security policy for us in the Cayman Islands.

So, Madam Speaker, while nothing is perfect in the world that we live in, I believe that we are making strides in the field of agriculture, and, certainly, once the CARDI office opens with the technical expertise that will be on hand and with the access to all that

we will be able to access, I certainly think that agriculture will be stronger once we are able to get that office open.

Moving on, Madam Speaker, the Petroleum Inspectorate: While the petroleum industry has self-regulated itself in the past in a number of areas, including the quality of fuel imported and marketed locally, and they have been doing a pretty good job at it, the recent fuel report identified some gaps which exist and need to be addressed. Now, Madam Speaker, I just want to take a second here to let it be made known very clearly that I do not think of it as my job to find fault. But I also know that it is not my job to hide anything from anyone. So, when media suggests at any point in time that I should say nothing about something, then I have a great difficulty with the way that the media thinks.

Madam Speaker, at the forefront, fuel quality standards and controls are needed which will not only ensure that motorists are getting what they pay for, but will pave the way for Cayman to be more proactive in its role in reducing greenhouse and other harmful gas emissions, hence reduction in air pollution and global warming. Madam Speaker, policies will be focused on all grades of fuel imported because while the standard for diesel quality is largely driven by the utility company, there are some lingering issues with the grades of fuel sold in the Cayman Islands.

Accompanying these and other pending policy matters which are work in progress, the Government recognises that the implementation of such new policies may create disproportionate burden on customers. So, the measures that will be put in place will take into account any cost impact with the goal of minimising its effect on fuel prices. And during the interim, while these policies are being developed as we speak, the Government will continue to embark on periodic random sampling of fuel imported and those results will be published.

Let me make one more interjection here, Madam Speaker. And I say this not guardedly, but knowing it to be a fact. There are some storage areas, not necessarily at the bulk fuel storage, but not excluding the bulk fuel storage areas, which on examination show that they are not maintained to the level that they should be maintained. And, Madam Speaker, it is only right to put in place the kind of regulations which will correct this situation because it has been going on for a long time.

So, in the interim while the policies are being developed, as I said, we are embarking on periodic random sampling of fuel imported. And, Madam Speaker, those results will be published. A formal complaint process is also being developed to ensure quality and structured information is provided to us in regard to fuel issues so that the Government can tackle these issues more effectively. Ultimately, we are committed to exploring all avenues to ensure the main concerns related to fuel are addressed in the short to

medium term to bring much needed relief in this area to consumers across the Cayman Islands.

The operating permit regulations are currently in the final drafting stage. No longer than two days ago we were taking a look at them. These regulations will be a mandatory requirement of the Cayman Islands Dangerous Substances Handling and Storage Law. So, the Petroleum Inspectorate and the Ministry are working diligently to put these regulations in place so that all fuel operators will be in full compliance with the Law.

The steps which have been completed are Cabinet's approval to have Legal Drafting prepare the regulations. The CPI has been working with Legal Drafting to finalise the regulations and very shortly we will be getting the drafting completed and having Cabinet approve the final product and having them gazetted, at which point in time we will appoint the necessary board to approve permits to operators. At that point in time we can begin to issue permits.

You see, Madam Speaker, the truth of the matter is that the law calls for the regulations to be in place, and it calls for operators to have a permit. But permits cannot be issued until regulations are in place. As we go through life and live and learn we make sure that we do what we are supposed to do. So, we are hoping that within a very short period time that situation will be corrected and will allow for better monitoring of the situation in that industry.

Now, Madam Speaker, even though there is a shortage with staff, I think interviews have already been conducted, someone has been seconded and I do believe that additional personnel will be hired very shortly to bring that department up to the strength where it can be effective at its job.

Moving on to the Department of Vehicle and Drivers Licensing [DVDL]: Back in 2006 it had been the intention of the then Ministry of Communications, Works and Infrastructure, when the Honourable Member for East End was the Minister at the time, to have . . . well, I should say it was the Government's intention driven by the Minister to have another licensing office in the eastern districts.

At that time one supervisor, one vehicle inspector and two licensing officers had been hired and the intent at the time was to put this additional office at the James Manoah Bodden Civic Centre, Madam Speaker. But budgetary constraints caused for this not to be completed. But, Madam Speaker, that had been the intention from that time and those staff had been hired from them so now we are doing everything we can to make that become a reality.

Not in hindsight, but even when the new location was built next to the First Baptist Church opposite the gas station, moving it from out of central George Town, that was largely due to those facilities next door to the police station originally being totally inadequate so the Minister at the time moved with that. And even now, what is there on occasion gets overcrowded be-

cause even though you have satellite facilities in West Bay and I think some inspections are done in North Side too, I believe—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts:**—there is only the one main location which can do all of the inspections. And now on many occasions, if I am correct, inspectors have to go out to quarries and other heavy equipment sites to inspect the heavy equipment.

Madam Speaker, that is not the ideal situation. So, we have now agreed to move forward with looking for a branch in the eastern districts and we are fairly confident that we have identified a site. If we think about it (and this was the thinking at the time when the Ministry was looking at this), the vast majority of quarries are in the eastern quadrant of the Island. So, you will find that the majority of heavy equipment will either traverse those areas or are based in those areas. So, if we can get an office up there and have the ability to do the total inspections up that side, it certainly would relieve the main location and have them be able to do that.

So, Madam Speaker, the Ministry staff have been pursuing to identify a location and I think they are hopeful that sometime in the second quarter of the upcoming fiscal year they should be able to open that. Understanding very well that the staff have already been hired and have been working down at the main office, there is no increase of cost by way of staffing. It would just be the operational cost of the office. I believe it will create much more efficiency. And I am certain that the heavy equipment operators will be happy for the convenience. Not only that, but the residents of the eastern districts would also find it very convenient to be able to do all of their licensing, either on the way home or on the way down or on a Saturday without having to drive all the way into town. So, Madam Speaker, we are working towards that and hopefully that will happen by end of the calendar year.

Madam Speaker, I have to admit to you that I can't swear that I have my head fully around the electronic vehicle registration yet myself. But I think I understand enough about it to give mention to it because it is something that DVDL is looking very carefully at. And, Madam Speaker, this electronic vehicle registration uses radio frequency identification technology to identify vehicles and validate the identity status and authenticity of vehicle data. The basic system consists of tags, antennas, readers, and a host system. A unique electronic identification code is established for each vehicle via a tamper resistant windshield sticker tag and each unique code is linked to a record in the centralised owner vehicle database.

It is believed that this initiative will improve customer service while keeping up with the advancement in technology, enabling us to accelerate our inspection process and prevent fraud. The system will

relieve operational burdens and improve fiscal performance for the department by providing automated means to screen vehicle registration for inspection and licensing.

It is also thought that the system will assist the RCIP Service by enabling faster apprehension of serious law offenders, enabling automated detection and citation generation for non-compliance vehicles and also an effective new deterrent that motivates motorists to meet regulatory requirements.

Madam Speaker, while I was speaking and talking about having another facility in the eastern districts, what I forgot to mention was that this is something that was in the works from two or three years ago and ministry staff has continued to work on it.

Madam Speaker, back to this new system: It is designed with security features to prevent tampering or fraudulent use. So, built-in self-diagnostic capabilities allow continuous performance monitoring to detect or prevent possible problems early on. The tag code is unique to each vehicle and it is virtually impossible to duplicate and includes other security features. So, DVDL and the Ministry have drafted a Request for Proposal (RFP) and that will be published later in the year because there are several companies that have shown interest. While everybody is confident that it will improve what exists now, we have to make sure that it does not create any prohibition with cost to the customers or anything like that. So, we will have to see where we go from there.

Let me just say this, Madam Speaker, before I move on to Planning. What I just spoke about a while ago . . . everyone, including myself, will have to be totally convinced that it is the right thing, and that it is financially viable and everything, for it to actually happen, but that is the direction in which the department is leaning.

Moving on to Planning now, Madam Speaker, in the short term the department is working to complete the adoption and implementation of the 2009 IBC [International Building Code], and the related codes and standards to replace the 1999 standard code (which is what is being used now). This is to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors and to protect public health and safety.

Madam Speaker, the department is also adopting the 2014 NFPA 70 National Electric Code [NEC] to replace the now utilised 2005 National Electric Code to ensure that electrical installations are done in accordance with Best Practice and the latest Industry Standards.

Right now, as we speak, Madam Speaker, there is a continuing drive by the Director, Mr. Haroon Pandohie and his staff to introduce technology and systems to enable the public to conduct business with the department online. The hope is to get it 24/7, 365 days a year, driving efficiency gains and reducing processing times.

Phase 1 of the online Planning system is now operational, and this is to do with inspections where when inspectors go out on the field, they relay their checklist information while they are still in the field from a tablet. This allows for better tracking, immediate database information, and it also allows the person who is being inspected to be able to track exactly what the circumstances are.

Madam Speaker, this will allow my house that is being inspected, hypothetically speaking . . . I hope I never have any more of them that will have to be inspected, but anyway, what it would allow for me to know very swiftly online is if there is any shortcoming and anything that needs to be corrected with that inspection so that I do not have to wait for several days before the department gets in contact with me to tell me that this is what a shortfall is and this is what has to be done to correct it. And that is what has caused a lot of delays and is an area where we continually get complaints. Because something goes wrong along those lines, or even with Planning reviews, you then get put into the back of the pile because something has to be done to fix a plan or to correct something to allow for the inspection checklist to be all positive. So, Madam Speaker, that in itself, is making a difference.

Phase 2 will deal with Planning applications and building permits and the director and staff are confident that they will have that ready to go online by January. They have to upgrade the computer hardware (not the software, the hardware) in order to make this be able to work, Madam Speaker. And they are in the process of doing that.

Training has been ongoing with staff being certified. And while we may not be telling the difference immediately, it is slowly but surely manifesting itself, Madam Speaker. What we are now having the ability to do is that instead of sending out three different inspectors, because the inspectors are cross-trained, one inspector can inspect mechanical engineering, plumbing, all one time, rather than have three different sets of information and all of that. So, that certainly is going to make a difference as the days go by.

So, the combination inspectors, Madam Speaker, certainly, as I said, will make a difference. And, of course, we are looking to get the combination planning reviewers to get them up to speed. I am told some of the staff are lagging behind a bit and that all of that training is not completed. But, just as the inspections are done by those who are cross-trained, so too will the Planning review process. The objective is to get so that that one person can review all of the sets of plans rather than having various individuals having to do that. And that certainly is going to cause for saving time.

Madam Speaker, the Planning Department has always, from as long as I can remember, had room for improvement. But I can safely say that the director is doing much good with regards to creating

those improvements and, Madam Speaker, I think once there is satisfactory cooperation from staff and everybody heading in the same direction, we will see great strides as we continue.

Madam Speaker, it is absolutely important . . . and I am sending the message to the entire department, not because of a boast, but it is very possible that we may be seeing (if I may use the term) an upswing in development in the not-too-distant future, and that department has to be with the ability to deal with that and not have people being held up with regard to development just because they are not equipped to do so. We recognise that and are doing everything we can to ensure that they are up to the task.

Madam Speaker, one department that has always been plagued by some difficulty is the Department of Vehicle and Equipment Services, which is DVES. I am happy to say that since January of this year a young man by the name of Mr. Richard Simms, who was the deputy director up at DVDL, has been "seconded" as the Acting Director for DVES and is assisted by Mr. Stephen Quinland who is the Deputy Director. And I can say, Madam Speaker, together they bring a wealth of knowledge and experience and I am content that already they are moving that department forward in a positive light. Their objectives immediately are to focus on some key areas to improve the department's productivity.

Technical staff qualification: Madam Speaker, already all of the technical staff are on a schedule to be ASE [Automotive Service Excellence] certified. The goal of the department is to develop the skills of the employees and their abilities, the organisational focus on the employees to become better and more efficient in what they do. Now, Madam Speaker, this will certainly reduce the operational cost. They are also implementing a new inventory system to enhance better accounting controls of their operation. Now, Madam Speaker, there is no sense hiding it. And I believe that you too are aware of it. They have had problems in this area over the years, but I think we are sounding the bell now that those days are over and we are looking forward to much better things ahead.

The department is also aiming to ensure proper facility maintenance by effectively implementing sound facilities management practices. The department can save thousands of dollars annually. These measures include keeping all building systems and equipment up to date and running efficiently; keeping the facility clean; and, of course, maintaining security. Again, this will see much savings in the short and long run by reducing utility cost, employee injuries and eliminating expensive emergency service calls.

There are some capital needs which the department has with regard to diagnostic tools and software and, while we cannot do all of it one time, there is some money in the capital budget this year to begin that process so DVES can update its diagnostic

equipment to be able to detect vehicle requirements in terms of repairs.

Madam Speaker, the last thing I want to speak about under DVES, is the Fuel Management System. Right now we know that there is a system which operates out of the front of the Department of Vehicle and Equipment Services where it is a central supply of fuel for core government. Madam Speaker, this was a 1996 contract. The contract was with Chevron which at the time we knew as Texaco. Now, Madam Speaker, I'd best be a little careful in how I say this because maybe in 1996 this seemed sensible then. But I can tell you it does not seem sensible now. Anyway, not to argue about that . . . but, in 1996 what was done was that Texaco was allowed to put in equipment (that is the tanks and they actually built a small building, and also the pumps and whatever ancillary stuff that had to be done), and they were allowed to be a single source supplier of fuel and also what is known as TBAs. Oils and all of that had to come directly from them. There was no ability to get bids or quotes or anything like that. So, it was a single source supplier, and was a 15 year contract. This contract I think expired in 2011.

What is happening now with it is that the contract is up and it is still operating on a month to month basis and I have met with the people of Rubis, Madam Speaker. Both parties are quite aware that there is no contract. I have told them that whatever transpires, as soon as we are able to get our heads around it (and we are there now) that it will be out for open tender. I have asked the Honourable Attorney General, and Ms. Jackie Wilson is examining the contract and some other back and forth email between the Ministry and Rubis, to give us a legal opinion to where we stand with regard to the equipment and what is the best way forward with regard to that equipment.

Our next step is that once we know that, very shortly we are going to develop an RFP and have this out for open tender. Of course, involved in that whole process will be a guaranteed secure and safe fuel management system to ensure that some of the problems we have had in the past, which had to call for the Auditor General stepping in and doing all kinds of inquiries, that we make sure that nothing like that is possible again.

Madam Speaker, we are moving in that direction. Some people have suggested that what we should do is to disband the fuel management system and simply allow the various government departments, ministries, portfolios and all of the agencies to just make arrangements with private sector and retailers across the Islands and simply get the fuel like that. There are several problems.

The first problem is an arrangement such as the one that I am proposing will certainly guarantee that the cost of the fuel at its highest will be the same cost that the retailers pay when they get it—not what they sell it for, what they get it for. And the facility is

already there. But the biggest problem is . . . and no one . . . because it is not that I would not go that route, but no one has yet shown me how we could ensure . . . For example, I drive an F-150 truck for some department of government and the license number is so and so and so and so, 23050 or whatever, and I go to the gas station and I get the gas regularly and I am a regular person in there, no one can tell me that the person behind the cash register is always going to look out and see which vehicle it is, see that that is the license number because I keep coming in and saying license number so and so and so, how much gas, so and so and so. So, I could take my own vehicle and go to the gas station and go inside there and say such and such and such.

Nobody intending to do anything evil but that is just how it works. Meaning, it would not be that somebody from the gas station was intending to assist me to do wrong, and there is no fix for that. That is the problem. There is no fix for that and all that is going to mean is that it is going to cost more to monitor and it is going to be an impossible situation to be totally satisfied with, besides the fact that you are paying that much more for the fuel all the time.

And that facility . . . I mean, I'm batting on the government's wicket here, so forgive me if I am not who somebody thinks I should be. But this is my personal view and no one has convinced me different yet.

But you see, when we check the volume of fuel, I am told that we are the third largest purchaser of fuel. "We" means the government. So, it would make a huge difference in the cost. So, that is why . . . and I just wanted to take a minute to explain that, Madam Speaker. And that is why we are going that route but I am satisfied that we will be with a secure process and we will be able to save the government money and it will not be something we will have to put out for 15 years anymore. We can do it for a shorter period of time that there will always be competition because we are not going to allow anyone else to own the equipment in the facility anymore. I think that settles that one, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the Lands and Survey Department is also, in my view, moving along very nicely. And being introduced right now is implementing what is called an online Lands and Survey system (that is, L&S Document Submission Service). This is just a first step to a long-term process. This first step allows clients the option to electronically submit their documents for registration from their offices. This is being introduced now, as we speak. Clients will be able to access Lands and Survey online and make certain types of applications online without having to send the messenger down.

A year from now it is expected that clients will have the ability to have the use of an online forms system where users will be able to complete and submit the forms currently required in order to carry out transactions with the Land Registry. These first

two steps, Madam Speaker, will allow for a reduction in a number of lodgment errors and omissions, and it is conservatively thought that this will improve processing turnaround times by at least 20 per cent.

Madam Speaker, these two processes are part and parcel of the objective of e-conveyancing. When the whole thing is achieved and it becomes a reality, this will allow the public to submit all and every document which requires registration to be submitted. It will allow for these to be submitted electronically from anywhere (that is, from here or from overseas, remote locations), and it will then, at that point in time, be utilising a system of digital signatures.

Madam Speaker, this will be state of the art. And while it is not something that is going to happen in a day, the move has started. I know that the chief officer himself, having grown up in the Lands and Survey Department, is going to make sure to keep on top of this and to ensure that it becomes a reality.

They have also implemented an express service, Madam Speaker, to process certain documents in an expeditious manner. And this service is one where customers can request express service to be completed within 48 hours. It was implemented two months ago and what the history has shown over that period of time is that the vast majority of the services are completed within one working day. So, this is a faster and more cost effective way to close transactions which will enable customers to ensure delivery times and manage interest payable and cost.

Madam Speaker, another step which is in the works is to create deposit accounts for (should I say) the regular customers—those customers who utilise the services of the Lands and Survey Department on a very regular basis. I was talking to the Ministry staff this morning and I was comparing it with what happens at Customs now, when frequent importers keep putting a deposit into an account and as they clear their goods they keep drawing down and, as the money needs to be replenished, they put more money into that account.

This is very similar. That way they will not have to be sending cheques all of the time and it certainly makes the whole thing more efficient. I think that is innovation to a very high level. While it is not reinventing the wheel, it certainly shows that staff are trying to create systems which are user-friendly and make the whole operation more efficient. I think that kudos should be given to the HoD and the rest of the staff who have been working hard.

Madam Speaker, I am nearly there now. Not quite nearly there but nearly. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I am on now to the National Housing Development Trust (NHDT). Before I speak to this let me just make a very early statement. This is especially for the representatives for West Bay to make sure that they understand very clearly and they can pass the message on the people very clearly.

Whatever the thoughts are with those people who are living in the older houses in West Bay, we have asked the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to do assessments, and we have asked all of those residents to cooperate with the Department of Children and Family Services so that these assessments can be made.

Nothing will be done to cause these people to be displaced at any point in time where they do not have anywhere to go. Let me say that openly. The Government has no intention of making that happen.

What I want to say (so that people can understand the rationale) is that I know anybody who has been living somewhere for quite some time and you get comfortable with the place, it is difficult to even think about going somewhere else. The problem that we face is that there is no magic in the world that can properly maintain those places. And the places are unsafe.

I am told that in several instances the very bolts that hold the structures to the foundation have rusted away. So, while some people might get the impression that you do not care, it is because we do care. It is unsafe. And God help us if some major catastrophe were to happen. So, that is where the problem is—honest. It is not even so much about being able to knock those places down to use that land to build again, although that would be the inevitable desire. But, you see, if you simply leave it like that, having no preparation for anything, if you have a major disaster, where are you going to put them?

So, I am only speaking like this hoping that people will understand that there is nothing about trying to do anything to anybody that is untoward, but it is to try . . . and the Government recognises—and I am sure that previous governments recognised this too—that a solution has to be found. But the solution is a solution that is a bigger picture than just this that we are talking about. There had been thoughts expressed about certain other locations. And I am just saying this because we have been trying to talk it through to see what kind of solutions we can get.

There have been thoughts expressed about using certain other locations which are owned by the Government (in West Bay, for instance) knowing that these people will still want to reside in West Bay, so as to be looking to possibly somehow or the other find the funds to be able to do a series of multi-family developments to assist towards that.

I hope Members appreciate the point that I am trying to make. And I wish that everybody would get to understand that. So, there is no fear of anybody having to up and leave or anything like that. It is just that we need to make this assessment so that we know what the needs are, so that when we look to see how we can handle it, we know what we are dealing with. That is the whole purpose of that exercise.

Madam Speaker, having said that part of it, we have been looking at the GGHAM programme

[Government Guaranteed Home Assisted Mortgage] to get that restarted again. To this point there have been some 327 families who have benefitted from this and now own their own home. The GGHAM programme is not the affordable housing programme. It is a separate programme. It is one whereby people who are assessed by the financial institutions and who can make a mortgage payment for a house of their desire, but who do not have either the collateral or the cash up front . . . the government offers a guarantee of up to 35 per cent of the top end of the mortgage, which means that once the mortgage has reduced in principal by 35 per cent, the government guarantee falls away and it keeps getting less as it goes down to that 35 per cent. Now, this is geared for families that earn a maximum income of \$75,000 annually.

We are meeting with the banks and we have been reviewing the old agreement with a view to making a few changes. I think six of the commercial banks initially were involved—the clearing banks—and I think within another meeting or two, we will be able to finalise the new agreement, get it all signed up and get that process started again. There are still people out there who are in that position and it really was a very useful programme during the time that it was operating. So, each of the banks have pledged verbally to us that they will commit several million dollars on an annual basis, worth of mortgage portfolio under this programme.

The Credit Union has been wanting to—I hope the Financial Secretary is somewhere around that he is hearing me speak. I forget to say this to him. They have been trying for years to be a part of this GGHAM programme, but because they are not a clearing bank and the guarantee that was brought to the Legislative Assembly referred to “clearing banks,” they could not be part of the programme that the guarantee could be lodged with and now we are wanting to fix that situation so that the Credit Union can be a part along with the other financial institutions. So, Madam Speaker, that is moving ahead and I think that should not be long.

The applications for all of those homes in Bodden Town, some 130 applications, have already been assessed. Now, Madam Speaker, let me say to you and everyone else that we have totally changed the policy that was there previously, because these homes were being built only to be rented forever and ever. Madam Speaker, it just did not make sense. It made absolutely no sense. It meant that the National Housing Development Trust would be responsible for the maintenance of these homes, the insurance of these homes. You would have been struggling morning, noon and night to collect the rent for these homes. You may as well build the homes and say, *Here, take um.*

If the government could afford that I would be happy to. But this whole programme is geared to give people pride. The government puts the infrastructure

in place. It provides the land that the home is built on. It gets the home built at a very reasonable price (that is the National Housing Development Trust which is an arm of government) and once the home is built it allows for applications to be vetted for people to be able to get a mortgage for these homes.

You see, why this makes it possible for people to be able . . . and this programme is geared for . . . if it is a single person, a maximum earning power of \$30,000 a year, and if it is a couple, maximum of \$45,000 a year. It is geared like that so that people who can do better do not take advantage of it and those who need to actually access it can't get it.

But if you picture it, let us say, hypothetically speaking, a two bedroom house is being sold for \$105,000. If somebody qualifies for that amount of a mortgage, when they are going to the bank, they are not going to the bank with a house that is valued \$105,000. They are also going to the bank with the value of the land that the house is on, which they do not have to pay for. So, that is the help from the beginning. But it was never envisaged that government would have the funds to keep pumping three or four million dollars a year into this programme because once you get to a certain point, as you keep selling you keep rolling over and keep building more, which is what is going to happen in Bodden Town now. These 20 homes that are built here will be sold, and the funds recouped from those will go towards building another 15 or 20 because there is land in Bodden Town to do so. And that principle is what we believe should continue throughout as the needs arise.

There are still a few in East End that have not been sold yet, so I do not think there is a big push because there is not a ton load of applications for East End right now that you need to build . . . and you build as you need. What you do not want to do is to have them built and sit there for six or nine months because by the time you go back what you have to fix up you . . . so that is just a snapshot of where they are.

The new board is in place. Some of them are miserable but they work hard. When I say “miserable” I do not mean that in a bad way, I mean they work hard and want to see . . . and these are volunteers who want to see the right things happen. And I want to certainly express my appreciation to the chairman, Mr. Powell, and all the members of the board, and indeed the staff of the NHDT because I believe there are good things that can happen and that they will stay with the programme.

Madam Speaker, the Postal Department is one of the most necessary units that the Government has. Certainly Ms. Sheena Glasgow is in the right direction with her steer. I certainly believe that there is good staff throughout the three Islands. Cayman Brac and Little Cayman have less staff than Grand Cayman but all throughout.

We have had some innovations because like everywhere else they have had to do more with less

but they are doing okay. The one thing that I want to quickly mention that they are looking towards, which hopefully will become a reality in short order, is an automatic mail sorting system. That is a piece of equipment, Madam Speaker, which, once it is acquired, will certainly save on labour cost. It will cause mail and delivery and dispatch to be I can't say how many more times efficient than it is now.

They visited an operation in Guernsey recently and saw the benefits of this system. We do have some money into the capital budget this year to be beginning the process. This will not displace people. What it will do is cause for more efficiency. And as the volume grows you won't have to have more people and it will be able to absorb that volume and be much more efficient with the operation. So, we are looking forward to being able to move that process forward so that we can be more efficient in our timing of getting the mail out, not only foreign mail but local mail.

There has been a debate, Madam Speaker, very recently. Many people (some staff, some others) feel that post offices should be closed on a Saturday. Now, some of the outlying district post offices, everyone involved in that have agreed that they should be closed on a Saturday because they just were not doing any business. But I do not think we have gotten to the point yet, Madam Speaker, where it is very crystal clear. I cannot yet reconcile not having any post offices open on a Saturday and what kind of effect that would have on the general public and the services that are offered.

We are going to be looking at that. We are going to try to find empirical ways to gather evidence to know what is sensible and what is not sensible. But we have had the idea floated to us and will be looking into it. But I do not wish to say now that as of next month all of the post offices will be closed or that it will never happen. I think we have to look a bit more into that one.

Madam Speaker, winding down now but having to deal with the Water Authority, I am certain you and others will be pleased at the fact that the Water Authority has been very active in the Island of Cayman Brac. I think if they have not completed it yet, when completed they will have installed some 12,300 feet of various size water mains along the north coast road up to West End Primary, and also into the side roads off of there and subdivision roads. I think the Water Authority's check is that this will provide water to some 110 developments, and in Cayman Brac that is a pretty good batch out of them. So, that is ongoing, Madam Speaker.

They have also begun clearing and filling the location where the Cayman Brac waterworks facility will be placed. And, Madam Speaker, that is in their medium-term plans; not long-term, but medium-term plans.

They also have work going on in Lower Valley where they are completing the redesign and refurbishment of the reverse osmosis plant complete with building refurbishment, replacement of plant equipment and the modernisation of the plant control system.

Madam Speaker, one important thing to note here, which tells me that they are doing their job well, is that normally this would have been something that would have been farmed out to be done, and they are using in-house resources to do much of this work—most of it—in order to get that up to speed.

At the Red Gate site there is ongoing construction of a new pumping station to replace the existing one which is nearing the end of its life cycle, and certainly, at this point in time, does not meet the requirements of the Authority's pumping needs in terms of capacity, energy efficiency and flexibility.

Madam Speaker, let me say this publicly so that all of us are put in the spot: the Red Gate Road, which has been in need of repair for a long time now, and the Water Authority has been pleading along with those who actually live on that road, because you have both commercial and residential there. The only reason why it is not done yet is because we recognise and realise that if we did it before the water works that the Water Authority is doing are finished, it would only mess up the new road. So, we are just waiting until they are finished and the NRA has promised faithfully that they will give them good surface to move from.

ICTA [Information and Communication Technology Authority], Madam Speaker. Thank God we now have a newly appointed Managing Director in the form of Mr. Alee Fa'amoe. Just to say that we ensured at the Ministry, unlike what was initially intended, that the job was advertised locally. There were some 17 original applicants which dropped to 15 because of circumstances which were quite understandable. One person got another job that he applied for and there was a potential conflict with another one. But there were 15 Caymanian applicants. I was not involved, but I am told that it was a really difficult task because so many people . . . in other words, there were several of those applicants who either one, would have done a good job. But it had to be one so they went through all kinds of other procedures to get to the point where they decided on one. And we are happy that we are at that point.

I know from just short discussions with the new managing director, the he is focused. One of his early jobs is to go out and visit with all of the stakeholders, hear complaints, hear what their problems are and to make sure that the ICTA is a responsive unit.

The short-term plans for the ICTA are to ensure that government fees are fully collected and remitted to the government. Madam Speaker, one of the problems that are going to have to be dealt with very early now is that they are going to have to determine in short order a policy on what is called unbundled local loops.

When Cable and Wireless (now LIME) were here originally, there was no other competition. So, much of the infrastructure that others came and found was infrastructure that was placed by Cable and Wireless (now LIME). So, piggybacking (as I call it in layman terms) on some of that infrastructure causes LIME to say, *Well, it was me that paid for this so you need to pay me to use it.* I do not think that there is any set policy or fee which has been decided on how best to use that.

I know that they are checking into what is normal industry standard and what other jurisdictions use as a benchmark for this. But this will have to be dealt with very shortly in order to create a playing field where everybody can play and be content. And, of course, in all of this the end game is to ensure that the customers do not pay any more.

Madam Speaker, there are some other areas which ICTA are going to have to be looking at. And I certainly look forward to Ministry staff and myself meeting with the new managing director in short order (as soon as we can get the budget process completed) so that we can hear what plans there are and then we can have the board functioning the way it should; the ICTA functioning the way it should and Ministry being the good provider of policy.

Madam Speaker, the long-term plans for the ICT market are to promote competition by maintaining openness to new operators and the existing operators who provide new services, by ensuring operators respond to customers complaints that are made to the Authority, and dealing with disputes between the operators, as they arise and as they inevitably will. Also, Madam Speaker, as they have done in the past, assign spectrum to operators to enable new and improved services, and certainly dealing with disputes concerning ICT infrastructure. So, one more tick I dare say, Madam Speaker, and I am contented that that department will now see new good direction.

The ERA [Electricity Regulatory Authority]: Madam Speaker, I am going to do my best to make this the last one. But this one I cannot say anything about because—

**The Speaker:** Honourable Minister, your time has expired but I will allow time to conclude your final thoughts.

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts:** It has? Forgive me.

Just on the ERA, Madam Speaker. Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker, the ERA is currently running a competitive solicitation for 36 megawatts of firm power—"firm power" being electricity that is available 24/7 (all of the time)—to supplement and also to replace elements of CUC's current generation fleet. The ERA's goal in all of this was to attract a substantial number of qualified bidders, and in January the ERA qualified five potential bidders in addition to CUC.

The ERA has issued the relevant RFP in which it invested substantial effort and resources to ensure that it is the most complete and transparent RFP yet issued by the ERA. The ERA believes it achieved that goal, but has yet to receive critiques from qualified bidders. One prime objective of the RFP was to ensure that bidders are given explicit instructions as to what data to provide so that a level playing field for fully transparent evaluation of both price and non-price factors could be accomplished in a tight timeframe. This new generation, Madam Speaker, is expected to be online between April and May 2016. So, the ERA is looking for innovative responsive bids that can reduce the current cost of energy.

What is called CORE [Consumer Owned Renewable Energy], Madam Speaker, has taken off and the ERA expects that in the not-too-distant future, half of the allocated 2 megawatts of generating capacity will have been taken up by residential and commercial consumers. While improving the Island's carbon footprint and diversifying the source of energy supplied via the national grid, CORE does not currently reduce the cost of electricity. Madam Speaker, that is important for us to recognise. Consumer Owned Renewable Energy does not currently reduce the cost of electricity since the Feed-in Tariff rate offered to incentivise the customers to invest in clean energy is currently higher than the cost of the replaced fossil fuel energy.

In other words, CUC [Caribbean Utilities Company] pays the customer who has consumer owned renewable energy more for the electricity they supply them than what CUC charges. I'm telling you that . . . sorry, I didn't mean it like that.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts:** That is because it was meant to give an incentive to things like solar panels and stuff like that.

So, however, looking into the future, Madam Speaker, this certainly is not expected to always be the case but that is the case now.

Two independent power producers are close to agreeing draft power purchase agreements with CUC to provide wholesale renewable energy to the national grid, and the ERA is looking forward to hopefully approving these agreements and issuing relevant generation licences. And ERA is also anticipating that this energy will be cheaper than the current fossil fuel energy cost.

ERA also anticipates receiving a capital investment proposal from Caribbean Utilities later this year for a programme for a programme to replace the existing high pressure sodium street lights (the HPS street lights) with more energy efficient and durable LED lighting.

In two sentences I hope, Madam Speaker, CORE power supply now, if we were to bank too

much on that, because of the arrangement that exists, would end up with consumers paying more than they pay today. So, with all the fervour in the world and all of the desires in the world, we have to accept what is. And 'what is', is if we had everything replaced by solar power today, because of the arrangement we would have, the electricity bill would be twice as high. And it just so happens that that is how it is. Now, I am not saying that is an ideal situation and I am not saying that is a situation that should continue, but that is what it is now and we have to sit and work out what is the best way.

Besides that, let us never forget that firm power means power 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year (and when it is a leap year, 366). Solar, in this country, cannot be termed as firm power. It can always be part of the whole thing. But we could never ever sensibly expect to say that we could do everything with solar power. And there are other reasons, but time will not allow me for that.

So, the production and distribution of energy, Madam Speaker, is key to the success of any modern economy. And yes, the Government is actively reviewing and exploring all options available to reduce the cost energy to the citizens of these Islands. There are many conflicting views and theories on the most effective means to address the energy related issues. Rest assured that the Cayman Islands, like most other small territories, depend on the importation of fossil fuel to produce a firm reliable source of electricity. Currently, solar seems to be attractive because costs are rapidly decreasing and emerging battery technology holds some promise of storing the energy, thereby overcoming the inability to produce power when sunlight is not present.

However, these storage technologies are in their infancy, Madam Speaker, and early adopters are learning some expensive lessons, such as batteries designed to last 20 years having their estimated life span cut in half after one year of operation. This is primarily due to the intermittency of solar power constantly charging and discharging batteries.

Utility size renewable energy generation is the most economical way to implement renewable energy in these Islands. Studies have suggested that significant economies of scale exist for up to 5 megawatts of capacity of solar. Five megawatts of utility scale solar would require between 20 to 25 acres of land. So, land use is also an important part of the equation to be discussed when you are talking about how you are going to supply power to the Island.

The current fuel cost charge including import duty on diesel is roughly 22.5 cents per kilowatt hour. So, any proposed utility scale renewable energy power purchase agreement would only be economically viable if it is less than 22.5 cents per kilowatt hour. What solar is being paid for is 38 cents per kilowatt hour. That's what it is. While the cost of solar energy systems has come down significantly in the past two

years making it more and more viable in today's electricity prices, it is important to note that there is a major shift on the way, globally, towards more economical fossil fuels, such as liquefied or compressed natural gas, or liquefied petroleum gas. Not only are these fuels much greener than diesel, or heavy fuel oil, but due to the explosion of natural gas production in the US, these gases are also becoming very attractive pricewise economically.

If Cayman can transition away from diesel to one of these fuels in the near future, on the one hand it would have a positive effect in bringing down the fuel cost charged to consumers, but, on the other hand, it would raise the hurdle for the viability of utility scale solar. As it lowers the price threshold per kilowatt hour, solar would have to achieve in order to be economical.

These are not things that I say to argue against something. These are things that we have to consider when we are looking to make any kinds of decisions of this nature.

Due to the intermittency of solar systems (that is changing cloud cover and the sun not being available 24 hours a day) capacity factors (that is, the outputs for these systems) tend to be quite low at roughly 20 per cent of the name plate or what is said to be able to produce. And to put this in perspective, it means that 60 megawatts of utility scale solar power would only replace the total amount of annual output of approximately 12 megawatts of conventional firm power. That is what I am told.

Of course, if you are looking at 60 megawatts of solar power you also have to remember that if you are going to produce anything of that nature, you are looking at 300 acres of land. Solar panels concentration in a single locale I do not think is conducive to reliability. To increase system reliability it would be more effective to distribute any large scale solar renewable energy project to the greatest extent possible. So, when it is raining in East End it is not raining in West Bay. Simple!

Due to the intermittency of solar and wind systems all utilities, I believe, are required to have firm power available, as is the case with CUC.

**The Speaker:** Honourable Minister, I take it you are bringing your final thoughts to a quick end.

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts:** Yes Ma'am I am ending it right now.

Madam Speaker, the current ERA led solicitation for 36 megawatts is to replace the retiring CUC generators and to meet the Island's anticipated growth requirement. So do not let anybody believe that this 36 megawatts that is being solicited (or is a solicitation) is going for 14 megawatts of equipment I believe is this year and in 2016 another 18 megawatts. And the remainder is what is expected for increase needed.

Madam Speaker, I will have to end. But let me say this: I will perhaps have another opportunity (and I am sorry that I did not do my timing any better than this) to expand a bit more on this business of firm energy and electricity consumption on the Islands.

Again, I want to thank all of the staff who prepared this budget. I want to thank my own staff for all of their continued hard work in the Ministry to be able to keep me to the point where I believe I have enough knowledge to deal with certain things rather than feel like a Dodo when they are the one who know and I don't, and for that I appreciate all of their hard work.

Madam Speaker, I want to commend the Budget. I believe that it is the best, under the circumstances, that we could have done. And I am certain that the Minister of Finance will have done more than his best. I had to say to him when he was saying a prayer the other day that you don't have to be frugal with your prayers. You can be frugal with everything else but not your prayers.

Madam Speaker, thank you very much for your indulgence.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Third Elected Member for West Bay.

**Mr. Bernie A. Bush, Third Elected Member for West Bay:** Madam Speaker, I stand here today in this most honourable House a bit over a year since the people of West Bay honoured me with this position. I have done a whole lot of listening, reading, questioning, learning and watching. I would like to use a quote from the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama who said: “**Our prime purpose in this life is to help others. And I you can't help them, at least don't hurt them.**”

Madam Speaker, I too would like to join the choir in congratulating the Finance Minister on the hard work that he and his staff put into this. I don't have to speak on the same things that the Leader of the Opposition or my two learned friends from East End and North Side spoke on, but there are some things that should be cleared up.

I am going to start firstly with the incident where it was said that we were trying (and I guess because I was the seconder of the motion) to destabilise the Government, and all of those kinds of things said which are far from the truth.

In the Oversight Committee meeting the Complaints Commissioner simply asked if there was any way of getting this document discussed. The chairman, who is from the district of North Side, sat and carefully explained how it had to be done, how it would be done. The Second Elected Member for George Town moved the motion and, in my humble opinion, after it was clearly explained, I seconded the motion. I have no idea how this could be shown as trying to destabilise the country.

Madam Speaker, I have heard all of these people in their campaigns saying that they knew how things ran in government and this and that. I was very disappointed to know that this has gone on where it has come down to what one said and what the next one said. But it is all in the meetings and I have here to clearly state that, in my humble opinion, it was clearly stated what we had to do and what would happen.

Now, it is typical in government, it seems, that everyone knew that the Complaints Commissioner was working on this but the hand and the head were not communicating. To get there in the Brac and all of a sudden be told that so much work had been done and was being done . . . to me it is very strange to think that the Complaints Commissioner would not have been included in these talks. But, once again, that is typical of how government operates, it seems. But I'm new. And I am watching and learning, but there seems to be lot of this where some sections don't know what the other is doing.

It is just like in this document here that was presented to us, Madam Speaker. When I went to the section where it says “scholarships”, it showed me \$10.5 million. I would like to say a special thank you to the councillor who clarified it and made it \$15 million. I guess I am also still learning how to get to understand—

**The Speaker:** Member, could you please say which document and which page?

**Mr. Bernie A. Bush:** Okay, the 2014/15 Budget.

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts:** Is it the AP&E?

**Mr. Bernie A. Bush:** Yes sir.

I am not going to stand here today and criticise the Government on their budget. What I will do is to ask a few things of them.

But what I will say and show, Madam Speaker, is that over the years—and I just heard the First Elected Member for George Town say so—it seems that time after time there has been a waste of our resources which the chickens have now come home to roost. We spent money to get reports done only for them to disappear on some shelves, collect dust so that some department can say that they had this done—[\$]2.5 million on dock consultants; \$4 million on the dump.

There was a 2012 report on behaviour and discipline in the schools that was headed by a consultant, Dr. Moore. We cannot seem to find any of these. And, according to other people, they were all here before.

The Auditor General also said that the last clear financial reports were done ten years ago; something in that context. For us to know if we are

getting value for our money we should know what we have done.

In the absence of such statistics or proper books, I can only do what I have been doing, and that is going out there and asking the people who are involved—[the people who] are working with the problems the people who are on the ground, the soldiers. And after talking to them I am of the opinion that we are not getting our money's worth.

A perfect example is if we go to the budget 2014/15 Budget, the AP&E, and go to HCA-28, page 78. It says: "**The administration of Community Assistance Programmes**". Why this jumped out at me . . . I am almost sure every elected Member in here can go on the streets or go out to their community or their district and find some people. It says \$5,445,316. Description: "**The administration of Community Assistance Programmes including** (and this is the important one):

- **The provision of in-home, residential and day care services provided for indigent elderly and adult disabled persons."**

It goes on to say, Madam Speaker, that some of the money is used for "**provision of means and needs assessments in respect of applications for public welfare.**"

Madam Speaker, under "**Related Broad Outcomes**" at the bottom, says:

**3. A More Secure Community**

**4. A More Efficient, Accessible and Affordable Public Service**

I am still yet to figure how it relates up there. But when I go to the figures, Madam Speaker, and look back on what it was the year before and what it is now, it seems that the sum requested grows every year. If you take that \$5,445,316 (and keep in mind that this is only for one year) and you divide that by 12 months, you will get \$405,256 a month or \$13,508 per day. Is this value for money and it is growing every year? Obviously, the problem is not being addressed or fixed. And it is not just this Government; it has gone on year after year, after year.

There are multiple budget items for different topics on different lines that I wonder just how good these people are at preparing these documents on where to get different things from, and it is more or less the same thing.

Madam Speaker, I was called out of here and taken just up the road . . . and, Madam Speaker, all of us know people that have . . . there's a lady right up the road that I was taken to her home and she has just been diagnosed about a year ago with Alzheimer's. Her husband is not working and his bus is broken and he needs help. They have been assessed by this department and yet they are saying that they are not eligible. These are the kinds of questions that we are putting money and what are we to do for these types or people.

Madam Speaker, there are many places [that] we could say should be questioned. There are many loopholes to be closed to help us with what the Government needs to do, not what they want to do. One of the things of which I have looked at on this document, Madam Speaker, is the section where it says "Collection of Coercive Revenue". We all saw what happened, because I have to agree with the Government that it seems as though sometimes the press takes things, blows them out of proportion and do not realise that it is hurting the country as a whole.

Look at what happened the other day with the wedding dress fiasco. The question I have been asked on the street is why did they take a foreign . . . this has happened to many locals, by the way. Why is it that they took a foreign national to protest in our local media for us to show how efficient we are in changing or amending our legislation to accommodate a foreign national? But we all know, Madam Speaker, in this honourable House that there are scores of Caymanians who are being unfairly treated because of loopholes that have existed for decades in our labour laws and our immigration laws. And there have been numerous attempts to get legislation amended or enacted. And the most common excuse, Madam Speaker, has always been that we do not have the resources. And this has gone on for decades. Could it be that the political will is not there?

Madam Speaker, what action will have to be taken by the people of this country in order to get the attention of the policymakers to act as efficiently as was done lately regarding the wedding dress saga?

Madam Speaker, when we go to Collection of Coercive Revenue on page 110, one of the first things that jump out on page 110 is tourist accommodation tax. Madam Speaker, I get calls from people overseas saying that they see advertisements for condos, yet when they come here they are coming with a friend or whatever. Maybe it is time for us to legislate some laws and close loopholes to simply say that whoever owns the condo is the only person who do not have to pay the head tax; something as simple as that. Too many friends are using and renting condos down here and they are getting away with [*sic*] paying the head tax and that adds up. And this is a prime destination. We do not have to sit and continue to make people take advantage of us.

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts:** Getting away *without* paying it.

**Mr. Bernie A. Bush:** Getting away without paying it.

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts:** Without paying it.

**Mr. Bernie A. Bush:** Yes sir, thank you.

Madam Speaker, that is just one.

There are so many loopholes that we should close. A perfect example is another one which con-

cerns the beautiful Island of Cayman Brac. Why is it that the stamp duty concession continues for the Sister Islands? Is it not possible that a multi-millionaire who could afford the stamp duty or, in fact, some rich Caymanian is being protected by this type of legislation? Why is there not a criteria put on this, something like only for Caymanians; preferably first-time Caymanian owners?

In particular, there should be no waivers for persons who are speculating. And to clarify that to some people, these would be people who buy property just to hold on to it in the hopes of driving up the price and make a profit from it in the future. We cannot afford these people to do to the Brac what has been done in [Grand Cayman]. The reason, Madam Speaker, that I feel this is the right thing to do is that the price of land in all three of the Islands is becoming harder to own by the little Caymanian. And he who owns the land owns the country.

Another one that I will never forget in the Brac when the look on the faces of some people when this [subject] was brought up. Madam Speaker, we all agree that the civil service needs to become more streamlined and efficient overall. Everyone is saying that. On the other hand, we should not use taxpayers' dollars to subsidise mature private businesses that do not add to the employment of Caymanians. One such example of this is where we are losing money on the operations of the Maritime Authority, and the justification given that it provides revenue for private sector. Madam Speaker, what are these businesses? Should taxpayers continue to subsidise them? I think not!

They claim that over 50 per cent of the private mega yachts we already have, and then on the other hand they say that competition is stiff. But in most businesses I know, Madam Speaker, when you have over 50 per cent of the market share, you really can't say it is competitive. That means you are dominating. If we are in demand, if the demand is so high, why is it that we cannot increase the fees to at least break even of our cost. This is another where you have to ask yourself who it is for.

I want to commend the Education Councillor when he [talked about]—and this has been my campaign for the last two or three months—the mess in the education system. And when I heard the councillor say that they have formed an objective independent schools inspectorate I was so happy, because for too long in the Education Ministry it has been doctored. And this is where a lot of money is being wasted.

Madam Speaker, no one can tell me that you have tons of people working here but every time you need to someone to act you have to fly someone in from the Brac, put them into a hotel and they stay here. If it is done once or twice to give them the experience I can understand. But there are other people on this Island who can also act in the Chief Education Officer's [post]. But it seems it has become a habit

where there is only one person from the Brac that they can fly in and spend all of this money on.

Madam Speaker, I would also like to say that when the paper came out that spoke to the twelve things that the Government hopes to do, I was so happy when they said that there were five priorities. I beg the Government to carefully look at the priorities. In my humble opinion, and in the opinion of many people on the street who pay attention, is that the airport and the dump should be the two priorities—not the dock. And, Madam Speaker, stay-over tourists built us, and we have to make sure that when they come through that airport that it is a positive happening for the people.

It was with much pride when I saw the other day that the local . . . and I saved the article. It says, "Look and see that the Marriott is really astounding that once again we have one of the very best hotels within a chain. The local Marriott Hotel should be congratulated." [UNVERIFIED QUOTE]

That being stated, I must, however, draw a parallel to the old Holiday Inn. And I am sure some of the older Members on the next side of the floor will remember the staff and so forth because in the 80s that old Holiday Inn was ranked the best in their chain four years in a row. Quite a feat! However, the glaring difference which shows how for all our tourism successes that we can talk about, we have actually gone backwards in 30 years in some key areas.

When I looked at the image in the newspaper, the Marriott staff were holding gold medals grinning from ear to ear. I would have been too. But the most glaring and extremely disappointing aspect is the absence of one Caymanian. But yet, when the Holiday Inn back in the 80s won it four years in a row, over 95 per cent there were Caymanians.

Then you have to ask if these people at the Marriott have taken any Caymanians that we can say two, five, ten years from now when they win again they can say they have trained someone. And we have a young lady walking around with a Master's degree . . . more than just her actually. There are three or four of them in hospitality and cannot even land an interview sometimes. Willing to work and wants to work, got loans to pay but can't get a job. Where have we gone? I do hope that what is being said about training and so forth is followed through.

I would also like to commend the First Elected Member for George Town on the revitalisation of George Town. This is something that when I was in charge of Pirates Week, Madam Speaker, a young lady from the Brac by the name of Carol Britton, the former Director of Tourism, Shomari, and Charles Gregory of Hopscotch and I started something and tried to have it at the end of every month, a Caymanian night. In fact, the Cabinet's secretary, Mr. Rose, his group performed the very first night for us in George Town. Everything was Caymanian—Caymanian food, Caymanian artifacts, everything was Caymanian. And

it is something we tried for four, five or six months and then the rainy season came and then Pirates Week. So, it is something to say to the First Elected Member for George Town—it's about time. And I am very happy for the steps that have been taken. And if your people need to talk, those people and myself are all available. We would be more than happy.

Also when it comes to dividing the land up in East End, we know it will take time, Madam Speaker. In fact, a former educator and I approached the Chief Officer, Mr. Eric Bush. We went to Hart [PHONETIC] and got a curriculum. We spoke with the Boy Scouts, the Girls' Brigade and we will be presenting to the Minister a project that we hope they will work with us on for young people. So, this was all very good to hear.

Madam Speaker, the country has heard what the Leader of the Opposition and what the other Members for North Side and East End had to say. Once again, there was no need for me to repeat that.

I want to commend the Member for East End because when he stood there and pleaded for equality for Caymanians, everywhere I went after that, people were saying to tell him we felt it. And it is true, Madam Speaker, if someone who is on the Floor of this honourable House has someone as close to him as that and this is what has been said and done . . . and when you hear rumours on the street that the right side of the helicopter where the First Officer could be in there and learn, that the stick was taken out . . . I am hoping this is not true because, having been in aviation myself and having a son who flies, I know a little. But I would really hope, Madam Speaker, that after the cowcod fiasco, the insult to this country, that they would not go as far as to really take out the right side of that so that the young man could not even as far as I am concerned, sit there and learn at the hands at one of these people.

Madam Speaker, I heard the Deputy Governor talk about thousands of hours needed in combat. Something like that was said about combat. I know we have a west-ganistan as they refer to it, but none of that is necessary here. Madam Speaker, no one can tell me that the same how we could take and come to this House and give someone who is not Caymanian status to make sure that that individual was eligible to be a police officer, that we could not have somehow sat and said to the powers that be, *We want this young man in there, or, Let us get something done quick.*

Madam Speaker, a lot of people are talking about this. And no matter how they dress it up, lots of explanations are still needed. But [Members], Madam Speaker, the listening public, the [Member] for East End should be commended for standing up and being counted. For too long too many Members in this House, on both sides, have had to sacrifice and bite their tongues because of someone who is related. If it is a Caymanian it is our duty to fight, plain and simple.

Madam Speaker, for too long the politicians or the representatives have taken the blame for a lot of what should have been done. A perfect example is the Minister of Health and Sports. I sat and heard this Minister tell one of his senior officers that this needs to be done; something that was done from when the Premier was Minister of Sports. It went through the last Government and is back here again. I sat and also heard the last Minister of Sports tell that same person to get this done and now there is a very good chance that this country could be embarrassed in the Sports arena because of one person's. . . . I can't figure why. It is a simple thing to be done. But yet it was done for one of the smaller associations that come under the big association overlooking everything. Yet we are cursing the Ministers.

This is one time I will defend the Minister. I sat there in the room and heard him tell one of the senior officers in his Ministry to get it done. And six, seven years later it still has not been done.

#### **Moment of interruption—4:30 pm**

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

I recognise the Minister of Planning to move the suspension of Standing Order 10(2).

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

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts:** Thank you.

Madam Speaker, I beg to move Standing Order 10(2) [be suspended] in order that the business of the House may continue beyond the hour of 4:30.

**The Speaker:** The question is that Standing Order 10(2) be suspended to enable the business of the House to continue beyond the hour of 4:30 pm.

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

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

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

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

### **BILL**

### **SECOND READING**

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

*[Continuation of Debate on the Budget Address and the Throne Speech together with the Government's Policy Statement]*

**The Speaker:** Please continue, honourable Member.

**Mr. Bernie A. Bush:** Madam Speaker, when we look at all of these happenings and the people out there are questioning asking questions, you can only try to give them the answers.

What was so good to hear was when I heard the Deputy Governor say that if any of the Ministers come to him about any of the officers that they would be dealt with and straightened out right away. I do hope that the Ministers . . . because last year at this same sitting, I was able to give information on documents to a Minister that was changed before they got to the Minister. They admitted to me afterward that they found out. Once again nothing was done.

I should have done it the way the Member for North Side did it and that was, *Is this your final answer?* But, Madam Speaker, I tend to want to get things done in a nice way, and maybe I have always had a thing that it is better to draw bees with honey and not vinegar.

So, I want to compliment the Minister of Finance for a document which had a lot of work put into it. And I will say that I do hope that small businesses will be paid attention to. Madam Speaker, just yesterday afternoon I learnt that a landmark in West Bay, which we all grew up on, Borden's Pizza . . . in fact, people from all over the Island, some weekends, would drive to West Bay to get Borden's Pizza. I learnt that the granddaughter of Ms. June Borden is opening it back up this weekend down in Trafalgar Place. Madam Speaker, it is a good feeling to see a young entrepreneur try something.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Bernie A. Bush:** Yes.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Bernie A. Bush:** Hopefully, they will have the Borden special.

Madam Speaker, this was good to hear, and if they have their grandmother's recipes down pat, it is good!

Madam Speaker, I will say to the Government that if it is good for our people, do it. If it is good for our country, do it. If it is going to help five people but is going to hurt 100 people, do not do it.

Madam Speaker, good luck.

It has not been said, but this budget surplus . . . no one has said [that] at least 60 million of it was from the previous Government, of which I was not here. That is why I am not here blaming anyone because I see a lot of people coming here and getting themselves into discussions here back and forth. I am not here to pay for the sins of others; I am here to try to make life better for my Caymanian people.

I want to wish the Government good luck. This budget they have had more time to deal with. This

time next year we will really see the proof of the pudding. And for the sake of this country, Madam Speaker, I hope all of the predictions will come through.

What I would also like to say, Madam Speaker, is that I have heard about some people stopping and passing on congratulations about the 2.5. I have had a lot of complaints from people saying . . . and to put it into words of one civil servant who said: "this was a slight of hand, because when we agreed on the 3.2 cut that is what we were supposed to get back, not a 2.5 payoff time, one time." The average person making [\$]2,000 to [\$]2,500 in government . . . because we all know the civil service in pay is top heavy. The foot soldiers make little.

I thought it would have been better to say anybody above \$5,000 or \$6,000 can wait until next year. Everybody below that will get their 3.2. Maybe that is just my wishful thinking. But at least, like I keep trying to say, something was done. A little piece of something is better than nothing. But people feel a way and, of course, they would not go and complain because it might be like in the Ministry of Education where vindictiveness, Madam Speaker, is well known.

To the Government, good luck. To the First Elected Member for George Town, thanks for your advice. And once again, Madam Speaker, thank you, and I wish the Government good luck with the budget that it will come out to be good for this country.

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

I recognise the Honourable Minister responsible for Finance.

**Hon. Marco S. Archer, Minister of Finance and Economic Development:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I would humbly request that I be able to borrow the lectern if the Serjeant . . .

*[Pause]*

**Hon. Marco S. Archer:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, before I get into my substantive speech I would like to take a few moments to respond in kind to some of the matters raised by the Third Elected Member for West Bay a few minutes ago.

And just for the sake of clarity, for the benefit of the country, with respect to the wedding dress issue, the Member for West Bay was correct in his statement in that it has been blown out of proportion. I think the Government acted as swiftly as they could, but I would like to explain as to why it is an issue with which the Government sought to act swiftly.

It is because the country has developed an international reputation as being a destination for weddings. And several businesses have been doing quite well in planning and organising these weddings. So, in

order to protect the country's reputation, as well as ensure that in this struggling economy those small businesses did not suffer the consequences of what was a situation blown out of proportion, we thought that it was best to amend . . . let me not say amend . . . to revisit the policy—and it is a Customs policy not a Customs law. It is not a matter of law; it is a policy that has been in place for quite some time.

So, just for the benefit of the country so that they can comprehend it is not a law that the Government acted swiftly to amend; it is a policy which has developed over time within the Customs Department that we sought to change.

So, Madam Speaker, I just wanted to raise that point so that the country could understand and recognise that we acted swiftly to avoid any further fallout on the international stage, and to try to prevent any further spreading (so to speak) of this virus that it has become, because some were using it for their own . . . it had become a political football.

Madam Speaker, concerning the budget surplus of \$108 million in the fiscal year 2013/14 as compared to the \$60 million in fiscal year 2012/13, the two cannot be compared. And one cannot take credit for the next for the simple reason when the fiscal year ended in June 2013 a new fiscal year started on July 1 2013. A new administration would have taken office. New policies would have been put in place, new criteria and new restrictions. A whole new way of doing business would have been put in place; therefore, it is not correct to say that the \$108 million surplus of 2013/14 is as a result of the \$60 million surplus in fiscal year 2012/13.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Marco S. Archer:** Precisely.

Madam Speaker, for the sake of clarity, an operational surplus does not carry forward to the next fiscal year, so there is no mixing of the two. As I've stated before, it is correct. At the start of the fiscal year there is no surplus. And as I have stated before, the surplus of each year is earmarked for different purposes hence the \$60 million surplus of 2012/13 would have been all used up by what it would have been earmarked for.

I will just draw a reference, an example: the \$108 million surplus in fiscal year 2013/14, [\$]44 million from that—approximately [\$]47 million of that goes towards statutory authorities and government-owned companies. Another [\$]28 million goes towards servicing the national debt. So, if you add 28 and 44 that far exceeds the \$60 million that is referred to. So, it is fair to say that in fiscal year 2012/13 the surplus would have been used up on just those two things alone. So there would have been nothing left to contribute towards the surplus in fiscal year 2013/14.

Concerning the 3.2 [per cent] pay cut taken from the civil service between 2010 and 2011 or 2012

(the years escape me, Madam Speaker, but nevertheless, the fact that it did occur it is not all of that important that I get the years correct) . . . Madam Speaker, it was taken from the civil service, given back to the civil service and then again taken back. I think many civil servants understand what occurred and many understand now why it cannot be given back. In everything you will always have those who decide that they are not going to understand because they have made up their minds and they are going to see it from their perspective. But at the end of the day the Government has done the best that it can do under the financial circumstances.

As I have said before, the mere fact that a surplus of \$108 million has been achieved does not mean that gold was struck. There's still a lot to be done. There are still obligations to meet. Therefore, we thought that we would do the best we could, which was to give a onetime gratuity payment of \$2.5 million which would equate to 2.5 per cent which equated to approximately \$3.7 million to \$3.8 million. It is a one-time payment and it will be paid in the June salary at the end of this month and it will not impact the 2014/15 fiscal year. It is a onetime payment. It enables the civil servants to keep pace with inflation for the 2013/14 fiscal year of some two point something per cent. So, their purchasing power has not been eroded from that perspective.

Now, we do believe that it is fair and reasonable to return the 3.2 per cent to the civil service when the country can afford it. But for now we have done the best that we can in the circumstances given, and have given them a 2.5 per cent onetime gratuity payment equating to approximately \$3.7 million to \$3.8 million. It will not impact the 2014/15 fiscal year.

Madam Speaker, that was done to recognise the fact that the civil servants have worked hard and also, as I have said before, to ensure that they were able to keep pace with inflation so as not to erode their purchasing power and for the standard of living to be eroded or declined in any way.

Madam Speaker, I will now turn to the speech that I have prepared, given that I had not anticipated the Third Elected Member for West Bay to speak, so therefore I did not prepare a response to his contribution. But, Madam Speaker, with respect to the conclusion of the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill before the House, I would like to thank all honourable Members for their support of the Bill and for the debate on the Throne Speech, the Honourable Premier's Policy Statement and my Budget Address.

Honourable Members who have made a contribution to the Second Reading of the Bill, either stated their explicit support for the Bill, or there was an absence of any stated opposition to the Bill. However, certain honourable Members have expressed matters in their contributions that I wish to address.

There are a few areas of the contribution by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition that I would

like to address, Madam Speaker. It was said that the Morritt's development had not yet received the promised import duty concessions that were authorised by the previous Government. Madam Speaker, I can report to the House that a letter has been issued to the effect that an import duty concession is approved on the importation of building materials with respect to the Londoner Building at the Morritt's Resort.

Madam Speaker, the comment was also made that Government did not have all of the budget documents available on the 26 of May, the day the Appropriation Bill was presented to the House. Madam Speaker, as is well known to everyone in this Parliament, there are four budget documents which are tabled each year in this House to accompany the Appropriation Bill. The most referenced of these is the Annual Plan and Estimates.

For the 2014/15 fiscal year this document is 378 pages long and all honourable Members of the House received a copy of the Annual Plan and Estimates (AP&E) on the budget day, May 26<sup>th</sup>. In the past, honourable Members of the House have stated that printing the other three budget documents resulted in the unnecessary cost and wasteful spending for the Government. The Ministry of Finance simply responded to that past suggestion from Members of the House that printing a complete set of four budget documents resulted in unnecessary cost for the Government.

For the 2014/15 fiscal year, details of its other three budget documents are as follows, Madam Speaker: The Annual Budget Statements are contained in a single document that is 983 pages long. The Ownership Agreement placed in a budget document is 718 pages long. The Purchase Agreements are detailed and are over 588 pages long. Therefore, for 2014/15 a single set of these three other budget documents totaled 2,289 pages.

Madam Speaker, on the day of the budget a complete set of the four budget documents was provided to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and to the Member for East End. On the morning after the budget sufficient copies of the other three budget documents were delivered to the Legislative Assembly. This enabled all Members of the House to have a full set of the four budget documents that totaled 2,667 pages.

Madam Speaker, I believe that I can honestly say that no Member of the House was handicapped by having the main reference budget document on budget day and the other three documents the following day, given the fact that everyone refers primarily to the Annual Plan and Estimates before looking at the other documents.

Madam Speaker, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May the Honourable Leader of the Opposition stated that this Government had submitted a borrowing plan to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office [FCO] and that the FCO had rejected the Government's request to bor-

row. Madam Speaker, I can categorically say to you that I am not aware of any long term borrowing plan being sent to the FCO by the Government; not this year nor last year.

Madam Speaker, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition also enquired about a change in funding arrangements for the Cayman Islands Monetary Authority in the 2014/15 Budget, when compared to previous years. For the 2014/15 fiscal year, Government has budgeted \$6,865,000 with respect to outputs that the Monetary Authority will provide to the Government. In 2013/14 the amount so budgeted is \$9,865,000, therefore Government plans to pay directly to the Monetary Authority an amount that is \$3 million less in the 2014/15 Budget than in the previous year. Nonetheless, there will not be any decrease in the amount of work performed by the Monetary Authority.

In April 2014 the Legislative Assembly passed the Directors Registration and Licensing Law. This law and its accompanying regulations will provide the Authority with the revenue stream that will be paid directly to the Authority. This revenue source will be used to help fund the Authority's activities. The previously mentioned law and its accompanying regulations are expected to provide an \$11 million revenue source for the Authority during the 2014/15 fiscal year. It is for this reason, Madam Speaker, that Government's direct funding of the Monetary Authority's activities is shown at a lesser amount in the 2014/15 fiscal year as opposed to that of the 2013/14 fiscal year.

It is worth repeating that the Authority's role will not diminish in 2014/15. It is simply receiving a significant direct source of revenue to pay for its activities. That is directly from the private sector, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, Members will obviously think that Government could have reduced its funding of the Authority's activities by more than the \$3 million which I stated earlier. There is another way of reflecting on this matter. After the end of the 2014/15 fiscal year Government expects that the Authority will pay over a contribution to Government's general revenue that will be bolstered by this new revenue source for the Authority.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition also enquired about the funding arrangements for the National Roads Authority (or the NRA) in the 2014/15 Budget. In 2013/14 the Government budgeted approximately \$9.1 million in respect of work to be performed by the NRA. In 2014/15 the Government has budgeted \$5 million with respect to miscellaneous road surface upgrades, work which will be done by the NRA. However, in addition to the 2014/15 budgeted \$5 million I just mentioned, the Government will cause \$10 million of the import duty on gasoline to be paid over to the NRA instead of that \$10 million being received directly by the Government. Therefore, for the 2014/15 fiscal year the NRA will have available to the

Authority \$15 million of work to be done in the year, much of which will entail road works connected to the George Town revitalisation project announced by the Government.

Madam Speaker, diverting \$10 million of import duty on gasoline to provide enhanced funding for the NRA and the reduction in duty with respect to diesel imported by CUC [Caribbean Utilities Company] will have an impact on Government's revenue for 2014/15. The Government has reflected this impact in its financial statements. On page 336 of the AP&E document it shows duty on gasoline and diesel imports declining from a forecast of \$35.4 million for the current year ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014, to a figure of \$22.2 million for the upcoming 2014-15 fiscal year. This decline in gasoline and diesel revenue for Government of \$13.2 million is consistent with the enhanced funding for the NRA in 2014/15 and the reduction in diesel duty with respect to diesel imported by CUC.

Madam Speaker, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition also made the observation that the Cayman Islands economy is estimated to grow at a rate that was substantially less than the forecasted global growth rate and less than the growth in advanced economies. This is indeed correct, Madam Speaker, and the Government is being prudent and responsible in estimating its growth rate in 2014/15 to be less than that forecast for the global economy or even for that expected in advanced economies.

Madam Speaker, on page 7 of my Budget Address it is noted that the global economic output is expected to strengthen to 3.6 per cent in 2014 whilst advanced economies are projected to grow by 2.2 per cent in 2014. The forecast growth for the Cayman Islands economy in 2014/15 is therefore 2 per cent. Without the start of the major capital projects there is very little chance that the rate of growth in the local economy will exceed that of the global economy, hence the reason why the Cayman economy is projected to grow at a slower rate than the global economy.

Madam Speaker, the honourable Member for the district of North Side also made a very comprehensive and noteworthy response to the Budget Address. He implored the Government and the Cayman Islands National Insurance Company to be very careful before entering into agreements. Madam Speaker, I regard this as good advice. The honourable Member also stated that he preferred linking the debt of government to the Cayman Islands Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Again, this is something that we have been doing and will continue to do because it enables the average person to get a better understanding as to the proportion of debt in relation to the overall economic activity or the size of the economy.

In my Budget Address I stated for the 2014/15 fiscal year that Government expects its debt to GDP ratio to be 18.5 per cent. I would like to take a short

moment to explain this important ratio, Madam Speaker, so that the general public can more fully understand what it means and how it compares to other countries.

Madam Speaker, GDP or Gross Domestic Product can be defined using very simple terms as the value of goods and services that a country produces in a one year period. When a national debt of a country is compared to its gross domestic product the resulting ratio is universally known as the debt to GDP ratio, which is expressed as a percentage. Madam Speaker, it is fair to say that the lower the debt for GDP ratio is, the lower the strain that exists on a national government and therefore indicates a healthy economy capable of producing sufficient goods and services to meet its public debt obligations without the need for additional borrowing.

Madam Speaker, to put the Cayman Islands' expected 2014/15 debt to GDP ratio in perspective (and I will mention that our debt to GDP ratio stands at 18.5 per cent), I would like to provide the House with the following information with respect to debt to GDP ratios at the end of 2013.

For the advanced economies, Madam Speaker, Japan has a debt to GDP ratio of 243.2 per cent; the USA has a ratio of 104.5 per cent; the United Kingdom has a ratio of 90.1 per cent; China has a ratio of 22.4 per cent; and looking more closer to home, Madam Speaker, for the less advanced economies, or less developed economies, the Bahamas has a debt to GDP ratio of 66.2 per cent; Barbados has a debt to GDP ratio of 126.4 per cent; Trinidad and Tobago has a debt to GDP ratio of 46.6 per cent; and Jamaica has a debt to GDP ratio of 146.2 per cent.

So, for the sake of comparison at 18.5 per cent we can see that the Cayman Islands, despite all that is said, is in very good shape and we are doing even more to improve it.

Madam Speaker, the government's debt to GDP ratio of 18.5 per cent forecast to the 30 June 2015, compares quite favourably with the ratios of the advanced countries and other Caribbean Islands that I've just mentioned. And it is the Government's aim to reduce the ratio even further. However, for the purpose of complying with the dictates of the Framework for Fiscal Responsibility [FFR], the Government shall have to continue expressing public debt as a percentage of government's revenues.

Now, Madam Speaker, I have not commented on the valuable contribution made by each honourable Member who spoke to the Bill. But that does not mean that their debate and points raised herein have been forgotten. The public would have heard those contributions and Honourable Ministers would have addressed the matters as they made their own individual contributions.

But looking at the subject of revenue, Madam Speaker, the Government has made it clear that it will reduce the duty rate charged on diesel being imported

by CUC for electricity generation from 75 cents per imperial gallon to 50 cents per imperial gallon. And this change will take effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015. This decision by the Government was made with the noble objective in mind of reducing electricity cost for households and businesses alike, and it should also have the further effect of not just reducing the price of electricity, but prices in general.

However, these objectives were impacted by the recent announcement that a rate increase for CUC has been approved by the Electricity Regulatory Authority [ERA]. It is expected that this rate increase by CUC will impact the commercial customers adversely and small businesses in particular—the very sector that the Government was trying to help because of the important role that they play. This is evidenced by the fact that during the 2013 small businesses provided the larger share of employment by employing 14,660 persons or 40.6 per cent of the workforce.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, I am pleased to say that because of what the Government did, we have mitigated the effects on the small business sector. And I would like to emphasise that the Government decided that all small businesses, those being businesses employing 10 or fewer employees, will be entitled to the discounts that range from 25 per cent to 75 per cent depending on the physical location of the small business (that is, the discount as it pertains to the trade and business licence and the ability to pay those licence fees with quarterly installments as opposed to the one time annual payment).

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I wish to thank all honourable Members for their explicit and tacit support of the Appropriation Bill now before the House and respectfully ask that they so vote for the Second Reading of the Bill. Assuming that the House approves the Second Reading of the Bill when the vote is taken, Madam Speaker, I intend to start Finance Committee proceedings tomorrow, Thursday, 5 June at 10:00 am. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

The House will now take a five minute suspension. I will ask Members to please remain in their seats.

**Proceedings suspended at 5:08 pm**

**Proceedings resumed at 5:13 pm**

**The Speaker:** Proceedings are resumed.

Thank you for your indulgence of the break for consultation.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Premier.

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

Madam Speaker, we are in the home stretch now with respect to the debate on the Budget Address, the Throne Speech and the Policy Statement, which I delivered on behalf of the Government.

The Minister of Finance has just wound up the debate with respect to the Budget Address, and responded, I believe, quite ably, to matters with respect to the budget which have been raised by the Members of the House—in particular, Members on the other side of the House. So, it is my duty, Madam Speaker, as Premier, and as the one who delivered the Government's Policy Statement, to now wind up the debate with respect to the Throne Speech and the Policy Statement.

Madam Speaker, I have listened with much interest and even some amusement at times over the course of the past few days, to my colleagues on both sides of this House as they have responded to the Throne Speech, the Budget Address and the Policy Statement. It is always good when we can put aside our political differences and come to this House and do the will of the people and ensure the continued stability and progress of these beloved Cayman Islands.

Madam Speaker, in the course of these proceedings, Members also had the benefit of the report of the Progressives-led Administration for its first year, entitled "On Course", and some Members did refer to it in the course of their debate.

Madam Speaker, as the 35<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America, John F. Kennedy, once said: **"We don't see the end of the tunnel, but I must say I don't think it is darker than it was a year ago, and in some ways (I believe it is) lighter."** We have made much headway in the past year and we are forging ahead with major projects, some of which are already underway or will begin soon.

I must say I wholeheartedly agree with what the Leader of the Opposition said when he rose to make his contribution, and if I have recorded him correctly, he said: "We don't need fussing and fighting and the building or roadblocks for the country. We need solutions, progress and understanding." I could not agree with him more.

And I believe, Madam Speaker, that this Government, the Progressives-led Government, has brought and continues to bring this type of approach to our management of the country and, indeed, to the way we operate within the confines of this Chamber. Only by working together and having frank, honest and good debate can we maintain the reputation of the Cayman Islands and continue to attract investment, because, Madam Speaker, of the confidence that has now been restored to Government and to these Islands.

Madam Speaker, we are blessed to be in a democracy and a country where free speech is lauded. There is no shortage of that these days, Madam Speaker. But I mention it because today marks two

major milestones in the history of the world. Twenty-five years ago today Poland held elections that heralded the collapse of communism in that country, creating a democratic society. Also twenty-five years ago today the people's army put down China's incipient protest movement with shocking brutality. Today in Poland on this anniversary they celebrated where they have come with pomp and circumstance. But today in China, memorials and celebrations were forbidden.

Many of us remember those two history-making events. But I often wonder if we really remember the fights of others for democracy when we have an opportunity to go to the polls in Cayman and when we have the opportunity, as we do, to speak freely and openly about whatever concerns us in this country.

Madam Speaker, as I said at the beginning, I listened to some of the contributions of the other Members with amusement, including the Leader of the Opposition alluding to the fact that many of the projects we are pushing through were ideas borne of his Government. Madam Speaker, I am man enough to give him his due. But the difference is that the Progressives-led Administration is actually getting things done. We are not looking for backdoor deals to push through work at our seaport and at the airports. All of our projects; the two just mentioned to the landfill, will be done under the guidance of the Framework for Fiscal Responsibility [FFR].

It's because of the FFR that we, as the Member for North Side suggested, can't "just get on with it" with the important projects like waste management. We made a promise to the people of this country to uphold the Public Management and Finance Law [PMFL] and the FFR so there could be no doubt that everything is being done above board in finding private sector partners to get the airports revamped, the cruise berthing piers built and our waste management issues resolved once and for all. It can only help us maintain the confidence we have been able to rebuild if we follow the law.

Again, I have to agree with the Member for North Side when he said that the FFR is no more than commonsense. It is unfortunate, Madam Speaker, that the last administration did not appear to use any commonsense in their management of these proposed projects.

Madam Speaker, where I do take issue on this point with the Member for North Side is when he complained in his contribution that he left behind a ten year waste management implementation policy in 1992—Madam Speaker, that was the year my first son was born. He is 22 now—when, the Member said (and again I quote him), he was "kicked out of Government." Madam Speaker, like me, you are old enough to remember that 1992 was the year that the membership in the Legislative Assembly was increased from 12 to 15. Time marches on. And now we have provision for 18 elected Members of the LA un-

der the present Constitution. And we also have burgeoning landfills that can't be fixed with a waste management policy developed more than 22 years ago when there were only about 27,000 people living in the Cayman Islands.

We've more than doubled the population since then. Also, Madam Speaker, technology and best practices have changed, and I can't really believe that the Member for North Side is seriously suggesting that we use his ancient study to fix our growing landfill problems. As I said, Madam Speaker, time marches on and we need to find feasible modern ways to address waste management on all three Islands—not tired, rhetoric about past efforts made in political office that were unsuccessful.

Madam Speaker, for those like the Honourable Leader of the Opposition who said the dump plan cost too much and does not make sense, we beg to differ. At least we are seeking to address the problem. The approach adopted by his administration cost the country millions of dollars and delivered nothing.

Madam Speaker, we will be successful in coming up with a viable solution for waste management in these Islands, but we will do it in an open, honest and transparent way with a goal of having an integrated solid waste management system in place in 2016. This is an old chestnut but the Progressives-led Administration has the political will to find a solution. In fact, Madam Speaker, if I am not mistaken the RFP went out this week for the consultants who will prepare a national waste management strategy, an outline business case. Those tenders are due on the 16<sup>th</sup> July this year, so I believe we are making good headway.

Speaking of modern solutions, that is what we will do with the cruise berthing piers in the Harbour in George Town. The Member for North Side would have the country believe that if we pretty-up the cruise terminal with some trees and concrete buckets, our cruise visitors will be happy and continue to come with no complaints. It is that sort of simplistic approach, Madam Speaker, that has delivered us where we are now at crisis.

I won't spend time in my reply here repeating what the Deputy Premier and Minister of Tourism said in his speech on Monday night. But I will happily remind everyone that efforts have already been made to make the visitor experience more enjoyable. But that is not enough. We have to address the issue substantively. We have to address concerns about capacity and about the overall ability of not just the cruise berthing when it is built, but of George Town itself, and the Island as a whole to cope with the increased projected numbers of visitors.

We have heard year after year after year from successive Governments that we need cruise berthing to remain competitive. This, Madam Speaker, is another project that we have the political will to get done, and we are going to get it done, as the Minister of

Tourism said: "With determination, integrity and resolve." And that, Madam Speaker, has been and will continue to be the way that we address all issues facing this Government. Indeed, Madam Speaker, I will hope that every Member in this House would approach their role with those three traits—determination, integrity and resolve.

And so, Madam Speaker, I was most disheartened to hear a Member on the other side, in my view, abuse his privilege of position and place on Friday afternoon. The Member for East End chose this forum to air his family's laundry, blaming the civil service for the inability of his nephew to get a job piloting the police helicopter. In addressing this matter in this manner in this House, Madam Speaker, in my view the Member did a disservice to his nephew, to the civil service and to this House.

I should tell you, Madam Speaker, that in the almost 14 years I have been here, I have never heard any Member of this House so openly and blatantly use their position as an elected Member to seek to further the interests of their family. In my view, it is an abuse of the office and one that ought not to be condoned by this House. And, Madam Speaker, if the Standards in Public Life legislation were in effect, I do believe the Member would fall foul of those provisions.

Madam Speaker, the Member said on the Floor of this House that because he is a Caymanian his nephew is entitled to a job. And he is right, if the nephew has the right qualifications for the job he is seeking, which in this case, Madam Speaker, unfortunately, he does not. The published job description requires pilots for the police helicopter to have a minimum of 1,000 hours of multi-engine turbine flying. This young man has less than 200. For the Member to say that Government did not offer assistance is simply, Madam Speaker, an untruth. And in a moment I shall read a memorandum sent to me and the Deputy Governor by the Chief Officer which outlines the measures which Government has taken and the steps that have been tried to assist this young man.

Madam Speaker, with your permission I wish to read into the record a memorandum addressed to myself as Premier, and copied to the Deputy Governor from the Chief Officer and the Ministry of Home Affairs dated June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**The Speaker:** Please proceed.

**The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin:** "Subject – Darren McLean.

"I'm aware that MLA Arden McLean has publicly voiced his discontent and condemnation of Darren McLean who is MLA McLean's nephew not being hired as a helicopter pilot in the Air Support Unit of the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service.

"To date Mr. McLean has met with several individuals from the Ministry of Home Affairs (that's Mr. Darren McLean) and the RCIPS to discuss the

requirements of the position and where his current experience and training levels are at, as well as the possibilities and opportunities that may be available which could assist him in accomplishing his ultimate goal of becoming a helicopter pilot with the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service.

"In accordance with the job description for the helicopter pilot, the following are mandatory requirements for the post holder to have:

- Possession of a current commercial pilot licence;
- minimum of 200 hours night flying experience;
- minimum of 1,000 hours of multi-engine turbine flying;
- experience in flying over water during day and night missions; and
- 50 hours on type EC135 (which is the particular model of helicopter which the RCIPS is currently utilising).

"According to Mr. D. McLean's resume as of September 2013, he has the following qualifications:

- Commercial rotorcraft helicopter licence, instrument rated.
- 162.2 total helicopter hours.
- 156.7 hours on the S300-CBI/R22 Craft; and
- 5.5 hours on the Bell 20683 Craft.

"To the best of my knowledge, below is a timeline of meetings which have taken place to date that were set by the Ministry or RCIPS officials to assist Mr. D. McLean."

"February 2012" (note, Madam Speaker, this was before we took office) "Mr. D. McLean was contacted by Air Operations Unit Executive Officer, Mr. Steve Fitzgerald, to visit the Air Operations Unit. Mr. McLean met with Dave Knight, Chief Pilot, who shared valuable information about the Unit and occupation of being a pilot in the RCIPS and gave a visit of the Unit.

"December 12, 2012, Mr. D. McLean met with the Commissioner of Police. Matters discussed included an overview of Mr. McLean's pilot training and associated experience; suggested that experience" (that is accumulation of flying hours) "be logged vis-à-vis military logging and power lines. Offered access to and mentoring from our helicopter pilots and employment within the RCIPS Air Support Unit was not offered to Mr. McLean at any time during the meeting.

"September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013, Mr. D. McLean was contacted by Air Operations Unit Executive Officer, Mr. Steve Fitzgerald via email as a follow-up to confirm the status of his progress."

Madam Speaker, I should interject here that on the 9<sup>th</sup> August I met with Mr. Darren McLean's father, Dervin (Buster) McLean to discuss these matters and I actually raised the issue again with my chief of-

ficer, which probably is responsible for the September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013, contact.

“October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013, a meeting at the Air Operations Unit with Mr. Fitzgerald to discuss Mr. McLean’s progress and possible options moving forward.

“October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013, meeting with Mr. D. McLean and me” (this is the chief officer) “with his father. This meeting was agreed again to show support of Mr. McLean’s desires as well as to further explain the reason for the qualifications and experience required to be a pilot with the RCIPS Air Support Unit.

“October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013, at my request” (that is the chief officer’s request) “helicopter company contacts were provided to me by Mr. Fitzgerald to further share with Mr. Darren McLean as possibilities to seek employment to get the required flight hours.

“November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013, I” (being the Chief Officer) “hosted a further meeting with Mr. Darren McLean in which I invited my Chief Human Resources Manager, Mrs. Briana Ebanks. In addition to this, I provided letters of support for Mr. McLean which were addressed to the companies earlier identified by Mr. Steve Fitzgerald.

“November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013, meeting with Chief Human Resources Manager, Ministry of Home Affairs. During this meeting Mr. Darren McLean’s resume was reviewed and updated and a letter of reference was provided from me.” (i.e. the Chief Officer)

“November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013, the Deputy Governor was contacted by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development seeking any assistance the Cayman Islands Government could offer Mr. Darren McLean to get additional training.

“November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2013, the Deputy Governor contacted Mr. Gary Benham of the Governor’s Office to assist with the Minister’s request.” (that is the Minister of Finance)

“November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013, Mr. Benham contacted the British High Commission seeking information and investigating opportunities for Mr. Darren McLean to apply to join the British Military as a trained pilot.

“December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013, responses from the air staff and IPP in MOD.”. I’m not sure what MOD means.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**An Hon. Member:** Ministry of Defence.

**The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin:** Ministry of Defence.

—“An assistant to the Defence Advisor Caribbean British High Commission were given to Mr. Benham quoting from that response in summary:

“There are lots of complications to overcome which will be expensive and then won’t guarantee him a place at the Military Flying School even if he were to achieve the standard required. There is also the problem of the UK residency requirement to join the UK

Armed Forces, which I doubt will be flexed in order for him to join. I would suggest that the Cayman Islands Government pursue this case through commercial training rather than through the military.’

“December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013, Mr. Benham emailed the Deputy Governor and provided him with the email chain of responses received. There were suggestions for commercial training to be offered rather than military given the limited experience Mr. Darren McLean has.

“It was also suggested that Mr. McLean apply for an internship employment to build his experience.

“Mr. Fitzgerald has offered Mr. Darren McLean the opportunity to visit the Unit and fly with the crew on operational missions as an observer, both day and night. To date he has not taken up that opportunity.

“There has been no further contact from Mr. Darren McLean between Mr. Fitzgerald and any of the pilots to date. I feel that my Ministry” (this is the chief officer speaking) “and the RCIPS has done all we can and more to assist Mr. Darren McLean.

“I understand that he has been given a scholarship by the Cayman Islands Government and has successfully completed his commercial pilots licence. However, I cannot justify hiring him with his current qualifications. As stated above the published job description requires a pilot to have a minimum of 1,000 hours of multi-engine turbine flying. Mr. Darren McLean currently has around 200. Until Mr. Darren McLean obtains the prerequisite hours of flight time we will not be able to consider his request for employment as a pilot in the ASU of the RCIPS.

“Should you have any further questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.” [UNVERIFIED QUOTE]

Now, Madam Speaker, the last thing that I wanted to have to do was to—

**The Speaker:** Honourable Premier, before you go on, do you have a copy available for the Chair please?

**The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin:** Madam Speaker, I can have a copy made. I think this is the only copy I have here but I am quite happy for you to have sight of this and we can copy it in due course.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

*[Pause]*

**The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin:** Madam Speaker, the last thing I wish to have to do was to deal with this matter on the Floor of the House.

The young man is a great asset to his family and to this country. He has a tremendous amount of ambition. He is a very good boy. He is the same age as my eldest son. They were born the same year. But

it is his uncle, and to an extent his father, who has made this a public issue. And his father has raised it on the Floor of this House and has made it . . .the allegation—

**The Speaker:** His uncle. His uncle has raised it, not his father.

**The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin:** His father has raised it—

**The Speaker:** On the Floor of this House.

**The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin:** Yeah . . . no his father didn't raise it on the Floor of this House. His father raised it on the talk shows. His uncle raised it on the Floor of this House. Thank you for correcting me, Madam Speaker.

—and has . . . I was going to say implied, but has alleged that it is myself and other Members of the Government and members of the civil service who are a part of some conspiracy to keep this young man from being able to achieve his lifelong dream to be a helicopter pilot.

Madam Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. And I know in his heart of hearts, because I know him very, very, very well, the Member for East End knows that that would not be something that would ever cross my mind. In fact, the opposite would be the case. He knows my advocacy for young people, and opportunities in this country. He was part of my Party; he was part of my Administration (or I should say administration of which I was also a part) for years.

But what he did on Friday was wrong by any measure. And I have a duty to make the country aware of what I have done, what the public service has done and what Ministers in my Government have done as part of the efforts to give young Darren McLean an opportunity.

Madam Speaker, I am prepared to say even now that if it is possible for us to assist Darren with training in any way . . . the measures that we have tried so far haven't resulted in what we need. But if it requires financial assistance, then that is something that my Government will certainly look at favourably to see how we can help. We, in no way wish to penalise this young man. In fact, we want to help him as we want to help every other person, and particularly every other young person in Cayman who has ambition and drive to become something and to achieve something and to have a good job and a sense of self-worth and esteem in this country.

But I was duty bound to make the country aware of what the Government—even before we took office—has actually done in trying to assist. Not the story at all that has been told by the Member for East End, or indeed, by his father on the talk show.

Madam Speaker, enough about that.

Madam Speaker, I want to get back to the responses of Members of this House with respect to a range of things. I listened closely to the Leader of the Opposition, and I have to say that his claim that all that we have done is to simply wrap up all of his projects, all the projects his administration actually started, all initiatives that they began, in a big red bow or paint them red, as he said, and call them ours, and that, of course, he supports these initiatives. I take that, Madam Speaker, as a backhanded compliment because to have the Leader of the Opposition—whom I have known for so long—find himself unable to actually criticize anything of consequence in the budget, I think it a huge compliment to the budget that this Government has been able to present.

Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to his discussion about the building up of Singapore, and I have heard him walk down this road more than once. I often shake my head because Singapore is a country of 5.3 million people and consists of some 63 islands, and the parallels I find difficult sometimes to grasp. I was particularly curious to understand the significance of his observation that the Premier of Singapore earns \$3 million a year. I don't think he was suggesting that that is what they should pay me. But—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin:** —I could not follow the relevance of that.

Madam Speaker, on more than one occasion during his contribution, the Leader of the Opposition said that immigration has to be changed, that the population has to grow. He wants to import jobs so as to give Caymanians work, which is commendable. But I suppose where we differ, Madam Speaker, is that we do not just want to import jobs to give Caymanians work, we want our Caymanians to be able to take on some of the top positions that we hope the job creation will actually bring to offer.

Madam Speaker, I keep saying this, but the Leader of the Opposition has been around for 30-plus years. He has been the Leader of Government Business twice and Premier once. Indeed, the basis of the current immigration policy was established by his administration. And so I am always left shaking my head quite a bit when he complains so bitterly about the present immigration regime.

I believe, Madam Speaker, we have a pretty good immigration policy in place. I do agree with some of the observations of the Leader of the Opposition though, that we have to be careful about how insular and restrictive we are with respect to immigration. There is, particularly in tough times like this, a tendency to want more enforcement, to want to force companies to employ Caymanians and to say that we are not going to allow more work permits.

Madam Speaker, I have been around this business for a long time. I've spent a lot of time work-

ing on it, thinking about it, observing it. I have concluded that we will never ever, through enforcement or otherwise, compel companies to hire people that they do not want to hire. The Cayman Islands Government would never be able to afford the level of resources necessary to have that kind of enforcement regime.

For 40-plus years we have striven to drive employer behaviour by virtue of penalties. *If you do not hire this Caymanian you are not going to get a work permit or we are going to prosecute you*, those sorts of things. Madam Speaker, I am not suggesting that we remove those provisions from the law, but what I have concluded myself (and some of my colleagues share my view) is that we have to develop an accreditation scheme which has been talked about before, which incentivises employers to hire Caymanians and to train Caymanians. We are not going to succeed by trying to force them to do it by threat, intimidation, legislation, prosecution. It has not worked for 40 years and in my view it is never going to work.

One of the initiatives which we hope to get underway during the course of this year is one that will give life and function to an accreditation scheme. A lot of the hard work on that has already been done. It was done during the years when the PPM was first in office from 2005 to 2009 and we have dug out that work and that research and we are looking at how that can be included in proposed new amendments to the Immigration Law over the course of this fiscal year.

Madam Speaker, again giving credit where it is due, I would like to publicly thank the Leader of the Opposition for working with Mr. Gene Thompson and Dr. Devi Shetty in getting the ball rolling on the Health City project which is now operational. Despite disparaging comments from the Member for North Side, who I believe is using what I regard as spurious numbers gathered by the spies in his self-proclaimed Ezzard Intelligent Unit (EIU) to make some kind of point, I am happy to say that the hospital has opened and is indeed doing medical miracles.

Just this week doctors at Health City completed the first specialised heart procedures on a patient from Trinidad and Tobago. These highly specialised procedures would normally require a trip to the US and it is the first of its kind to be performed in the Cayman Islands. Madam Speaker, Health City is one of the few facilities within the region where this procedure can be conducted. In fact, for every 10 to 15 cardiac centres in the world, only one centre would perform this procedure—a testament to the high level of expertise found at Health City, Cayman Islands.

Madam Speaker, the Member for North Side again in his contribution (and he said this many times over the years) spoke about what he considers to be the compromised standards of admission, or I should say registration, of doctors at Health City, because the law was changed to accommodate the Indian certification. But, Madam Speaker, that is not the reality, it is not the perception that we have and, indeed, I believe

over the course of the next little while we will become very, very proud of what Health City is able to do and the reputation that it is going to garner for itself, the doctors, nurses and staff who work there, and importantly for these Cayman Islands.

Madam Speaker, because it is here in Cayman it is ideal for neighbouring Caribbean islands. Patients are now able to shorten their travel time for tertiary care and avoid the high cost of travel and the visa requirements for equivalent care within the US or elsewhere. In addition to groundbreaking procedures, Madam Speaker, Health City is also bringing in jobs and the spinoff of employees living in the districts of East End and North Side is good for the shops and restaurants in those districts. Just as the new hospital has made jobs for our people, once our projects get going, they too will create employment opportunities for Caymanians.

Madam Speaker, we are a year into this term and I have listened to the talk shows, I've read the paper, I follow things, I listen to the debate in this House. With respect to the contributions of the Member for North Side and the Member for East End, I just have this observation to make: I have struggled, Madam Speaker, to find one occasion over the course of the past year when either Member have agreed with anything that the Government has done, has applauded anything that the Government has done, has done anything but criticise anything that the Government has done. Madam Speaker, even a stopped clock is right twice a day. It could never be that everything that the Government does is bad or wrong. And then, Madam Speaker, both of them use the same language, because they no doubt sit and consider how they are going to approach these things. They both use the exact same words in their speeches—that East End is *embargoed* by this Government and North Side is *embargoed* by this Government.

Madam Speaker, the biggest obstacle to getting anything done in the districts of East End and North Side, in my respectful view, are the two representatives from those districts—because they stand in the way of everything that the Government proposes. They complain and criticize. Nothing that is proposed is good or right or proper for the districts. If you talk about putting in an extension of the East/West arterial, that is met with complaint and concern. Nothing that you do, nothing that you propose is right. Health City was put in there; Health City is a bad thing. The Member for East End did not say that but the Member for North Side consistently takes that view.

So, Madam Speaker, it is very difficult for the Government to move things forward in the face of constant obstacles, hurdles, criticism at every single turn. Madam Speaker, if the Members for East End and North Side truly want to represent the interest of their constituents and to help the Government do its very best for those districts, I would suggest, I would hope, I would pray that instead of going on the talk

show twice a week and banging the Government to death, that they spend a little time talking to the Ministers and Members responsible about how we can actually assist in developing and improving the situation within their respective districts.

Madam Speaker, my roots are in East End. I have a deep and undying love and passion particularly for that district because that is from when I come; generations and generations. I still have a farm in the district of East End. My father still has many acres of land there. I spend a lot of time there. So, neither of them need to come with this idea to try to convince people that somehow the Government, or myself in particular, is opposed to opportunities being created, better life being created for the people of those two districts.

Madam Speaker, before I move on to talk about the police and so forth, I want to say a few words about the arrangement, the deal, the discussions with the DART Group. I think the last public statement I made with respect to this was that there had been no progress with respect to the negotiations which we have been having with the DART Group about the two agreements essentially which had been entered into by the previous administration with respect to a whole range of things; particularly with respect to the continued development of the hotel that is under construction, the Kempton Hotel; the closure of the West Bay Road, and the continued development of the Public Beach and so forth.

Madam Speaker, we have been careful in our public utterances with respect to this because we believe that the DART Group is a major and important player in Cayman's economy. They have invested hundreds of millions of dollars here. They have given every indication that they wish to invest more, and we want to do everything we can to partner with them in the continued development of Cayman and opportunities for Caymanians.

Madam Speaker, we had, I believe (not myself but other Members of my team) some nine meetings with the DART Group over the course of the past year. But until recently I believe we have made very little in terms of progress. I am not going to go into the details of what the stumbling blocks were, but I think the country is generally aware that the position that we took with respect to the agreements that had been made with the previous administration were that we thought there were aspects of those that needed to be renegotiated and we needed to come to terms, which we believe the people of this country would find more acceptable, more reasonable than those original agreements.

Madam Speaker, what I want to say today is that in more recent times I myself have met with the chief executive officer of the DART Group, that I believe we have made significant progress that we have a better understanding and appreciation of what both sides require, and that as of yesterday I am in receipt

of what I think is a very helpful letter and I am quite optimistic that over the course of the next few weeks we should be able to hopefully come to terms. It is important that we do so. It is not good that we have a range of things that are left hanging with respect to the previous agreements. And we certainly want to encourage the DART Group to continue their investment in Cayman.

The economy has turned but it is still far from operating at the pace that we all would like to make sure that we get everybody back to work. And the more economic activity, the more development that we have going, the better the chances that by this time next year we won't be talking about unemployment in the way that we have had to over the course of these past six years.

So, Madam Speaker, as I said, I won't go into any of the detail. And I know I am taking something of a risk that it may all fall apart in the end again, but in the same way that I said in the past that there was no progress, when I believe there is progress, I feel it is important and only fair that I indicate that as well.

Madam Speaker, I just want to turn briefly now to talk about the proposed budget for the Ministry of Home and Community Affairs. The total operating budget for Community Affairs in the upcoming year, including its department units and government owned company, the KEYS Foundation, is about \$14 million, which represents less than \$100,000 increase over the previous year. In addition to that though, there is about \$19 million made up of what are called transfer payments and money paid to non-government organisations. For those who would wonder what 'transfer payments' relate to, they relate to payments to the seamen's and veterans pensions and so forth, and money given to the CAYS Foundation and money used for school lunches, for the Pines, and so forth.

Madam Speaker, it is important for this Government that we continuously strive to improve the quality of life for all persons in these Islands. Accordingly, the work of Community Affairs helps us achieve this outcome by ensuring that human development remains at the forefront of this country's national agenda. It is the mission of the Ministry of Community Affairs to empower children and families by adopting a holistic approach to address human needs supported by innovative legislation, policies, services and programmes which focus on positive social development.

Ultimately, the goal is to have a stable, safe, prosperous and healthy community in which there is equal access to opportunities and support networks in place to help those most vulnerable. Madam Speaker, such a community takes care of all of its members, especially children, the elderly, the vulnerable and persons with disabilities.

There are tremendous involved in providing quality human services to people in an ever-changing environment. Part of this complexity stems from the challenge of balancing the overwhelming amount of

need with the very limited resources that we have. As all honourable Ministers and Members of this House are aware, we find ourselves in a time when many are struggling to meet their basic needs, thereby increasing demands and strain on the services and programmes provided by the Ministry of Community Affairs.

We know that large and growing sums of public funds are being spent on helping the relatively poor to make ends meet. These are persons who are not absolutely poor, but in these times need a hand-up to make it. We are also spending on the care and protection and correction of young persons whose life paths are at risk. We also know that the growth in these expenses outstrips the growth in our revenue base.

Madam Speaker, the projected growth in these social patterns suggest the picture of a society that would become less and less pleasant to live in with higher percentages of persons in poverty, growing numbers of delinquent or disaffected youth and stressed out chronically ill adults with associated disabilities, dependencies and dysfunctions that come with such conditions. In terms of response to these challenges we also know these facts: We cannot continue our old Band-Aid approach, such as throwing a little more money at poor relief or injecting more cash into healthcare. We have to get at the root causes of these situations, work right across government and join our partners in civil institutions to really turn this around.

This means lots of rethinking and retooling. We must begin to see each of our areas of work through the lens of what the whole human being requires. In other words, we must address human needs in a holistic way. As a result, in the 2014/15 financial year, the focus of Community Affairs will be to restructure and reorganise the way human services are delivered in order to realise greater efficiencies and maximise existing resources in all of the agencies that fall under my direct responsibility, namely, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the Needs Assessment Unit (NAU), the Department of Counselling Services (DCS) and the Children and Youth Services Foundation (CYSF).

Madam Speaker, the Ministry in partnership with the Department of Children and Family Services will focus and enhance the provision of its clinical services to the people of the Cayman Islands through the Adults Special Needs programme, Foster Care and Adoption Services and ensure that any necessary intervention in a child's life is done so in their best interest and in accordance with the principles of the Children Law.

Madam Speaker, as previously mentioned before, it is evident between the population of unemployed persons and those with an inadequate income, the demand for financial assistance from the Cayman Islands Government in order to meet basic needs has increased significantly due to the economic downturn

over the past few years. Hence we need to improve the financial assistance system and develop policies to better address and provide for the needs of the community. The Needs Assessment Unit therefore is a new unit stemming from one of the efficiency recommendations of the Department of Children and Family Services public service review conducted in 2010. The mission of the Needs Assessment Unit is to provide a centralised delivery of financial assistance services to assist persons in meeting their basic human needs.

A significant amount of persons seeking financial assistance are mothers with dependent children, elderly or disabled persons who are chronically or terminally ill and unable to work to maintain themselves, as well as persons who have become unemployed and are unable to locate employment for various reasons.

The separation of financial assistance from the Department of Children and Family Services and the establishment of the Needs Assessment Unit commenced in March 2013, and its first budget was approved last year at the end of October. Since that time the Ministry along with the Department of Children and Family Services and Counselling Services has been working along with the unit to further enhance policies and procedures to meet the needs of its clients.

The Department of Counselling Services will work to expand their family programmes to reach more parents in the Cayman Islands in order to assist them to develop positive and effective parenting skills that reduce risk factors and increase protective factors within their families. We will also be continuing the enhancement of a family therapy services to broaden the range of services available to those in our community who are struggling with issues such as trauma, grief, depression, anxiety and substance abuse.

As a government-owned company, the CAYS Foundation (Children and Youth Services) will continue to provide the Government with programmes and services that focus on therapeutic interventions with children who require care and protection or engage in offending behavior.

Madam Speaker, turning to the Ministry of Home Affairs, I should say that the operational budget for this year is about \$92 million, which is a \$3 million increase over last year's budget. This supplements and reaffirms this Government's commitment to public safety and our country's national security. Madam Speaker, almost all of that \$3 million increase goes to salaries personnel cost, because, as I have indicated before, we have serious issues on the frontline with respect to the full range of our uniform services.

The Cayman Islands Fire Service this past year we requested and facilitated a review of the Fire Services by the Chief Fire and Rescue advisor for England, equipped airport rescue launches with life-saving rafts in Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac and Lit-

tle Cayman, and completed the upgrade of the air conditioning system at the West Bay Station and we have now commenced tender for a new system for the George Town Fire Station. The Ministry also conducted fire extinguishing training for 230 people; performed annual inspections for liquor licensing premises; hotel inspections and commercial buildings and sent five officers to the USA for training in fire prevention. One person was sent to the UK for command and control aerodrome training.

Madam Speaker, turning to the London Office: I think most people know of the issues that we have had there, but what I can say in the positive is that we have advertised for a director for the London Office. The applications are all in. We have a short list of four applicants, all of whom are Caymanian, and interviews are being scheduled presently. So, we hope to have someone in post in a relatively short time.

Madam Speaker, with respect to the Department of Community Rehabilitation, that department has delivered more than 2,000 formal professional reports assessments for the courts over the past year to help guide judges and magistrates in appropriate sentencing and other matters. The Ministry has delivered community based supervision and intervention for one person with mental health illness who is in the criminal justice system, a range of domestic violence services, victim services and drug court services.

Madam Speaker, with respect to the Department of Computer Services (DCS), I can report that this department has delivered upgrades and system functionality, improvements to the general registry, including upgraded software application to support all aspects of the new Exempted Limited Partnerships Law and e-services systems to implement electronic data exchange. The department also upgraded online company registry systems to make certificates available as e-certificates that are emailed directly to clients.

Integrated software is now available for the processing of tobacco licensing with receding workflow document management and board processing along with an integrated module for the processing of the special economic zone trade certificates.

The system functionality required to support the new Immigration Law 2013 has been redesigned and built, including work permit administrators with increased powers at the new permanent residency point system, inclusive online self-points assessment tool.

At Customs the department has come up with a scanning solution. Custom officers are not able to scan crew and passenger declaration cards at the airport. Documents are tagged with the flight numbers and dates are stored in the ECM system allowing easy retrievable for enforcement officers.

To help ensure Caymanians are aware of and can apply for available jobs, Computer Services delivered the National Workforce Development Agencies online job placement system which provides an effi-

cient way for employers to communicate efforts to hire a suitable Caymanian and an effective way for the NWDA to provide information to the Immigration Department and its boards that will allow for informed decisions to be made in the work permit process.

The Department of Immigration was a key participant in the Immigration Law revision in 2013. The department met with stakeholders, offered technical advice and implemented processes and systems to meet the demand and changes that came with the implementation of the new law.

Madam Speaker, as I said in my Policy Statement, in the past year changes in the way airline passenger data is provided to immigration officials has meant that 65 per cent of outbound passengers no longer have to be physically processed by an immigration officer and can pass directly into the departure lounge after the security controls.

Madam Speaker, as a Government, as a country really, we continue to experience significant challenges with high numbers of Cuban migrants. Since January 2013 some 141 migrants have landed illegally in the Islands. The detention and repatriation of these migrants places a significant financial and logistical burden on government. To date 98 have been repatriated and another 43 remain at the Immigration Detention Centre. Madam Speaker, we had hoped to go this month to Cuba to sit with the authorities there and see if we can improve the process. But, for a range of reasons, that has had to be postponed and will not occur now until September.

Madam Speaker, interdepartmental corporation and planning under the Ministry of Home Affairs has led to a common software platform for public safety, law enforcement and community rehabilitation. A records management system, Jail management system and computer aided dispatch system from a company called SunGard Public Sector is now shared by the RCIPS, the Department of Public Safety Communications, Her Majesty's Prison Service, Department of Immigration Enforcement and the Department of Community Rehabilitation. This initiative is a new benchmark of sharing information between these departments and will lead to more rapid and efficient suspect identification, arrest, conviction, incarceration and ultimately will facilitate the successful rehabilitation release and integration back into the Cayman society.

Madam Speaker, we all know that we have entered a new hurricane season and at the heart of all we do during this time of the year is Hazard Management Cayman Islands. It has integrated the maintenance and provision of the two-way government radio network into the department. As a primary service for first responders the network is critical to HMCI. In corporation with the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service HMCI has trained and certified a new group of 27 mass casualty responders and incident commanders. This training sought to build interagency coordination

and response capabilities to manage complex incidents and disasters.

In association with the Red Cross and the Fire Department, HMCI has certified a new community emergency response team in West Bay which is 33 members strong. HMCI also delivered public awareness sessions at schools and other public gatherings to increase disaster awareness and preparedness throughout all age groups and demographics in the Cayman Islands.

Madam Speaker, the Cayman Islands is now a participant in the regional Tsunami Warning Network programme. A sensor for the Caribbean Tsunami Warning programme has been installed in George Town Harbour which will provide valuable data on sea levels to assist in the warning mechanism for the Caribbean and the Cayman Islands.

The sensor was funded through a UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) grant and installed by the German company OTT. The high precision sensors work by continually monitoring sea level. Data is sent via satellite to the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre in Hawaii and other international scientific institutes. If an unusual rise or fall in sea level is detected, especially after an earthquake event, scientists analyse regional data and decide whether a tsunami warning should be issued to islands and countries that could potentially be impacted by the tsunami wave. We join other countries in the Caribbean as a participant in a tsunami response exercise in March.

Madam Speaker, HMCI has also secured additional specialised equipment for the Urban Search and Rescue Team to boost its response capability. HMCI conducted emergency management training for first responders to build the country's capacity to respond to major disasters.

Madam Speaker, over at the Prison Service we have introduced a release on Temporary Licence Scheme. Making a community safer is not just about holding prisoners securely but releasing them to lead law abiding lives once they have served their term. To that end, the Prison Service has introduced a risk based Temporary Licence Scheme so that those coming to the end of their sentence and whose risk has been lowered, will be able to go out on their release to work and link with outside agencies prior to the eventual discharge. There are currently two prisoners on the scheme and this expanded during the coming fiscal year. Every prisoner in Northward and Fairbanks has had their category of risk reviewed to ensure that it is correct and that they are held in the most appropriate accommodation and given a responsibility that their category demands.

Madam Speaker, the limited capital funding available has been utilised to bolster the security of the physical infrastructure of the prison, including upgrades to fencing, installation of additional cameras and lighting. Because of the problems with Cuban mi-

grants the prison has recently been given the responsibility for the management and oversight of the Immigration Detention Centre (IDC).

Mrs. Natalie Lavis, a former prison governor and past member of the Business Development Unit for the National Offender Management Service in the UK, has been employed by the Ministry of Home Affairs to provide management support and assist with the transformation of the Prison Service. She has been instrumental in all of these initiatives and will assist the prison director with the developments of the IDC.

Madam Speaker, as you are probably aware, the Ministry of Home Affairs has oversight of the National Drug Council which has been busy implementing preventing programming in the primary schools, drug and alcohol education programmes in the prisons for males and females. The Council has also reintroduced youth-to-youth programming into the schools, following a hiatus for several years and collecting data to develop and support the Cayman National Drug Information Network.

The Council has provided feedback to the Liquor Licence Law review process. It has begun conducting an evaluation of programmes aimed at preventing and supporting persons affected by drugs and alcohol in our communities, and conducted and reported on the Cayman Islands Student Drug Use Survey 2014 and Her Majesty's Prison Service 2013.

Madam Speaker, the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service now has a new cell complex on island which is undergoing construction. It will meet all or our expectations and be human rights compliant, as well as improving the effectiveness of police investigations due to the ability to separate and prevent co-accused from concocting their stories before they are interviewed.

In addition, the progression in recruitment of a Caymanian only police recruit class, the first in over 30 years, has demonstrated the commitment to secure local talent and increase the percentage of Caymanians in the service. The class of 13 started in March 2014. At the senior end, RCIPS secured a position on the UK senior command course to ensure development at the highest level of police training for a Caymanian candidate which is critical for the development of officers who seek to attain commissioner grade positions.

Madam Speaker, modernisation of the police fleet is continuing ensuring that ineffective and increasingly expensive to repair vehicles are being removed from the fleet and replaced with a least higher programme that will cut cost both in maintenance terms, but also will exploit the modern fuel economies to reduce fuel cost.

The Cold Case File Task Force has been making headway with the conviction and guilty verdict via jury in the cold case review in respect of the conviction of a murderer from a 2008 case, as one exam-

ple. The Anti-corruption team of investigators has been active with the conviction of a senior public official on various fraud offences and several Royal Cayman Islands Police Service employees were awarded the Deputy Governor awards over the course of the past year demonstrating the high calibre of staff at the RCIPS.

Madam Speaker, looking forward at the Cayman Islands Fire Service, the Ministry will complete the recruitment of a chief fire officer as well as a deputy chief fire officer and conduct a strategic exercise to restructure and reorganise the department to better meet the vision and mission and to support best practices incorporating the feedback from the UK Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor.

Madam Speaker, we intend to successfully resolve all outstanding aerodrome fire rescue compliance issues identified by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) by the end of this year, and to equip the aerodrome and domestic services with replacement personal protection equipment.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry will conduct recruitment of staff based on the results of the reorganisation and restructuring exercise as well as a human capital assessment of current establishment ensuring value for money and succession planning.

Plans are in the works to upgrade firefighting equipment for Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, per assessed needs, and facilitate the necessary training in fire prevention, domestic and aerodrome with the assistance of the office of the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor for England and other resources.

Facility improvements are also planned. The Ministry will replace fire vehicle bay doors for West Bay and George Town Fire Stations that were damaged during Hurricane Ivan as well as upgrade radio equipment in conjunction with Government's overall communication plan. The Frank Sound and Cayman Brac Fire Stations will receive upgrades to the air conditioning systems and we will consolidate dispatch services.

Madam Speaker, we plan to enhance communications between the London Office and the Cayman Islands Government central communications systems by leveraging technology and systems integration opportunities. There is also a plan to increase the efficiency of the system currently in place for the application and processing of visas and passports for visitors and students respectively. The Ministry of Home Affairs will also assist the Caymanian student population in the United Kingdom and Europe with job placement and other matters.

In the Department of Community Rehabilitation we will provide community based supervision and risk assessment of lifers on parole and deliver empowerment services to assist offenders with preparation and reintegration into the general population. The Ministry will also secure additional human resources

to meet the growing need by the courts for social inquiry and other reports, as well as the legal requirements of the Conditional Release Law.

Already underway at the Department of Computer Services is a complete commission review and we will implement recommendations for further Computer Service Department services infrastructure, including outsourcing options. Our aim is to drive IT governance mechanism to streamline and make most efficient use of IT resources across government improving service delivery to stakeholders and increasing value for money.

Madam Speaker, as I said earlier, work on phase 2 of immigration policy reform is underway and it is focusing on the work permit system simplification of applications accepting online applications and one-stop shop for police clearance certificates when required for an application. The Immigration Department is working with the airlines to have the percentage of department passengers who are screened electronically increased to 90 per cent in the coming months when all airlines become capable of providing manifest data electronically. Consideration is also being given to enhancing finger printing requirements inclusive of the collection in the management of fingerprints in immigration legislation which will significantly aid in the effective border security. It is proposed that the fingerprinting process will be in a phased approach starting with work permit holders.

Again, Madam Speaker, speaking of Cuban migrants, the Department of Immigration officials will form part of the delegation of government officials who will travel with us to Cuba in September, as I said, to meet with representatives from the Cuban Government to discuss ways of improving the repatriation process and other associated matters.

Madam Speaker, at the Department of Public Safety Communication, also known as 911 system, the Ministry will upgrade electronic monitoring to a new foil-resistant technology to better service the needs of the courts, police and prison, while ensuring public safety and continued enhancements to national CCTV programme. The Ministry will also facilitate rationalisation of dispatch services (that is, amalgamate the service operated by the fire service).

Hazard Management Cayman Islands is in their final stages of completing arrangements for a much needed upgrade of the national telecommunications infrastructure and operating systems. This will allow for greater portability coverage, use and expanded lifespan of the entire network. The National Telecommunications Systems supports all government agencies, inclusive of public safety and security agents.

At Her Majesty's Cayman Islands Prison Service the Ministry will increase the number of prisoners participating in the release on Temporary Licence Scheme so that they have an opportunity to participate in community based work and gain valuable skills

required for successful reentry to society. We will also introduce a structured working day for prisoners whilst in custody as part of their overall core day.

Madam Speaker, because security has been an issue at the prison, the Ministry will install upgraded fencing, security cameras with automated video alerting and a link back to the national CCTV hub along with estate repairs and upgrades to further enhance security and increase detection of contraband. We will also complete separate cells for juvenile offenders and work with the Ministry of Health and other mental health stakeholders to implement safe remand and secure facilities and appropriate treatment interventions for offenders suffering from mental illness and who have a dual diagnosis.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry will provide ongoing training for prison personnel to support them in their role as rehabilitative agents, including, but not limited to, mental health awareness, de-escalation, risk of harm assessment and mixed inmate group management.

This coming year the National Drug Council will bring the revised national drug strategy to Cabinet for approval bringing programming and budgets in line with the plan and ensure proper implementation. There will be a review of the National Drug Council Law for relevance, management and operation which includes mandatory collection of data. The Council will provide feedback to the Liquor Licence Law Review Committee with a goal of having dialogue to ensure the revised legislation is in line with the Regional and International Best Practices. It will also develop Kading [SOUNDS LIKE] proposed policy or legislation for the need to manage prescription drugs, develop a curriculum for drug prevention and education programming and conduct councillor training.

At the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service, Madam Speaker, we will reopen the East End and North Side Police Stations—and it is a pity that both the East End Member and the North Side Member are gone—and increase staffing to support policing in these districts and evaluate current estate needs and develop a plan to support them as well as future growth.

Madam Speaker, the entire Opposition seems to have abandoned the Chamber, but both the Member for East End and the Member for North Side were speaking about . . . particularly the Member for East End, that the Government is not responding what they are requesting and what they are asking and each of them have had three visits to Cabinet. Madam Speaker, I think what I have just said has demonstrated that the Government is listening and the Government is doing whatever it can to respond to what we believe are legitimate concerns—not just of the Members but of those two communities. And so we have taken what I believe is a big decision to reopen both the East End and North Side Police Stations.

Madam Speaker, in closing, might I just say that as our ultimate aim is the wellbeing of the public. We cannot compromise on these principles because the public is depending on us for the country's productivity, stability and, in very fundamental ways, for its very survival. We must therefore all be active and committed partners in this process because if we do not act now we could all too easily slide into social crisis. Certainly, at the very least a high quality of life will ultimately elude us if we do not act starting in this coming budget to focus across the board on human development and security priorities.

Madam Speaker, I believe that we have delivered a good solid budget which will inspire confidence in the broader community, in investors, and in the international community. But that budget, Madam Speaker, and the numbers that are included in it underpin the policies and the programmes and the projects of this Administration. And so it is those plans, those programmes, those projects that are ultimately aimed at making life better for all who live and work here, and all who call these Islands home.

I believe, Madam Speaker, that we have a good solid plan that the future for Cayman is indeed bright. And I commend this Budget to this honourable House because I believe with all sincerity that these practical institutional changes we have proposed will make work between the Ministry and its agencies more integrated and fruitful and will, ultimately, inure to the benefit of the people of these beloved Cayman Islands. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The question is that a bill shortly entitled The Appropriation (July 2014 to June 2015) Bill, 2014, be given a second reading.

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

**Ayes.**

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

**Agreed: The Appropriation (July 2014 to June 2015) Bill, 2014, given a second reading.**

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

**The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin:** Madam Speaker, may I ask for a division?

**The Speaker:** Most certainly. Madam Clerk.

Madam Clerk, for the purposes of the division we did receive formal apologies from the Deputy Premier and the Leader of the Opposition.

**The Clerk Assistant:**

**Division No. 16**

**Ayes: 11**

**Noes: 0**

Hon. Alden McLaughlin  
Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts  
Hon. Osbourne V. Bodden  
Hon. G. Wayne Panton  
Hon. Marco S. Archer  
Hon. Tara A. Rivers  
Hon. Anthony S. Eden  
Mr. Winston C. Connolly  
Mr. Roy M. McTaggart  
Mr. Joseph X. Hew  
Mr. Alva H. Suckoo

**Absent 6**

Hon. Moses I. Kirkconnell  
Hon. W. McKeever Bush  
Mr. Bernie A. Bush  
Capt. A. Eugene Ebanks  
Mr. D. Ezzard Miller  
Mr. V. Arden McLean

**The Speaker:** The result of the division is as follows:  
11 Ayes, 5 [*sic*] absent.

**Agreed by majority on division: The Appropriation (July 2014 to June 2015) Bill, 2014, given a second reading.**

**The Speaker:** Madam Clerk . . . Let me repeat that again, please. The result of the division is as follows:  
11 Ayes, 6 absent.

I recognise the Honourable Premier.

## ADJOURNMENT

**The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin:** Madam Speaker, I wish to thank all Members of the House for persevering through this debate process, and I especially thank those who have remained to the end this evening.

Madam Speaker, I wish to thank your good self and the Honourable Deputy Speaker who stood in for a full week, all members of the staff of the Legislative Assembly, particularly the Clerk and Deputy Clerk for their work and assistance and guidance in getting us through this process. I think that the debate has gone very efficiently. We have managed to get through having all but one Member speak in five days. I think we have done quite well.

So, Madam Speaker, it is now my honour and duty to adjourn the proceedings of this Legislative Assembly until the conclusion of Finance Committee. And to echo the Minister of Finance, Finance Committee will commence at 10:00 am tomorrow.

**The Speaker:** The question is that this honourable House stands adjourned until the conclusion of Finance Committee.

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

**Ayes.**

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

**At 6:40 pm the House stood adjourned until the conclusion of Finance Committee.**

