



**CAYMAN ISLANDS
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
ELECTRONIC VERSION**

2015/16 SESSION

20 May 2015

Second Sitting of the First Meeting
Throne Speech and Budget Address
(pages 27-70)

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

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PRESENT WERE:

SPEAKER

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

MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

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

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

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

ELECTED MEMBERS

GOVERNMENT BACKBENCHERS

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|---------------------------------|--|
| Mr 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 |
| Mr Alva H Suckoo, MLA | Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town |

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

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

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

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

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
THRONE SPEECH AND BUDGET
2015/16 SESSION
WEDNESDAY
20 MAY 2015
10:20 AM
Second Sitting**

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

The Speaker: Good morning.

I will ask the Honourable Deputy Governor to grace us with prayers today.

PRAYERS

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

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 Premier, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Leader of the Opposition, Ministers of the Cabinet, Ex-officio Members, and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that we may be enabled faithfully to perform the responsible duties of our high office. All this we ask for Thy great Name's sake.

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

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

The Speaker: Please be seated.

READING BY THE SPEAKER OF MESSAGES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONDOLENCES

The Speaker: I wish to give condolences to the Member for East End on the loss of his mother-in-law.

I recognise the Honourable Premier.

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

On behalf of the Members of the Government (and I believe I can speak for the entire membership of the House), I wish to publicly offer condolences to the Member for East End and his dear wife Allison, on the loss of her mother, his mother-in-law, recently.

Madam Speaker, this has really been a very difficult time for the Cayman Islands, and particularly the district of George Town. We have lost so many loved ones over the course of the last few weeks. I know all of us have been attending many, many funerals. So, on behalf of the membership of this House and, in particular, the Members for the district of George Town, I publicly offer condolences to the many families who have suffered loss of loved ones over the course of the last few weeks.

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

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, I think I have a very solemn duty, and it is much longer than a few words because there are a few people we have been very involved with over the years that have passed on. I want to pay due deference to this legislature. And I do so as the Father of this honourable Legislative Assembly.

I had planned to do it later and to ask that it not be recorded against any time that I have, if I so choose to rise. But, having gone this course, I ask the indulgence of the Chair and of Members, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: That would be in order. Please proceed, Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, as I said, I have a very solemn duty

today and I do so as the Father of this honourable House, and that is to pay tribute to great Caymanians who have gone on to their eternal reward in the past several weeks. And I join with the Premier in doing so.

Cayman has lost outstanding citizens who have made vast and long-lasting contributions to the development of our Islands. First I want to pay tribute to a personal friend, confidant and great Caymanian, the late Dr. Edlin Merren, OBE, JP. I was not able to be at the funeral service, so I am going to put on record what I think is a very great tribute paid by my cousin, Mr. Garfield Powery, JP, himself a longtime friend and colleague in the Gideon movement of Dr. Edlin, Mrs. Merren, and their family.

Madam Speaker, I quote Mr. Garfield Powery: "In every country, in every land rich or poor, small or great, there always arise a handful of special sons and daughters born of the soil who had an extra dimension of talent, character and abilities. It was those individuals who became the principal contributors of the life and character of the nation. Today, we mourn the passing of one of those special sons of the soil, Dr. Thomas Henry Edlin Merren.

"Ralph Waldo Emerson, the great American Writer and Philosopher, expressed it so well when he wrote, '**The true test of civilization is not the census, nor the size of the cities, nor the crops - no, but the kind of man the country turns out.**' How fitting are those words to the life of this remarkable man who rendered a great contribution to this country and its people, a man who had the rare privilege of it being said of him that he had no enemies, for everyone was his friend.

"I am glad that I enjoyed a close friendship with him for over 40 years, which resulted in a close mutual love and respect for each other. Dr. Merren was truly a wonderful man who had some of the finest qualities of the human spirit, qualities of love for family, love for country, but most of all he had a deep abiding love for God and His work. He had great regard for human friendship, and certainly a great love for his family, and I applaud them today for the great love and great care they afforded him throughout his illness, which is a testimony to the noble family he created, for indeed it can be said of him that his life and character speak well for itself.

"To paraphrase the words of Shakespeare and his famous play *Julius Caesar*, he wrote, 'His life was so peaceful and gentle and the elements for good so mixed in him that even Nature would stand up and say that this was a special man.' For the essence of his life was to care. The beauty of his life was to love, and the joy of his life was to give. Such a man was Dr. Edlin Merren.

"I am glad to have known him. I am glad that he was my friend, and I will always cherish the memory of his friendship and the great privileges that I had to sit at his feet and hear all of the wonderful stories of his noble life which was reflective of his love for

family, his love for country, but, most of all, his love for the wonderful God that he served. Today we can all say that the earth is a much better place because he graced it with his presence, and that heaven and all its richest blessing is the beneficiary of our loss." [UN-VERIFIED QUOTE]

That was the tribute in the programme paid by my cousin, Mr. Garfield Powery.

Madam Speaker, what I can also say is that Dr. Edlin was an ardent supporter of the United Democratic Party. He did not get on the public platform, but he was our honorary chairman. His advice over the years was invaluable to me as its leader, and to me, from the early stages being elected to this House. He took a great interest in matters political as he was a true Christian and he assisted the backbench in the 1989 to 1992 Assembly in the formation of our Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast, which I think elevated itself to more of a national prayer breakfast.

So, our condolences are passed on to his widow, Mrs. Helen, and his children. May his soul rest in peace!

In the same vein, I want to single out four other great Caymanian men who in their own right made huge contributions to the business world of Cayman, education and our social development. We all know that Mr. Thomas Hurlston, MBE, JP; Mr. Carl Godet, Cert. Hon.; Mr. James Bodden (Sonny Boy), MBE, JP; and Mr. Perry George passed away recently. It is fitting that I do the same.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Tommy made his contribution in many ways, as a seaman and then in the work of the Texaco Oil Company. His belief and hard work was in the Lions Club, where he was (if I remember correctly) the founding president of the Lions Club of Grand Cayman. I believe he was most instrumental in the development of the present buildings on that compound. I know in his day he was the backbone in the Lions Club and through his effort much and very meaningful work was done to enhance the lives of people through the programmes of the Lions.

As a Justice [of the Peace] he gave service in the Juvenile Court and was always compassionate. But as we know, Mr. Tommy was very firm. He was also a Special Constable and played an important role in the development of that body, I understand. We say thanks and offer condolences to his good wife and his brothers and sisters and other family members. May his soul rest in peace!

Madam Speaker, my good friend, Mr. Carl Godet, has passed on. Carl Godet arrived in these Islands in the 1960s from the Turks and Caicos Islands after being trained in Jamaica by International Air Radio as a radio operator and air traffic controller. His responsibilities included the dissemination of local weather conditions for airlines that operated in and overhead of these Islands. As air traffic controller, he advised incoming and outgoing airlines of the weather conditions and of other air traffic in the area.

In those days, Mr. Carl and others, volunteered as firemen, saw to it that flare pots (that is kerosene burning torches) were placed alongside the runway to light the landing path for flights and were kept serviceable and the runway was safe. Those were the heydays of smothering mosquitoes and suffocating smoke-fogging machines that was the only method of mosquito control.

He was a very dedicated and efficient person, well liked and respected by all. Carl was a very joyful gentleman, with a very serious and contagious laugh. I was fortunate to have him as a loyal and genuine friend. So, Madam Speaker, one of my first remembrances of Carl was as a little boy. I saw him play football. He was an avid football player. He could kick the ball from one end of the West Bay Town Hall Field, from one goal post, nearly to the other one. He, like many others who came and made Cayman their home, contributed to sports long after he left the game. But in his day he played against the visiting teams such as the British war ship sailors that came.

As I said, I was fortunate to have him as a loyal and genuine friend. So we pass on our condolences to his widow, Mrs. Maggie, and his children and other family members. May his soul rest in peace and God's light perpetually shine upon him!

Madam Speaker, Mr. James (Sonny Boy) Bodden, MBE, JP, was a good man, a very grand Caymanian and an astute businessman. He gave exemplary service to his Island home. He served with me on the Port Authority Board for two terms. Those years were important in the life of the Port. We had hurricane damage here in Cayman and in Cayman Brac and we had to rebuild. We recognised the need for changes to the Port operation between the cargo and the cruise operation, and so, between 2000 and 2005 we changed the cargo operation from day to night in order to enhance and give safety to our cruise visitors.

In all of that, Mr. Sonny would, in a very quiet, but sensible manner, make his valid contribution. We built the present cruise facility which made our cruise tourism viable and gave it ability to grow. His contribution was very meaningful in those hectic days. At the same time I was Minister of Sport. There was not a time, Madam Speaker, when we went to Mr. Sonny and his good wife, Mrs. Rose, that, that couple did not make their donation in various ways.

Certainly, in paying this tribute we want to express our deepest sympathy to his widow, Mrs. Rose, and their family in their hour of grief.

Madam Speaker, the late Perry Matthew George was a gentleman and a scholar, an economist, an IT specialist and educator. He joined the UCCI (then the Community College of the Cayman Islands) in 1996 as senior lecturer and head of the computing department where he provided strategic leadership in curriculum development and implementation and IT development.

In 2000, he was promoted to associate professor and head of Arts and Sciences, where he was involved in the development of several associate and certificate programmes, as well as the establishment of a Student Counseling Department. He became the chair for the Council of Chairs in 2009 before being appointed Dean of Administration in 2011.

Both leadership roles gave Mr. George responsibility for UCCI operations, policy making and implementation. He served on various committees at UCCI, including secretary to the Academic and Administrative Committee and co-chair of the Graduation Committee. He also took on an active role in the planning of UCCI's 10th Charter Anniversary celebration.

He was, as I said, a remarkable man. He was a gentleman and a scholar. He was a hardworking, dedicated, humble individual who was loved and respected in the community. He was always willing to assist in whatever way he could no matter how small the task. He carried himself with dignity. He was always working on projects.

Madam Speaker, Mr. George, like Mr. Godet, was not born in these Islands, but like so many others who came and made Cayman their home, contributed in no small or insignificant way, but in tremendous ways, more than we can really give thanks for. Mr. Perry was a great cricketer. I always saw him at those matches when he played for the Blue Marlin's Cricket Team. He was inspirational to me and reliable for advice when I was Minister of Sport. I could talk to him. He would give me advice and I found that he was reserved, but, Madam Speaker, his advice was genuine, it was solid. These are the kinds of people who have made the Cayman Islands what it is and we, as Caymanians, must never forget the kind of people who come here and help us develop and make this their home.

So, Madam Speaker, yes, we want to pass on our condolences to his wife and his family in their great loss, and to the fraternity at UCCI for the loss they are experiencing with his passing.

Madam Speaker, these are persons, outstanding citizens who have left great examples of love of family, love of country, who selflessly gave of their time and years to their country. May their souls rest in peace!

Of course, Madam Speaker, other families have been stricken with grief recently. For those who lost loved ones, we can, and would like to offer our deepest condolences. Particularly, I join with the Premier in extending condolences to the Elected Member for East End, his good wife whom I count as a very good friend of mine, in the loss of her mother. Madam Speaker, we know what that means when we lose our mother. We lose our best defender, our confidant; that is what we lose—people who stand by us and behind us and push us to do our best. And we want to assure Allison and her husband, the Member for East End, that, our thoughts are with them.

I thank you for your indulgence and that of the House.

The Speaker: Before we move on, does any other Member wish to express any sentiments?

If not, Madam Clerk, we will move to the next item of business.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND OF REPORTS

GOVERNMENT OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS – OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS, FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2014

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Attorney General.

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House the financial statements for the period ended 30 June, 2014, for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The Speaker: So ordered.

Does the Honourable Attorney General wish to speak to the report?

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: Madam Speaker, no. The report itself is self-explanatory.

REPORT OF THE STANDING BUSINESS COMMITTEE FIFTH MEETING OF THE 2014/2015 SESSION OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The Speaker: Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin: Madam Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House, the Report of the Standing Business Committee, Fifth Meeting of the 2014/2015 Session of the Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: So ordered.

Does the Honourable Premier wish to speak to the report?

The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin: No, thank you, Madam Speaker.

STATEMENTS BY HONOURABLE MEMBERS AND MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

The Speaker: There are no statements for this morning.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

BILL

SECOND READING

APPROPRIATION (JULY 2015 TO JUNE 2016) BILL, 2015

DEBATE ON THE BUDGET ADDRESS AND THRONE SPEECH

~ Together with ~

GOVERNMENT'S POLICY STATEMENT

The Speaker: moving on with the Second Reading. Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Before beginning my Budget presentation, I want to extend my congratulations to the Tories, or the Conservatives, on becoming the Government again. I have some good friends in the Tory party. Maybe I have some big enemies too; I don't know. But I certainly want to congratulate them on becoming the Government again.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: No, no, you just keep quiet and behave yourself. This is a day for you to listen.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, what we know is that taking over Government in any country, and certainly one as the UK, has to have its intrepid feelings, whether it can make it or whether it will fail. Certainly they must be pleased that they have come from a coalition to gain such a large number of seats. So, those of us in this fraternity of parliamentary democracy can extend congratulations to them.

Madam Speaker, most of all I want to express my pleasure in seeing that my friend and my lawyer Mr. Geoffrey Cox, has retained his seat. Not only did he retain his seat, but he won it by a huge margin in a field of several candidates. So we want to congratulate him. I think a lot of Caymanians now know of his prowess as a lawyer, his ability as a lawyer. Some will

probably cringe at it, but, nevertheless, he won by a huge margin.

Madam Speaker, the presentation of a country's budget is important. It shouldn't be laced with personal attacks from the main person presenting the policy. And the need for self-preservation and aggrandisement often make hatred the kind of mind that made the speech go off the deep end. That is where the Premier found himself on Friday.

Madam Speaker, the Premier began with *Shakespeare* and sad to say ended with, it seemed, Satan. Sorry, Madam Speaker, but I don't think that was what *Shakespeare* had in mind when he talked about the tide in the affairs of man. The tide in our affairs, I want the Premier to know, is running against us. And that is what must be addressed properly so that all of Cayman can benefit from our hard labour. That is not happening. It is not happening because of the mindset of the Government. If they were different, the quality of the lives of our people would be greatly improved.

Madam Speaker, I must say too that our people have to make up their minds on what it is they want on where these Islands should be in the future. I have said many, many, times that Caymanians must embrace wealth or reap poverty. We cannot continue to listen to naysayers in the form when we are about to put forward meaningful policy that will address long-term issues in this country; whether it is immigration or development otherwise.

If we don't take the hard decisions, bad is going to be the end for these Islands. You can't listen to those persons who talk about they don't want too many people, and this one is responsible for taking business and, to put it bluntly, that this investor, or that new Caymanian, or that new person coming is responsible for taking business. But yet at the same time that same person complaining, can walk away with a \$25,000 or \$40,000 cheque from the business that those people have brought to our Islands.

So, Madam Speaker, that is how we have built this country. We built it with open arms, but by protecting our own people, but allowing people to come and spend so that we could enhance ourselves, so that we could get a better standard of living, so that we didn't have to live when we stayed in our grandma's house and worried about the leaking roof and sleeping on a floor bed. No. We moved from that. But how did we do it?

We must ask the question: Did those persons, who had the wherewithal in the country, give us that opportunity? No, they didn't. And I keep saying so. And maybe I have made enemies for it. But the fact is we couldn't get the college education we wanted. I couldn't be the lawyer I wanted to be. I couldn't be the teacher I wanted to be because there was no opportunity. And the few that had the dollars . . . it did not trickle down.

So, I am one who is not ever going to give up on the fact that people must come and help us build. We must welcome them. So, Immigration must be a thoughtful, very thoughtful and deep thought process where people are not victimised. So, the Government had better put on their thinking caps.

Madam Speaker, I knew the Development plans that I put on the table when I was the Government, would have benefitted everyone, had not the desire of power and the ability to disrupt taken preeminence in the tide of affairs that were in existence, which was flowing between 2009 and 2012 by the then Leader of the Opposition, now Premier.

The fiscal discipline we exercised between 2009 and 2012 was remarkable, bearing in mind that in the first two years of administration, the Government incurred debt for the continued building of the Clifton Hunter and the John Gray High Schools which were started by the PPM Administration of 2005 to 2009. The Clifton Hunter school cost over \$106 million to construct, equip and furnish, while the John Gray High School, which is incomplete . . . I don't know how much that has already cost this country, but it is in the millions and millions of dollars.

Madam Speaker, the way in which the last PPM Government went about trying to finance the two high schools is a lesson in how not to conduct fiscal affairs, including the procurement process and tendering of government projects. The Premier would want people of these Islands today to believe that it was my administration that participated in bad procurement practices. What procurement? We never got any of the projects started. We couldn't get to that point because of sabotage from the highest positions. The only problem with his statements are that they are not made on the basis of fact, but, rather, fully resting on a figment of an overactive imagination.

He stated, and I quote, “. . . **bad procurement practices that . . . delayed needed projects and in some cases cost the country millions of dollars. . . . I will assure the people of this country that we are not going back to those evil days . . .**”

Let me pause to allow the Premier—I hope he's listening—to carefully consider these statements.

You know, the Premier can't sit down when I rise, he has to find an excuse to get out of this Chamber, and always, he can colour it and say it was good, that he had to be out for some good reason.

Madam Speaker, he continues, even in the highest of our days on Budget Day, State Opening Day, to point his finger and lay blame on McKeeva Bush. I was at a service a few Sundays ago and the pastor said that there were two boys in the town who were blamed for everything in the world. If a cat went up a tree, they got blamed for it. If somebody's water was left on, they got blamed for it. Whatever happened in the town, no matter how mundane, no matter how large, it was the fault of those two boys.

So the boys went to Sunday school and the pastor, who was a huge man, some 6 foot, 300 pounds—huge—grabbed one of the little boys and said, *Tell me, where is Jesus?* And with every question the decibels rose that much higher. The little boy, petrified, frightened to death, finally wriggled himself away and ran home.

And his brother went after him, looking all over the house for him saying, when he found him locked up in the closet, *Boy, what happened to you?* [He replied] *What happened to me? Weren't you in church? Didn't you hear that Jesus is missing and they are going to blame me and you?*

[Laughter]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Someone said to me after the service, *Mr. Bush, don't take it literally, but it sounds like that's the licks you've been taking.*

So, as I listened Friday, it came back to me. Oh, if they could leave it that way they would let the world believe that I was forever wrong, or that I am to blame for every wrong in this country.

I believe that if anybody has taken leave of his senses, it must be him. Do I need to remind the Premier of the gross mismanagement of the procurement process with Tom Jones and the building of the schools?

Do I need to remind him that Tom Jones walked off the job countless times for various breaches of contract?

Do I need to remind the Premier that this country spent over 100 per cent more than what was agreed to complete Clifton Hunter High School? And when it is all said and done, a similar situation will have occurred with the John Gray High School. Do I need to remind him?

Do I need to remind him of the big row that he and Tom Jones' people had, which was carried on the front page of the *Cayman Compass*?

Do I need to remind the Premier of the millions of dollars of fill that was dumped in West Bay, George Town and Bodden Town on sites where capital works projects were to begin, but due to the gross negligence and lack of controls and with no money, millions of dollars of fill still remains on those sites, but the projects never got started. Bad procurement? Bad process?

Madam Speaker, just in West Bay for the Beulah Smith High School, \$2.5 million in marl, and \$900,000 to the contractor for having to stop the work. And they point their fingers at me saying that I caused . . . and what did the Finance Minister say?—"Frittered away millions of dollars." But they can only look at a few I frittered away, and I will come to that. I will come to it. I will.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Oh, patience, my son, patience. You'll get it. You'll get it because I know you are all going to refer to it. That was only a tease on Friday.

Mr. Premier, it is you who should be mindful of the abuses of procurement processes conducted during that administration. Part of the process of good procurement is to see that the necessary funds are available to do what's being agreed to by the Central Tenders Committee. If the funds are not available, but the projects are approved, then is the Central Tenders [Committee] doing its job? Are they doing their job?

Is it not a fact also that Tom Jones and the Cayman Islands Government got into a law suit? The bad deals and flimsy contracts Government entered into, while it was my UDP Government that had to deal with the headaches, it was the PPM Government that placed this country in the financial mess in 2009. So flimsy were these contracts and the poor quality of work that my UDP Government was forced to search out a better alternative.

Madam Speaker, windows and entire floors had to be chopped out and jackhammered up in order to build a safe and code compliant building. You think that didn't cost money? You should have gone and seen it. You should have gone and seen the mess, for people who said they were contractors. I don't know who they were. I don't know any of them. But I can tell you that it was a mess! And it cost money. Money!

How about the \$12 million that was paid to Tom Jones without proper procurement? There was no real . . . if there was they couldn't go into it because there was not the money to do it all. And there was concern which was brought out in Finance Committee—it's in the records—wanting to know what and how the \$12 million were spent.

The PPM broke all of the financial ratios that are a part of the Public Management and Finance Law (PMFL). Was it not the PPM Administration that spent almost a million dollars . . . no, more than a million dollars; over two million dollars, I think it was, to put on a boxing fight? And our Cayman boxer was never given an opportunity to fight live for the world to see. Now they want to play games about millions of dollars being frittered away by me.

Yes, it was. That's what they want to say. I tried to get something done. Yes. So, they are going to say, *Oh, the Chinese, you had to pay them.* Yes. If they had left the Chinese alone we would have a dock.

Count how many times the money was spent, Mr. Minister of Finance. You gave people scholarships, and you shouldn't have given one above the other, and Nation Building was bad. Well, what is it? How wrong is it, Madam Speaker, if a family is better off than the next family, that you shouldn't help the less well-off family a little bit more? Why not?

Make me tell you all . . . I know they looked. They investigated. I know they did. But they couldn't

find, because, you know what? McKeeva treats everybody equal—PPM, C4C, UDP, any person, whether they come from . . . whatever family they come from. I don't care. I don't care about that. If they come from the man in the moon and they deserve to be helped, that's my *modus operandi*.

But they say that was bad! *You can't manage*, and, *You didn't go to university. You don't have any education*. I have heard all those things right there, sitting there, the insults that kept coming. And don't ask about the campaign. Oh my God. I've never in all my years been through one where so many things were said.

So, Madam Speaker . . . money being frittered away, Mr. Minister of Finance?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: You're talking about what? What about it?

The Speaker: Please put comments through the Chair.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, if he has a question, let that man rise so I can answer him properly. Let him rise, if he is a man. Let him rise.

No. They prefer to do what they just did in their stinking, dirty, evil talk. But facts are facts. And I know when they are getting licked when they stoop to the lies. Because when I use my money, it's mine. No matter what I do with it, it's mine. I did mine.

Don't worry about that.

No. You don't know.

You shouldn't shake your head because you don't know, you weren't there. You only listened to a liar who was paid by you all to lie. That's what I want to tell you. But take up your time doing that instead of answering the things that you need to answer. Take up your time doing that and see if that gets you anywhere. It might put you a little bit further behind than you think you are.

Madam Speaker, they broke all the financial ratios that are part of the Public Management and Finance Law. Now they play the blame game about millions of dollars being frittered away by me. They like to point fingers but they better remind themselves that five, four could be pointing back at them.

The lack of planning by the PPM Government of the past is indicative of how small vulnerable countries can find themselves overnight almost paralysed by self-induced stroke.

¹**“Fortunately for us, we could manage the symptoms found in 2009 once the appropriate diagnosis revealed the facts and . . . [my UDP-led]**

Government acted” as swiftly as we could in this bureaucratic environment.

“The potential paralysis from the swelling debt in the Caymanian economy” (as a result of the reckless frittering away of the country's surplus and reckless borrowing and fearless abandonment of prudent fiscal practices by the last PPM Administration) **“was enough to encourage the”** (UDP) **“Government to find a more viable approach to investing both domestic and”** internationally.

“In June of 2011, I announced the content of the investment alliance with Dart Cayman Islands, known as the ForCayman Investment Alliance. At that time I stated boldly” (as is my nature) **“that investment around the world has been uncertain.”** As a result my **“Government [would] not plan to engage in any further long-term borrowing—even for needed projects, including schools and roads. Investors the world over”** were and **“are still exercising a high level of caution, waiting and watching before committing to huge large-scale projects. Therefore, the need for partnerships with the private sector to build national infrastructure, facilities, social and educational programmes, without incurring any debt or obligation to repay”** (in some instances was an) **“essential part of my Government's economic growth strategy. This approach was far superior to that which the PPM Government pursued prior to 2009”** and remains far superior to what they are even now pursuing.

Their criticism, Madam Speaker, for what my Government did between 2009 and 2012 was so relentless and so ruthless that they find it very difficult to move in any direction that would be seen as walking in that path led before by my UDP Government. I know that the politically aware, regardless of what party they support, or who they support, can see that the machinations of the PPM are nothing more than trying to claim original UDP ideas as their own.

What did you have? Where are yours?

Even the word “Dart” they said was . . . even the word “UDP” . . . even the words “United Democratic Party, (“UDP”) they said meant “Under Dart Power.” Oh my. And look where you are today. The same thing they did with some of the businesses before. Unless it is them it is no good. Only them! They are the masters. They have it all. They know it all. Only them!

Oh yeah? I don't think so.

So, Madam Speaker, the next time the Premier gets up to speak, he should be mindful that they are here today sailing a ship that the UDP Government had to command after they ran her aground. Also be mindful that the PPM have not done anything other than carry out the fine work which the UDP Government started. And because I know just how much joy they have in their hearts for me and how discombobulated and forgetful they can become when

¹ Official Hansard Report, 20 August 2012, pages 109-110

they become overly excited, let me name a few of the plans, Madam Speaker:

- Narayana Cayman University Medical Center; that is the UDP medical tourism policy, and its various ancillary businesses, such as information technology development.
- The cargo dock to do specialised trans-shipment and an oil refinery.
- A new cruise ship berthing facility.
- Various proposals for renewable energy.
- Ironwood project. This was a gov/community development project in North Side/East End and the necessary East/West Arterial Road to go with it.
- New five star hotel in Bodden Town area.
- Dart projects, ForCayman Investment Alliance; that is roads and waste management programme and the agreement with new hotels and other commercial property development.
- Cayman Enterprise City.
- Re-development for a cruise ship jetty at the Cayman Turtle Farm to make it easier for tourists to visit the attraction and for new tourism attractions to be added so that it can pay its way.
- Numerous partnerships with the private sector for the building of condos and commercial development that would keep the construction industry going. This was further stimulated by providing reductions in import duty on construction material.
- New gateways for CAL [Cayman Airways] and other airlines to increase our tourism.
- A mega yacht development to create a new maritime industry.
- The Airport Redevelopment Plan, including jet ways and runway extension.

In my various discussions with Cayman's tourism officials and overseas business people in the industry, including a discussion with Mr. Branson, who told me on his visit here, and in my discussion with him about Virgin Airlines coming to Cayman, that there should be an increase in our room stock and the expansion of the airport which included the expansion of the runway. Also in my discussion with BA [British Airways] regarding the change in the use of the 767 to the triple 7s, they agreed to bring in the triple 7s, but one of the conditions attached was that we needed to have a better airport facility.

However, Madam Speaker, after the Government has had to accept the projects, let me say to the Premier—history cannot be successfully thwarted and facts will always rise above the distraction and evil of those who believe they can repeat and repeat the distraction of a plan or an issue. They shall not succeed. But such were the blatant attacks on our medical tourism plans, even attacking Dr. Shetty himself, the port plans and Cayman Enterprise City and the revenue measures, all of which the now Premier gave no quarter in his attacks on me between 2009 and 2012.

None! But today, today the PPM has seen the light, the good common sense I used. And lo and behold what wonderful projects they are today.

What wonderful projects they are.

Madam Speaker, isn't it fair and fitting to say, **"He who knows not and knows not he knows not: he is a fool - shun him. He who knows not and knows he knows not: he is [simple] - teach him. He who knows and knows not he knows: he is a wise - follow him. He who knows and knows not he knows: he is asleep - wake him."**?

As for Cayman Enterprise City, I am also glad to see that the Premier has finally come around to seeing the benefits of this project as well. The fact is that the numbers CEC, Cayman Economic City promised, were based on projections seen in other parts of the world. Those figures could have grown at a much greater rate if it wasn't for the bureaucracy placed in its way by Opposition spouting off and various civil servants who sided with the Opposition.

The fact of the matter is, if I had listened to the PPM Opposition, the Special Economic Zone, just like the Shetty project, would have never gotten off the ground. The fact is that it takes time for any new sector to take root, flourish and grow. I will never forget in the Cabinet that day when Duncan Taylor told me, when I carried the Shetty project to Cabinet, that he was voting against it. I said, *Where do you have a vote in this Cabinet? You ain't got a vote here. If you object to this, go to London and tell them why.* And his reply was, *Well, I won't go that far.* I said, *No, you can't, because it is a good project.*

They did everything in the world, Madam Speaker. I don't need to remind you, Madam Speaker (because it's you I have to speak to here, and only because you're the Speaker), you were there. You know?

I am very proud of the efforts by the UDP Administration made in the face of unyielding opposition by the PPM. I am also very satisfied with the progress that Charlie Kirkconnell and Cindy O'Hara have made. I still support the project wholeheartedly. They are two good Caymanians coming from strong family business backgrounds. I believe they will make it. I see that.

I have not seen what was renegotiated recently, but will say this: My Government had to ensure that this new sector was not going to grow at the expense of sacrificing the great gains made in our economy, particularly in the financial services industry. It was always envisioned that CEC would be a new industry, standing on its own and working in tandem with the financial services industry. It was going to bring a new kind of business, one where businesses would have a physical presence here and not just have a registered office. It was on that basis that we insisted that businesses servicing the local industry would not be allowed to operate inside the zone as a zone company and be entitled to any of the concessions.

You see, Madam Speaker, if we allowed all local businesses to enter the zone and receive the benefits from the special economic zone concessions, we would end up seriously destroying our revenue base. I hope they see that. However, Madam Speaker, we agreed that we would allow specific local businesses, like law firms and accounting firms, to have a presence in the zone, as we believe that their presence in the zone would complement the efforts of CEC. However, they would not be treated as zone companies and would not be entitled to any special economic zone benefits.

Madam Speaker, it is not true, and grossly misleading for the Premier to state that the legal agreement my UDP Government signed did not give Caymanian businesses access to the various market segments contained in the agreement. We spoke with various Caymanian businesses, including law firms, discussing a multitude of opportunities, including the introduction of a comprehensive trademarks, patent and copyright law, making it easier for tech businesses and intellectual property companies to register, protect and transfer intellectual property efficiently in and out of the Cayman Islands.

We spoke with CIMA [Cayman Islands Monetary Authority] and the Cayman Islands Stock Exchange (CISE), and Maples, about what it would take to establish a derivative and commodities park, but the wheels of bureaucracy sometimes moves mightily slow. However, I can assure that we had advance talks about assisting CEC in getting this commodities park. I still believe that this commodities park is essential and very necessary to move our financial services in a new direction.

In addition, Madam Speaker, the design plans for Cayman Economic City is centered on creating a cluster where businesses benefit from a working environment in close proximity to other businesses of a similar nature. To that end, it was also necessary to have other businesses in the zone offer complementary and ancillary services. So restaurants, fitness centres and other businesses have always been encouraged and welcomed into the zone.

This will allow these businesses to have a sure and certain clientele. They are guaranteed a certain amount of business just by being located in the zone, or they should be. However, they would not have been allowed to receive the concessions as a zone company because they fall outside the agreed zone businesses located in one of the parks, namely, media, biotech, commodities, IT outsource and now the maritime. It's a position, Madam Speaker, I supported then, and it is a position I still support now.

So, if the Premier has been able to modify the agreement and still safeguard the financial services industry and the overall local economy, and government's revenue base, then I say congratulations. After all, Madam Speaker, this is what progress is all about, working together for the greater-good. But for the

avoidance of doubt and to again make sure history isn't distorted by fiction, let me record in straight terms what I did to create the Special Economic Zone and facilitate Cayman Enterprise City.

In February 2011, Government signed an MOU [Memorandum of Understanding] with a development group regarding the desire to establish a knowledge-based special economic zone in the Cayman Islands which would be the first of its kind in the Caribbean region. The objective was to diversify the economy and bring new knowledge-based companies that would not have considered establishing in Cayman prior to the launch of the zone.

In September 2011, the Special Economic Zones Law was enacted. And in February 2012, the Special Economic Zones Authority was established and Cayman Enterprise City launched. Since then CEC has brought over 153 companies to set up a physical presence in the Cayman Islands with staffed offices. Almost half of these companies were in the zone during the early stages. The majority of these companies have moved from North America, of both the US and Canada, as we predicted.

CEC has acquired property now and they are going to build. They have created an internship programme encouraging zone companies to take on young Caymanian interns. Last year 10 students interned within the zone. This year CEC expects to increase that number by 50 per cent, as we predicted it would do and as was promised by my Government, it had the ability to do. So, CEC has launched their website with the objective of becoming a resource for young Caymanians as well as linking to the jobs portal and the internship programme it provides information, articles, tips and videos on entrepreneurship and technology. And they have created the Maritime Services Park within CEC.

I should say, Madam Speaker, if there was no CEC, which we know I received opposition to, would there then be a Maritime Park being proposed as the latest addition to the Park? No, I don't think so. So again, I say big kudos to CEC for making good on their promise to my Government when we signed the agreement, for doing its part in diversifying the economy and contributing to our gross domestic product (GDP).

Madam Speaker, in terms of what we did to raise revenue as an alternative to imposing some form of direct taxation, we had to increase fees. The PPM Government has continued to go along on this trajectory and has not reduced any of those fees, save the fuel surcharge, which I want to make the record clear about.

Madam Speaker, the Premier talked about duty surcharge on fuel being reduced while blaming me for its increase. We all know why that had to be done. We know that it was the PPM who created the deficit. However, I promised that when our financial position was better we would reduce that duty that we had to

put on. They wouldn't do so and I brought a motion to have it reduced significantly. Well, the budget came and they said they were taking some off. They wouldn't accept the last motion, claiming all the country could afford is what they were offering.

Now, not even nine months later, they have come back and taken it all off, they say. So, at the time of my motion the surplus projections were already waiting. So, what does it mean? It means that the allegations he made on the UDP Government about living in the past and self-aggrandisement and political survival has to be what they are practicing at the expense of the poor people when they could have done much better from the beginning because we created the surplus, which must be able to help some of our people. That's a fact. You can't change that. But they want to change it. And they get up every probably . . . I was going to say everyone, but let's wait and see who is going to be parroting after the Premier.

We'll wait because they all would never come in front and speak. They have to speak in the back of when I speak.

Madam Speaker, the alternative, let me say again, for not introducing those fees would have been the imposing of some form of direct taxation which the Labour Government wanted me to do. They wanted me to put in place property tax, income tax, payroll tax or VAT. I also recall how the now Premier and his then PPM colleagues carried on when these increases were announced. In his estimation, the sky was falling. Yet today, at this very minute, the Minister of Finance has declared for the third year in a row that there are no changes to the budget in terms of increases in duties. So I see that the sky hasn't fallen.

As a matter of fact, Premier, you and your Government are quite happy to bask in the sun of these glorious moments. You can say something for as long as you want and say it as loud as want and even believe your own statements, but you will never be able to turn an untruth into the truth. You should really check what you are saying.

Madam Speaker, as long as the Premier continues to speak evil and distort history and the facts, I will offer corrective information. Simply put, the Premier's comments, his claims, his innuendo has nothing but pure propaganda that leads the country to its own demise. His talk was what hurt the people in 2009 to 2012, and people are still hurting today from that ricochet. Someone said, and I quote, ²**"The most effective way to destroy people is to deny and obliterate their own understanding of their history."**

So, for as long as this PPM-led Administration tries to bend history in their favour, I will stand opposed and speak the truth until the truth is forever embedded in the minds of the people of these Islands. The truth is that it was the PPM Administration be-

tween 2005 and 2009 which was severely reckless, and grossly mismanaged the finances of these Islands. As the responsible Opposition at the time, I came to the Floor of this honourable House on numerous occasions to warn them of their wanton spending and they responded by telling me, and I quote, "Not on the kindest of mornings, McKeeva Bush, would we listen to your sound advice."

The result of that was that for the first time in its history, the Cayman Islands brought a deficit budget to this House. We became non-compliant with the Public Management and Finance Law. They broke the law. And the Cayman Islands had to go cap-in-hand to the Foreign Office in the UK to get every budget, including this budget which we are now debating, approved by the FCO. The new Loan Bill for the PPM was well over \$300 million, just covering a few areas. But they racked up a total Loan Bill well into \$500-odd million by mid-2009 or thereafter.

They had agreed to the new loan with Morgan Stanley for, I think, about 7.5 per cent. I have that agreement somewhere about, Madam Speaker. They broke the Public Management and Finance Law and that is what allowed the UK to hold over our budget since 2009. All the UK had to do in the past years was give assent to our Appropriation Bill. They never had any say in the budget. All they had was a say in signing the assent to the Appropriation Bill.

When my Government took office in 2009 we had to dig the country out of a financial black hole by introducing new duties and increasing taxes in other areas. I made a promise to the people of the Cayman Islands that when the country could afford it I would repeal certain taxes or fees including the duty on fuel. I also went all over the world trying to bring business to these shores, and also, through the sale of a bond which took much time because we were in the throes of getting off of the OECD [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development] gray list. Who was then the Minister of Financial Affairs? Who? The Premier! The now Premier who was the then Minister; that's who was responsible for having placed us on that list because he chose to ignore an international obligation to have us sign tax exchange information agreements (TIEAs). And through the issuance of the bond we were able to refinance much of our short-term debt.

The alternative would have been much worse. And my Government was being forced by the FCO to impose some form of direct taxation on the people of the Cayman Islands which would have had eternal negative implications to our financial services industry. Income tax, property tax, value added tax would have increased the burden on the poor, the elderly and the working middle class. This is what the PPM Administration should claim total responsibility for! And to add insult to injury, they have the audacity to say that building a hundred million dollar school, or a \$106 mil-

² George Orwell

lion school, was in the best interest of our children's future.

The now Premier, who was then Minister of Education, was advised that the country would encounter huge financial cost and our economy would not and could not sustain this level of capital expenditure. But to that solid advice he told the entire country that he was proceeding, and I quote, "Only God could stop" him. Did he really need to spend \$106 million on a building designed in Chicago for the climate of Chicago when we could have gotten a more appropriate building for half that, or maybe less?

So, Mr. Premier, take credit for that. Take credit in knowing that you and members of your Cabinet are the only and absolute perpetrators of this abominable and financially treacherous act. That's what it is. In your pride and arrogance you drove our Islands to the brink of financial collapse. Now you want McKeeva to take the blame for it. Take credit for that! That's a part of history that can never ever be erased. Yet you have the nerve to talk about my Government being the cause of people losing confidence in the Cayman economy. It was my administration, our hard work and persistence that kept these Islands afloat.

Madam Speaker, how many times they called me a fool, I'm uneducated, didn't have any university education, shouldn't be Minister of Finance? But it was my efforts that allowed our Islands to maintain our Moody's Aa3 credit rating during the worst financial crisis the world has ever seen. Yes, I had civil servants who helped me. Yes. Even while the US and UK were both downgraded and nations around us were faltering, and further afield were faltering; while the US and UK were both downgraded, the Cayman Islands maintained its credit rating. And if it weren't for the UDP saving the Cayman economy, your PPM-led Government would be leading an island in the aftermath of an economic meltdown.

Oh, what do they want to say? They want to draw red herring, wanting to lay something personal at my feet. Well, let them go ahead. I have a few personal things in a basket waiting for them. I want to see who is lily white. You remember what I said. The last time I saw lily white, didn't look like some of *unna*. Go ahead with *unna* personalities. You think your highly paid liar will save *unna*? Wait and see, Madam Speaker. Wait and see.

I wonder, Madam Speaker, if they would have wanted to take charge if we hadn't done the things to help the country. I wonder what we would have had if we had listened to the mock parliament held outside here. And they are talking about political shenanigans? Huh!

Madam Speaker, let me go to this continued frame of mind about competence, intelligence and relation. After destroying the surplus that we had left and they found in May 2005, they left a deficit of \$80 million in 2009, there about. They left huge unpaid

bill. And there was a government building started with no money to build it. It ended up costing just about \$100 million. We didn't cut the 500 to 600 civil servants as the FCO wanted. And don't say they didn't want that, Madam Speaker. They told us so. We must go and do so. I said, *Where in the world do I have the power to do that?* [They replied] *Oh, the Constitution.* [I said] *The Constitution is your baby. You want it, Mr. Governor, you go do so. Not me. I don't have that responsibility. I can't do that.* But they wanted it.

Nor did we cut the senior citizens, veterans, and scholarship grants that they wanted us to do. We didn't do so. So now the PPM says they should get the political credit for the surplus. But let me give the PPM credit for balancing the budget on the backs of the poor people of these Islands. They have totally ignored the needs of the poor, the elderly and the handicapped, except what is normally budgeted with a little increase every year. But not the huge fallout from the crisis that we have been in, they haven't taken up anywhere near as much slack as they could.

As politics go, Madam Speaker, the people are aware of what the Premier did between 2005 and 2009. No matter what the budget looks like today, he can't take the credit because nothing new has been done to earn revenue. It was the PPM who left us in the hands of the UK—not the UDP. It wasn't the PPM who gave us a surplus—it was the UDP. The people know. They are more aware than how certain sections of the media may put it or what the PPM is now trying to portray.

So, Madam Speaker, yes, I can heave a sigh of relief that what the PPM did in breaking the law is now being corrected, corrected because we in the UDP had to put in place new revenue measures which have gotten us to this point. So, the people have had to pay for the mistakes made by the PPM by paying higher fees to bring us back from financial ruin and regain our financial independence. This is a burden that we have all had to bear, political friend and foe, resident and citizen, alike.

What I know, Madam Speaker, is that while there was the surplus, children's scholarships were cut. Benefits to the handicapped people were cut and senior citizens, in particular the seamen and others in need, were not assisted. Many applications are still lying around not assisted. Maybe, Madam Speaker, those on their high horse who somehow believe that they are more and above some of us and think they can look down on us will laud these decisions not to give and laud it as good fiscal management. But certainly in my thinking it's a loss of our social conscience and a moral responsibility of the Government.

Yes, I heave a sigh of relief and say thanks to the Government because the fiscal plan that we put to the FCO and agreed by them in 2012 has kept its course. Except for the areas which the PPM tweaked, it's the surplus that we put in place that has kept us on

this successful trajectory. Sad to say, meanwhile, people have no work, no electricity, including the handicapped, no water and losing their houses. The elected Government . . . yes, we are winning the battle because we are meeting the FCO requirements. We are winning the battle. But Caymanians are losing the war. Caymanians are losing the war. The economy is still in the doldrums.

Madam Speaker, we should take heed regarding the pronouncements made by top economic analysts who suggest that the world economy is still very fragile and could find itself in another recession. What is the Government of these Islands doing to mitigate and protect us from the full force and effect of another world economic crisis?

Build back confidence, they say. Oh yes? With what they are doing?

An immigration programme that is stifling businesses, both local and foreign, and one that is keeping Caymanians from getting work, is an immigration policy that is heavily discriminatory and it cannot build a country for the future.

I listen to some people talk about too many people in this country. We cannot build a robust future if we don't have critical mass to achieve economies of scale. That said, Madam Speaker, I am fully aware that we also cannot grow a population at a rate exceeding GDP. We know that. However, growth in GDP means more demands for goods and services. We can only get that kind of consistent and protracted growth if we have a population that can sustain the needed demand through its numbers and also earn a decent wage with an increase in their disposable income. This formula can contribute to the growth of the economy through spending.

Simply put, Madam Speaker, a growing population and decent wages would equal new and sustained gross domestic growth and a strong local economy. However, if we try to stifle growth and opportunity and rely on cheap labour and practice exploitation and discrimination, the Caymanian economy will suffer and businesses will close.

Madam Speaker, that is a fact. Let all those who say we don't need this and we don't need that, say how their entrepreneurship is going to work. Let them say it. I said many times, and people don't seem to like it, and don't want to admit it and they cuss me for it, but when you fire one manager, three Caymanian secretaries, mostly, are sometimes lost.

The Speaker: Honourable Leader of the Opposition, you have one hour remaining. At this time I will take a 10 minute morning break.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, I might need some help from my colleagues. They won't be speaking for all their time.

The Speaker: I will have to leave that to your negotiating skills, Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Thank you kindly.

Proceedings suspended at 11:47 am

Proceedings resumed at 12:02 pm

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Before we took the ten minute morning break we were continuing with the debate of the Second Reading [of the Appropriation Bill]. The Leader of the Opposition has concluded one hour of debate. He has one hour remaining.

I recognise him to continue his debate.

I will ask all other Members to please make their way inside the Chamber.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can I bring your attention to the fact that there is not a quorum?

The Speaker: Once you get in your seat I will entertain that interjection, Honourable Leader.

I recognise the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, I see you have a quorum now. I was saying earlier that we didn't have a quorum. But we have one now.

[pause]

The Speaker: Please proceed, Honourable Leader.

**APPROPRIATION (JULY 2015 TO JUNE, 2016)
BILL, 2015— BUDGET ADDRESS AND THE
THRONE SPEECH TOGETHER WITH THE
GOVERNMENT'S POLICY STATEMENT**

[Continuation of debate thereon]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As I said before we took the break, I have sat and listened to the Premier chastise me on what he has even called mangling of the relationship. Well, as I said before, they should be ashamed to talk about mangling relationships. In fact, those who write it for him should be ashamed too. I am still waiting, though, to hear from him what it was I did to mangle this relationship they claim we had with the FCO. In my opinion, what I did was to stand up to the Foreign Office when they wanted to press us into taxation because they thought they had us conquered when this present

Premier broke the Public Management and Finance Law and the FCO took control of the budget process.

At that time, Madam Speaker, they also told me that in no way were there going to be any more projects without their explicit permission above \$10 million because we could not afford what was already contracted. In fact, what they were doing then in those early days was indicating their intentions to introduce the FFR [Framework for Fiscal Responsibility]. Of course, our aims and objectives will always be different from theirs. You can't blame them for wanting to protect the City of London. No. That's their job. But it is also my job to protect the Cayman Islands where I can.

So, if that's what the Premier talks about bad relationship, well, they can go ahead. I am never going to let them or anyone else where I can, have their way with us and run us into the ground. No. I'm sorry. I can't.

Now, what I and the FCO agreed was that there would be no more borrowing. That was part of the fiscal plan that we agreed on and it is still in place up to today. So, they go ahead about mangling relationships. Maybe that runs well with some that want to hear it; maybe it runs well with some in the UK. What I need the Premier and all to know is that McKeeva Bush is no puppet. I am not looking for a knighthood. What I specifically want them to know is that McKeeva Bush is not Robert the Bruce.

Madam Speaker, I believe that the Policy Statement was against the good practice and custom of our parliamentary operation on the State Opening because it was laced with personal attacks and invectives discrediting me, my UDP Government where they could (or they tried to), but in the end he tried to temper the address by saying that he would not be distracted by political stunts and side shows. He said that he would not go back to the days of personality politics and a government focused on self-aggrandisement and political survival.

I am not sure how he could say all that when so much percentage of the speech was doing just that. I am always amused at how far the Premier will go to start a quarrel and then declare that he didn't start anything and was merely defending himself. I heard that just a while ago. You only have to call their name or refer back to them and they believe that they are untouchable, that they can say all that they have to say and then as soon as you say something back to them, you're being personal. Madam Speaker, that is not how debate goes. If you raise a matter, it's likely to get dealt with. They must expect that. And don't think that people don't have information. Don't think that their life is so guarded that they are so protected that there is not information. Time will see. Let them go ahead.

But let me bring that wondering delusional mind back to reality. I don't understand this, Madam Speaker. You have to make the corrections and you

have to say what the facts are. Was it not the Premier who went outside of this honourable Legislative Assembly to hold mock parliament while this honourable House was in session right out there on our steps? Isn't that a political stunt and side show? Personality politics, it seems, is all they know. That's all it has ever been for them. As a matter of fact, that's why they are Premier today because they tried to destroy me politically. But it has not worked. For I tell you, Mr. Premier, and others, your report of my death has been grossly exaggerated.

The Bible speaks at length about the reward of those who plot evil. Talk about the politics of old—let me tell you what John F. Kennedy said. He said this: **“Let every nation know whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.”** And may we say the Cayman Islands' liberty.

He went on: **“. . . we are opposed by a monolithic and ruthless conspiracy that relies on covert means for expanding its sphere of influence—on infiltration instead of invasion, on subversion instead of elections, on intimidation instead of free choice . . . It is a system which has conscripted vast human and material resources into the building of a tightly knit, highly efficient machine that combines military, diplomatic, intelligence, economic, scientific and political operations.”**

This is not the politics of old, Mr. Premier. This has always been the dirty underbelly of politics which some politicians continue to play and would prefer that we forget about and would like to see me gone and not be able to reply. As I said, your report of my death has been grossly exaggerated. That's why we have all these various people down here taking notes. You have to answer every little thing.

What do you think if they had, Madam Speaker, the many ministries that I had to have because of not having enough Cabinet ministers? Jesus, God he would have the House half full of people then, if he had had the four ministries that I had.

Anyway, Madam Speaker, let me move now to a more positive matter of tourism. Madam Speaker, I would want to speak positively about such achievements that the Premier would have you believe he and his Government have achieved. The interesting fact is that if it was actually true I might actually reach across the aisle a different way. I find it of particular interest that they have lauded their Government's efforts and are speaking of how great they are doing, especially when you look at one of the main pillars being tourism. I say, how dare they claim credit?

Oh, no doubt the Minister is working. I give him credit for working. But they didn't lay that ground provision, they didn't lay the foundation. The policies were there. But I thank you for keeping them in place.

We pushed the boulder with strategy, policy, and the sweat on our brow to the top of the hill. The Premier took the election through that action which will be revealed soon enough, and now has stood by and watched the boulder roll down the hill. He has the audacity to claim credit and beat his chest with what they claim is their achievement. I didn't think I would have to remind the amnesia that seems to be in abundance so early, didn't think so. Yes, I state early, even though it's been half of their term as I was sorely waiting for some significant moment of projects put forth that I could talk about, a few. However, nothing has materialised. I must call his ghost action to account.

They seem to have been asleep during my Government's last term. After he ran up the tab we couldn't pay, they must have dozed off for four years. I wish they had. That way we would have been better off rather than the disruption he helped to cause. He ran havoc with our accounts and the budget which left us at the peril in the jaws of the UK. We understand that.

Now they want to claim responsibility for the successes of tourism. I had to revisit my past Government's policy decisions and notes in order to be reminded of the following, and let me treat that amnesia a little. When his Government left office in 2009 we were down double digits as much as 10 per cent at the end of 2009 for stay over arrivals. But through strategies that we collaboratively worked with the tourism sector to develop, we increased arrivals some 30 per cent, or close to a third increase from 2010 through to 2013. As they should also note, plans and projects have a cumulative effect that will carry forward at least a year and a half or maybe more. So my Government can easily claim the record stay over arrivals which we achieved for 2014 especially, as they simply followed what my Government put in place.

As is well documented, due to the present Premier's brick and mortar, he left us in a serious predicament. As it related to tourism, we had to make the tough right decision of downsizing the tourism operation. We painstakingly parted ways with a vast amount of long tenured US staff members and closed three physical offices in the US as one measure to reduce cost. And we actually got the budget down from some \$27 million or \$29 million to just about \$19 [million] or so. So don't say that we didn't work to reduce cost. We did! We brought the budget down from must have been close to \$30 million, \$29 [million] plus, I think, to something like \$19 [million]. So, our strategy had to be clear and concise and we allowed the young energetic team at Tourism, headed by Mr. Shomari Scott, to find out-of-the-box methods to deliver the results we so desperately needed.

As a reminder, we reduced the tourism budget by a third while increasing tourism arrivals by almost the same. This was in the face of when the Caribbean was down in regard to visitor arrivals and the world figures remained negative or flat for the most part. As

an example, one of our policy decisions was to reinvigorate relationships and target increased air routes. And with that strategy we have additional air service from five cities with different airlines, all within that three year period, with routes such as New York City, D.C., Toronto, Panama, São Paulo, and Dallas, or Panama and Dallas. But we also opened four markets in three years with Buenos Aires, Panama, São Paulo and Dallas also. That aggressive approach was the most ever, which helped to bring tourism arrivals back to the healthy numbers the Premier across there now boasts.

So, Madam Speaker, understanding the viability of the industry we look to diversify. We increased airlift from Canada to reduce dependence on the US. We strategically opened up Latin American markets in order to seed the foundation to have other target markets to not be as dependent on US markets in five to seven years. I think that's good forward thinking or planning. We injected Caymanian culture and sold back into how potential visitors see and view the Cayman Islands in order to give the Cayman Islands life and vibrancy through the rebranding or, rather, recapturing of what makes Cayman so special.

CaymanKind: We are no longer that vanilla destination in the minds of potential visitors. I would like to remind all naysayers that I am ecstatic that now CaymanKind is the fabric of our beloved Cayman Islands and the brand has also been proven through the many awards it has won.

To further elaborate, Madam Speaker, the projects which our Government had the foresight to start were projects such as ForCayman Alliance, which we already said, to be able to bring another quality four or five star brand to continue to build on our higher-spending clientele (that's what it is all about), and many other tourism properties in the future, as our room stock was so desperately in need of additional hotel rooms. We were down, and it is still down.

The Beach Bay Hotel project, which we hope will get underway, will, I think, invigorate the eastern districts and bring much business. They talk about "Go East"; that's solid Go East, not like what they had before—one little cook-rum on the beach and talking about Go East? This is going to bring real money to people up there.

The Dr. Shetty Hospital, The Cayman Islands Health City, as it is officially known, and for which I see the Premier is clamouring to pretend that he supported from the beginning. Yes. In training, my Government understood that if we improved tourism it would all be for naught if there was not enough access for our people.

We therefore developed the Hospitality School. In doing so, we took a different tack and instead of heavily weighting the council with civil servants or rewarding cronies with a board council position, we strategically put the employers on the coun-

cil—the general managers of the major hotels, the general managers of the major restaurants and water sports companies.

We then included Immigration from a government perspective in order to ensure connectivity between all parties. Those professionals were tasked with forming the standards and curriculum for the school and would then see the progression of students and have a vested interest in the programme and its ancillaries. And at the end of that programme, how could any of the major properties and stakeholders then deny those who passed their industry standards a chance at a career in one of the pillars of our society? So that was a good plan.

Understanding the importance the youth would play in the future of our society, the Government had earmarked funds to help this programme flourish. Unfortunately however, I have heard the stories of the lack of funding that is strangling this programme prior to its blooming and prospering. I hope not.

So let's get this straight. We brag of surpluses whilst we drop dynamite on the rail tracks to the desired goals. Don't say that the money wasn't . . . I have said it over and over and went to the industry. I am putting increasing money, increasing duty on the imported liquor and cigarettes. They warned me about cigarettes, because I said it could go to \$5.00 or \$10.00 a pack. I said I hope it goes to \$25.00. I should put it up more than that. But do you know what happened? That didn't stop cigarettes from going up. People are still smoking. I should have gotten more out of it. But I said the money from the imported liquor and imported cigarettes would go to the Hospitality School. It was earmarked for that. I said that over and over in the budget debate. I said so in Finance Committee. I said so to the industry who reluctantly, I should say, took it on. Nobody is happy about a fee increase, but they reluctantly took it on.

So, I hope, Mr. Minister, that you are getting the lion's share of that, if not all of it, for the Hospitality Training School, and at least as much as is needed to make it grow and take on what it was meant to do.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: You didn't start it.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: He's going talk about he started it.

You just heard me stand here last time, Minister, telling you how it was started and you're going to talk about you started it?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: No, you never started it. We started it. Don't you worry; I am not taking credit for this building. I didn't start this building. But I started that programme.

I started that programme. I put the council in place, put the money in place, and I wasn't there to launch it, you didn't invite me to launch it or for the launching, but I was involved from the beginning. Let's hope it is what we had the high hopes for. Let's just hope it's that. You don't have to invite me to anything.
[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Yeah, you're right, you get. You get a big rock in your head from them.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition: So, our Government allowed and worked with the Tourism Department to devise strategies with lesser budgets to increase visitation when the rest of the Caribbean was down. We, however, fought to have positive arrival results.

Our Government started new routes and used Cayman Airways as a tool to bring new visitors, as well as encourage airlines, such as Jet Blue and WestJet to fly to the Cayman Islands. It should also be known that we started and had much conversation with American Airlines about the Dallas route. They mentioned a timeline and that has come to fruition. However, I see that this Government will want to claim credit for that too.

Our Government was unapologetic in bringing the authentic Caymanian way back to the fore in our branding campaign and is no longer hiding who we are as a nation and should be proud of. I think our visitors are relishing and have even celebrated in this identity.

So, we will get the Kimpton Hotel at least. I don't know if we're going to get the Beach Bay Development. But we should be getting the Shetty Hospital and more.

I can speak now of the great indicators that we have from a tourism perspective—record arrivals, high occupancy, a private sector that is ecstatic about the progress, a Premier that is boasting of all his accomplishments. Maybe we should put a statue in front of all these monuments of his mis-education built. However, many skilled and unskilled, educated and undereducated are struggling without a job. And that's what we need to remember in the tourism sector. Even "Feed Our Future" is going strong.

Madam Speaker, I am proud that we have worked hard on our tourism product and that we are bearing fruit from what we did. And I thank the Minister for continuing that and hope that our tourism product can continue to be enhanced by the policies left in place with the work that he puts into it at present.

Madam Speaker, Health City Cayman has now completed its first full year of operation. As of last week achieved the much sought after Joint Commission International Certification (JCI). We congratulate them on this milestone achievement, as we knew that in achieving the JCI this would allow them to continue their expansion plans on a more rapid pace.

On another note, I offer my congratulations to Health City on their efforts thus far to identify, hire and train Caymanians as was originally agreed in their discussion with us and was in the agreement with the Government. We encouraged creating a high-tech working environment as was always envisioned as a cornerstone of Health City's plans. It then comes as no surprise that there are now major international IT companies which are desirous of partnering in the development of the plan for a Tech City Cayman Islands which will be located in Health City.

As part of Health City's overall vision for creating a cutting edge medical centre of excellence in the region, and staying ahead of the inventions in the field of medicine, Tech City is a natural step towards this end.

Madam Speaker, we are asking the Government to pursue this new business opportunity of Tech City, urging them, as this will once again create opportunities in the Cayman Islands, including new jobs in the technology sector that will in turn lead to the creation of additional indirect and induced employment opportunities in areas such as administration, professional services, hospitality, retail, et cetera, thereby further establishing the Cayman Islands as a destination choice. Again, that was part of the vision, new opportunities.

Madam Speaker, Tech City will function initially as a healthcare and technology incubator and accelerator for technology of focus innovative healthcare products and services. Examples of healthcare products and services are tech-enabled mobile and broadband healthcare applications, patient care outsourcing services, remote medical services, patient care call centres, and virtual healthcare training and education services. But we all know that this type of industry has no limits to its creativity and our people in these islands will be better off for it being established here rather than in a neighbouring or competing jurisdiction.

Madam Speaker, in summary, from what I know, my papers tell me that as Health City is now showing some of the benefits that we spoke to, we believe that Tech City Cayman Islands will also greatly benefit the people of these Islands as it will attract:

- 1) IT enterprises in the healthcare sector. This includes both startups and established.
- 2) IT enterprises more generally. It is expected that these enterprises will be focused on healthcare technology initially, but this could change over time as the technology sector develops.

- 3) Near shore IT services enterprises operating mainly in the business process outsourcing technology subsector.
- 4) IP holding companies—those companies may or may not be directly linked to the technology enterprises referred to above.

Madam Speaker, in this world of competition, Government needs to move on this innovative development. It can be bigger, I believe, than the potential of Health City itself. It has tremendous potential.

Madam Speaker, I want to turn now to another area that I have been pushing, talking about and had moved ahead on. I want to focus on two areas that I think are of necessity for the future, and one area is to deepen corporate capabilities to seize global opportunities.

Madam Speaker, we must grow a diverse and resilient ecosystem of companies, including a stronger base of local companies with the potential to be leaders in the Americas region. We must also entrench Cayman as the essential base, in not only the Caribbean, but in the region, for both MNCs [Multinational Corporations] and global SMEs [Small and Medium-sized Enterprises]; that the MMCs remain a critical part of our economy. They allow Cayman to stay plugged into the developed country markets which will remain sizeable for the foreseeable future. They also play a key role in developing Cayman as a hub for Pan America's management operation.

Three main areas, I think, require special focus: First, we have to make a significant push to derive commercial value by promoting R&D [Research and Development]. Businesses can make much greater use of our untapped technology base through both product and process innovation in areas ranging from biomedical technology to clean energy solutions. Our total R&D expenditure has to grow over the long term to secure our future as a knowledge-based economy. Over the next years I think we need to target to raise Cayman's expenditure on R&D to a fair percentage of the GDP, let's say, compared to current expenditure. And that could be achieved through increased private sector R&D expenditure I think. And we should also review ways to drive public sector R&D so as to capitalize private sector research and commercialization.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, we have to develop the financing capabilities to take advantage of global opportunities and manage, I think, inherently higher risk of these markets. Demand is growing rapidly in fields where Cayman based companies have significant strengths, such as in the financial services industry and tourism. But there are some gaps in cross border financing capabilities in Cayman, including in trade and project finance. The Government could help the market plug these gaps through private industry market based solution and institution to provide the credit insurance guarantees and other in-

struments needed to facilitate commercial bank financing. That, I think, will also protect Cayman's role as a leading global banking centre.

Maybe, Madam Speaker, we are reaching some of this. But there is work yet that could be done.

Thirdly, we would develop strong alliances between large and smaller players to promote technology transfer, test bidding, and commercialization. That alliance will help the SMEs develop capabilities in the local market which we can then deploy abroad, and that network of supply chain relationship will also benefit the larger foreign players and help root them in Cayman.

So, Madam Speaker, those capabilities will provide new opportunities for Government to diversify the tax base as well as provide greater support and assistance to our poor, our elderly and our children.

You see, Madam Speaker, for social programmes to have the necessary financial support, we need to be more pro-business and welcome new cutting edge businesses. I tell the Government, some may laugh at me, scorn me, I don't know what they will do, but I hope they don't listen to the naysayers because that way they won't get anything done. Too many people don't want to see this, don't want to see that, and don't want to change. They want everything, but they don't want any changes. How in the world do you make that happen? I don't know.

Now, Madam Speaker, another aspect that I think is of Cayman, is Cayman as a centre of excellence. Cayman's future must rest, I believe, in being a global centre of excellence. Some of the things we are doing, we are moving in that direction. But Hong Kong, Dubai, and Singapore are what they are, not because of the specific economic activities they conduct, but because people want to be there. And that, too, has to be Cayman's key advantage in the future, being a distinctive destination and a meeting point here in the Americas for enterprise, people's talent, culture and ideas, which will be a source of competitiveness and growth in its own right.

Madam Speaker, as I said, we can't be the dishwasher destination, or the Salvation Army to the whole world. We must continue to attract top quality people from around the world even as we manage our overall dependence on foreign workers. We must do that. New competitor environments in the Caribbean, Madam Speaker, and beyond, are already staking their claims in the global knowledge-based economy. Why do we think Bermuda is doing away with their rollover policy? Why? Think about it.

Our advantage lies in our ability to attract diverse and high quality talent from around the world who must work alongside their Caymanian peers, our people, and add to our capabilities. This must remain an enduring advantage and is a committed position of my party. We don't believe that you must stifle growth. We don't believe that we can give our people oppor-

tunity if we don't allow other people to come and help create opportunity.

Where are we going to get it from? It has to be a policy that allows people in. Sorry, the money is not growing in North Side, not growing East End, not growing on trees in Bodden Town, not growing down in Bolton where I live, nor up on Seven Mile Beach. No, the money is not growing there! The money is somewhere else, and it's coming to us and we must utilise it and allow people to bring it and utilise it. And that's what the old people of old did, our forefathers in this House, if you want to say that. They protected Caymanians, though. They gave us some rights. Not everybody was protected now. Don't let anybody fill your head up with that. Hear what I tell you? Because I have already told you that there were far too many that couldn't get education, right?

Nevertheless, we grew and we made it better. So don't let these people, these naysayers, tell you that we don't need people here and you must be back in the 50s and 60s. Oh yeah? Well who wants to be by a cook-rum, let them go and be by a cook-rum. I want my air-conditioning, I want to go in a good kitchen and a good dining room and sleep without the fear of rain coming in on you. That's what we had when we were growing up. We cannot go back to that! And the way to do that is to allow people to come and invest and we are welcoming.

So, Madam Speaker, yes, as this distinctive global destination we will also see enterprising Caymanians venture overseas for part of their careers as their companies expand abroad and as demand for their skill grows. But Cayman must remain their home, the country they feel emotionally rooted to.

So, wherever they may be, in Cayman or abroad, we need to engage our people. Their commitment, their ideas, their skills and hard work will continue to be our greatest strength. To realise our potential we must focus more in several areas. First we must grow the knowledge-based economy which will continue to make Cayman that distinctive global centre. We must develop thriving, creative art clusters distinguished for both their development of Caribbean content and appeal to an international audience. We should also aim to continue to host more global events building on the vibrancy of the Islands. We must provide the best opportunities in Cayman for diverse talents to grow and develop.

Our workforce will become even better educated over the next decade, by 2020, we hope, and beyond. A good percentage of our resident workforce is projected to possess at least a diploma, I think, including 35 per cent holding degrees and maybe higher. I'm not sure if that's in keeping with what the Ministry sees. But this is comparable to the leading G8s today.

Madam Speaker, however, we have to complement the academic roots of advancement with a range of new practice based pathways to excellence.

We have to build deeper expertise across the board, whether amongst our marine engineers, our attorneys, our construction workers, or our finance professional chefs and tour guides and other tourism workers, we must ensure that Cayman will be a centre for thought and practiced leadership, Madam Speaker, in our key areas of specialisation. These are some thoughts, Madam Speaker, that I believe are important to where we need to go.

In opening earlier, I stated that Caymanians need to decide what it is they truly want. Now, Madam Speaker, I need to ask what it is we as representatives want for them.

I can speak for the UDP in this honourable House and elsewhere. I have often said that our people need to make up their mind. What is it they are looking for in the future of the Cayman Islands? We must know they must have work. We know that. We know that they must live in a crime-free country with a safe future with opportunities for their children and grandchildren. We must be able to take care of our elderly and provide entrepreneurial opportunities for our Caymanian people.

The UDP is certainly about a unified Cayman. We are about getting back to what made us successful, Madam Speaker. We recognise that we have no natural resources—no mountains, no rivers, we have no minerals, no oil or bauxite. All we ever had, and what have allowed us to come ahead, is being a good people. That is what has made us come ahead. The world, though, has changed today. But if we are willing as Caymanians to make some adjustments and bring in businesses and be welcoming and understand that we, as of now, are not our own masters, we know that the world controls our money. As I said, we don't print money down here. Not growing on any trees. We know that the world controls our money; the banks, the hedge funds, the reinsurance, the companies registered here and the hotels, and that the world is our tourism and that really, Madam Speaker, we are dependent on the world. Let us not forget that.

Let us not forget to preach it. Even the Premier has picked up on that, as much as he's kicked me in the face about Immigration and so on. Even he has picked up on it. We are dependent on the world.

Then, Madam Speaker, if we can recognise who has helped us get the good homes, the good education, the good standard of living we have enjoyed over the last 50 years, and realise that it wasn't the statements that the Premier makes or any politician makes right now, and that he has done nothing for our success, and, Madam Speaker, the social benefits, the seamen and elderly benefits, the scholarships for our children did not come just now. But in spite of them we have survived.

The Speaker: Honourable Leader of the Opposition you have 15 minutes remaining.

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Fifteen?

The Speaker: Yes sir.

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, kindly.

There are some who still exercise good conscience, we know that, and know what humanity is. We can realise that. There are some who do that.

I know my good friend, the First Elected Member for Bodden Town. He and I served together in Cabinet and he knows the work, feels the compassion for people, understands the need of people and is willing to put out his hand to help people. I can relate to him.

We know that we have to help our people. We know that. So, yes, there are some who still exercise good conscience and know what humanity is. And we can realise that we will always need a government but it must be one that cares enough for the people to give those benefits while we work to build the Islands as our people did in the past. If all of that is comprehensible, then, yes, we will and can have a better life in the future.

Yes, I desire, Madam Speaker, it's been long I have been talking about it. From the first time I entered that very first seat down there in 1984 I said that. We want to be the Singapore of the Caribbean. And we can be the diverse community living in unity where progress is not measured by what party is in, or what it calls itself, but measured by the quality of life in these Islands for all of our people. Let us not be fooled by the gimmickry. Where is the evidence of the benefits for the people and their families' survival?

Talk is cheap, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, someone said to me at the prayer breakfast the other morning that we as leaders must have the courage to stand up for those who don't have the power. And it is said that the tragedy of a country is not that mistakes are made. We're all human, all of us here. The tragedy of a country is not that mistakes are made, but that there is a refusal to learn from our mistakes and those of others.

Madam Speaker, I could go on much more of what was said that I could deal with. But no, I will sit. I will invite all Members to our public meeting tonight at Marina Drive in Prospect. I am going to deal with that thing called one man, one vote. We are going to publish our petition against it because we believe that no matter what, it is not good for these Islands.

Maybe people thought it was the best thing to have. I know that some of my colleagues in here have their deep hardened opinions about it. But no, Madam Speaker, I certainly will not support it. I cannot support dividing this country up any more, Madam Speaker. No.

That cannot be the kind of participatory democracy we want. And the Premier knows that. He

knows that. It is amazing, Madam Speaker, how less than two years ago the now Premier, then Leader of the Opposition, did not support one man, one vote. And there was an entire war of words with the chairman of C4C, some of whom are now his coalition partners, over the same thing. But now, all of a sudden for temporary political expediency he has made a 180 degree shift in his position.

Are you telling me, Mr. Premier, that members of the C4C are now influencing your decision to disregard the will of the people and change the process that has been in place for over 185 years and has served the Islands well?

History will record that my party and I were again right, if you decide to implement one man, one vote. Why for once, Mr. Premier, can't you and I publicly be seen to do the right thing for the thousands of people who have put their confidence in us and voted for us?

You see, Madam Speaker, the Premier knows what I am saying is correct. You know that you don't really support this change. But it appears as though his party, and perhaps even his conscience, have been hijacked. I don't know. I will stand with him though and will defend the position, our position, as it relates to one man, one vote. We seldom see eye to eye on much. But you know in the deepest chambers of your conscience, Mr. Premier, that we are both right in our objecting to one man, one vote, and single member constituencies.

I will continue to fight against one man, one vote, because it will bring more polarisation in the country, lead to more separation in our communities and districts, and certainly increase the cost of operating the government.

So, no, can't agree. I am not going to agree. But we will have to abide by democracy and whatever the Government does. Madam Speaker, after we do the petition and circulate, we will see whether they will pay any attention to that.

Madam Speaker, yes, we live in a good Caymanian community. We live in a good Island. These are good Islands, Madam Speaker. Our people have worked hard. Our forbearers have worked hard to build this place up. Yes, we know we can't please everybody, but certainly, Madam Speaker, we have to work as much together as we can, even with our differences, to ensure that we continue building a stronger foundation.

Thank you kindly.

The Speaker: We will now break for lunch and reconvene at 2:15 pm.

Proceedings suspended at 12:55 pm

Proceedings resumed at 2:25 pm

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Before we took the luncheon break we were continuing with the debate on the Throne Speech, Budget Address and Policy Statement.

Does any other Member wish to speak?
[pause] Does any other Member wish to speak?
[pause]

I recognise the Sixth Elected Member for George Town.

**APPROPRIATION (JULY 2015 TO JUNE, 2016)
BILL, 2015— BUDGET ADDRESS AND THE
THRONE SPEECH TOGETHER WITH THE
GOVERNMENT'S POLICY STATEMENT**

[Continuation of debate thereon]

Mr. Joseph X. Hew Sixth Elected Member for George Town: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was hoping to get the lectern . . .

The Speaker: Perhaps we could have someone bring the Serjeant in, so that the Member can be accommodated.

Mr. Joseph X. Hew: Thank you, Madam Speaker

I rise today to join my colleagues in thanking Her Excellency the Governor for her heartening and encouraging Speech from the Throne. I would also like to congratulate the Honourable Premier on the delivery of the Policy Statement entitled "Toward a Better Tomorrow."

Madam Speaker, I applaud this Government and the Premier for the courage displayed in making the tough decisions today, toward a better tomorrow. It is said that courage is the most important of all virtues because without courage you cannot practice any other virtue consistently.

Madam Speaker, speaking of courage, I would also like to offer my congratulations to the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Marco Archer, his team and the entire Government on a meaningful and well-presented budget. This 2015/16 Budget demonstrates discipline and fortitude in facing up to the big issues whilst creating a foundation for a strong and sustainable economy.

Madam Speaker, as we reflect on our first two years of being in office, this Progressives-led Administration can be proud of its many achievements. This Government has tackled many difficult issues, such as immigration, the environment, one man, one vote, minimum wage—and the list goes on and on—whilst at the same time having stayed focus on the outcomes and not the obstacles. Madam Speaker, not everyone will agree with all that we have done. But we cannot be accused of resting on our laurels. In fact, we will continue to build on our recent success and stability and push forward to deliver strong, sustaina-

ble growth and to ensure that all Caymanians will benefit.

Madam Speaker, this Government has restored consumer confidence, and as Her Excellency mentioned in her Throne Speech, we will continue to be attractive to international investors on the basis that this Government has steered the Islands' economy towards a sound annual growth rate of just over 2 per cent, and have overseen increased employment. This Progressives-led Administration has sown the fortitude in making evidence-based policy decisions and not being distracted by those stuck in the blame game.

I am happy to know that this Government remains deliberate in following proper process and in practicing good governance in the planning and execution of major capital projects, such as the airport, the cruise berthing facility and a state of the art waste management facility. These are projects of national importance that must follow good governance to ensure that the people of these Islands receive value for money. Madam Speaker, much work is happening behind the scenes. But this summer, we will see the start of the airport redevelopment, expanding the airport to some two and a half times its current size and all within our current budget limitations.

In the coming weeks we will be seeking public consultation on the environmental impact assessment, the EIA, for the cruise berthing facilities. Again, this EIA has been formulated following the outlying business case and best practice processes. This EIA and other intellectual property to do with the Port will belong to the people of this country so that they can decide the future of our cruise berthing facility and whether or not we move forward or continue to seek a better outcome.

Madam Speaker, a similar process is taking place to provide the country with an outlying business case to determine the best options for a waste management facility. Again, this information will belong to the people of these Islands so that they can decide how we address this national issue.

Madam Speaker, this Government set out on a deliberate plan to restore confidence and stability to this country and its finances after several years of turmoil and instability. We continue to achieve this through discipline, and by prioritising those projects which required our immediate attention. It is said that derivatives are a financial weapon of destruction.

Another much needed project that this Administration has undertaken is the revitalisation of George Town. As a representative of the people of George Town, I am personally pleased to see the advancement of this effort. I am encouraged by the recent start of construction of a commercial building across the street from the police station and the recent completion of a retail plaza just up the street across from the Casanova Restaurant. Madam Speaker, this is the

first time that we have seen construction in our nation's capital in almost a decade.

I am especially pleased to see the physical works starting with our road corridors in and around the capital. This is a very important aspect of the revitalisation effort, as in order for our town to become attractive, persons will need to have access to the town with relevant ease. We have also seen some efforts by the private sector, such as the construction of the sidewalk along the North Church Street waterfront. However, if we are to truly rejuvenate the capital, we will have to make changes to our Planning zones and laws to facilitate mixed-use development and more emphasis to be placed on pedestrians and consumers. Madam Speaker, it is hoped that these changes and the refocus of the town will attract private sector to once again reinvest in the capital.

Madam Speaker, I am also pleased to hear that plans are in place to reduce the speed limit on the West Bay Road, and crosswalks and other traffic-calming measures are being implemented. The incidents of accidents and pedestrians being struck by cars on the West Bay Road are far too frequent. The West Bay Road is a hub of our tourist economy, but it is also enjoyed and traversed by many residents. Recently, it has been too dangerous to walk on and sometimes even a bit scary to drive on.

Madam Speaker, another threat to our tourism product and overall quality of life is the emergence of illegal vendors and hagglers on our beaches, boat ramps, sidewalks and just about every street corner. This is a situation that can and will only get worse if not nipped in the bud. The Cayman Islands have long held a distinction as a safe and hassle free jurisdiction. But today our guests are being haggled and harassed by persons pushing everything from hair-braiding to land and sea transport and even illegal drugs. I have in the past, and will continue to, call on all of our authorities, including the police, to join together to stamp out this trend before it becomes far too much the norm.

On a more positive note, the Cayman Islands have continued to post record numbers of arrivals both by air and by sea. And we have received several international accolades for our marketing, our growth as a destination and most recently, our own Seven Mile Beach was rated as the best beach in the world by *US News and World Report*. These accolades and the highest number of arrivals in over a decade did not happen by chance. Much effort has been placed on becoming much more strategic and creative in our methods to build our tourism numbers. This Government recognises that tourism is an important pillar of this economy. Therefore, through collaboration and the removal of barriers between ministries and agencies, we have worked together to develop and enhance other facets of our tourism offering.

Without the luxury of new developments and additional room keys, it was no easy feat to achieve

what we have over the last 18 to 24 months. The team at the Department of Tourism continues to do a fantastic job in positioning the Cayman Islands to those who fit our target demographic. However, we recognise that during the high season we are limited in our ability to increase numbers once we have reached the capacity of our room inventory. Therefore, as I mentioned before, with no new inventory available, we had to devise a strategy to fill rooms during the slow, or what we would call the shoulder months in order to increase our overall growth.

Madam Speaker, never before has there been such clarity in the relationship between entities, such as Cayman Airways, the Department of Tourism, Cayman Turtle Farm, the Public Transport Unit, the Port Authority or the synergies between the Ministry of Sports, the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Financial Services. It is with these unified approaches that we have successfully filled those gaps or shoulder periods with the hosting of major sporting events, major financial seminars, conferences, and the creation of events, such as, CayFilm, which takes place next month at the Ritz Carlton.

It is by no surprise that the Cayman Islands are becoming known as a destination that hosts first class events. Cayman Cookout, Taste of Cayman, Pirate's Week and Batabano, all continue to grow. This year we will see the second staging of a world class kite surfing competition attracting thrill enthusiasts from around the world. And CayFilm, which is in its second year, will attract hundreds of visitors. The confirmed major celebrities include actor Reno Wilson of CBS's *Mike and Molly*, actress Alexa Pena-Vega and her husband Carlos Vega, known to kids as Carlos on *Big Time Rush* on Nickelodeon and also now as the host of *Game Heads* on Nickelodeon; Brian Cox, OBE, and several directors and screen writers.

Madam Speaker, this year we will also continue to support major sporting events including tennis, football and rugby, to name a few.

Madam Speaker, it is with proper strategic planning and a clear indication of where and how we want our stay-over tourism to grow, that we have increased services from established gateways and strategically attracted key new gateway services, including additional flights out of New York by Delta, and, most recently, out of Dallas by American. Today we have 8 carriers servicing some 20 international gateways, many of which are serviced several times per day.

Madam Speaker, I heard the Leader of the Opposition earlier speak about development of Panama and Buenos Aires and São Paulo, Madam Speaker, we no longer cover those routes, but have refocused to cover the area, particularly in the north-eastern United States where our traditional tourists and strongest demographic reside.

Madam Speaker, having our own national airline offers its own set of advantages apart from

opening strategic gateways, which helps to stimulate traffic from that destination. But Cayman Airways also helps to keep the cost of airfares competitive, and in many cases, are lower than most of our competitors. It is also known that because of Cayman Airways, as a destination, the Cayman Islands Government do not have to pay for risk seats, or rely on these sorts of partnerships with the airlines, costing the Government millions of dollars per year as in other jurisdictions.

Madam Speaker, with these efforts, we, as a destination, continue to secure the Cayman Islands' competitive advantage as a warm, luxury Caribbean destination of choice through the ease of airlift. It is also equally important to our tour operators and watersport operators that our efforts in cruise tourism have produced positive results. With short term enhancements of the Royal Watler Terminal and the evidence of a properly planned process that follows best practice towards cruise berthing facilities, the cruise lines have reacted by boosting their schedules. As a result, we have seen unprecedented growth in 2014 and, thus far, steady growth year to date for 2015.

Madam Speaker, perhaps many, many plans were made prior to this Administration taking office, but what this administration has done has produced results and we have done it in just under 24 months.

Madam Speaker, unlike the previous administration, we have continued to advance these Islands through sound financial management, due process and good governance. Madam Speaker, the economy has responded and the country has grown. Over the next few months we will continue to lay the foundation for continued growth in all sectors of our economy. We expect development to continue in all sectors, but especially within the hospitality industry where we will see moderate growth continue over this year and next year with the increase in room inventory with the opening of the Kimpton.

So, Madam Speaker, we must also prepare our people to take advantage of this growth. After many years of discussions and many Governments' failed attempts, we have finally seen the successful launch of the Hospitality School. Madam Speaker, in a few short weeks we will be graduating our first group of bright, young Caymanians who have all been placed within the hospitality industry. And immediately after, we will begin recruiting for the next set of young Caymanians to enroll in the upcoming semester.

Madam Speaker, we have also seen the private sector embrace this programme. And, in fact, just recently I visited with the Westin Hotel as they were holding a career's day on their property for high school students. The kids thoroughly enjoyed this and I give kudos to the Westin as I believe that they have realised that with the Hospitality School and this Government's firm commitment to training Caymanians and placing Caymanians in the hospitality industry, they have gotten a jump-start by trying to attract or plant the seed in the minds of our high school stu-

dents before they graduate, that the hospitality industry and, particularly in their case, the Westin can provide a real, tangible career opportunity.

Madam Speaker, it is our goal that through this Hospitality School and through our continued work with the private sector that when our guests arrive at our hotels they can truly experience what we consider our CaymanKind experience with the smiles of Caymanians, young Caymanians, taking their place rightfully at the front line of the industry.

Madam Speaker, we also know that the developers of the Kimpton Hotel have placed a couple of Caymanians overseas to train on Kimpton properties so that once that hotel opens they can hit the ground running. As someone who experienced walking up to the front desk of a hotel in Miami and being greeted by a Caymanian, they said, *Wow, even when you go overseas you can experience CaymanKind!*

So, we look forward to these sorts of private partnership initiatives in training our Caymanian people, that we can truly Caymanianise and display the CaymanKind product across the board.

Madam Speaker, at the request of the caucus I have formed a small committee to review our public transport and to make short-, medium- and long-term recommendations to Government. It is obvious that we cannot simply continue to build roads, as we would soon have to start building roads on top of roads if we are going to accommodate the levels of traffic that we are currently experiencing. It is also known that without a proper and reliable bus service we will continue to see an increase in the import of automobiles and, ultimately, an increase in traffic congestion.

Madam Speaker, in the short-term, we have continued to expand our bus routes with hopes that our residents will embrace these bus routes and start to utilise them to make them feasible for all. But, Madam Speaker, in the long term, we have got to come up with a sustainable and comprehensive plan to address public transport. We have got to be able to offer public transport to our residents that will allow them to access public transport in a safe and comfortable environment protected from the elements. There has to be a national plan with bus depots that are lit, that are safe, that persons can feel comfortable dressed in their work clothes to sit and wait for the bus and be able to board the bus without getting wet from rain or without standing in the sun and becoming soaking wet with sweat while awaiting the arrival of a bus.

Madam Speaker, these buses will have to operate on a fixed schedule between the districts with the ability to move people from district to district on a strict time schedule. The committee at this point has prepared some recommendations for the short-term in dealing with our current public transport unit and some of the recommendations being made towards the law that we can implement immediately to allow that unit to operate more efficiently and for us to continue to encourage and grow that sector of the industry. And

then, Madam Speaker, we will move on to more medium term changes in the law and, of course, the longer term strategic plan towards developing a national public transport system.

The public transport unit has also continued to monitor the need for taxi services to support our recent increases in arrival numbers, both at the airport and the cruise port. Over the last year, dozens of Caymanians were issued licenses to operate their taxis and provide a living for themselves and their families due to our success in tourism. Several dozen Caymanians have found employment as tour and bus operators as well.

Madam Speaker, it is said that discipline is a bridge between goals and accomplishments. This Government was elected on a platform of returning stability, security, and dignity to this country and its citizens. Madam Speaker, we took the helm of the good ship Cayman amidst a state of shambles, uncertainties, and the fractured Government. However, this Administration, not daunted by the mess it found, hit the road running. Madam Speaker, we embarked on a solid plan to restore stability and to stimulate growth within this country.

As I said before, the country has enjoyed a growth of just over 2 per cent on our GDP, imports are up, real estate sales are up, construction has increased, and the tourism figures are at a level that we have not seen in well over a decade. Madam Speaker, this is what the people of these Islands elected this Government to do. Even during my Tuesday afternoon constituency visits, Madam Speaker, and sometimes when I am out in the public, persons have approached me to congratulate us on our efforts and have said that they can see the difference. There is actually some feeling of a buzz, of a change in the air that makes them feel that the future is positive.

So, in two short years, Madam Speaker, this Administration has made two reductions on fuel taxes, set in place several tax cuts and stimuluses for small businesses, and in two short years this Administration has reduced unemployment for Caymanians. These are facts. These are statistics. These are the results of the hard work of this Government, Madam Speaker. Compare this to the political and economic uncertainty that this country suffered during the previous administration.

Madam Speaker, in closing, this Government will continue to be disciplined in its plan towards stability and sustainability against disruption and distraction. We will continue to move forward rather than regress and we will protect what we have already achieved, for, Madam Speaker, we cannot risk what we have or gamble away our children's future.

With those closing words, Madam Speaker, thank you very much and may God bless these Cayman Islands.

[Applause]

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause] Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause] Final call . . . I recognise the Honourable Deputy Premier.

The Deputy Premier, Hon. Moses I. Kirkconnell: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise to share my contribution to the Throne Speech, presented by Her Excellency the Governor, the Budget Address delivered by the Honourable Minister of Finance, and the Policy Statement, "Towards a Better Tomorrow" delivered by the Honourable Premier.

Madam Speaker, I stand before you today as one of the people's representatives for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. As a parliamentarian, and as a Member of this honourable House, I am cognisant that the citizens and residents of this country, whom we serve, regard us with high expectations. They have placed their trust in this Progressives-led Government to lead the way to economic growth and prosperity.

Madam Speaker, that trust has not been misplaced. Over the past two years the physical and economic outlook for the Cayman Islands has no longer been foreshadowed by decline and uncertainty. Rather, achievements to date reflect that this Government has kept its shoulder to the wheel and is delivering on the pledges that we were elected to accomplish.

Madam Speaker, the 2015/16 Budget has brought the country's finances into compliance with the Public Management and Finance Law (PMFL), and, closer to having full control of our economic destiny. It seeks to create the right environment for investment, inclusive economic growth and job creation, and it shows that the Government is continuing to manage the country's finances diligently, reasonably and transparently. I wish at this time to congratulate and commend the Honourable Minister of Finance and his dedicated team for exemplary management of the public purse. I look forward to the Ministry of District Administration, Tourism and Transport contributing to the achievement of our stated objectives throughout the 2015/16 financial year and beyond.

I would also like to place on record my support for the Honourable Premier for his foresight and stewardship. Delivering on an economic vision of this scale requires focus, discipline, fortitude and a collective commitment to working together for the greater good. As elected representatives, we commenced our term in office resolved to spare neither effort nor energy to improve the quality of life for the good people of the three Cayman Islands. And we stand firm on that commitment today.

Madam Speaker, the theme of this Budget presentation, "Towards a Better Tomorrow" makes it clear that Government's strategic focus remains aligned to facilitating economic growth and prosperity for the people of these Islands. In my contribution to-

day I will outline the specific initiatives within the Ministry of District Administration, Tourism and Transport which will occupy the majority of our focus for the year 2015/16.

Although varied in scope and purpose, these initiatives share the goal of creating an enabling environment through which to continue growing and developing the tourism industry and the Sister Islands towards a better tomorrow and a brighter future. In broad terms, these initiatives include:

- Boosting offseason arrivals by promoting sports tourism and niche activities to drive incremental visitation;
- Partnership with CONCACAF and hosting groups and football tournaments held here in Grand Cayman and Cayman Brac;
- Redevelopment and expansion of the Owen Roberts International Airport;
- Increasing airlift to provide greater access and connectivity from key source markets;
- Improving secondary market penetration; and specifically with this, it is focusing on the West Coast and European business as a secondary market when you look at the new flights coming out of Dallas to start connecting the West Coast.
- Development of the cruise berthing facility;
- Hosting boats and anglers as part of international fishing tournaments
- Furthering medical tourism arrivals, accommodating through assistance from Customs and Immigration and support staff at the airport prior to arrival and departure to aid the patients of not only Health City, but other licensed medical tourism providers.

Madam Speaker, these activities and others will ensure that the enhancement of the tourism sector takes place on many fronts. Our goals are clear and we are resolved to continue with the collaborative and integrated approach adopted to reach the ambitious targets we have set for ourselves.

Madam Speaker, the strength and vitality of a tourism industry is typically measured by the arrival results. On the basis that tourism statistics are accepted indicators of economic wellbeing, the Cayman Islands have good reason to be optimistic about their future. Our tourism industry is an important contributor to GDP and, therefore, although it has been widely reported, it bears repeating that 2014 was a banner year for tourism arrivals. January 2014, at the time the highest January on record, and February 2014 were the highest since 2001. The year closed registering an 11 per cent increase over 2013, which was more than double the regional average of tourism arrivals, which was 5 per cent.

For the first quarter of 2015, we have already surpassed both of those achievements, making this one of the best quarters in our Islands' history. Over-

all, 115,000 stay-over visitors were welcomed to our shores, which equates to an increase of 5.7 per cent compared to the same period in 2014.

March arrivals registered 45,400 visitors, which is the highest number in any one month since recordkeeping began. Year over year—arrivals for March 2015 increased by 2.8 per cent over the same period in 2014. As a travel destination, we are doing well, both in absolute terms as well as in the comparison with our regional competitors.

Madam Speaker, I have heard it said that too much emphasis is placed on arrivals and too little is paid to quantifying tourism revenues. I would contend that you cannot generate revenue without adequate visitor arrivals. And I am pleased to report that for the calendar year 2014, government collected \$20,700,000 in tourist accommodation taxes. This reflected a 26 per cent increase over the previous year (2013).

While 2014 was a remarkable year in terms of visitation, growth in tourist arrivals is not an end in itself. The real end game is putting the right measures in place at the right time to enable tourism to act as a catalyst for development, a driver of business, opportunities and an engine for keeping revenue multiplying throughout our economy. This is what ultimately leads to the creation of jobs and improvements in the standard of living of our people. Visitor arrivals confirm that important inroads are being made and I am very pleased with the hard work that has brought us to this point.

These outstanding results did not come by chance, but are the manifestation of deliberate and responsible planning, and extraordinary levels of positive collaboration between Government and private sector. Madam Speaker, the deliberations of today remind me of what Harry S. Truman said. It is amazing what you can accomplish if you don't care who really gets the credit.

Madam Speaker, we deliver the results here in a very factual way, proud of what has been accomplished, saying to the country that we were proud to find workable platforms that we prudently took and if we could use them we used them to build our tourism product and if we had to change, we changed. But today we deliver the results.

I want to explain one of what we believe through the hard work and change in methodology of what we have done, which is a differentiator in some of our arrival numbers from the previous platform. We looked at the peaks and valleys of our tourism season. We realised that when we are at the peak, and there are no rooms to be found, no matter what you do, you are not going to increase the arrivals, you are not going to have any more rooms to sell, and you are not going to be able to increase the GDP at that specific time. It is the old adage of, "if you fish in a pond with no fish and you have the most expensive fishing rod and the best gear money can buy, you are still

going to catch no fish." So, we looked at it and said that the time we have that we can add to our tourism product is the time that we have rooms available.

Rooms are available in what we call a "shoulder season." But a shoulder season is a shoulder season because that is not when your tourist travels. So we looked at capturing other visitors who would come for specific reasons. That is why we talk about sports tourism. Working with the Minister of Sport we value tournaments, we value volleyball, football, swimming . . . if those events happen in the first two weeks of February when everybody is sold out, it will not add any more visitors to this Island and it will give us no other return on our investment. But if we can encourage those groups to come at times, like May and end of August and September and October, when there are rooms available, the hotels keep the people employed, the revenue stays up, the airport gets more through-put and you can see the result. We have a higher percentage of growth for the year.

So, Madam Speaker, with no new hotel rooms coming on line, with no new product to sell, we were able to increase the percentage of overnight visitors by 11 per cent over the previous year because of a change in strategy and a change in how we look at accommodating more visitors at shoulder seasons.

We also worked with the wedding destinations. If you look at the research on *Destination Weddings*, the average spend is \$80,000 per wedding. I did not know this, but people get married in May, August, September and October. That is what the statistics say. That is when we have shoulder seasons, off seasons. So, for us to encourage weddings to come to our shores, gives us the ability to have rooms available and gives us the ability to drive.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Moses I. Kirkconnell: It gives the marriage officers more to do in a time that they would not have work. So the trickle-down effect that my good friend from East End is trying to point to is that everybody benefits from this, and this percentage that has increased has trickled down throughout the economy.

Madam Speaker, I believe that the success of this, as Councillor Hew said, is seen and felt throughout the Cayman Islands. All the way down, if tourism operators know that their business is going to be a little more level than it was, that means people can be kept employed, importations can be kept up, and it works out very good for a yearly plan. So, we are very, very pleased with how this is working and we continue to look at how we incentivise groups to come in these periods of time when we have rooms available, and this is a strength that will continue to benefit our tourism product.

Madam Speaker, I must take the time to compliment our private sector that is working with us in this coordinated effort. Looking ahead, our objective

for the remainder of 2015, growth in arrivals is forecast between 3 per cent and 4 per cent. This is not the double-digit increase we had aimed for and achieved in previous years, but it is still a respectable target and there is a very good reason for it. As I stated before, we are at a saturation point. The only way we increase is by looking at and moving to shoulder season which, I think, we have proven works extremely well for us.

Madam Speaker, the cruise sector as well, has performed extremely well. I am pleased to report that the cruise at the end of 2014, 568 cruise ships called on George Town and Cayman Brac, which translated into 1.6 million cruise passengers. This represents an increase of 17 per cent over the previous year of 2013, or 233,000 more passengers. That, combined, shows an increase of approximately 300,000 more visitors over the last year to our shores.

Councillor Hew has done a good job of explaining the transport, the tour, the taxi. I do not think I have to dwell on that, other than to say that we are working to ensure that the visitor expectation is met and that there are enough taxis and tour operators available at peak season. And, as we build out our shoulder season with cruise and stay-over, we again realise that this gives the taxi and tour operators business throughout the year so they do not have to lay people off in the slow months and it keeps a more balanced economy. Again, Madam Speaker, we say here today that this is a strategy and it has not been happening by accident.

Madam Speaker, our target and objective for 2015 is 1.7 million passengers to arrive by cruise. Again, this is not a double-digit growth, but it allows the businesses that are in that part of the tourism industry to strengthen the organisation to look at how they improve and repair some of their boats, buses, equipment they use, and balance the way they are ready for the next surge to come forward.

Madam Speaker, as encouraging as these results are, it is important to remember that the tourism industry is about people and not numbers. Irrespective of how compelling a story the numbers tell, the tourism industry is people intensive, and it is our Caymanian people who should be at the vibrant core of tourism. When I addressed this House last year, I noted that there was a need to match tourism jobs with qualified Caymanians, and it was the Ministry's intention to address this pressing need through the establishment of a Hospitality School.

Madam Speaker, this Government took the plans that were there. But we moved quickly and the Hospitality School is a reality today, something that I have heard . . . I have been in the tourism industry. I have heard the talk of a Hospitality School for the last 20 years. It was going to happen all over different places. They were going to buy buildings to put it in. This plan utilised the bricks and mortar we already had at the UCCI. It involved partnership between the

Department of Tourism, the private sector and the college. The objective has been accomplished in just one year. The results from the school are positive and encouraging.

Since the hospitality workers are on the front line in tourism, having Caymanians situated where they can more easily interact with visitors, adds authenticity to our guests' vacation experience. Investing in our young people will also result in a more sustainable and flexible work force and will greatly enhance the competitiveness in the Cayman Islands service sector over the long term.

Madam Speaker, plainly put, this school is equipping our young Caymanians with the beneficial skill sets for our tourism industry. The goal is to give every young Caymanian that wants it, the opportunity to prosper and benefit from our tourism industry. And it is our obligation to offer this, which we have done, Madam Speaker. I want to make sure that the Leader of the Opposition understands that this programme is funded, scholarships are available. We have removed every barrier for a young person to go to this school. We have visited it. There is no better day spent than spending time with these young people in their classwork and then watching them as they go to the job that they have chosen to intern in and learn their profession and skill set.

Madam Speaker, this Government has said that we are going to empower these young people. We are working with the Ministry of Education on this, we have the skills surrounding it, and we will not fail at giving these young people the opportunity from our growing tourism industry.

Madam Speaker, in the 2015/16 fiscal year Education and Training will remain at the forefront and we will continue to work with the Ministry of Education, the Cayman Islands Tourism Association and the private sector partners in aiming to double the intake of students in the next class. And, Madam Speaker, the first class that is now finishing has worked in the private sector, and, as they have not yet gone into their fulltime jobs yet, it is our assumption and our goal (and we have been told that we have been successful) that most of these young people, as they leave this programme are now going to a job in the private sector that they have actually interned in. And in this we take tremendous pride and will continue from the standpoint of the Ministry (I will speak for the Minister of Education from the standpoint of Education, the Councillor's standpoint and the Government) to continue the work and encourage them.

And I will say this, I invite everybody from the other side, any time you would like to visit, please do. Members from this side have visited and I think that everyone here would agree that it is a very inspiring and enjoyable day to see the amount of positive effort that is being put into this programme. So, Madam Speaker, I am sure you can hear in my voice how ex-

tremely proud I am of this programme, and I speak for my entire Ministry with that.

Madam Speaker, investment in infrastructure serves as a springboard for job creation. It plays an important role in the long term economic fortunes of our country. The Honourable Minister of Finance outlined in his Budget Address that Government is providing a stable, transparent business environment. In other words, an environment that private sector can be successful in. That is the obligation. This, coupled with the strength of our key economic indicators is attracting developers to invest in our Islands. The most recent example is the pending sale of the Treasure Island Hotel property on Seven Mile Beach, which will command, after the sale, an inward investment of between \$70 million and \$80 million to renovate and refurbish the property. We have been told that the construction of this will start within eight months.

Other examples include the construction of the Kimpton Hotel, which will open in another year and a half. We also note that there is a redevelopment [plan] of the former Hyatt property, which is at Planning [Department] now. The rebranding of the Wyndham in East End was recently done by the Thompson family. It was a very enjoyable afternoon to see Miss Mary there as they cut the ribbon, and to see the focus that Mr. Kel Thompson put into rebranding the hotel in East End. I know that the Member is delighted with the job creation and the global brand that is being recognised now and brought to that area of the Island. It is one of the first times that I can remember a global brand coming outside of this belt in the Seven Mile Beach area. So, I am sure that the Member for East End spends time there. His constituents work there. I am sure he is quite happy with that. I know the Tourism Department and Ministry and Government are very happy with the rebranding and the success they are having there.

Madam Speaker, the expansion of Camana Bay has been announced. It brings with it a five star property and those plans, again, some beginning plans have put in. The Ironwood golf development, a new property on the eastern side of the Island, again, Madam Speaker, that brings with it a whole new diversification of our tourism product with an Arnold Palmer golf course. I believe when that is built in the strength of the other golf courses on the Island, we will have an opportunity to look at a complete new group of tourists travelling to the Cayman Islands.

Also, Madam Speaker, there have been public statements about the new hotel that will be built at Health City to facilitate the patients that come from abroad. The investments on this scale, Madam Speaker, are encouraging news and should be construed as a very realistic indication of the level of confidence that investors now have in our jurisdiction.

Reinforced with our triple A Moody credit rating in the highest per-capita income in the region and continuing to work to make sure that the people of this

country benefit from these investments, we are pleased that these and other new hotel/condo properties will significantly contribute to the 5,200 rooms currently available across our Islands. They will add a healthy mix of three, four and five star global brands, which attract a wider cross section of visitors. But, Madam Speaker, we know that it is going to take two years before these rooms start to come on line. I took the time earlier to outline our strategy of how we are going to continue to grow our product by moving into times of the year that hotel rooms are available, moving to the shoulder season and continuing to balance out the tourism overnight visitor arrivals. I also mentioned that we have encouraged, in meetings with the cruise lines, to look at more visits here during the slow times in the summer months and fall.

Madam Speaker, I think that everybody understands the work that the Ministry and Department of Tourism and our stakeholders have in front of us. We have to stay aggressive. We have to leverage our marketing and our PR, our advertising channels, to ensure that we are poised to repeatedly attract visitors to fill the rooms when they are available.

Madam Speaker, again, it is the coordination and the work between the Cayman Islands Department of Tourism, the stakeholders that work to advertise and market in parallel. An example is that the Department of Tourism runs an ad and a couple of days later a stakeholder, Marriott, Westin, Wyndham runs an ad. That is two ads that have been run to the same person, but it is paid for by two people. So it costs the country half and we get the same exposure. So, those are the kinds of things we are coordinating and working with our stakeholders to make it a growing situation.

Madam Speaker, I would like to move to the visitor experience given that the first and last impression of the Cayman Islands is derived at the airport. We have all seen that several modifications have taken place in the last few months—covered walkways, a new departure area, the restrooms, along with more immigration and customs officers (and I thank them for increasing the human capital there). The Cayman Islands Airports Authority has a greeter. They have greeters and customer service people who, if they are not there, they notify and work through trying to give as much information as possible to make the experience as pleasant as we can. I believe that we realised early on that there was very little that we could do with the bricks and mortar there in a short period of time.

We also realised that we had a major issue from friends and family, local Caymanians and tourists arriving, and that we had to move extremely quickly to try to work through this and to solve this problem. The first thing we could do was what we did. We looked at the people who worked there and understood how we could schedule better, become more involved, break down the silos, put everybody in the same room and say, *This is our goal. Our goal is to get more people*

through in a shorter period of time in a more comfortable way. And everybody that has joined us, come together to talk about it, has certainly done the best they could do.

Certainly we had some lines this year but we brought in thousands of more people, and I think you will have to agree that the lines were managed better and were not as long as they were the previous year. So we have made some baby steps. But we continue to be disciplined in the way we go forward in getting the re-development of the airport done.

Madam Speaker, my whole life in going through Miami Airport, it has been under construction. Every time I leave Miami Airport and I see a workman with a hammer, I say to myself, *When I come back, it is going to be better.* What we did not have in Cayman was building on our repeat visitors and encouraging them to come back and they had the most fantastic experience whether they were in Cayman Brac, Little Cayman or Grand Cayman. As they left the airport in a crowded situation they did not see anybody starting to build or add on to the airport that was there. Our decision was to look at how we could start the airport as quickly as we could to remedy the situation.

Step number one is as people leave, they realise there is a solution and that the Government is working to correct the issue in the short and medium term. And, Madam Speaker, what we have also been able to do is, this \$55 million is being funded through the cash that is available from the Cayman Islands Airports Authority and the Government providing \$15 million as a fast track to make sure this is built in two and a half years to solve our problem.

Again, that last 10 years we have talked about the need for an airport redevelopment. We have talked about how it has to be done. But the simple fact is that we followed best practice, we did the outline business case, we moved as quickly as we possibly could, and now in two years ground will be broken, site work will start and we will know that, moving as quickly as we can, that phase, two and a half years from now, will be finished.

It is an airport that is designed to get people in, and through, and onboard their plane as quickly and efficiently as possible, and it is designed so that when people arrive we will get them in, through and out of the airport to start enjoying their trip back home or their vacation as quickly as possible.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Moses I. Kirkconnell: Madam Speaker, the question from my colleague was if I wanted to mention the jetways. I think he has a very valid point. I want to make very clear that we approached this in a disciplined way. We realised that, number one, we had a certain amount of money available to spend; number two, we had to understand how we could do this as quickly as possible for the maximum benefit to the

people of the Cayman Islands and our tourism product, which is dependent upon this one part of the infrastructure that brings people in and takes people out—the last impression. So, the disciplined part of it, Madam Speaker, comes in as you look at all the different things you would want and you think of the different places you have been in the world and the airports you have gone through, and our decision is based on getting people in, through and out, and in the reverse as they return to their home, or as we Caymanians go on vacation, check in, go through, and get onboard with the amount of money that we had to spend.

The difference with the jetways was because of the infrastructure that had to be built around them, was a \$20 million issue. What we hear, what we researched and what we saw was that guests wanted to get in and get through as quickly as possible. So our decision had to be to facilitate the number of arrivals that we have with the money that we had. We could not make it a smaller area and jetways, so they could not be combined. So, the discipline was that as we started to lay the plans out for public consultation and we—each one of us here had a thought and an idea of something that could be changed or made better, or substantial savings or a better product for our visitors—had to be very disciplined and say there is nothing else that we can do with the money available, and to get this started as quickly as possible to deliver this to this country in a two and a half year period.

So, Madam Speaker, what is also part of this business plan is that there are phases after this. Once we can take the pressure off of . . . and everybody has been there on a Saturday. I get at least 10 calls every Saturday if it's a 30-minute wait, understandably so. We have put everything in the process to start it. Once that is underway, then the next phase is to look at what is the need of this country 10 or 15 years from now, knowing that we have done the absolute best we could for short-to-medium term.

So, Madam Speaker, this went through our caucus, it went through our Cabinet, and we are moving forward as quickly as we possibly can with this. And, Madam Speaker, the next phase, obviously, gives us time and it gives us opportunity to see what kind of finances will be available for that. So, that certainly is our thought and understanding and a conversation for another day.

Madam Speaker, the airport that has been designed and that will start this summer is an airport that has been prepared to receive 2.5 million passengers a year. The airport that we now use was built to receive 500,000 passengers a year. So, we are pushing over a million passengers a year through the building that is there now. I think you can understand increasing two and a half times, what that will mean for the experience of actually going through and leaving or arriving by plane.

Madam Speaker, our cruise berthing facility is on time. I can report that the environmental impact assessment is under review and once the review process has concluded, the design development phase for the berthing facility will then start. So, we are gathering all the information that is available to us. Again, we do it under best practice and in the most prudent way we possible can and continue to prepare to move forward to the point where we go to public consultation and then after that, step by step are the business case outlines.

Madam Speaker, earlier I spoke about tourism and people. Our tourism industry comprises far more than amazing flora, fauna, diving and beaches. Over the years the industry developed, we have taken great pride in the warm, human experience that makes a visit to the Cayman Islands so unforgettable. This is the very foundation that our award winning CaymanKind is built on. Madam Speaker, I know you and I joke about this, certainly as colleagues we joke about it, but when you visit a Caymanian home, you are either going to get a cup of coffee, something sweet, something to eat, and if you refuse all of that, you are going to get it in a bag to take it with you. That is CaymanKind. And we are all extremely proud of our heritage, and as we look at what makes us so special and grows our repeat visitors, we realise it is CaymanKind and the Caymanian people.

We worked hard to attain consistent growth, and continually raised our game to encourage prospective travelers to respond to the call to action soon through our various branding and marketing endeavours. In order to drive demand even further, Madam Speaker, the Department of Tourism is strengthening its advertising and promotion efforts within our primary markets. The Department is also re-doubling its efforts to ensure that the right messages are delivered at the right time to the right audiences in 2015, and we intend to elevate this momentum.

I have taken my time to explain how important the timing is on this. In the developing market content and we look at it and realise that we must have fresh, new angles. Cultivating more partners for joint initiatives to share the information and make it easier to attract visitors with the budget that we have. And, Madam Speaker, engaging in more marketing and promotion campaigns, again with all of the stakeholders that are able to participate in cooperative ventures with the Department of Tourism and Government.

Our focus during the next fiscal year will remain on creating rewarding and meaningful careers for Caymanians within the service and hospitality sector. Particular focus will be placed on increasing the provision of quality service and business excellence that we pride ourselves in, Madam Speaker, and in bringing them, as we talk about, CaymanKind and the experience that forward-facing, front-facing Caymanians give to our visitors.

Our airlift is a differentiator for us in the industry and it gives us a competitive edge. We have seven airline partners. American, Delta, United, JetBlue, WestJet, Air Canada, British Airways that offer direct flights from the US, Canada, UK, Cuba, Honduras, Jamaica, and others. Some of the US gateways, New York, Miami, Dallas, Chicago, Tampa, Atlanta, Boston, Houston, Charlotte, Newark, Detroit, and unbelievably offering, on average, 500 flights or 65,000 seats per month. I would safely say that one of the reasons the stability that we sit on, the new investors that are coming, and the way the airline partners are looking at adding more flights and other airline partners looking at coming here, shows the interest that we have portrayed to the outside investing community.

Madam Speaker, in 2014 Cayman Airways transported a record-setting 412,000 passengers, an increase of over 25,000 passengers from the prior year. All areas of the airline's operational airlift framework saw increases in 2014, including those strategic services purchased by the Cayman Islands Government for tourism and domestic routes, as well as the airlines core route operations. Madam Speaker, for the first quarter of this calendar year, Cayman Airways has delivered a growth of 9 per cent in total passengers against 2014. It is particularly impressive when this growth is considered in the context of last year being a record-setting year in itself. Importantly, the North American routes include strategic tourism routes operated with help and on behalf of the Government and the people of the Cayman Islands. These routes are reporting an increase of 7 per cent for the first quarter, laying the foundation for improved 2015 visitor arrivals.

Madam Speaker, having our own national airline which can be deployed in tandem with our tourism building initiatives has certainly given us an immense advantage over our neighbouring countries that lack their own national airline. The Ministry and Department of Tourism are continuing to work closely with Cayman Airways to evaluate and develop new tourism routes as we go forward. I spoke earlier of the secondary markets we are looking at, the importance of understanding how we penetrate into the western part of the United States and how important the Dallas route is, that, along with American, Cayman Airways also services and helps open up that area, the high yield customer from Seattle, Los Angeles, San Francisco, the pockets of money we are looking to get.

For the current year Cayman Airways is in the strongest position it has ever been in. The airline is currently C\$5 million ahead of last year (and the fiscal year ends at the end of June). Madam Speaker, Cayman Airways should end the fiscal year with a \$2 million net profit. The North American markets which contribute 80 per cent to our visitation, remains steady, and with the introduction of the weekly Ameri-

can Airlines, Dallas will start again to be a gateway from the west.

As a Government, we are encouraged by these results, as they provide tangible proof that our strategies for growing the industry are working. More importantly, these results tell us that more businesses have been able to improve their bottom line. More people are being employed as a result, and more revenue is multiplying throughout our economy and finding its way into the pockets and onto the tables of the wider percentage of our population.

Madam Speaker, I want to spend some time on Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. I want to talk first about the budget. The two most important items from the standpoint of the Sister Islands is Dat-2 and Dat-3. Dat-2 basically focuses on district administration and Dat-3 focuses on public works. But to give an idea of what that encompasses and the importance of this, it guarantees the daily services, the quality of life that we have become used to. These provisions:

- Fund passport and travel documents.
- Processing of registration applications for corporate and vital information registers.
- Develop, implement and support Tourism and Business initiatives to help energise the economy and create jobs.
- Vehicle inspection and licensing.
- Child day-care.
- Customs and Immigration services.
- Treasury services, processing accounts.
- Sports coaching, community sport programmes.
- Disaster management, preparedness and response services.
- Construction and maintenance of public facilities.
- Collection, preservation of historical and heritage items.
- Collection, documentation and preservation of material.
- Providing exhibitions and displays.
- Preservation of historical sites.

So, Madam Speaker, why I wanted to list that out is because I wanted to make it very clear that we have increased the number in the budget this year from \$8 million to \$8,100,000. What that means is that all services along with the increase that the government workers are getting have been funded and will continue to be as they are.

Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to say that in mid-October of last year, Cayman Airways introduced an enhanced service to Cayman Brac utilising a 30-seat Embraer. Annually, Cayman Airways transports 30,000 passengers between Grand Cayman and Cayman Brac and another 10,000 passengers are transported to and from Little Cayman each year. Since the introduction, passenger loads to and

from Cayman Brac alone from Grand Cayman have increased over 20 per cent, meaning that we can expect 6,000 more passengers to travel back and forth this year starting when the plane was introduced in October. This summer, the Embraer 120 will be replaced with a larger and more comfortable Saab 340B/plus aircraft setting the stage for the long-term success of the Sister Islands.

Also, there was a question my good friend asked about the introduction of this. Madam Speaker, when the question was asked, Cayman Airways, an entity owned by the people of the Cayman Islands, was in negotiation for the Saab 340. It was not prudent for the Government to release the information of what the cost of the plane that was being flown, as it was competing to acquire another plane. And I think you will understand that.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Moses I. Kirkconnell: Madam Speaker, I think that he is a very knowledgeable man. He understands that.

Also in July, Madam Speaker, Cayman Airways will be launching direct outbound service from Cayman Brac to Miami, which should further serve to enhance the tourism product of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Moses I. Kirkconnell: No, Madam Speaker. There is not an airport in East End. But there is a road from the airport to East End. That is what we do not have—

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Members, please keep your comments through the Chair.

Hon. Moses I. Kirkconnell: What we do not have, Madam Speaker, from the George Town airport is a road to Cayman Brac. We have to fly there. That is the reason for the importance of the introduction of the new aircraft.

The recently completed expansion and upgrading of the Charles Kirkconnell International Airport in Cayman Brac means that the Cayman Islands now has two airports that are international airports. From an operational perspective, Madam Speaker, we tend to think of Cayman Brac as a small airport. But many people are surprised to learn that this runway can accommodate all of the same aircraft that lands at Owen Roberts International Airport, other than the Boeing 767, flown by British Airways.

As a result, this redevelopment for the very first time since 911, international commercial flights can now fly directly to and from Cayman Brac. This is

a fundamental change that will help increase tourism and, again, stimulate the economy of both Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

The Saab has 34 seats. It flies at around 329 knots. So it will be about a 25 minute flight time to Cayman Brac.

One of the items for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman is sports tourism. This year they hosted for economic benefit and impact. For both Islands they hosted Canada, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Jamaica in tournaments. They had the Cayman Airways Tournament games there. They had Dutch soccer camps there in January. This was all with the blessing of the Sports Minister and coordination.

Madam Speaker, for scholarship athletes, we talk about the sports programmes. We are completing the track; we are finishing the fourth changing rooms to bring to FIFA standards. We are proposing and have budgeted for a 25 metre pool next year. Again, that is an economic stimulus as you exchange swim clubs and they spend reciprocal time. And we use this, as you well know, Madam Speaker, to build solid citizens. I dare say that you are a product of a sports programme from Cayman Brac and to say a more successful person to come out of the programme, Madam Speaker. The scholarships that they have received at any one time through the programmes, there will be five or six young people away at college on scholarship that was obtained through the programme.

Madam Speaker, when you look at their community effort and the things they do to be good citizens, I am going to be bold enough to speak for you as well, Madam Speaker, to say that we believe that this is extremely important to growing good citizenship in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

Madam Speaker, we will continue to use the sports complex facility as we grow it. It has grown from your stewardship to mine. We believe that it is showing all of the right attributes to help make the Islands successful, and we look forward to the next budget and our proposals for that. But it has become an integral part of the community itself that people my age go there and watch sports (since they don't play too much anymore). But you get a real cross-community effort there, and it is a very positive area and will continue to be developed in the right way. We are very pleased with that for this year.

Madam Speaker, we have also opened a Cayman Airways reservation office which provided more jobs in Cayman Brac and it gave redundancy to the reservation office here in Grand Cayman. Some of the young people working there are bi-lingual, so it functions extremely well. There is also a new and improved cargo office and warehouse operations. We are working towards the establishment of Cayman Enterprise City in Cayman Brac. I want to thank the Minister of Financial Services for his work in that re-

gard and working toward some of the regulations that had to be looked at. I thank you and your team.

They have made three visits there, Madam Speaker. And they continue to look at what businesses are suitable to be located in Cayman Brac.

We also had a visit from the Premier. He announced the joint marine unit that would be established. That is now there, the staff and boat. And the plans are to enlarge the vessel that is there. There is a lot of coastline for them to patrol and to continue to work together with the joint uniform branches there. Again, I want to thank the Ministers responsible and the Deputy Governor (because he was active in this as well) for their support.

I also mentioned earlier that Cayman Brac participated in a number of cruise visits. This year we had a scheduled stop from a Star Flyer cruise vessel. I am very pleased that she has again booked for next year from December through April, weekly visits. It is not a daily visit, but it is a start to get Cayman Brac's name in the industry and look for other smaller cruise vessels to see that you can make regular stops and the success that this little vessel has had. It will take a little while, and it will take more visitors for the retail aspect of them coming ashore, but we get the exposure and we get repeat guests out of the ones who visit, like it, and want to come back.

Madam Speaker, I mentioned that arrivals were up 20 per cent from October by air. Cargo containers were up 11 per cent for the last five months. So, the economic activity is heading in the right direction. We have also had some very successful weekend activities and festivals, last weekend Bracanal sold out the Island completely, along with the Brac Jackpot. We see the agriculture show and other tournaments that we continue to work towards, because, again, that is filling up the valley and bringing more people there in off-season time. I certainly congratulate the organisers of those events.

Madam Speaker, Little Cayman this year had some road work done. We continue to look at improvements on the North Coast Road. We are doing work. We have had a crew there for a while. Also, money was approved for the start of the boat ramp and boat dock on the north side, which was an important part of facilitating that area of the Island because there was no launch area and no government dock there that could be used in the Mary's Bay, or the eastern end of Little Cayman.

Also planned for this year is to improve the lighthouse at the Bluff. It is a tourist attraction. Quite a few people go there. It needs proper restrooms and it needs to look more like a lighthouse than a light. So we have plans that have been drawn. We are looking at them and we will take a look at them together and review them and move forward in trying to complete that tourism part.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to report that along with increased arrivals, increased activities in

investment, the statutory authorities are also doing well. The financial position of the Cayman Islands Airports Authority indicates a performance for June 20, 2014, of a net profit of \$5.5 million. Madam Speaker, looking ahead, the Cayman Islands Airports Authority has projected an operating result of \$9 million for the year ending June 2015.

Madam Speaker, the Port Authority has again had similar results. The revenues have increased considerably from 2013 and are projected to continue upward through 2015/16. The net profit for 2014 was \$1.9 million, and the net profit projected for the year ending 2015 is \$2.7 million and \$3 million for the year ending 2016.

Madam Speaker, the appeal for our destination's leisure offerings was made validated by a myriad of international sources earning us a number of impressive accolades including the title "Destination of the year" in the *Caribbean Journal's* Caribbean Travel Awards. Other aspects of our tourism product, such as dive, culinary, accommodations and attractions, earned our Islands a total of 156 TripAdvisor certificates of excellence. These are our stakeholders, Madam Speaker.

Just this week, if you looked at yesterday's paper, *US News* has named Seven Mile Beach as the best beach in the world.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Moses I. Kirkconnell: Madam Speaker, winning accolades underscores that we are on the right path and highlights the hard work that is being carried out behind the scenes by agencies such as the Department of Tourism to promote and work hard with stakeholders for this destination.

Madam Speaker, in today's world where so many consumers are connected online, I encourage all people to do their part on social media to say what a good place Cayman, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman truly are.

Madam Speaker, on the positive side I can also report to all honourable Members that in our 2015/16 budget they will see that we have decreased the output to the Tourism Attraction Board as they are growing their revenue. Thus monies can be allocated to other places.

Madam Speaker, the Cayman Turtle Farm comes under a lot of scrutiny, but it has shown an increased performance over the past two years. Total revenue increased from \$6.1 million in 2014, it is projected to be \$7.1 million for the 2014/15 year. In the upcoming fiscal year, total revenue is budgeted at \$7.5 million, ending 2016.

The combination of increased revenues paying down and paying off debt and managed expenditure levels, have allowed the reduction of the equity injection to the Cayman Turtle Farm from \$10.29 million to \$9 million. That is a \$1.29 million reduction in

two years. I think that speaks volumes when you consider a large portion of that equity is paying off a capital sovereign debt. And the other part of it is really providing the anchor for trickle-down tourism, especially in the West Bay area because of the tour operators, the taxi operators and all of the people, the hundred-plus Caymanians that work at the Farm and the adjoining tourism properties around it. So, Madam Speaker, the Turtle Farm is heading in the right direction, the revenue is up, the debts are getting paid, and it is providing the anchor for the tourism, cruise tourism and stay over tourism, to have an attraction that is managed and to the standard they are looking for.

Madam Speaker, to sum up, I want to thank the Minister of Agriculture for the hard work his department has done in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, instrumental in the agricultural shows. I also want to thank the Minister and Councillor responsible for Environmental Health. The baler is at Cayman Brac and they are baling the metal to ship it off the Island. They removed the tyres. There is activity going on there. And I am told that the mosquito plane is spraying Little Cayman as we speak, and they are going to be in Cayman Brac tomorrow. So, we are appreciative of that.

I also want to mention the work that the Councillor in charge of e-Commerce is doing and how that is moving forward. We really look forward to the good things this year with that.

Madam Speaker, this year our objectives are achieving a 3 per cent to 4 per cent year-end increase for stay-over visitors, and to have 1.7 million cruise passengers arrive. We are working closely through the Cayman Islands Airports Authority for the redevelopment and support, to breaking ground for the redeveloped airport this summer; managing the design development phase for the berthing facility, leading to the commencement of construction; ensuring that young Caymanians have opportunities to become qualified and established regarding meaningful careers in the service and hospitality industry; seizing opportunities to deliver a high yield visitor.

Madam Speaker, this is one of the tools and one of the ways we use Cayman Airways and our partners. As an example, the highest concentration of money is in the northeastern United States. For us to attract the visitor who makes \$300,000 or more, we have to get them from the northeastern United States in a very easy way. So our strategy to attract a high yield visitor means that not only can they afford to visit, but they can afford to enjoy the Island and spend approximately \$7,000 each in a week as they visit, which we have other gateway cities which range from spending in a week \$1,800 all the way up. So, we can see that strategically if we point ourselves to bring the visitors that not only can afford to be here, but can enjoy what we offer, CaymanKind, safety, sun, sand, sea, hospitality, then, we build repeat guests over and over.

Madam Speaker, leveraging market, PR and advertising channels to drive repeat business and fill additional capacity as it comes on stream two years down the line, we are planning for it now. There is also air service improvement to Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. We are continuing the pipe water through Cayman Brac heading east. We are promoting sports and family nature tourism in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. We are working towards the establishment of the campus of Cayman Enterprise City in Cayman Brac for the purpose of sustainable jobs; completion of the emergency shelter multi-purpose hall and work with the Ministry of Education on the business case for its transition to a new school on the Bluff.

Madam Speaker, thanks to productive partnerships and spirit of collaboration between the tourism sector and Government, the tourism industry is in a strong position. Considerable progress has been made in recent years, and I am happy to report that we are in good shape. A lot of gains have been made in just two years. And in my Ministry we have fought hard to make them. That is why we are resolved to aggressively unlock new opportunities for our three Islands.

I take this opportunity to compliment Councilor Hew on his hard work and all of the positive things he does for the Ministry of Tourism.

Madam Speaker, we have the opportunity to make tomorrow a better day. And in so doing, it must be a better day for everyone. This Progressives-led Government is managing the affairs of the country responsibly and sustainably to ensure the incredible gains we have already achieved are eclipsed only by the phenomenal gains that we have yet to bring to fruition.

The Cayman Islands is stronger today than they have ever been in years, and we are on course to achieve goals that will benefit our people for generations to come.

Madam Speaker, I am filled with confidence and optimism that the prospects of our Island, both in short and long term, are incredibly bright. I pray that Almighty God will grant us the strength, the wisdom to bring about a better tomorrow. Again, Madam Speaker, I leave you with: **“It’s amazing what you can accomplish if you don’t care who gets the credit.”** (Harry Truman.)

The Speaker: 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? [pause]

I recognise the Member for East End.

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, can I ask a question? Do we intend working late, or is it the usual 4:30? No one notified anyone of us working late.

The Speaker: It is my understanding that it is the intent of the House to work until 6:00 pm.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Member, were you rising to ask the question solely, or were you rising for recognition of your debate?

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, I certainly want to debate, so, do not think that anybody is going to get away with what the evolved said. But certainly, Madam Speaker, it is unfair to Members of this honourable House that at 4.15 [pm] we are told that the intent is to work until six o'clock, when the hours of this honourable House are prescribed in the Standing Orders until 4.30 [pm]. Members, including myself, have always been extremely receptive when the Government intends to work late and they notify us in advance. This cannot be the right thing to do. And if I had not asked, at 4.30 [pm], the hour of interruption, I would not have been told that it is until six o'clock.

The Speaker: It remains an intention until Standing Order 10(2) is hereby suspended and passed by the majority, or it fails by majority. Until then, the debate is alive and well under our Standing Orders until 4.30 [pm]. At that time we will do as customary, we will ask whether there is an adjournment or a suspension to continue and the majority will determine that. That is as far as the Chair can intervene.

So, Member for East End, please continue.

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, I appreciate what your position is. I certainly do, but certainly, Madam Speaker, at the very least the Government cannot impose its absolute will upon the minority of this House. Madam Speaker, it looks like this Government wants us to be a one party state, that only them have a say. That’s alright, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Member for East End, may I have a moment?

Under the Standing Orders, you and any other Member are entitled a total debate time of two hours. Should you commence your debate now without any further interruption or delay, you will have at least 15 minutes continuing into tomorrow morning. So, you are not forced to conclude your entire debate today.

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, that is rather presumptuous on your part because they may say 8 o'clock then.

The Speaker: Member, I have received an indication of 6 o'clock, and if the motion is moved at that time, to the contrary, the Chair, obviously, will have discretion.

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, it has never been in me to be afraid to debate. We all know that! So, it is not that I am trying to avoid debating; that I shall do. And two hours I shall stand. So, Madam Speaker, let me start that debate on this Budget that is here. And, Madam Speaker, I am sure we will take note that I am debating, because in the 14 years that I have been here, things have changed dramatically.

I remember as young turks in this honourable Chamber, the now Premier and I would spend many nights until four o'clock, five o'clock, six o'clock in the mornings and be here by 10 [am] or shortly before, with our folders of prepared speeches. And when after one year, I will never forget—a little over a year, at least three of the Ministers stood and said, *That's enough. This is not a chamber of presentation; this is a chamber of debate*. And as such, presentations are not allowed.

So, I shall do as we were taught to do; read from my notes.

Madam Speaker,—

The Speaker: Member for East End, is that an intention to the Chair that you are deliberately intending to breach the Standing Orders so that it would be called to my attention?

[Laughter and pounding on desk]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: No, Madam Speaker. We have seen the breach all day with them reading from prepared speeches. That is the breach I am talking about.

The Speaker: Until it is called to the attention of the Chair, I cannot rule on it, so I was just trying to elucidate from you what your motive was for making the statement so that I—

Mr. V. Arden McLean: No you don't—

The Speaker: —so that I would not have omitted from making a ruling that was being solicited from you. But seeing you are not soliciting a ruling, please continue.

Mr. V. Arden McLean: No, Madam Speaker, the ruling should have been made over there. But that is all right, the next one [who] gets up I am going to do it, though. Now unna started, the next one [who] gets up I will do it and bring it to your attention. And I know how they will try to counter that but we will see; been here long enough.

Madam Speaker, let me first of all thank the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition for their kind words of sympathy on behalf of this House, which were extended to my wife and our families on the passing of my mother-in-law. I shall pass on those expressions of condolences to both families.

Madam Speaker, the Government has presented us with what they are gloating about, as the best budget ever. Madam Speaker, I believe that it is fair and reasonable to recognise that all of us want to have a balanced or surplus budget in our country. And whilst that has been proposed and achieved by the Government, there are many things that need to be pointed out. And whilst I believe that that is laudable, we also have to understand, Madam Speaker, that when you are collecting revenue and not spending, any budget can have surplus or balance. And I will go on to explain why I am saying that.

Madam Speaker, a surplus budget: at the expense of whom?

The Government has stood here and talked about how the country is on a sound footing and they are making a positive difference in the lives of our people. Madam Speaker, I am not as optimistic or as convinced as they are that a surplus budget represents value for people, in the sense, that on a daily basis I am experiencing how the people of this country are hurting. Madam Speaker, much has to be done to translate that onto the lives of the people to let them feel the value of that surplus budget.

I can't blame the Government, Madam Speaker, for people losing their homes in all instances. But certainly, there are many instances where the loss of homes, loss of jobs can be directly attributed to the Government, the actions or lack thereof. And, Madam Speaker, I witness them every day.

Up until yesterday, a young lady in the Bodden Town constituency, divorced, four children, raising the children on her own, fell into problems with mortgage on the house. And one week she got an evaluation to try to get it refinanced for \$495,000 and the next week the bank sold the house for \$250,000; what was owed on that mortgage. These are scenarios that are playing out daily across our country.

That is one scenario, Madam Speaker. Because of the split of that family they cannot survive. There are situations that I find in my constituency as well as other constituencies within this country, where people on their jobs get laid off because of redundancy. Or, their job has ended because of it being in the construction industry and they are losing their homes because they cannot meet their monthly obligations to survive.

Now, Madam Speaker, I have always believed that government has a responsibility to stimulate the economy. And I am not talking about building buildings. I'm talking about intervention in development of systems that will make it easier for people during these austere times. We can sing of the economy rebuilding as much as we like.

I heard the Councillor of Tourism say that buildings are going up, first time in a long time in the Capital, across from Cassanova [By the Sea restaurant]. But it is not being occupied. It has been there a

year and it is not occupied. Small businesses are failing.

I see where the Minister of Financial Services budgeted \$156,000 for support of small businesses. These are times when Government must, or should, stimulate small businesses. Give them soft loans. But we are not into that. And this Government stood here and talked about how no new taxes, and we are still doing a surplus budget. Madam Speaker, no new taxes, but what about the old taxes which are so high? They cause difficulties for people to survive, for small businesses to survive. On a monthly basis small businesses are failing.

Madam Speaker, my mentor, the late Warren Connolly, once said to me that if the country has, the people have. Madam Speaker, he must be rolling over in his grave because the country now has and many of its people are suffering; many, Madam Speaker. And we know it, all of us within these hallowed Halls, who are Representatives. We have people knocking on our doors every day. The cost of living is out of reach for them. They cannot send their children to school; they cannot pay for lunches for their children, and they go to the Financial Assessment Unit. Madam Speaker, it is still monies on our part that has to be paid.

Madam Speaker, we need only look at the budget. Under Transfer Payments of the Minister of Community Affairs, Youth and Sports, we have Poor Relief Payment of \$6.2 million; Poor Relief Vouchers of \$1.35 million; Temporary Poor Relief for young parent programme (YPP) students, \$30,000; Youth After-care Payments, \$60,000; Pre-school Assistance, \$150,000.

Madam Speaker, now, if I know anything about Caymanians, they do not want to go there. They have no alternative. There is nothing going on in the economy that will give them jobs to get their own, in order that they need not hold their hands out to anyone, least of all, the Government. They want to be on their own. They want to make it on their own. If we are paying them here, that says something. If we are helping them through here, that says a lot, Madam Speaker. It says that economically we are taking the money from them and giving it back to them. They are not as independent as we would like to believe. And every human being, at the very least, wants to feel that they are independent and can make it on their own without holding their hands out to government. Those numbers should not be so high, Madam Speaker.

I know the Minister of Finance said that the increase in the retirement age to 65 could very well result in a larger employment pool. Well, Madam Speaker here we go again. There are many of these in this Poor Relief Payments that seek assistance from this Government (from the government, not this Government) that are over 60. But we have done nothing, absolutely nothing to assist those people af-

ter all of these years of making their sacrifices to this country.

Moment of Interruption—4.30 pm

The Speaker: Member for East End, once you have completed that statement, we have reached the hour of interruption and I will need to recognise the Honourable Premier.

Mr. V. Arden McLean: We have done nothing, Madam Speaker, to assist these people, such as giving them waivers, reductions in their purchase power, like retired discounts. That is why they cannot survive. That is why they come to us. That is why we have to be the Robin Hood to rob the rich to help the poor. We are making them poor people. They cannot retire on their benefits that they get from their retirement plans.

Madam Speaker, go ahead and do that.

The Speaker: Honourable Premier.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 10(2)

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

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

The Speaker: The question is that Standing Order 10(2) be suspended to allow the House to continue proceedings beyond the hour of interruption.

Honourable Premier, is there a specific time of 6 pm?

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: The question is that Standing Order 10(2) be suspended to allow the House to continue its work until the hour of 6 pm.

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

Ayes and one audible No.

The Speaker: I believe the Ayes have it.

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Can I have a division?

The Speaker: Madam Clerk, please call a division.

The Assistant Clerk:

Division No. 1

Ayes: 10

Hon. Alden McLaughlin

Noes: 2

Capt. A. Eugene Ebanks

Hon. Moses I. Kirkconnell
 Hon. Osbourne V. Bodden
 Hon. G. Wayne Panton
 Hon. Marco S. Archer
 Hon. Tara A. Rivers
 Hon. Anthony S. Eden
 Mr. Roy M. McTaggart
 Mr. Joseph X. Hew
 Mr. Alva. Suckoo, Jr.

Mr. V. Arden McLean

Absent: 5

Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts
 Mr. Winston C. Connolly, Jr.
 Hon. W. McKeeva Bush
 Mr. Bernie A. Bush
 Mr. D. Ezzard Miller

The Speaker: Madam Clerk, for the record, I should have mentioned at the commencement of the afternoon break that the Member for North Side had a constituent commitment and so did the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition also gave apologies for tomorrow as well.

The Assistant Clerk: Thank you.

The Speaker: The result of the division is 10 Ayes, 2 Noes and 5 Absentees. Accordingly, the motion is carried and the House will continue until 6.00 pm.

Agreed by the majority on division: Standing Order 10(2) suspended.

The Speaker: Member for East End, please continue with your debate.

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

Madam Speaker, I wish to draw to your attention that I would respectfully ask that my time is meticulously recorded and that the interruption is removed from the time that is allotted to me of two hours.

The Speaker: You started at 4.20 [pm] and we stopped at 4.35 [pm] and you are now commencing. As soon as you get back up on your feet you will be timed according to the clock, and I am recording it. Please continue.

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

I don't want to miss one minute out of it.
 Madam Speaker—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: The Premier is saying he is going to give me more time. That is good, Madam Speaker, because he knows I can stay here.

Madam Speaker, when we stopped to suspend the Standing Orders, which we only just found out that we were going to go late, I was talking about

retirees who are having difficulties living in this environment, this economy that the Government tends to say is on the rebound and working well and investor confidence and things are well, whilst on the other side we are spending somewhere around \$8 million to \$9 million to supplement those very people.

Madam Speaker, there are countries that are now making a business out of attracting retirees to their country by virtue of giving them exemptions, reductions in taxes and the like. But here we are, Madam Speaker, we know how many problems we are having with personal lives of people and their personal finances. Madam Speaker, we have to remember that pensions did not go into this country until 1989, a mere 16 years ago or thereabouts; '88, '89—'99. Sorry, Madam Speaker, I know 16 going back have to be '99; (16 years).

The people who are retiring today have less than 20 years on the pension. Many were on contract and were given COS [Contracted Officers' Supplement] that we stopped in 2002. The Premier and I stopped it in this honourable House. So, here are we, knowing that, and we—and I am not only blaming this Government, Madam Speaker—have done nothing. But this Government just happens to be the Executive now. This is the Government we have and the responsibility just happens to lie squarely on the shoulders of the now Government. We have done nothing to assist those retirees. We know some of them are retiring with \$200 to \$300 a month. Is it right? It is right for them to have to go directly to Government and hold their hands out? I say no. I believe that the Government needs to put provisions in place to assist those people. They are in need. They are Caymanians.

I believe that intervention on the part of the Government can assist them. Give them breaks on what they buy, whether we talk to the merchants, the supermarkets and rebate them the duties, the 10 per cent or whatever it is that would reflect on the duties. Encourage the supermarkets to assist them, because there are simple formulas. When the retirees spend \$50, no rebates, if you give them 20 per cent off and make them come in front of the line to pay his bills, they will be coming out with \$100 because they know that if they spend \$80 they have a \$100 value. That will help. That is what this Government needs to do and I encourage the Government to start looking into that direction. I encourage them to do that, Madam Speaker. It is all well and good to have millions of dollars in our coffers but if our people are starving to death we will have no one to manage.

Madam Speaker, do you know how many times in these budget addresses we have talked about business? At the least, almost one dozen times. We have talked about businesses and supporting businesses and supporting businesses. There has been much less talk about supporting our people. We are taxing them . . . and, Madam Speaker, you hear,

the Minister says there are no more taxes and the Premier says no more taxes, but what about those that are on them?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: We take off loads and can still take off more and can get more money.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: The next budget the Premier is saying.

Here is what we are going to do: three years of hardship. I wonder if the Premier . . . and then one year, and I know there are people on that side who like to say there is no future in the past. So, at 2016/17, they are then going to tell the people not to worry about the past, the future is what we need to talk about. That is what they say, in particular, my good friend.

I wonder if this Government knows what George Bush (not the daddy, but the brother) who was president, told the press core. They asked him: "Why do you keep bringing up the holocaust; that is the past?" He said: "The past is so hurtful, it cannot be forgotten." That is what is going to happen. You are going to pay the price for it, not me.

You think hungry belly yesterday don't remember tomorrow? They remember it today, the same way they were hungry yesterday. And they are going to remember it tomorrow. And they are going to remember who helped them from who did not. And I guess that is soon going to be stopped now too. We won't do that anymore. Oh boy! Everything to help our little people appears like we are at the crossroads of shutting it down and making it illegal. Out of compassion, we can't even do that anymore, Madam Speaker. I don't know how we are going to survive; us in particular and them more so, those who hurt on a daily basis.

Madam Speaker, on page 4 of the Premier's address he talks about "**small business sector reporting strong growth and confidence in Cayman's future.**" I don't know. Did they have a retreat and went to Little Cayman or what, or a different island to be able to write all of these speeches? Because I can assure you it was not on the same island that I am on, that those were written.

Madam Speaker, the Government speaks of the restoration of stability to government finances. Madam Speaker, three years, laudable! But we have done nothing to help our people.

Madam Speaker, they are getting up speaking on behalf of the House about the Tories this and the Tories that, how good it is to get them in and the lawyers that come here and make millions of dollars off of these lawsuits and how they went back with that, must be, and win again.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: I don't know, Cox or something.

But, Madam Speaker, Cameron spent five years with austerity measures in place trying to get back with his budget in line. But he stretched it out over ten years. But we must close it in in three years. If you don't spend, you can save. I mean, now I am no CPA or anything of that nature, economist or anything, but I know if I do not take anything out of my pocket it is still there. I know that. The people of Cayman know that.

Madam Speaker, you remember the Wendy's commercial with two little old ladies?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Yeah, my pocket may have a hole but those same little old ladies in the 80s that asked "where's the beef?" are asking about it now. They are still asking and they are our people who are asking about it.

Let me get back, Madam Speaker, to the Minister of Finance who got up here and talked about all of the restrictions we have on ourselves, the net operating position, debt service, net debt, cash reserves, and financial risks. Now, Madam Speaker, all of those were restrictions imposed upon ourselves. And I really can't blame this Government for them being into law, because those same Tories were so afraid of what the Leader of the Opposition was doing to this country, that they needed us to put it in law to stop him.

Let's get it straight now. We have to get this straight, Madam Speaker. That previous UDP Government had to be stopped. The 18th of December we put a stop to him—2012 it was? That is why we had to do it, to stop him from sinking this ship. Now, my good friend who assisted with it . . . and you know I hope I never leave this Chamber without getting the opportunity to tell my people under privilege what I did to get rid of him. That will forever haunt me if I can't tell the people what happened on the 17th day of December, 2012. But I am going to use privilege to do it and it won't be long either.

Madam Speaker—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Conspiracy or not, many have fallen along the way at the hands of the Leader of the Opposition. It wasn't conspiracy then? Well we are going to tell the people what I did. I need to get that out. That is burning my stomach.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Alright. My good friend is out in that corner you know, with that brief case with all of those tablets.

[Laughter]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, what I am saying to the Government is that the Tories spread out their bringing back in line the finances of their country, and they are in much more debt than we are. We will never reach that on the basis of GDP. Never! They have spread it out over ten years with the hopes that they get it back in line, but they want us to bring it back in three years at the expense of our people. And yes, the Government has been successful in doing that. But there has not been any relief for people in these austere times. There has been none!

You think 25 cents off of diesel for CUC on your electricity bill and then paying 55 [cents] per gallon at the gas tank is relief? That is not even revenue neutral. But we are going to discuss those fuel people too. It is time now. Where is my good friend?

Madam Speaker, I am saying that this Government had a perfect opportunity when they came into power and some of them will have to get up and tell me whether or not they did it. But I think this Government had the perfect opportunity to say to the Tories—*Listen, we know you put this in place to stop the then Government, but here we are, we are different people and we want to extend this over a five, six year period.* That's what I believe would have been a reasonable approach. And then, we would have had money to spend to stimulate this economy and get people going.

Madam Speaker, this country has had one gig in town ever since the recession hit us. One gig! That is why he could demand as much as he did. One person to do construction; that's why he was in a position to demand, command the country—*I'm not doing it unless I have this or I have that.* And we open up and gave him wholesale, carte blanche; everything! Rolled right over! Madam Speaker, and I fear it could come back to haunt us one day. I pray it does not, but I fear it will.

Madam Speaker, let me move on to some of the more mundane stuff to deal with this Government. First of all, let me start with this minimum wage thing and this Labour Law. I want to congratulate the Minister on the minimum wage, and I would like to think that it was because Mr. Miller and I brought a motion on it. Of course, they will say no, but we all know when they get up and pat themselves on the back of doing this minimum wage and hear the Premier say, *Fortitude* you know, and, *We're the only ones in 20 years that had the fortitude to bring it.* Wow! But we reminded them, Madam Speaker, so I'm taking credit for it too.

I am taking credit for that single member constituency too. With that one man one vote, if you think

I didn't put some pressure on him. And we will reach that one too.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank the Minister—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Yeah, well, I guess if East End and North Side being two become one, fair then that George Town become naught.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, that is what this Premier is capable of doing you know. He just likes to move you off, but he knows he can't deal with me with that. He knows that very well. He gets under the skin of the Leader of the Opposition. He knows my skin has stood the test of time with him, soft, in between and hard.

Madam Speaker, I want to go back in congratulating the Minister. You see, he couldn't throw me off. I don't think he wants me to congratulate the Minister, you know. That's why he was trying to throw me off, on congratulating the Minister and the Minimum Wage Committee and the like.

The Labour Law as well, I met with the Minister concerning the Labour Law and she assured me that all of my concerns were represented therein. Now, Madam Speaker, here is my fear: In my 14 years of being here, almost 15 years of being here, I have seen it happen before. I have seen us stand here, all 15 Members vote for the employment law under the leadership of the honourable Roy Bodden. And he was minister from 2000 to 2005 and that will tell you how long that has sat up there gathering dust. Once it reaches a point where the lobbyists get their claws upon it, it then comes out of the woodworks, like woodlice, and they yam it up. And no politician has the fortitude to put it in place.

Madam Speaker, through you, I warn the Minister to watch out for those fire breeding demons and dragons that are going to come at that Labour Law and that minimum wage. You hear what I say? Forewarn is forearm. They are coming. I promise you they are coming. I don't know who out there they are going to get to, but they are getting to some and your ears are going to be ringing. Trust me! I have seen it happen twice. I've seen my good friend, the now Premier, fall into that exactly too. It nah good! Those lobbyists—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Well, he just said, not this time. Madam Speaker, [thumping on desk] I applaud him in advance if such is the case.

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, *[sighing]* Now, you talk about balancing the budget in three years? That which you just said is much more commendable, that those lobbyists are not going to get to you. Madam Speaker, you know how they do. I don't need to . . . now mind you, I think for the new ones I need to tell them how it works. But for us old salts, we know exactly how it works. Just be careful how they come, because they come in the middle of the night, cloaked in black. You hear what I am telling you? Madam Speaker, I hear you clearing your throat. Madam Speaker, we know how they come. Sometimes they are bearing gifts too. We know.

Madam Speaker, I want to come back to some of the legislation that this Government is planning on doing. But right now I want to talk about how . . . and I mentioned the minimum wage and Labour Law because I am going into the area of my constituency.

Madam Speaker, I listed quite carefully to the Deputy Premier and how he talked about the many things that he is doing for his wonderful district. And justification being because there is no road to it and you know, we need to support those two Islands because they are a part of this country. And I applaud him, Madam Speaker, for advocating on behalf of his people. Madam Speaker, you have done that, and Captain Mabry, Gilbert, Captain Charles. I've followed you all and how you have advocated on behalf of your people. But, Madam Speaker, so have I. And, Madam Speaker, the difference is that whilst you do not have a road to Cayman Brac for easy access, East End is easily accessed, anybody can drive there, and I ain't getting any responses from the Government. Mind you now, Madam Speaker, I can show you one from May 18th, 2010 too, and they were not there then either.

Madam Speaker, the mistake that all governments make is that East End is too far away. And when we start advocating or objecting to certain things, it is because they don't understand our way of life. The Premier does. I would venture to say he is there every week, if not every fortnight. But he understands, but I don't know who has captured him now. You know it must be because he . . . he does not have a bigger stake in George Town, he doesn't. His mother is from Bodden Town and his father is from East End. He is supposed to be interested in "Go East".

My last trip to Cabinet, Madam Speaker . . . five times I have been to Cabinet with this Government.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Yes, Madam Speaker, the Ministers are saying *great, great, they invited me*. The Constitution requires you to.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Yes, you did what you were supposed to do but you ain't doing anything about it.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, now I ain't got to tell any lies on the people. Madam Speaker, I was invited to Cabinet; the latest time was in March. Because I could not go the week of March 16th, I think. Seven days from the 24th is what?

An Hon. Member: The 17th.

Mr. V. Arden McLean: The 17th. I asked for a postponement of that meeting because of me travelling to and fro. So, I went on the 24th March. And, Madam Speaker, they invited me under section 47(3) of the Constitution.

And section 47(3) says: "**Where an electoral district is not represented in Cabinet, the Member or Members of the Legislative Assembly representing that district shall be entitled to attend a meeting convened by the Cabinet once every three months for the purpose of - (a) making representation with respect to matters affecting the district; and (b) making budgetary representations when the Annual Plan and Estimates are being developed.**"

Now, Madam Speaker, it is my belief, it is information coming to me from my sources now, emphasis on my sources that the budget had already gone to England when I went to Cabinet.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: The sources don't seem to be very good.

[Laughter]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: But certainly, Madam Speaker, they had already developed the budget, because here is why I say that. Whilst I respect that the devil is in the details, I don't see one thing there for East End. And maybe, Madam Speaker—*just maybe*—we will hear of at least a couple of things of the five times I have been to Cabinet that I have repeated all five times.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: No, we are not talking about things we got because all we got was what was required of the Government to maintain the government buildings!

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Which roads?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Which roads? The little chip and spray? Those were required for maintenance.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Oh, so unna thought . . . Now I know unna really gone bunkers now.

Madam Speaker, you know my community and as well as the Premier knows the community is a community that enjoys and culturally fish part-time and in some instances for a living. Madam Speaker, I have asked them to dig out a ramp, the only major ramp in East End where we launch all of our boats. They have built ramps and in Cayman Brac they must have built four or five.

[Laughter]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: They built in West Bay, George Town, and, Madam Speaker, they cannot find \$30,000 to deepen the ramp in East End. Is that really fair to the people of East End?

Madam Speaker, remember I had promised the Premier that I know the procedures bout here too. And you know I will lay all of them.

Madam Speaker, every time I went to Cabinet, every Minister said they will get in contact with me to discuss these myriad of matters, several matters that I brought to them. One Minister called to make an appointment to see me; the lady Minister.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, the Minister said we went on tour but we were not talking about there.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Yes, well, we will get to you too. Don't rush anything because everybody is going to get a little piece.

[Laughter]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, the Minister for Sports is saying that he went with me on tour to the retirement home; that is true. Yes, we did. And for the sports facilities, the maintenance thereof, we did that. The key is that there is no capital works going on in my constituency, okay? Madam Speaker, I also spoke to this Minister of Sports. Now, latest being at the East End/North Side Sports Day, and, Madam Speaker, if you had wrapped him in white linen he would not have been purer in his utterances to me. And he put his hand on his heart and told me that the changing rooms were into this budget.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: They dropped um. Yeah, I know. They chopped the budget.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: They chopped the East End budget but they are building them in Bodden Town though.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, I heard the Deputy Premier here this afternoon, he is building the fourth one in Cayman Brac! And I can't get one in East End and I have been asking for it ever since I got there.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: You are going to tell them I asked? I've been told them, because everything I discussed with you in Cabinet I go and tell them. I spill my guts up there on you.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, that's what I get for being nice. That's what I get when the people of this country say that I do not work with them. How do I work with them when I beg them, beseech them on behalf of the people? Madam Speaker, it nah for me you know. Your 20 odd years of being here, Madam Speaker, have you ever gotten anything out of advocating on behalf of the people of Cayman Brac? No! It was not for you. Whether it was right, wrong or indifferent for the people of Cayman Brac, it was theirs.

The Government's responsibility is the dividing up of the financial resources of this country to better the people. That's the responsibility of the Government.

The Constitution gives the representative of the people of East End, if they are not in Cabinet, the expressed right to go there and make representation on budgetary matters! And you're ignored. And we got surplus.

How much is it costing in Bodden Town to build that changing room?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: One million dollars. That's expensive too. I don't think you have that in here but anyway.

Hon. Osbourne V. Bodden, Minister of Community Affairs, Youth and Sports: One point five (1.5).

Mr. V. Arden McLean: One point five (1.5). That must be Public Works that estimated that.

Madam Speaker, it bothers me. It really bothers me. We cannot leave out people in this country. We cannot dismiss people. They have a right to be in this country. They must be treated equally. Unna need to stop the political one-upmanship now. Just because you want me out of the way. It has nothing to do with me. Do it for the people; it's their right.

Madam Speaker, that is nothing. I wrote to the Ministers and they don't even respond for months and months, and they are still outstanding. I told unna that you all were going to get your little piece, you know.

Why?

The Minister of Tourism, promised to go to East End with me. He tried coordinating the time. I think his staff mixed that up somehow. He is forgiven for that and so are they. But, Madam Speaker, I have not heard a thing since. Every time I see him he reminds me of it though—out of sight, out of mind. We cannot treat our people like this.

Madam Speaker, when I was Minister everybody knows that I treated no human being in this country any different than the other. But no, because I am a troublemaker on Tuesdays you see, unna trying to get rid of me.

So, unna coming to East End at the last year, do something and say, *See what we did*. Unna think people in East End are fool-fool or what? Unna really think people are fool. You all underestimate the intellectual abilities of the people of the country too much. And unna know I will get on that platform for unna. And I will go throughout at unna. Don't underestimate my ability to communicate with the people of this country. Don't ever do that! If you all have no relationship, I do.

I wrote to the Premier, Madam Speaker, about Health City. We lost a gentleman up there recently. I wrote to the Premier about the protocols surrounding having catastrophic incidents up there; if protocols are in place to utilise the Shetty Hospital.

Madam Speaker, we have cardiac matters. Patients going into cardiac arrest and the ambulance pick them up, drive into town, only to bring them back to Shetty [Hospital]. I wrote the Minister—can protocols be put into place. They have triage units up there for life threatening trauma. We pick them up in East End, carry them to town and if they happened to be alive still, we drive them back to East End.

We pick them up in North Side and drive them to Shetty to try to save their lives and are only told to go back and pick them up to take them to George Town Hospital where they assess them, two hours later they are carried back.

I have not heard of an answer from the Government. Nothing! Absolutely nothing!

In the meantime, my people . . . and, Madam Speaker, who am I to say that my constituent who passed recently because of a heart failure would have

been alive? I can't say that. And I do not venture into that area. But certainly, Madam Speaker, the people in East End who picked him up under the direction of 911 to drive him to meet the ambulance which is located into North Side, found the ambulance in North Side at the entrance of North Side by *Nico Norte* and then transferred him. He was alive then and he passed. They had passed the Shetty Hospital by some five or six miles to go down to Frank Sound, turn and go in to get the ambulance.

Madam Speaker, do you think that is fair to the people of East End?

I recall when this hospital was being negotiated, that the Government of the day required that they put a triage unit in that hospital for that purpose. But is something wrong with that or is something wrong with me, Madam Speaker? I will accept that if I am asking for too much you know. I will accept that. But somebody needs to tell me it is too much to be asking for. You understand me my good friend? Tell me that it is too much. But at least answer me. At the very least answer me so that I can tell my people that when you feel a pain in your heart, jump on your bicycle and try to ride to George Town. Something!

Madam Speaker, I wrote to the other Minister about the farm thing that is going up out there where we are going to give people so that they can sell their produce. I got a response which said that they are passing it to the technocrats and as soon as they get the information they will revert to me. Uh! Since January? Where are those technocrats? That's the kind of disrespect that they have for colleagues. But the public asked me to work with the Government. That's the kind of disrespect we have?

Every day people are asking me for answers. I can't give them any answers.

Madam Speaker, I must tell you that there are some civil servants that are good. It is easier and I get more results from civil servants than I get from them over there; as there is an Almighty above me.

I laid on the Table in this honourable House, and presented to the Minister of Agriculture, the names of the people who were interested in doing farming on that piece of land, Madam Speaker, that we have been trying all of this time to subdivide, which Dr. Frank bought for the prisoners. Every update is that they are working on it. How long does it take to do a subdivision in this country? Basically, that is all that it is—splitting it up into one acre or five acres or whatever lots. Why? Why? I'm not here representing Arden McLean. And we are talking about budget surplus?

I don't know why they are trying to starve me for. Madam Speaker, sometimes it becomes an uphill battle and you feel like just giving in. But you know what, Madam Speaker? I have never been a quitter. And every time you kick me from behind, I consider it a step forward. And every time you slap me in my face, I know I am too close to yours. And that is how I

will continue to be. And if I step on your toes that means you are too close to me.

It's wrong that a government that preaches transparency, openness, inclusiveness, that they should practice because they have three people there who did not get elected with them—four that didn't get elected with them. And this is the kind of behaviour that I am subjected to? Yes, Madam Speaker, they have come up there, done the basic maintenance on the infrastructure that government must maintain. But the stuff that really matters to the people, nothing!

For \$30,000 to dig out a ramp that the people can use their pleasure boat or their little fishing boat to supplement them . . . they want them to go and hold their hands out so that they can get money over at the Assessment Unit that they can go Fosters to buy the fish or what? Is that what we are looking for?

I tried doing the ramp up there, Madam Speaker, when I was minister. I did the one in Gun Bay. I did the one in East End but the contractors did not do it that well. But I was man enough to put them in George Town, Bodden Town . . . well, Newlands. Plans are underway for Bodden Town right where that one is now with dock. And, Madam Speaker, I did in West Bay. And you are going to tell me that for \$30,000 we can't dig out that one in East End?

What kind of people are you anyway? What kind of people are you all anyway? You must practice what you preach. You are worse than the UDP! They did me the same thing. You should have corrected it. Two years in and unna can't find \$30,000 to dig out that little ramp up there? And dig out one little bit of black grass for me? That's the Government that we have? That's the Government that brags about surplus budgeting of \$120 odd million?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, I said that I brought up the Labour Law for a specific purpose, to address the Minister of Tourism and the Minister of Labour. Many months ago, Madam Speaker, I had an issue, Mr. Miller and I had a situation with [Morritts] Tortuga Club with regards to our people who were working there. Madam Speaker, I brought it to the attention of the Government. I was dismissed and I used government in a broad sense then. I even visited the boards, wrote letters, did everything. Nothing was done to assist those people.

Madam Speaker, daily, just today, they are making the professional Caymanians redundant still.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate the Thompsons like the Deputy Premier said. But this is next door that is disenfranchising our people under the Labour and Immigration Law and nobody is doing anything about it.

We give them work permits for positions that are not on their business plan. And somebody tells them not to worry about Ezzard and I because we are

no hurt to them. And they go on and do as they please. Does it make any sense for me to go there and have any discussion with them? No!

That is what we are doing to help Caymanians? Making jobs redundant and doing it in the States? Madam Speaker, the Minister needs to seriously bring that labour law and let's see if we can get some teeth into it.

We need to review immigration because I see that the Premier says that the Immigration Law is not going to be totally reviewed again.

Madam Speaker, Caymanians are hurting. The country has survived and Caymanians have not. Madam Speaker, I do have a problem with it.

Madam Speaker, maybe I advocate too much on behalf of the small people. Maybe I am not friends with all of those who would think that they can direct me. I am who I am and I am going to stand up.

Madam Speaker, our tourism product is not as glowing as the Minister and the Councillor would make us believe.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, I hear the Premier saying it is the best; it has been 30 years or whatever the case may be. I don't know how the tourism product can be attributed to the management of a government, but be that as it may, let me say again to the Minister, which I called him recently about, that dock we need to do something about it. If we do not stop the behaviour of some of those people out on the dock soliciting those tourists, we will never reach our ultimate goal of trying to transition the passengers from cruise lines to stay-over visitors. Madam Speaker, it is not going to happen.

George Town dock reminds me sometimes when I pass there of some foreign country. They are harassing the visitors for a few dollars. Now if unna think I am afraid to say what I have to say and I have cover for my mouth, that nah going to happen.

Madam Speaker, we then look at the airport. And they fall in line up at the airport. The next taxi comes and pick up passengers and leave. Do it on the dock. Run those off, whoever is out there soliciting the people. If they come out there with one placard, run them off the dock! They are destroying the tourism product. But everybody is afraid. Do you know what is going to happen? They are not going to have any food to eat and put on their table.

The other thing is that everybody and their brother are getting taxi and tour licences. That's not true? That's not true Alden? You should check it out. Or are you helping them to get it? There are people there, Madam Speaker, who are not fit to be bus drivers.

I hear the Councillor talk about public transportation, try to get it quick. We are going to have serious problems in this country along West Bay Road,

along the eastern roads. These drivers are driving like mad people. And they are going to kill people. But we are sitting down not worried about that until it happens. We have been a country of reaction anyhow. When someone dies then we look to do something about it.

Madam Speaker, this Government speaks about the stimulus for this country: the condos at Beach Bay, the extension of the East/West Arterial road to Frank Sound, the golf course. They point to them as stimulus for the economy and successes in their two years. Two years, Madam Speaker, it is taking to get that road off of the ground? Are we sure that is ever going to come to fruition? Are we really sure that that we are going to see one blade of grass up there at that golf course?

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: No, I am not sure I am going to wake up tomorrow morning. There are many who wish that I don't, but surprise, surprise, six o'clock I am coming back tomorrow morning to get the other piece of my pie. The God I serve is merciful on me too. The same way He reigns over the unjust, He reigns over the just. Or the same way He reigns over the just that you think you may be, or anyone else, He reigns over the unjust. He knows which one of us have clean hands and a pure heart. He knows which one.

Madam Speaker, I hope these projects come to fruition. I am not as optimistic as this Government based on what I am hearing on the Street. But we shall wait with bated breath, because I am not excited about them anymore. It has taken too long for them to even commence. And some of the people involved with them . . . I don't know . . . anyway we shall leave that there and see how well the Government can negotiate with these people.

Madam Speaker, let me move on to what the Government is saying they are using to stimulate the economy even further: by stimulating the taxes on fuel for CUC. Madam Speaker, we did that in 2008. It was 50 cents and we took 20 cents off of it. Along came the UDP and they added that 20 cents plus 25 [cents] more—45 cents. Now, Madam Speaker, I thought it was a good move then for us to do it and it may be a good move now. There's nothing wrong with reducing the tax on the fuel for electrification. There's nothing wrong with that. However, I must tell you, Mr. Premier, that what you are doing is making us make the sacrifices for the gains of foreign companies. They need to make some sacrifices too. We should not have to do it all to relieve out people of the high prices. They should not have to do it all. We reduce it at CUC because that is the best place to reduce it really, because we know how much it costs. We know exactly how much it cost because they get theirs from Pratt, so you get one for one. However, you reduce 25 cents

per gallon there and you are paying 55 cents more out at the pumps. It is not even revenue neutral. It helps.

Madam Speaker, the Minister got up in here recently in the honourable House and said that he had told the suppliers that he wanted them to bring a plan on how there were going to deal with it going forward, and he was waiting for that. Madam Speaker, I say to my good friend, the Minister, that he should not wait, it is time to regulate these people now. It is high time we regulated the fuel importers.

Let's look at this, Madam Speaker. In your time as Minister of Works, you were partially responsible for the deregulation of telephone. We regulated the Water Authority. They can't raise rates without Cabinet's approval. We regulate the Water Company and we regulate CUC. Why? Because they are commodities that are utilities and they affect everybody. They affect an entire country. And the only other one that has a massive effect on an entire country is the fuel providers and we do not regulate them.

Now, let's look at the Water Company: a Cayman-owned company publicly traded. You can go and buy shares anytime you want.

The Water Authority owned by Government.

CCU publicly trades, can buy shares anytime you want.

The telephone, [Lime], publicly traded and you can buy shares anytime you want. Many Caymanians own shares into it by virtue of having worked there. And here we are, these two companies are foreign companies, no interest in the country and we do not regulate them. They come in and whatever profits, whatever proceeds they receive, they export it and send it home. Madam Speaker, we need to do it now. We need to do it now! We need to ensure that they do . . . and, Madam Speaker, you know what we are afraid . . . I hope we are not afraid that this country may very well run out of fuel. There is no fear of that. If they say they are pulling up their roots we will go and get a ship and anchor it off there until we get someone to come in to negotiate with. We need to stop making them intimidate us; that they are going to pull out.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: They are going to pull out? Tie those tanks on a tug and pull them away too then. Go ahead and pull out! No one is stopping you from pulling out. Do you think they are the only gig in this world? They are not. They are not the only company in this world that provides fuel.

I note it was glaringly missing, nothing into either one of those speeches about Navasota in that oil thing in East End.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Yes, I figure you would say that. You think East End is like anywhere else that there is a funnel and anything that comes out of it is mine? It is not so.

Madam Speaker, these fuel suppliers need to make sacrifices. For the very country that they are making their big profits in, our people has suffered under these people. And if they can't handle regulation then root up and go.

Do you know what surprises me, Madam Speaker? How the Minister for Works can say here within the last year that he did not know anything about these other new ones coming in until he saw it in the papers. That bothers me. And it should bother every Member that these people come in here and operate under another licence, another LCCL. Is that what happened? Nobody knows. That should give us all reason to be concerned. As far as I know it was Esso and Texaco that had the LCCLs. That was the perfect opportunity. They must have applied for new LCCLs. Perfect opportunity to hold their feet to the fire. What happened with that opportunity? Let's say we missed it, bring it here.

In the Bahamas, Madam Speaker, the Government puts on US\$1.06. They allow the supplier to make 33 cents above the CIF (cost, insurance, freight) Bahamas and then they allow the retailers to make 44 cents and they consider that to be a reasonable profit.

Madam Speaker, I know I can work back numbers and show that what these people are doing us is bordering on criminal conduct. But, of course, if we have nothing in place, we can't stop anyone.

ADJOURNMENT

The Speaker: Member for East End, we have reached the hour of 6 pm. Is this a convenient time?

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Yes, Madam Speaker. I shall be back tomorrow, God willing.

The Speaker: You have 30 minutes remaining.

Mr. V. Arden McLean: With the help of God and a couple policemen.

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Premier.

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

Madam Speaker, I move the adjournment of this honourable House until 10 am tomorrow, Thursday, 21st May.

The Speaker: The question is that this honourable House be adjourned until tomorrow morning, 10 am.

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

Ayes.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

At 6:08 pm the House stood adjourned until 10:00 am Thursday, 21 May 2015.

