



COMMONWEALTH  
PARLIAMETARY  
ASSOCIATION

Legislature of the Cayman Islands

# *Third Youth Parliament*

*Of the  
Cayman Islands Branch  
Of the  
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association*



*Held in Observance of  
Commonwealth Day  
In the  
Legislative Assembly of the Cayman Islands  
Monday, 10 March, 2008*

## *Verbatim Transcript*

## **THIRD CPA YOUTH PARLIAMENT**

Monday  
10<sup>th</sup> March, 2008

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**EDITED HANSARD**  
**VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF THE**  
**THIRD CPA YOUTH PARLIAMENT**  
**MONDAY**  
**10 MARCH 2008**  
**9.01 AM**

**OPENING REMARKS**

by

**Mr. W. Alfonso Wright, MLA,**  
**Chairman of the CPA YP**  
**Organising Sub-Committee**

**Mr. W. Alfonso Wright:** Honourable President of the Cayman Islands Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Vice Presidents of the CPA Executive, the Hon. Kurt Tibbetts, Leader of Government Business, and the Hon. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition; Hon. Ministers and Members of Cabinet, Members of the Legislative Assembly and of the CPA Executive, past Members of this honourable House, Youth Parliamentarians, parents, school principals, coaches, distinguished sponsors, invitees and guests, good morning.

Before calling on the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, and President of the Cayman Islands Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Hon. Edna Moyle, JP, MLA, to give a welcome address, as Chairman of the organising committee I crave your indulgence to say a few words about the Youth Parliaments hosted by the branch in observance of Commonwealth Day which is, for the second time, being sponsored by both private and public entities of the Cayman Islands and the CPA Headquarters Secretariat.

My sincere appreciation to the Executive Committee of the branch for agreeing to hold a third Youth Parliament in observance of Commonwealth Day. The Executive Committee of the Cayman Islands Branch is comprised of both Government and Opposition Members of this honourable House. So it is that both parties can be jointly commended for recognising and supporting the educational benefits derived from the participation of our youth in such an event. These Youth Parliaments are the only avenue afforded to the youth of our Islands to experience the distinguished seat of the Speaker and of Members of the Legislative Assembly.

My extreme gratitude to the members of the Youth Parliament Organising Committee for their commitment in ensuring that this Youth Parliament became a reality. Committee Members: Mr. Osbourne Bodden, Mr. Rolston Anglin, Ms. Lucille Seymour and Ms. Wendy Lauer Ebanks make a good team and have helped to produce another meaningful project.

We proudly acknowledge the local public and private entities and CPA Headquarters Secretariat for

sponsoring this event in furtherance of the aims of the CPA and the branch in promoting democratic parliamentary activity for the youth of the Islands.

Twenty-four Youth Parliamentarians will be participating in this year's Youth Parliament. They represent 9 of the 13 public and private schools throughout the Islands as well as students who have previously participated in our Youth Parliaments both at home and overseas. They are to be highly commended for their commitment to this Youth Parliament.

Many attended a three-day workshop on public speaking and debate organised and delivered by Dr. Livingston Smith of UCCL, as well as four consecutive Saturday meetings at the Legislative Assembly building where they worked long, hard, dedicated hours as a group.

Several students spent many afternoons in caucus in the meeting rooms of this building and outside during the weeks to prepare for their debates. Some are simultaneously preparing for examinations; some are studying overseas, and yet, all have gone beyond the call of duty to prepare themselves for this Youth Parliament.

We, as a Committee, can say that each student takes very seriously the privilege bestowed upon them in having the opportunity to represent the views of the youth throughout the Islands by way of this parliamentary forum. They take seriously the roles they are engaged in as you will witness today.

The Youth Parliament will debate three motions dealing with the environment, Caymanian culture and the National Youth Policy, a small percentage of the issues that they wish to discuss. Their voices today must be taken seriously. The views they will represent today are the views of the youth who will represent the voice of tomorrow's generation in this honourable Legislative Assembly. Their voices and opinions will for the first time be recorded and documented in writing. So, at this time, I wish each of them well in their deliberations. What they express today will be well documented in the annals of Caymanian history.

We would like to make particular mention of our longest serving youth parliamentarians, Ms. Marzeta Bodden, recognised as the Mother of the House, and Mr. Sidney Terry. With their experience they have been able to encourage and nurture the freshmen in procedures and parliamentary debate; together with Mr. Weward Marvin Hurlston, Jr., Miss Kalesha Edwards, Miss Heidi Knowlton, Miss Elizabeth Charles, Joseph Gracey, and Ms. Gabriella Mendoza-Hydes,

who participated in the 2006 Youth Parliament. These past participants have played a key role in the continuity and leadership of our Youth Parliaments and we trust that the participants of today will continue in that vein.

Parliamentarians of this 2008 Youth Parliament, you are creating amongst yourselves a fraternity of Youth Parliamentarians and we encourage you to go forward together to be the future voices of reason in these hallowed Chambers.

Today's proceedings will witness participants being sworn in as Members of the Youth Parliament, the process of the appointment of a nominated Speaker of the House by way of Proclamation by the Governor and the election of a Deputy Speaker. In order to provide the Youth Parliament adequate time to debate the three motions before them we have this year excluded from the programme the procedural process in regard to the election of Speaker and of Cabinet Ministers.

For those who are unable to be present in the Legislative Assembly building today to view the Youth Parliament proceedings, Weststar TV Limited will be sponsoring and presenting the event live on Island 24, cable channel 9. The proceedings are also being recorded by Radio Cayman and will be aired on FM 105.3 on Grand Cayman and FM 91.9 on Cayman Brac and Little Cayman commencing at 7.00 pm this evening. The verbatim transcripts of the proceedings will be available in due course on the CPA page of the Legislative Assembly's website at [www.cila.ky](http://www.cila.ky).

Much work has gone into the planning and organisation of this Third Youth Parliament. We are grateful to principals of the high schools for recognising the importance of this event for selecting youth from their respective schools and for all parents for supporting the participation of their sons and daughters in this event.

We thank the school coaches for their support and assistance given to the students and the Organising sub-committee. They are:

- Mrs. Leonora Mendoza-Hydes
- Mr. Mitchell Ebanks, Students Services Coordinator of UCCI
- Mr. Rajpal Hemraj of John Gray High
- Mrs. Hyacinth Downer of Cayman Brac High
- Ms. Shari Wilson and Ms. Jodi McDonald of Cayman International School
- Dr. Ann Rallie and Mrs. Linda Bernard of Cayman Prep and High
- Mr. Mark O'Brien of St Ignatius Catholic School

We are particularly grateful to Dr. Hassan Syed, President of UCCI, for working with the Organising sub-committee to establish a debating class for the Youth Parliamentarians, and Dr. Livingston Smith for conducting the workshop on public speaking and debate assisted by Mr. Mitchell Ebanks; the Government Information Services, in particular Ms. Bina

Mani, for her immeasurable contribution as public relations officer over the last eight weeks; to the Hansard section of the Legislative Department, Mrs. Janet Seffer, Mrs. Tania Connolly and Mrs. Debra Broderick, who will produce the verbatim transcription of the proceedings; to Mrs. Tania Connolly for her experience and proficient eye in editing and proofing many of the documents; to Mrs. Janet Seffer for working assiduously and effortlessly with the Organising sub-committee secretary and Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Ms. Wendy Lauer, in overseeing the postings of the Youth Parliament releases on the website in conjunction with Mr. Greg James, Ms. Tracey Gale, and Mr. David Elms of Computer Services.

Our most sincere gratitude is extended to the Deputy Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Mrs. Sharon Smith, and Assistant Clerk, Miss Nana Bothwell, who, with their specialised knowledge and experience of parliamentary affairs and administration worked tirelessly with the Clerk in administering the event.

We also thank all of the Members and staff of the Legislative Assembly as they have all contributed in some way. The CPA Cayman Islands Branch is deeply indebted to the many private and public entities for sponsoring the Youth Parliament. We particularly thank our major sponsors, Weststar TV Limited, Ernst & Young, and Thompson Development for their immeasurable monetary generosity.

We also thank our other sponsors, Cayman Airways, Caribbean Utilities Company Limited, *Caymanian Compass*, *Cayman Observer*, *CaymanNet-News*, Radio Cayman, J & M Electronics, UCCI, Subway and CPA Headquarters Secretariat, London.

Our gratitude also goes to His Excellency the Governor, Mr. Stuart Jack and Mrs. Jack, for hosting the reception this evening for our youth parliamentarians.

I conclude by expressing my personal appreciation to the Hon. Edna Moyle, President of the CPA, for her continued guidance and sage advice, and to our sponsors for supporting our youth in this most important of endeavours. The last two Youth Parliaments were financed in their entirety by private sector and the CPA Secretariat.

On behalf of the young people of this country, I thank you for your support.

I now call on the Hon. Edna Moyle, to bring opening remarks.

## **WELCOME ADDRESS**

by

**Hon Edna M Moyle, JP, MLA  
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly  
and**

**President of the Cayman Islands Branch  
of the CPA**

**Hon. Edna M. Moyle:** Honourable Vice President of the CPA Executive Committee, the Hon. Kurt Tibbetts, Leader of Government Business; the Hon. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition; Hon. Ministers and Members of the Cabinet; Mr. Cline Glidden, Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and Deputy Chairman of the CPA Executive Committee; Members of the CPA Executive, and Members of the Legislative Assembly, past Members of this honourable House, Youth Parliamentarians, parents, school principals, coaches, students, distinguished sponsors, invitees and all guests, at this juncture I wish to extend apologies for His Excellency the Governor and Mrs. Jack, who are unable to attend the opening this morning.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is an association comprised of over 170 national, state, provincial and territorial parliaments, with a membership of approximately 17,000 parliamentarians subscribing to parliamentary democracy. The CPA provides the sole means of regular consultation among members of Commonwealth parliaments, it fosters cooperation and understanding among them and promotes the study of and respect for parliament. It seeks to build an informed parliamentary community able to deepen the Commonwealth democratic commitment and to further cooperation among its parliaments and legislatures.

The role of the CPA is endorsed by Commonwealth parliaments and heads of government. With the creation of the constitutional post of Patron in 1989, Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, consented to become Patron. Since the 1990s the CPA has widened its focus to include the promotion of the Commonwealth and parliamentary democracy to young people and has encouraged all branches to observe Commonwealth Day by participating in parliamentary activities focused on youth.

According to CPA Headquarters Secretariat, there were two main reasons why it first organised an International Youth Parliament in 1997. The first relates to the concern that too few young people knew enough about the Commonwealth and the three core principles that bind our Commonwealth nations together: 1) verbal consensus building; 2) support for sustainable development; and 3) support for democracy and growth as sustenance of democratic institutions.

Our CPA Youth Parliament endeavours to meet the aims of the CPA to assist young people to understand political participation and parliamentary democracy through practical experience of the parliamentary system and to provide participants with an opportunity to acquire or improve upon many skills such as public speaking, debate, presentation, research, and organisational skills.

It is, therefore, my distinguished pleasure on this Commonwealth Day 2008, to welcome you to the Third Youth Parliament of the Cayman Islands Branch of the CPA, which is being sponsored by the many private and public entities mentioned by Mr. Wright in

his opening remarks. I, too, wish to thank you all for supporting this auspicious event for the young people of these, our beloved, Cayman Islands.

We have received from the CPA Headquarters Secretariat today's Commonwealth Day Message from Her Majesty the Queen, Head of the Commonwealth. It is my pleasure to read Her Majesty's message on this occasion.

## **MESSAGE FROM HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN, HEAD OF THE COMMONWEALTH**

### **COMMONWEALTH DAY MESSAGE 2008**

#### **The Environment—Our Future**

*As read by the Hon. Edna M. Moyle, JP, MLA,  
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly*

**Last year, Commonwealth Heads of Government met in Uganda on the edge of Lake Victoria and agreed to an Action Plan for tackling climate change. It was an appropriate place to do so: from there, the waters of the River Nile begin a three-month journey to the Mediterranean.**

**The Nile, throughout history, has served humankind in many ways. But for all its impressive size and importance, this river is a fragile eco-system; and its vulnerability grows with the number of people dependant upon it, so that a single incident of pollution upstream may affect the lives of countless numbers downstream.**

**The example of the Nile illustrates many of the challenges facing the global environment as a whole, which cannot alone sustain our lives as once it did. The competition for fresh water by a growing population is itself becoming a source of potential conflict. Our own attitudes to the environment, and the use we put it to, may have consequences for people on every continent and for every ocean and sea.**

**The impact of pollution falls unequally: it is often those who pollute the least—notably in the world's least-developed nations—who are closest to the razor's edge: most affected by the impact of climate change and least equipped to cope with it.**

**And it is important to remember that the environmental choices available in some countries may not be an option for others.**

**In some parts of the world, for example, fossil fuels can be used more sparingly and buildings can be made of more efficient, sustainable materials; but it is far harder to expect someone to adapt if he or she relies on the trees of a local forest for fuel, shelter and livelihood.**

**If we recognise the interests and needs of the people who are most affected, we can work**

with them to bring about lasting change. Happily, this approach has always been a strength of the Commonwealth, and awareness of environmental issues is now widespread, with a determination that future generations should enjoy clean air, sufficient fresh water and energy without risking damage to the planet. Few are more aware or energetic in confronting climate change than young people, and we should support them.

In the Commonwealth, governments, businesses, communities and individuals should each strive to match words and good intentions with deeds.

Every contribution has its part to play. Whatever we do, wherever we live, our actions in defence of the environment can have a real and positive effect upon the lives of others, today and into the future.

Elizabeth R

**Hon. Edna M. Moyle:** The Theme of Commonwealth Day 2008 is The Environment—our Future. In keeping with the Commonwealth Secretariat's theme, the Youth Parliament will this morning debate such a motion.

Today in London, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Headquarters Secretariat is observing and celebrating Commonwealth Day at Westminster and two Caymanian students studying in London, Miss Julie Ann Bain and Mr. Travis Ritch, have been invited to represent the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Cayman Islands Branch, in participating in the celebrations throughout the day.

To our Youth Parliamentarians participating in this CPA Third Youth Parliament, I wish you well in all your proceedings and look forward to listening to your debate as you work within the rules, practices and procedures of this democratic legislature. I trust that the learning experience will be rewarding, educational, and enjoyable; and that through this process many of you will be encouraged—or perhaps further encouraged—to become the future politicians and leaders of our Islands.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Organising sub-committee of this Youth Parliament, to the sponsors for their very generous contributions, and to all who have made this event possible.

Thank you.

Good luck and have a great day.

**Mr. W. Alfonso Wright:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and President of the local CPA branch.

Before I call on the next speaker I would like to make special mention (and as I call their names I ask these individuals to please stand) of: Mr. Gilbert McLean, Mr. Linford Pierson, National Hero, Mrs. Sybil McLaughlin.

These three individuals, past Members of this House (two of them) and past Speakers, took time to work with our parliamentarians during the workshops

at UCCI in helping them to assess their debating skills and gave them very good advice. We do thank the three of you for taking time to assist our parliamentarians.

Thank you.

I now call on the Hon. McKeeva Bush, OBE, JP, MLA, Leader of the Opposition and joint Vice President of the CPA to make his remarks.

## REMARKS

by

**Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, OBE, JP, MLA,  
Leader of the Opposition and  
Joint Vice President of the CPA Cayman  
Islands Branch**

**Hon. W. McKeeva Bush:** Mr. Chairman, Madam President, Hon. Leader of Government Business and Vice President of the Cayman Islands Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, other colleagues, members of the Organising Committee, National Hero, Members of the 2008 Youth Parliament, I am pleased to have been asked to be a part of this year's opening ceremony.

Democracy, in a stricter sense, is to have every man, woman, and child in a country participate in the decision-making process. Today, through this Youth Parliament forum, youth parliamentarians have their opportunity to contribute to the debate on three nationally important and, I might say, timely subject—the environment, the youth policy and our culture—contributing therefore to the ultimate national decision.

Healthy debate strives to bring about consensus through education and through enlightening the audience. Your subjects of debate are central to the long-term sustainability of our Islands and bringing about national consensus on these subjects is crucial to our long term success.

As young people, you are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to fully engage each other and your audience, including the current leaders, to have your views reflected in the final direction of this country on those matters.

Consider this as much more than an opportunity to debate your counterparts, but as an opportunity to shape the thinking process of your country and its leaders; much more than an opportunity to demonstrate the thoroughness of your research skills, but an opportunity to educate a country; much more than an opportunity to use your articulation talent, but an opportunity to impress your conviction on these subjects international dialogue and an opportunity to firmly grasp the reins of your country in this way and say to us, as leaders, *'Consider our views and opinions, this is the way we want things done.'*

In addition to your sharing of insight and perspective, it is also intended that you gain a new respect for the democratic process, especially that of

the Westminster Parliamentary Model of decision making.

As the longest serving Member of the honourable Legislative Assembly in these Islands, I have a particular interest in your leaving here with a keen understanding of the Legislative Assembly structure, rules, policies and procedures and how these aid in the decision-making process through protecting the rights of the minority, dictating the nature of debate, protecting the rights of each Member when speaking and keeping the debate relevant. That one, I must add, has been a very strenuous task of Speakers over my 23 years. Perhaps (I do admit) I have contributed to that at times. It is, you will find, necessary at some points to be a little bit repetitive. And, as I said, a little bit.

Additionally, I am certain that you will gain an appreciation that all of these issues require a balance. Each side of the argument has some merit. The decision process forces the leaders in a democracy to balance and weigh the pros and cons, the balance between those who call for development to maintain our standard of living, so that we can be here today, with the protection of the environment. This is always most challenging. Equally challenging is the balance between the enjoyment [by] our people of modern luxuries with the desire to retain our traditions and culture.

Remember that culture is moving. Most people would not want to go back to a *Cookrum* or a very hot night in August with a cardboard fan!

But as you can attest to better than I, since it has been several years since I was a teenager, the Youth Policy must provide respect for individual choices for the youth while providing structure to guard against those who make unproductive decisions. In this regard, I hope that on the motion for youth policy you would consider most seriously, in light of the recent spate of drive-by shootings, stabbings and accidents that have all claimed the lives of young men, what you think are some of the contributing factors to the breakdown of social, physical and other environmental factors that may be impacting the minds, attitudes and behaviour of our young people.

As young people, what would you suggest be done other than what is already being done—and, I might add, that a lot has been done over the years and is being done now—to influence other young people of your age group to, like you, act more responsibly, soberly or reasonably, in living a more orderly and meaningful life?

What I am asking you to do is to come up with a plan of action, perhaps in your debate on the motion before you, that identifies the main problematic areas and challenges facing young people, possible solutions and answers to them and a timeframe perhaps in which that plan of action is to be implemented by the government.

For example, do you think that more counselling for families would help?

Would increasing the number of social workers to interact with families, especially single parents and young mothers in particular, in their homes to address their personal needs and to help educate them about values and shared responsibilities at home and in the community [help]?

And, lastly, to what extent do you think families, perhaps even the wider community, are to be blamed for some of the social ills occurring in society and what do you think should be put in place so that dysfunctional families can become more responsible citizens?

If you find it a bit difficult following what I have said, on the break I will give you these notes.

Since I have only come here to make remarks (and I would think that the committee thought brief remarks), in conclusion, I formally welcome all of you to the Youth Parliament. I hope to be here as much as possible today and look forward to healthy and robust debate. But, more importantly, I look forward to seeing democracy in action.

I have watched some of you before. I can tell you, you do good—as well as some of us who have been here a long time. Enjoy it before the real thing happens to you!

[laughter]

**Hon. W. McKeeva Bush:** I take this opportunity to invite you and other young people to continue after today to participate in shaping our country's future. May the Good Lord bless you and your deliberations today and beyond.

Again, I thank the Chairman and the Organising Committee for allowing me on their platform.

**Mr. W. Alfonso Wright:** Thank you Mr. Bush.

I now call on the Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts, JP, MLA, Leader of Government Business and joint Vice President of the CPA Cayman Islands Branch to declare this Third Youth Parliament open and to make his remarks as well.

Mr. Tibbetts.

## **OPENING OF THE CPA THIRD YOUTH PARLIAMENT By**

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts, JP, MLA, Leader of  
Government Business and  
Joint Vice President of the CPA Cayman  
Islands Branch**

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

Madam President of the CPA Cayman Islands Branch and Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Hon. Edna Moyle; Vice President of the CPA Executive Committee, the Hon. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition; Hon. Ministers and Members of the Cabinet; Mr. Cline Glidden, Deputy Speaker of the

Legislative Assembly and Deputy Chairman of the CPA Executive Committee; Mr. Alfonso Wright, the Chairman of the Organising Youth Parliament Committee and sub-committee members, members of the CPA Executive Committee and my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly; National Hero, Hon. Sybil McLaughlin; past Members of this honourable House; Youth Parliamentarians' parents, and I will have to say grandparents; school principals and students, distinguished sponsors, invitees and all guests, I am certainly very pleased to be here this morning at the Third Annual Cayman Islands Youth Parliament.

I consider it a privilege to hand over these distinguished Chambers and all they signify to this assembly of intelligent and very articulate young persons from across the Cayman Islands. It is not every day that members of any parliament give up their seats so readily without the requisite political power plays and maneuvering. But, having done so, we, the Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Cayman Islands, are showing our support for the Youth Parliament which is being held to celebrate Commonwealth Day.

I am certain that I can say on this occasion without opposition that all of the Members of the LA are indeed proud to be associated with this event as it is a wonderful exercise in promoting the positive ideals of parliamentary democracy. It is vitally important that we, the government of this country, engage the interest of youth in the parliamentary process.

There is a staggering statistic that I would like to share with all of you. In the entire Commonwealth today, over 50 per cent of its citizens are under the age of 25. Even though the Youth Parliament is a one day exercise, it is an invaluable one for providing our young people with a forum to express their ideas, concerns and expectations with regard to democracy.

There is a quote that I find particularly fitting for today. That quote is from Kofi Annan, the former Secretary General of the United Nations and the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize winner. He said, and I quote **"No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts off from its youth severs its lifeline."**

By offering up our seats for the day we are demonstrating our support for you, the youth of the Cayman Islands, in taking an active interest in the Commonwealth. Now you will see firsthand how the political machinery that drives parliamentary democracy in the Cayman Islands works. Even though today is a role-playing exercise, we in the government believe that the presence today of youth in these Chambers draws special attention to the important role that parliament plays in the Commonwealth. Parliament is the backbone of a democratic nation. It is here that the people's business is conducted. It is in the House that the voices and aspirations of the entire community are heard.

Today's session will give you a greater understanding of what goes on in the government and an opportunity for you to express your views and opinions to us, the politicians, the government, and indeed the wider public. It also gives you the opportunity to have your views heard by key decision-makers and it will give you a better understanding of how decisions are made.

In my opinion, the most important outcome from today's proceedings is that you will have (and you have heard this before) your ideas and opinions taken seriously and you will be valued as capable contributing members of this society.

Your deliberations today will give those of you on the Government side a firsthand lesson in the responsibility that comes with the power vested in these positions. Those of you on the Opposition bench will get to better understand the duties that have to be performed by the Opposition in the legislature. It should give all of you an improved understanding of how political democracy works in practice and I am sure you will agree that it is certainly more fun than being in a classroom!

I understand that you have worked very hard at the topics that you all have chosen to debate. Today's topics, again (as you have heard from other speakers), are indeed very timely and topical and of great importance to the community at large. They include two Government Motions—the first, The Environment and our Future; and the second The Need for a Review of the National Youth Policy.

There is also a Private Member's Motion on the Preservation and Enhancement of Caymanian Culture. I know that I speak for both the Government and the Opposition benches when I say that we all look forward to hearing your views on these topics. We will all pay very close attention to your invaluable suggestions and opinions. I value them as representing the views of all the youth in our beloved Islands on these diverse matters of importance to Cayman's various communities.

This year's participants were primed for today's session by the CPA Youth Parliament Committee members during two days in February. Now that the participants have been briefed on the composition of the House, procedural matters, and the various roles involved, I am confident that you feel ready to settle in for a relaxed yet vigorous exchange when dealing with your proposed motions.

This whole exercise will undoubtedly provide you with worthwhile experience that will come in very handy in the future and I too look forward to the day when some if not all of you return to the hallowed halls of this House as future leaders of our country.

Holding a Youth Parliament provides an invaluable experience not only to the participants but also to the public. I too wish to thank our local media partners, Radio Cayman and Weststar Limited, who are broadcasting these proceedings live. I would like

to encourage every one to listen in to this coverage and to show their support.

Thanks again also to the generous sponsors who have kindly contributed to today's event.

The CPA Cayman Islands Branch, the hard-working subcommittee members and the youth parliamentarians have worked extremely hard over the past few weeks preparing for today and they all deserve our warmest appreciation.

So, I do believe it is not inappropriate, but rather very appropriate, if you would join me in giving them a huge round of applause.

[applause]

**Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts:** On a personal note, both the Leader of the Opposition and I have had the privilege of sitting in that seat and in that seat. I do not know yet which one of you will sit in that seat or in that seat, but let me say to you that we do expect that you will do us proud.

I now take great pleasure in declaring this CPA Third Youth Parliament open. God bless you all and I wish you all the best in your deliberations.

Thank you.

[The Clerk of the CPA Youth Parliament took her seat at the Clerk's Dias]

## ARRIVAL OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF THE CPA THIRD YOUTH PARLIAMENT

**The Serjeant-at-Arms:** His Excellency the Governor of the CPA Youth Parliament.

All rise.

[His Excellency the Governor preceded by the Serjeant-at-Arms proceeded to the Speaker's Dias]

## PRAYERS

**His Excellency the Governor of the Youth Parliament:** Prayers to be delivered by Youth Pastor Felix Manzanares.

**Youth Pastor Felix Manzanares:** 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 Third Youth Parliament of the Cayman Islands Commonwealth Parliamentary Association 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 Youth Parliamentarians participating in this Youth Parliament that they may be enabled faithfully to perform the responsible duties of their high office. All this we ask for Thy great Name's sake.*

Let us say Our Father's Prayer: *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 Clerk:** Please be seated.

Administration of Oaths or Affirmations by His Excellency, Mr. Alex Cowan, Governor of the Cayman Islands.

## ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS OR AFFIRMATIONS

**By His Excellency, Mr. Alex Cowan, Governor of  
the CPA Third Youth Parliament**

### OFFICIAL MEMBERS

**The Clerk:** Oath of Allegiance, Mr. Joseph Gracey, Honourable First Official Member, Chief Secretary.

#### OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

**Hon. Joseph Gracey  
First Official Member**

**Hon. Joseph Gracey:** I, Joseph Gracey, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law. So help me God.

**The Clerk:** Oath of Allegiance Miss Annalisa Wallace, Honourable Second Official Member, Attorney General.

#### OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

**Hon. Annalisa Wallace  
Second Official Member**

**Hon. Annalisa Wallace:** I, Annalisa Wallace, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law. So help me God.

**The Clerk:** Affirmation by Mr. Geoffrey Grizzel, Honourable Third Official Member, Financial Secretary.

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**  
**Hon. Geoffrey Grizzel**  
**Third Official Member**

**Hon. Geoffrey Grizzel:** I, Geoffrey Grizzel, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law. So help me God.

**ELECTED MEMBERS**  
**OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**Electoral District of West Bay**

**The Clerk:** Elected Members of the Legislative Assembly. Electoral District of West Bay.

Oath of Allegiance by Miss Thea Bush, First Elected Member for West Bay.

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**  
**Miss Thea Bush**  
**First Elected Member for West Bay**

**Miss Thea Bush:** I, Thea Bush, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law. So help me God.

**The Clerk:** Affirmation by Miss Marzeta Bodden, Second Elected Member for West Bay, Mother of the Youth Parliament.

**AFFIRMATION**  
**Miss Marzeta Bodden**  
**Second Elected Member for West Bay**  
**Mother of the Youth Parliament**

**Miss Marzeta Bodden:** I, Marzeta Bodden, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law.

**The Clerk:** Oath of Allegiance by Mr. Owen Foster, Third Elected Member for West Bay.

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**  
**Mr. Owen Foster**  
**Third Elected Member for West Bay**

**Mr. Owen Foster:** I, Owen Foster, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law. So help me God.

**The Clerk:** Oath of allegiance by Mr. Justin Jacky, Fourth Elected Member for West Bay.

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**  
**Mr. Justin Jacky**  
**Fourth Elected Member for West Bay**

**Mr. Justin Jacky:** I, Justin Jacky, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law. So help me God.

**The Clerk:** Electoral District of George Town.  
 Affirmation, Mr. Andre Harris, First Elected Member for George Town.

**Electoral District Of George Town**

**AFFIRMATION**  
**Mr. Andre Harris**  
**First Elected Member for George Town**

**Mr. Andre Harris:** I, Andre Harris, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law.

**The Clerk:** Affirmation Mr. Duet Berry, Jr. Second Elected Member for George Town.

**AFFIRMATION**  
**Mr. Duet Berry, Jr.**  
**Second Elected Member for George Town**

**Mr. Duet Berry, Jr.:** I, Duet Berry, Jr., do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law.

**The Clerk:** Affirmation by Mr. Michaiiah Bryan, Third Elected Member for George Town.

**AFFIRMATION**  
**Mr. Michaiiah Bryan**  
**Third Elected Member for George Town**

**Mr. Michaiiah Bryan:** I, Michaiiah Bryan, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law.

**The Clerk:** Affirmation by Miss Raven Ramoon, Fourth Elected Member for George Town.

**AFFIRMATION**  
**Miss Raven Ramoon**  
**Fourth Elected Member for George Town**

**Miss Raven Ramoon:** I, Raven Ramoon, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law.

**The Clerk:** Oath of allegiance by Mr. Weward Marvin Hurlston, Jr., Fifth Elected Member for George Town.

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**  
**Mr. Weward Marvin Hurlston, Jr.**  
**Fifth Elected Member for George Town**

**Mr. Weward Marvin Hurlston, Jr.:** I, Weward Marvin Hurlston, Jr., do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law. So help me God.

**Electoral District of Bodden Town**

**The Clerk:** Electoral district of Bodden Town.  
 Affirmation by Miss Latoya Davis, First Elected Member for Bodden Town.

**AFFIRMATION**  
**Miss Latoya Davis**  
**First Elected Member for Bodden Town**

**Miss Latoya Davis:** I, Latoya Davis, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law.

**The Clerk:** Affirmation by Miss Saleicia Samaroo, the Second Elected Member for Bodden Town.

**AFFIRMATION**  
**Miss Saleicia Samaroo**  
**Second Elected Member for Bodden Town**

**Miss Saleicia Samaroo:** I, Saleicia Samaroo, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law.

**The Clerk:** Affirmation by Miss Kalesha Edwards, the Third Elected Member for Bodden Town.

**AFFIRMATION**  
**Miss Kalesha Edwards**  
**Third Elected Member for Bodden Town**

**Miss Kalesha Edwards:** I, Kalesha Edwards, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law.

**The Clerk:** Affirmation by Miss Elizabeth Charles, the Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town.

**AFFIRMATION**  
**Miss Elizabeth Charles**  
**Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town**

**Miss Elizabeth Charles:** I, Elizabeth Charles, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law.

**Electoral District of**  
**Cayman Brac and Little Cayman**

**The Clerk:** Electoral District of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.  
 Oath of Allegiance by Miss Melody Martin, First Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**  
**Miss Melody Martin**  
**First Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman**

**Miss Melody Martin:** I, Melody Martin, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law. So help me God.

**The Clerk:** Oath of Allegiance by Miss Heidi Knowlton, Second Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**  
**Miss Heidi Knowlton**  
**Second Elected Member for**  
**Cayman Brac and Little Cayman**

**Miss Heidi Knowlton:** I, Heidi Knowlton, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law. So help me God.

**Electoral District of North Side**

**The Clerk:** Electoral District North Side.  
 Oath of Allegiance by Miss Corrina Worm, Elected Member for North Side.

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**  
**Miss Corrina Worm**  
**Elected Member for North Side**

**Miss Corrina Worm:** I, Corrina Worm, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law. So help me God.

## Electoral District of East End

**The Clerk:** Electoral District North Side.  
Affirmation, Miss Jessica Kong, Elected Member for East End.

### AFFIRMATION Miss Jessica Kong Elected Member for East End

**Miss Jessica Kong:** I, Jessica Kong, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law.

**The Clerk:** I invite the Government Bench and Opposition Bench to take their seats.  
Please be seated.

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE HONOURABLE MINISTERS OF CABINET OF THE CPA THIRD YOUTH PARLIAMENT

*By His Excellency the Governor of the CPA Third Youth Parliament*

**The Clerk:** Announcement of assignment of responsibilities to the Honourable Ministers of Cabinet of the CPA Third Youth Parliament by His Excellency the Governor of the CPA Third Youth Parliament.

**His Excellency the Governor of the CPA Third Youth Parliament Mr. Alex Cowan:** Honourable Members of the CPA Youth Parliament, acting upon the powers conferred upon me by the CPA Third Youth Parliament, I hereby charge the Elected Ministers of Cabinet to the following responsibilities:

- Mr. Weward Marvin Hurlston, Jr.—Minister responsible for the Ministry of District Administration, Planning, Agriculture and Housing.
- Miss Jessica Kong—Minister responsible for the Ministry of Tourism, Environment, Investment and Commerce.
- Miss Saleicia Samaroo—Minister responsible for the Ministry of Education, Training, Employment, Youth, Sports and Culture.
- Miss Kalesha Edwards—Minister responsible for the Ministry of Health and Human Services.
- Miss Corrina Worm—Minister responsible for the Ministry of Communications, Works and Infrastructure.

## PRESENTATION OF INSTRUMENTS OF APPOINTMENT OF LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS AND LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

*By His Excellency the Governor of the CPA Third Youth Parliament*

**The Clerk:** Presentation of Instruments of Appointment of Leader of Government Business and Leader of the Opposition by His Excellency the Governor of the CPA Third Youth Parliament.

Appointment of Leader of Government Business of the CPA Third Youth Parliament.

### APPOINTMENT OF LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**His Excellency the Governor:** To the Honourable Marvin Hurlston, Jr., in exercise of the powers conferred upon me I, Alex Cowan, Governor of the CPA Third Youth Parliament of the Cayman Islands do hereby, by this instrument, appoint you, the Honourable Marvin Hurlston, Jr., to be the Leader of Government Business of this CPA Third Youth Parliament with effect from 10 March 2008.

**The Clerk:** Appointment of the Leader of the Opposition of the CPA Third Youth Parliament.

### APPOINTMENT OF LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

**His Excellency the Governor:** To the Honourable Thea Bush, in exercise of the powers conferred upon me I, Alex Cowan, Governor of the CPA Third Youth Parliament of the Cayman Islands do hereby, by this instrument, appoint you, the Honourable Thea Bush, to be the Leader of Opposition of this CPA Third Youth Parliament with effect from 10 March 2008.

## STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF THE CPA THIRD YOUTH PARLIAMENT

**His Excellency the Governor:** Honourable Leader of Government Business, Honourable Members and Ministers of the Cabinet, Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Government and Opposition Members of this honourable Youth Parliament, welcome to the CPA Third Youth Parliament.

I would first like to announce that I am honoured to take part in this historic ceremony. It has been the custom for the Governor to say a few words at this stage of the proceedings. Let me therefore be the first to congratulate all the Members of this Third Youth Parliament as they take their seats.

I followed with interest the proceedings over the last three years since honourable Members were elected. At that time I challenged all Members to show a strong commitment and involvement in the big challenges that lay ahead. The motions presented today are of critical importance to these Islands as will be the current and future debate and referendum on a new constitution for these Islands. I would like to take this opportunity to underline the sincere commitment of the United Kingdom to assist in this process.

I thank the government bodies and members of the private sector involved in educating and informing the people of the Cayman Islands of the proposed changes and repercussions of each and every amendment to your Constitution. I would encourage the electorate to participate in the Island-wide discussions and public meetings being held in relation to the proposed amendments to the Constitution.

This is a significant time in our Islands' history and I wish you, the Members of the Third Youth Parliament, every success as you lead our Islands. May God bless you with the wisdom to guide the people of these beautiful Islands to further prosperity and greater benefits for our global community.

I would also like to publicly thank everyone who has helped out in making this Youth Parliament a success. I hope that everything will go smoothly this 10<sup>th</sup> day of March 2008. I wish all the Members of the Third Youth Parliament great success in the debates that will follow today, this Commonwealth Day as will these proceedings. In the meanwhile I thank you all for your attention.

[applause]

**PROCLAMATION NO. 1/08  
APPOINTMENT OF THE SPEAKER OF  
THE CPA THIRD YOUTH PARLIAMENT**

**The Clerk:** Cayman Islands CPA Third Youth Parliament Proclamation No. 1 of 2008 by his Excellency Alex Cowan, Governor of the CPA Third Youth Parliament of the Cayman Islands.

**WHEREAS I, Alex Cowan, Governor of the CPA Third Youth Parliament may appoint a Speaker who shall be a person, whether or not a Member of the Youth Parliament, who is qualified and not disqualified to be a Member of the Youth Parliament;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, Alex Cowan, Governor of the CPA Third Youth Parliament, do hereby proclaim and make known that having consulted and having received advice of all the Members of the Third Youth Parliament I appoint Mr. Sidney Terry to be Speaker of the CPA Third Youth Parliament with effect from this 10<sup>th</sup> day of March 2008.**

All rise.

*[The Leader of Government Business and the Leader of the Opposition left the Chamber to escort the Speaker Designate into the Chamber.]*

*[The Speaker Designate, escorted by both Leaders, entered the Chamber and proceeded to the Speaker's dais.]*

**The Clerk:** Please be seated.

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Mr. Sidney Terry, Speaker Designate of the CPA Third Youth Parliament**  
*Administered by the Governor*

**Hon. Sidney Terry, Speaker:** I, Sidney Terry, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and Successors, according to Law. So help me God.

**The Clerk:** All rise.

*[Departure of His Excellency the Governor of the CPA Third Youth parliament]*

*[Departure of the Honourable Speaker of the CPA Third Youth Parliament]*

**The Clerk:** Please be seated, but remain in your seats.

**SPEAKER'S PROCESSION**

*[The Serjeant-At-Arms announced the arrival of the Speaker.]*

**The Speaker:** Please be seated.

This CPA Third Youth Parliament is now in Session.

**PROCLAMATION NO. 2/08**

**The Clerk:** Cayman Islands Proclamation No. 2 of 2008 by his Excellency Alex Cowan, Governor of the CPA Third Youth Parliament of the Cayman Islands.

**WHEREAS the Session of the Cayman Islands Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Youth Parliament shall be held at such places and begin at such times as the Governor of the CPA Youth Parliament may from time to time by Proclamation appoint;**

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, Alex Cowan, Governor of the CPA Third Youth Parliament, by virtue of the powers conferred upon me hereby proclaim that a session of the CPA Third Youth Parliament of the Cayman Islands shall be held at the Legislative Assembly on the Island of Grand Cayman, beginning at 10 am on Monday the 10<sup>th</sup> of March, 2008.**

## STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER OF THE CPA THIRD YOUTH PARLIAMENT

**The Speaker:** Before I proceed to the Order of Business, I crave the indulgence of this honourable CPA Third Youth Parliament to say a few words.

Honourable Leader of Government Business, Honourable Members of the Cabinet, Honourable Leader of the Opposition, honourable Members of this honourable Youth Parliament, family, friends, and all of our listeners and viewers by radio and television, I bid you all good morning.

It has indeed been a great privilege and a distinct honour for me to be chosen as the Speaker of the House for this the third sitting of the Youth Parliament here in our beloved Isle Cayman. Today on Commonwealth Day, Her Majesty the Queen addressed the issue of pollution in her address to the Commonwealth heard around the world in all Commonwealth territories. She urged the Commonwealth to come together “**a trait**”, she says, “**that has always been a strength of the Commonwealth.**”

In order to assist each other in the never ending fight against pollution in her closing remarks the Queen states (and again I quote), “**In the Commonwealth, governments, businesses, communities and individuals should each strive to match words and good intentions with deeds. Every contribution has its part to play.**” Today we, the Members of the Third Youth Parliament, bring a small contribution to the table.

In today’s Caymanian society when the non-conservative locals speak openly and negatively about the Islands’ activities and the vast foreign influence on most of these said activities, as youth we have become almost trapped in a virtual war between foreign and local. I wish not to address the confrontation in society that causes some of us to be preset in this negative manner; but, rather, as a youth wish to address the fact that, as these Islands’ future, we get little attention and even less of an opportunity to voice our opinions concerning our community.

As Cayman is steadily progressing since the days of buildings no taller than your average coconut tree, to the days we now reside in—with colossal buildings, such as the Ritz Carlton, towering seven stories into the fresh salt air—our voices as the next in line seem of little importance. As time has passed, this importance has diminished.

In the last sitting of the Youth Parliament many of the Members were in uproar after a local artist depicted us as a rather cartoony uncoordinated bunch of kids here putting on a show. Much time and effort has been put into these proceedings by all Members of this Youth Parliament and the views and opinions are, indeed, all our own. As much as we have been coached in order to be here today, as

much as we have spent time rehearsing and re-rehearsing our parliamentary procedures, the Organising Committee itself is unaware of the majority of what will be said in today’s debate.

Rather than immediately going into a state of panic as to the possible negative outcome of today’s proceedings after my last comment, I urge you instead to pay keen attention to everything we have to say about the topics we will discuss today.

Days after the closing motion of the Second Youth Parliament, where I served as the Leader of Government Business, I was approached by one of the Members of the Government side who expressed his feelings from a greater society to be one simply of great joy and peace. *You put on a wonderful performance; back to school then for now for the fun is over.*

This year I ask the greater public for their support not on Commonwealth Day every year, but all through the year. I ask not for the support of the public to be directly focused on the Youth Parliament either, but on the youth, period. During the day and age where you as elders of our Islands stand in awe at the negativity that flows through the veins of our Islands’ youth and at the actions taking place within our generation—actions unheard of before in Cayman society—stop turning to the professionals from the United States or Canada or England or even to your own discretion to find the solution for any problem concerning your Islands’ youth. If you need answers as to what to do about us, right here would be your best place to start.

As we voice our opinions today, again, see us not as just dressed up kids doing a debate but, rather, as Cayman’s next generation of politicians and leaders voicing their opinions on just a few of the many events and activities that will shape Cayman into the Cayman that will be for our children.

To the honourable Members of this parliament, I have been here to see but a portion of the effort you have all put into the meeting of this, the Third Youth Parliament. I have seen the emotion on your faces as we mock debate and the high degree to which this endeavour has been taken seriously by us all. I wish to remind you all that we are a hand-picked group that has been chosen from different walks of life and brought together for the simple fact that we youth parliamentarians have been seen as fit for this job.

As we proceed through the formalities and come closer and closer to the great debate ahead, I urge you all not to rush while still not wasting time. This is a grand opportunity for us as the political future of our beloved Isle to show what we are made of, to prove that our opinions far exceed that of a group of kids putting on a show.

I wish you all good luck and myself look forward to the day’s events.

**NOMINATIONS FOR THE ELECTION  
OF DEPUTY SPEAKER OF THE CPA  
THIRD YOUTH PARLIAMENT**

**The Speaker:** I now call for nominations of the Deputy Speaker of this honourable CPA Third Youth Parliament.

I recognise the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, the First Elected Member for West Bay.

**Hon. Thea Bush:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to nominate the First Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman to be the Deputy Speaker of the CPA Third Youth Parliament.

**The Speaker:** Is there a seconder?

I recognise the Second Elected Member for George Town.

**Mr. Duet Berry, Jr.:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to second the nomination.

**The Speaker:** Does the First Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman accept the nomination?

**Miss Melody Martin:** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to accept the nomination.

**The Speaker:** Are there any further nominations? [pause] Are there any further nominations? [pause] Are there any further nominations?

If there are no further nominations, I declare the First Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman to be the Deputy Speaker of this honourable CPA Third Youth Parliament.

This Youth Parliament shall suspend for 15 minutes.

**Proceedings suspended at 10.33 am**

**Proceedings resumed at 11.00 am**

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

**The Clerk:** Government Business, Motions. Government Motion No.1—The Environment—our Future.

**The Speaker:** I call upon the Hon. Minister of Tourism, Environment, Investment and Commerce to move the Motion.

**GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

**MOTIONS**

**Government Motion No. 1—The Environment –  
Our Future**

**Hon Jessica Kong:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I beg to move Government Motion No.1—The Environment—our Future. The Motion reads:

**WHEREAS the environment and, by extension, our future is being threatened;**

**BE IT NOW THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT this Honourable Youth Parliament implements a sustainable public waste management system.**

**The Speaker:** Government Motion No. 1 has been duly moved. I call upon the Hon. Minister to speak thereto.

**Hon Jessica Kong:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as you are aware there are many environmental negatives that are the direct cause of human influence. Despite the fact that the Cayman Islands is ranked number 55 out of 207 countries for global carbon emissions, we have taken it upon ourselves to look into an issue a little closer to home—the landfill.

The landfill is not only an eyesore, but an environmental hazard. Traditional landfills produce what is known as leachate, which is the liquid that drains from a landfill.

Mr. Speaker, here in the Cayman Islands we have a very high water table and thus the underground water supplies are at risk for contamination from leachate. Due to the landfill being unlined it is a known fact that leachate from the landfill is seeping into the North Sound affecting our mangroves which is an essential habitat for marine life. Not only are our mangroves being destroyed, but our world renowned crystal clear waters are being affected.

Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, these crystal clear waters are one of the main attractions to our beautiful Cayman Islands. Furthermore, the current location of the landfill has been moved to one of the main thoroughfares heavily traveled by residents and visitors of these Islands on a frequent basis and provides a rather unpleasant aroma.

Now tell me, Mr. Speaker, which tourists come to the Cayman Islands to see and smell a mountain of garbage? And, furthermore, why should our residents be subjected to these distasteful sights and smells?

The landfill is also a great producer of methane and carbon dioxide. Both of these gases are greenhouse gases that call for concern. And knowing that we are ranked number 55 out of 207 countries for global carbon emissions we certainly can afford to reduce this. Ultimately, the landfill is a source of pollution that is long overdue and in need of serious attention.

Mr. Speaker, the solution to this quandary is a Plasma Converter system by Startech. The Plasma

Converter system turns the most repulsive and toxic waste into clean energy. Essentially, this system takes garbage that requires no previous sorting or classification and converts the garbage into synthesis gas comprised mainly of hydrogen and carbon monoxide along with an obsidian-like stone. The hydrogen is separated from the carbon monoxide and can then be converted to electricity. That said, this will also reduce dependency on fossil fuels.

The Honourable Second Official Member will further expand on the process of conversion.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure the question running through everyone's mind now is how much will this cost. The system that this Government is looking at investing in for Grand Cayman has the capability of processing 150 tones of garbage per day and will cost approximately \$40 million.

We have looked at investing in systems for both the Sister Islands. For Cayman Brac a system that has the capacity to process 25 tones of garbage per day for a cost of approximately \$15 million. And for Little Cayman, a system with the capacity to process 10 tones of garbage per day will cost approximately \$3 million.

The honourable Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town and the Honourable Third Official Member will elaborate on how the Government's budget will be redistributed to accommodate the cost of these three machines.

In addition to providing an unpleasant aroma and sight, the current landfill poses many health risks which have the potential to add strain to our health services. We have taken this into account in deciding to propose the Plasma Converter system as a solution. The Honourable Minister of Health will expand on these issues.

Mr. Speaker, the Government realises that, being relatively new technology, we will either need to rely on outside labour or train locally with the operator system. Startech has made provisions to aid in this area. The honourable Third Elected Member for George Town will elaborate on the necessary installation and maintenance required for the system.

Mr. Speaker, after consulting with the Honourable Second Official Member it has been determined that there will not be any legislative requirements for the legitimisation of this system.

Mr. Speaker, as a Government we have also looked into the credibility of this system. Hearing about this advancement in technology creates a statement of *"this sounds too good to be true!"* However, this system is a reality that will revolutionise the way in which we manage and eliminate our waste. The Plasma Converter system has been implemented worldwide, specifically in Japan, several American states, eastern Europe, South Africa, Costa Rica, Panama, and Puerto Rico. In Japan it has been implemented to eliminate hazardous incinerator ash and it has the capability to destroy contagious diseases.

Mr. Speaker, the Plasma Converter is the answer to the unsightly landfills throughout the Cayman Islands. Not only will we be eliminating waste, but we will be creating a clean burning fuel. The capacity to convert 10 tones to 150 tones of garbage into fuel, these machines will not only eradicate the current eyesores, but they will be long-term investments to be relied upon to manage public waste in such a way that will reduce harmful gases along with our dependence on fossil fuels.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you honourable Member.

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

I recognise the Honourable Second Official Member.

**Hon. Annalisa Wallace:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in support of the proposition made by the Government bench. My objective this morning will be to give a short summary—not detailed by any means—of how this Startech system will work.

Let me first make it very clear, Mr. Speaker, that the Startech system is not an incineration system. It breaks down waste by what is known as gasification. The system is driven by electricity and is computer controlled, unlike incinerators. As such, the system will be able to be controlled and will function in a safe method.

If the honourable House will refer to the first diagram found on page 1 of the booklet distributed, I will explain that in the first phase the waste is fed into the plasma converter. As indicated in the diagram the system is able to process all forms of waste—sludge, liquids, gases. All forms, Mr. Speaker.

It should also be noted that no sorting is necessary in processing the waste materials. This is of particular relevance considering the situation at the current landfill.

When the waste materials are fed in the system the converter generates a controlled lightning bolt which separates the molecules of waste into their elemental components. An example of this is seen on page 2, diagram 2, of the booklet given to the House. This honourable House is now viewing the breakdown of the poisonous gas cyanide. The heat generated by the system reaches temperatures of 30,000 and over degrees Fahrenheit and is able to dissociate the molecules so that they are no longer harmful.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to cite the 2000 Revision of the Public Health Regulations which states that, bearing in mind, Mr. Speaker, that we are not speaking of an incinerator, that **“. . . before approval is given under this Regulation, the system shall satisfy the requirements of maintaining a minimum combustion temperature of 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit for single chambers.”**

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, our system well meets these Regulations.

The Plasma Converter system produces two byproducts: the plasma converted gas, also known as synthesis gas, which constitutes primarily hydrogen and carbon monoxide. This gas is cleaned, filtered and refined, thereby neutralising the carbon monoxide gas. The gas is then cooled and stored in the PCG tank as seen in the first diagram on page 1.

Mr. Speaker, as a Government we are proposing that this gas can then be used to supplement the generation of electricity. Instead of burning oil which presents multiple environmental hazards, we propose that we can burn this PCG (Plasma Converted Gas) to turn the turbines and produce electricity which can be redistributed to the entire island.

The other byproduct of the gasification process is what is known as silicate. As mentioned by the honourable Member, the silicate is an obsidian-like stone. This is in essence a very hard and dense solid that can be used in the construction industry as a foundation material. Mr. Speaker, this byproduct can also be used to manufacture tile. Here we see a benefit for the economy.

I venture to speak on the efficiency of the machine. High energy waste materials such as plastics, solvents, tyres, and domestic refuse generate more electricity than the machine uses to break them down. What this means, Mr. Speaker, is that this machine will eventually be able to fuel itself as well as meet the electricity needs of the entire country.

Naturally, the energy produced by the system is dependent on the potential energy provided by the feedstock. Luckily, household waste is very high in potential energy. According to the Startech Environmental Corporation, Mr. Speaker, using normal domestic waste the electricity-to-fuel efficiency is 4.50. What this means is that the average waste-to-fuel conversion efficiency is 73 per cent.

I will use another example, Mr. Speaker, using the British Unit, the BTU, defined as the British Thermal Unit (the amount of heat required to raise the temperature of one pound of water by one degree Fahrenheit). When the Startech system is supplied with 9.3 BTU of potential energy in addition to 1.8 million BTU of electricity the end product is 8.1 million BTU of convertible energy. It has become clear from this example that this system will eventually be self sufficient.

The system can be produced to meet our needs here in the Cayman Islands. We can have the system manufactured to process hundreds of pounds of waste per hour, to hundreds of tones of waste per day. The system can be set to operate for a certain time period, that is, intermittently, or to work nonstop in the breaking down of waste. Because the system is computer controlled, its settings can be altered as necessary.

A brief synopsis of what will be supplied upon purchase of this system: You will receive the follow-

ing, according to the Startech Environmental Corporation website:

- the Plasma Converter vessel with feed system,
- the plasma torch and power supply,
- a high pressure cooling water system,
- central computer control station
- the gas polishing system.

In implementing this system we as a Government are attempting to significantly reduce the volume of sedentary waste here in the Cayman Islands while simultaneously reducing the Islands' carbon footprint. The Startech gasification process, as illustrated in the third diagram found on page 3 of the booklet, is able to reduce the equivalent of 300 drums of waste materials to the equivalent of one drum of inert harm[less] and useful glasslike stone

However, we are not in any way delusional, Mr. Speaker. We do not claim that this endeavour will be inexpensive. However, we do believe that it will be a valuable investment in our environment, our economy and our future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Second Official Member.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

[pause] Does any other Member wish to speak?

[pause]

I recognise the Honourable Minister of Works.

**Hon. Corrina Worm:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would now like to speak on how we as a Government plan on distributing the byproducts produced by this machine. As a quick reiteration of what the Second Official Member said, the two byproducts include a plasma converted gas which can be easily refined to hydrogen and stored in tanks especially designed for that same purpose. This gas can later be burned in turbines and used to make energy.

The second byproduct is a hard melt that turns into a silicate. Like I already stated, the plasma converted gas can be used as a field to generate electric power; what I did not mention, however, is that it can also be used to plant heating and air conditioning as a fuel to produce fresh water, produce chemicals and plastics, power fuel cells to produce electricity or power vehicles.

The hard melt can be used in the metal industry, the brick industry, cement industry, construction industry and abrasive industry.

We plan on selling this plasma converted gas on island. We would take the melt and sell it to different industries listed above on island. What we could then in turn do is take the money for these by selling these products and not only use it to better the waste disposal systems in Cayman, but also invest in more of Cayman's cherished environmental conservation projects that also help preserve the culture of Cay-

man, such as the Butterfly Farm, the Turtle Farm and the Botanical Garden.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

I recognise the Third Elected Member for West Bay.

**Mr. Owen Foster:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Second Official Member stated that no sorting would be needed for this machine. Mr. Speaker, there is a profit to be made from recycling. If we can presort our recyclables what need would there be for this machine? We could look into alternative ways for dealing with our non-recyclable garbage, cheaper ways that are also efficient.

Take, for example, the tabs from a soda can. They are of great value to the medical industry. Each one of those tabs is worth one minute for a person on dialysis.

My second point, Mr. Speaker, is the current landfill. What is going to happen to the current landfill between now and the time that we raise the funds for this machine to be implemented? Will we continue? Or will we start sorting? What will be done?

Another point I would like to bring forth, Mr. Speaker, is problems with the machine itself. When items containing chlorine are inserted into this machine into the process chamber, they create dioxins which are toxic and poisonous. Now, chlorine is in almost everything we use today—it is in our food, it is in plastic, it is in textiles, and an assortment of other items and objects that we use and consume. The liners inside of this machine that separate the outer cylinder and the plasma chamber itself are susceptible to assault from chlorine and high temperature variations, meaning that after a while these liners are going to have to be replaced. That seems like a technology that we are going to have to keep pumping money into.

My last point, Mr. Speaker, is maintenance. What are we going to do about getting parts for this machine when it breaks down? As you can see, we live on an island; we do not live in the continental United States or in another country that has means of getting the parts here today. We would have to ship them in, fly them in, or find another way to get these parts here. To me, it is inconceivable why we should just use a machine that needs parts to be brought in versus a machine that can be repaired on island as well as a simpler machine where we do not need to send people off to be trained to use this machine.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Third Elected Member for West Bay.

Does any other Member wish to speak?  
[pause]

I recognise the Third Elected Member for George Town.

**Mr. Michaiiah Bryan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would briefly like to highlight some of the issues surrounding the installation and maintenance of the Plasma Converter. The Second Official Member already highlighted some of the components of this machine as it relates to some of the issues raised by the Third Elected Member for West Bay who said that this technology is a, and I quote “technology that we will have to keep pumping money into.” I would like to ask him whether or not he thinks we should leave any machine on the island to just rot instead of spending the money necessary to adequately maintain it. Money will have to be used to maintain machines that are an integral part of our Caymanian society, industry and business sector.

As it relates to the issue of not sending people off to get trained for this, I believe that sending people off to be trained in the use of this machine is an important educational step for the Caymanian people. It will give them great technical knowledge, it will empower them to use alternative job opportunities and also they can even depart from this Island and become experts in other areas, to train other people depending on the level of expertise they get.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue to say that I would like to raise an issue of the proposed location. The Government proposes to build a facility that will house this system on or near the site of the current landfill on Grand Cayman. This will help to ensure that the systematic reduction of the landfill will be completed more quickly due to the proximity to the Plasma Arc Converter.

The Startech Environmental Corporation offers to train its customers' system engineers and operators at its operation and training centre in Bristol, Connecticut. Both classroom and hands-on training are conducted over several weeks during the customer's custom built cycle and much of this training is conducted on the customer's own system which would be under assembly at the time. Mr. Speaker, I believe, as I previously stated, that this is a great opportunity for Caymanians to gain engineering and technical knowledge and the acquisition of this knowledge will create more job opportunities for the people of these Islands.

As far as maintenance is concerned, Mr. Speaker, Startech offers a long term service agreement to customers assuring them that their systems will be serviced when needed and assuring that spare parts will be readily available. In addition to this, regular maintenance will only concern one main area: that is, the need to periodically replace the electrodes inside the machine after every 300 to 500 hours of use. Replacing these electrodes will only consume 30 min-

utes and will ensure that the machine's period of inactivity due to maintenance will be shortened.

I would like to reiterate that this technology should help the Cayman Islands to reduce the eyesore of the landfill. It will help to give us an increased sense of pride at the cleanliness of our Islands, and the training offered by the Startech Corporation will offer Caymanians extra educational opportunities so they can learn skills that will empower them in the job market.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Third Elected Member for George Town.

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

I recognise the First Elected Member for Bodden Town.

**Miss Latoya Davis:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have to say that I am in agreement with the Government for presenting this machine as a form of managing waste in our Islands. However, I will pose a question to the Honourable Third Official Member: Is the financial budget of the Cayman Islands sufficient enough to fund this machine?

The Government spends a lot of money each year for things, such as, the renovation of buildings such as our own Owen Roberts International Airport, schools, et cetera, to aid in the development of sectors such as education, environment and health. Mr. Speaker, I ask again, will the financial budget be sufficient enough to purchase and maintain this machine? And where do you plan to get the money?

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you First Elected Member for Bodden Town.

Does any other Member wish to speak?  
[pause]

I recognise the Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town.

**Miss Elizabeth Charles:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would just like to bring up some points that were made a little earlier by the Opposition. Chlorine was brought up. But as we stated before, all poisonous gases are refined—including chlorine.

It was also stated that we are an island, so how would we get the parts here. But we did previously state that other islands, such as Puerto Rico, currently have this in place.

Mr. Speaker, a wise man once said "**Let every individual and institution now think and act as a responsible trustee of the Earth, seeking choices in ecology, economics and ethics that will provide a sustainable future, eliminate pollution, poverty and violence, awaken the wonder of life**

**and foster peaceful progress in the human adventure.**"

That wise man was John McConnell, founder of International Earth Day.

Mr. Speaker, we have reached a time in this nation where we can be mature enough to make unselfish decisions that, though they may take a sacrifice now will not be outweighed by its later benefits. The Startech Plasma Converter, as you have heard, possesses the capability to not only power itself, but to also bring cheap electricity to the homes of Caymanian citizens after a period of time. With the global need for increasing energy and the electricity rates steadily rising, the financially correct time to act is now.

Mr. Speaker, another financial advantage of the Startech Plasma Converter is that for any material that cannot be completely gasified, as my colleague has stated, it will turn into a material useful in our very booming construction industry. This material can be sold in our industry as a means to add to our periodic payments. So it will not be the central matter of generating funds. This brings me to my next point, Mr. Speaker.

Currently, in this here Cayman Islands in the year 2008, we have appropriated \$825,000 to be used toward the improvement of our appalling heap of trash—our very own dear Mt. Trashmore!

[laughter]

**Miss Elizabeth Charles:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to appeal to the wisdom of this honourable Assembly to be so forthright as to ask that under the advisement of the Financial Secretary we replace the yearly appropriation for landfill improvement with a payment to the Plasma Converter, since owning such a device would negate our need for the landfill altogether.

And once again, if our Financial Secretary would deem it possible for us to restructure our budget in such a way that gazette claims, though they are important, would receive nearly \$2.5 million rather than the \$3 million currently administered so that some of the funds may go to the payment of this device.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate the obvious part of the environmental effects that have been previously mentioned. If our landfill remains in its current state, then by the next time we come together this parliament might be meeting under more solemn circumstances as we try to find solutions to what may prove to be irreversible consequences for not acting when we had the chance.

Mr. Speaker, the environmentally correct time to act is now!

Due to the leeching that can only come as an effect of our broadcasting land pollution on the Harquail Bypass we are setting ourselves up for future health dilemmas. Because this threat to our health does exist, and can be addressed by switching from

the use of a landfill to the Startech Plasma Converter, I would recommend that a portion of the health funds be appropriated to the machine as a measure of prevention of a bigger health problem.

And, might I add, the Plasma Converter has the capacity to kill diseases, such as Mad Cow Disease, Hoof and Mouth Disease and even Anthrax, should they ever arrive on the Islands.

Mr. Speaker, research done by our very capable Cabinet shows that owning the proposed 150 ton Startech Plasma Converter in Grand Cayman would cost an estimated \$40 million. If purchased at the same rate, a 30 ton converter for Cayman Brac would cost approximately \$8 million, while a 10 ton converter for Little Cayman would cost approximately \$3 million, giving us a total of \$51 million.

At first, this number may sound startling. I understand that, Mr. Speaker. But, as I am sure the Financial Secretary will agree, if this cost is split equally between the Government and two other interested members of the private sector, this will prove to be a very affordable endeavour with each party paying the sum of \$17 million.

With the \$825,000 assigned to the Plasma Converter rather than the landfill, and \$500,000 being reassigned from gazette claims to the Plasma Converter system, this machine could be paid for in a matter of 13 years. This is a very short time when considering the permanent advantages that are being offered to our environment and our economy. And if funds from the Department of Health can be appropriated to the Plasma Converter, then it will be paid for in even less time thereby excluding the possibility of having our children left with the payment of this machine.

Mr. Speaker, Mahatma Gandhi, a man praised for his wisdom and the peace he aimed to bring to this world once said, **“You must be the change you see in this world.”** I would like to take this statement a little further and say, this Government must build the positive change we want to see on these Islands by providing our people with environmentally safe alternatives for the issues that currently plague us.

The time to act is now!

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town.

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

I recognise the First Elected Member for George Town.

**Mr. Andrei Harris:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, before I enter into my discourse, I would like to address a statement that was made by the Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town, where she said there were other Caribbean islands, such as

Puerto Rico, that had this machine. I would also like to point out that Puerto Rico is a much larger Caribbean island. Is it not?

I would also like to elaborate on a point mentioned by the Third Elected Member for George Town and my question to him is, Are there not countless machines brought in by the Caymanian Government and eventually left to rot?

Mr. Speaker, I am in complete agreement that the Caymanian Mt. Trashmore is a complete eyesore and neither our tourists nor the residents of our beautiful Island should have to suffer this. We in the Opposition also agree that something needs to be done. However, Mr. Speaker, we in the Opposition feel that the Plasma Converter should not be the only option taken. Instead, a mass burn waste-to-energy machine, which is half the price of the Plasma Converter, and reported to be more favourable than the Plasma Converter machine, this mass burn waste-to-energy also generates enough electricity that is capable of powering 8 million homes. Here in Cayman the average homes range in size from four to six people.

Mr. Speaker, in collaboration with the First Elected Member for Bodden Town, I would also like to ask a few questions. First and foremost, even though the Fourth Elected Member of Bodden Town gave us a clear description of how she thinks the machine will be afforded, I would like to know if this machine will put a strain on the Government's pocket. The reason I ask this question is because the Government does not seem to be as capable as it thinks because it originally gave us figures that pointed to \$58 million, and then switched it saying it should come up to be \$51 million.

Mr. Speaker, thank you.

### Point of Order

**Miss Elizabeth Charles:** On a point of order.

He is misleading the House. In the beginning when my colleague spoke, she actually also listed a different ton weight from the one that I listed. So I would ask the Opposition to please clarify their facts.

**The Speaker:** Hon. Second Official Member, it was you that had passed the ton reading comments earlier from which the . . .

**Hon. Annalisa Wallace:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The point of order lies in the fact that the First [Elected] Member for George Town is misleading the House. He is saying that here on the Government bench we quoted a figure of, what, \$58 million? We never said that. We said that it was *approximately*, and it *may be approximately* . . . because the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that we are not able to get direct and specified quotes for this machine until surveys can be done on the land.

The fact of the matter is that we said \$51 million including all of the machines. And taking into con-

sideration the other quote which was made, \$40 million, that was made considering the variation in the capacity of the machine.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Honourable First Elected Member for George Town, the point of order has been taken into consideration. But seeing as you have finished your statement for this segment of the debate, I ask that the Opposition try to stray from nit-picking the current estimates, so to say. Please pardon my use of terms for these are, in fact, just general estimations at this time for something that we are indeed *thinking* of putting to good use.

Does any other Member wish to speak?  
[pause]

I recognise the Honourable Third Official Member.

**Hon. Geoffrey Grizzel:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To reply to comments by the First Elected Member for George Town towards the comparison of the size of Puerto Rico to the Cayman Islands, does the size of the population mean that 450 tons of waste per day is not comparable to that of Puerto Rico, Mr. Speaker?

More favourable, how? And who says this is the company's owners.

Mr. Speaker, we are not able to determine an exact figure of what the cost would be to initiate this project into our community. We would have to bring associates from the company we are buying the machine from to evaluate the situation of the landfill and to determine the size of the Plasma Converter needed and an exact price. We will, however, be able to compare to other countries that have similar machines and the cost they had in their community to be around \$30 million to \$40 million for one.

I know that sounds like a large sum of money, Mr. Speaker, but let me assure you that this will pay off in the long run. From the energy that we will receive from this machine we will even be able to sell this cheap energy to CUC, an electrical company already well situated on the Island. By doing this the cost of electricity bills would significantly decrease as would the cost of living in the Cayman Islands because the fuel factor price that makes our electrical bills so high will also significantly decrease. Instead of CUC having to pay fuel companies over \$6 million per month plus duty to power their generators, they can get that same fuel and energy for a very small fraction of the price.

In the long run, Mr. Speaker, the price of having this machine will reduce the future cost of having to fix environmental tragedies such as sewer and dangerous chemicals leaking into the North Sound damaging the mangroves, animals and their habitats, and damaging the delicate ecosystem. In the long run the cost of overall waste management will decrease because the very garbage itself becomes a product to

sell and to make profit. The saying does go that one man's trash is another man's treasure!

And to answer the First Elected Member for Bodden Town, there are actually many ways that Government can afford to do this funding. My colleague did say before that each private party or each party [could] pay \$17 million, and take \$500,000 off the budget being used for the gazettes. You can put that along with the \$825,000 being used to help better the situation with the landfill and we will have enough money to do so. And if that cannot work, we are also able to issue bonds. That is very popular within Government to help fund projects.

We are also able to borrow from or do partial funding with the banks and get loans to help fund this project.

As Financial Secretary of this Youth Parliament, Mr. Speaker, I will endeavour to see that the upcoming budget for July 2008 to 2009 has priority for the funding of the project at hand. The sooner this is underway, the sooner we can better our environment.

To conclude, I would just like to say as a final answer to the First Elected Member for Bodden Town, the only thing that we cannot afford in this project is not to implement it into our community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[applause]

**The Speaker:** Thank you Honourable Third Official Member.

Does any other Member wish to speak?  
[pause]

I recognise the Fourth Elected Member for George Town.

**Miss Raven Ramoon:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what we are proposing to this House is producing the power of the stars for a cleaner and safer environment. Whether it is vanilla ice cream or the deadliest waste, the Startech Plasma Converter can create usable resources from materials once considered a liability.

The *University of California Press* stated, and I quote, "**Each year during the past few decades, approximately 1,000 new chemicals have been manufactured and introduced into the marketplace. In the United States today, there are approximately 50,000 such chemicals in commercial use. Virtually every aspect of our lives is touched by these substances.**"

Let me emphasise that what we are proposing is not a burning process; in fact, like the Second Official Member stated, this converter should not be confused with an incinerator. It is an extremely robust system, computer controlled very safely and quietly.

Mr. Speaker, without further ado I would like to present to this House the advantages of using the Startech Plasma Converter over other technology:

1. The price of the Startech system and its operating costs are significantly less expensive than many of the present costs being experienced by industry.
2. Hazardous and non-hazardous waste—solids, liquids, sludges, and gases—can be safely and economically processed without producing harmful, illegal or noxious emissions, effluents or residue.
3. The volumetric waste reduction for most solid waste is approximately 300 to 1.
4. The Startech system environmental performance is safer than the United States EPA standards and regulations.
5. The Startech system can do on-site remediation of toxic “hot spots” (contaminated properties) and landfills and return those properties to the market sale in a safe and habitable condition. Landfills contain resources that can be safely processed and recovered as commodity products by the Startech Converter.
6. The Startech system will improve public health and safety, and will not produce the harm that arises from incinerators and landfills.
7. For many wastes, the Startech system produces commodity products for sale or use, such as metals, specialty inorganics and a clean synthesis gas (Plasma Converted gas).
8. The Startech system reduces the cost and risk to the corporation, agency and organizational entity from the “perpetual liability” that accompanies hazardous waste generation, treatment, storage, disposal and transportation.
9. The Startech system can be produced in various configurations that allow them to be used aboard ships for marine applications, in a truck for mobile applications, and in stationary configurations ranging in capacity measured from hundreds of pounds per day to hundreds of tons per day.
10. The Startech system can be operated intermittently a few hours a day as needed, or around the clock, without many of the difficulties and costs that arise in other technologies when operated in the same manner.
11. When processing high-energy content waste, such as plastics, solvents and tires, a unit of material that requires one kilowatt of power to process will produce enough PCG and recoverable heat to produce up to 2.5 kilowatts of electrical power.
12. Unlike other technology, no catalysts are required by the Startech system.
13. The Startech system can process low level radioactive waste. Although the system does not reduce radio activity, it can reduce its volume by factors of hundreds to one.
14. The Startech system can achieve “total and irreversible destruction” of hazardous and toxic compounds and waste, lethal viruses, bacteria and prions.
15. Resource Conservation Recovery Act recycling exemptions may be available where the resultant products produced are being used in an industrial process or to make a product.
16. The employment of the Startech system will allow the user to conform to Zero Discharge criteria, serving to enhance the good environmental community relations of the user.
17. Because the Converter is electrically driven, unlike incinerators, its operation can be stopped immediately by shutting off the electricity, and it is therefore controllable and “inherently safe.”
18. The system is computer controlled, easy to use and operates at normal atmospheric pressure, very safely and quietly.
19. The Converter can process solids, liquids and gases all at the same time,
20. The Startech system directly couples the co-generation and power systems.

In essence, the Startech Plasma Converter achieves remediation levels far safer than environmental standards.

Mr. Speaker, in summary, this Startech machine greatly reduces cost and waste associated with waste generation, can process all waste material in any form, is safer than environmental standards, recycles waste into valuable commodity products, is sized to convert thousands of pounds per day to municipal facilities that process hundreds of tones per day, has

stationary and mobile systems available, completes safe and irreversible destruction of even the most deadliest waste and produces solid and gas commodity products during conversion.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Fourth Elected Member for George Town.

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

I recognise the Fourth Elected Member for West Bay.

**Mr. Justin Jacky:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When I first heard about the Startech technology I was very pleased. I think it is a great machine. But upon thinking about the pros and cons of the machinery I have come to certain conclusions which I will now share with this honourable House.

Because of the nature of this machine and the hazards associated with heating something to 30,000 degrees Fahrenheit, I think that housing, maintenance and proper training would have to be tooled in managing such a machine. The costs for this were not touched by my colleagues on the Government bench, however. Housing costs have to be taking into consideration. Maintenance costs—on top of the \$51 million estimate that we have, how much more will this be?

Is the Government budget really up to making such monumental spending with projects like new schools, the rebuilding of the Glass House and other environmental projects? Is this really the best solution at this moment in time?

I believe the Government should implement this plan at a later date, but for now concentrate on the short term and cheaper ways of dealing with the landfill problem. Recycling is one way that the Government could try to break down and reduce the amount of garbage produced by Caymanians. This would not only take the load off the Startech machine when it does arrive, but it would also deal with the problem at hand.

Another aspect that Government could look at for dealing with our current waste problem would be the cheaper machine as stated by my colleague, the First Elected Member for George Town. This alternative would lighten the costs on both our residents and the Government.

I would also like to say that the Plasma Converter its lining and its electrode replacements cannot be 30 minutes as stated by the Third Elected Member for George Town. This is because the cooling process for something that heats up to 30,000 degrees Fahrenheit could not be 30 minutes. This process would have to be a little bit longer and also a little bit more difficult to do than presented by my colleagues on the Government bench.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you Fourth Elected Member for West Bay.

Does any other Member wish to speak?  
[pause]

I recognise the Second Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

**Miss Heidi Knowlton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We indeed have not forgotten about our beloved Sister Islands of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman in regard to this Motion.

I would like to remind this honourable House that we are looking for an optimum and long term solution to our current garbage disposal system and not just some old chewing gum quick fix!

[laughter and applause]

**Miss Heidi Knowlton:** The saying goes: *If it ain't broke don't fix it!*

Mr. Speaker, if a fat child sits on a swing and sees those ropes about to pop, they need to get up; otherwise they are in for a good lick!

[laughter]

**Miss Heidi Knowlton:** In this case we can clearly see that we are going to break our Islands, hypothetically speaking. So let us avoid this lick by getting off the swing before those ropes pop!

Mr. Speaker, if we do not start thinking and planning ahead for the future of these Islands, our children will face even greater waters with the burden of having to clean up our mess. We can prevent them from having this burden by preventing this garbage disposal issue from becoming any more harmful than it already is. And the solution, Mr. Speaker, lies within this Plasma Converter.

We will, indeed, have two smaller size machines, as the Honourable Deputy Leader of Government Business stated—a 25 ton converter for Cayman Brac, and a 10 ton converter for Little Cayman—along with the facilities to house the converters.

In the long run, Mr. Speaker, the benefits of this machine will far outweigh the negatives. This machine is so advanced it can even be used to get rid of biohazard waste, hospital waste of any sort, including needles and even sewage.

Mr. Speaker, the Cayman Brac and Little Cayman garbage disposal system at present takes the form of a landfill in which garbage is put into the ground and then buried with sand. This method is anything but environmentally friendly as the decomposing waste in these landfills is a harm to the environment. Think of the gas called methane. Methane is a gas and is significantly harmful to the greenhouse gases. We, therefore, are contributors to global warming by the continuation of these landfills. Sadly enough, the garbage dump in Cayman Brac now exists in wetland area.

This Startech machine can help us rid ourselves completely of the garbage volumes that currently exist in our Islands. Furthermore, it could be used to aid in cleaning the entire mass of landfills that we have already obtained over the years. This land could then be transformed back into a useable piece of real estate.

This would be particularly beneficial to Cayman Brac as our garbage dump is located in an area of some of the highest value real estate on the island.

Mr. Speaker, this Plasma Converter is an environmentally sound approach to waste management. Bearing in mind that waste management is an essential component of a comprehensive sustainable development plan for Cayman Brac, Little Cayman and Grand Cayman. I am in complete favour of it.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Second Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

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

I recognise the Second Elected Member for George Town.

**Mr. Duet Berry, Jr.:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Before I begin to discourse, I would first like to revert to some comments or the argument brought forth by the Third Elected Member for George Town. In his argument he stated that the cleanliness of our islands begins at the landfill. No, Mr. Speaker, the cleanliness of our beloved Islands begins at the household, and we should start there in educating the populace how to recycle, how to best manage the amount of garbage they are generating.

[An interjection: Hear, hear!]

**Mr. Duet Berry, Jr.:** Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the Fourth Elected Member for George Town gave us 20 reasons (shy of one advantage) of why we should get this technology employed here. However, we have heard nothing of the disadvantages. Is it that the Government bench is saying that this means of technology is foolproof?

I don't think so.

I believe that the Government bench knows as well that this technology does have its shortcomings.

Mr. Speaker, the breakdown of the amount of money we are going to spend in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman respectively, I think it was \$15 million and \$3 million . . . just about, say, \$18 million for both these Islands. But if you check the population of Cayman Brac, it is 2,000 approximately, and 200 in Little Cayman.

Mr. Speaker, what I am trying to get at is that we do not need to spend \$18 million just to put this equipment over in Little Cayman and Cayman Brac;

we can ship the garbage from there and bring it to the island here. Why do we need to spend all of this money when the garbage that Little Cayman and Cayman Brac would generate would not amount to so much that we would have to spend \$18 million, also considering the fact that these things do wear down and the housing and all of that sort of stuff, maintenance.

Mr. Speaker, again there was mention made about the size. The Government bench is not sure of the size and the amount this technology would cost, and they have to investigate or have some associates from the Startech Company come down and look at our current landfill. But in their statement they did say that the technology is able to convert 150 tones of garbage. Would this be on a daily basis? Would this be on a monthly basis? They should have investigated long before coming to the House, Mr. Speaker, to tell us what the cost would be. They are spinning around and not letting us know exactly what the cost will be, and I believe this is making a mockery of us here.

Thank you.

[inaudible interjections]

**The Speaker:** Thank you Second Elected Member for George Town.

Could I please have order in the Chamber?  
Thank you.

Does any other Member wish to speak?  
[pause]

I call upon the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Thea Bush:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Whereas I am in agreement with the Government bench in practicality of their proposal of this ideal seemingly sort-less waste disposal system as proclaimed by the Fourth Elected Member for George Town, now known to be the Startech Plasma Converter, I still feel it is my duty to highlight to the Government that perhaps more consideration should be placed on location.

Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that this piece of machinery needs to be in a well ventilated area and perhaps other equipment would be more suitable as pointed out by the Third Elected Member for George Town. However, the landfill is now well saturated in contents of waste, as is the whole point behind this Motion, I assume. So I then ask the Government bench, Where would the waste that is now in the landfill be moved to, to accommodate spacing for the building of the housing for this system?

The Government bench is adamantly proclaiming that all hazardous elements are removed. Then why is it that research has consistently proven that dioxins, which are hazardous chemicals are still emitted? Primarily products which contain some form or element of chlorine, I will reiterate, will increase the emission of dioxin which to no avail includes as many

products as food, paper product production, antiseptic, dyestuff, insecticides, paints, petroleum products, plastics, medicines, textiles, solvents, and many other consumer products.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, as expected the increase in the emission of dioxin would increase if the majority of the waste being processed include elements of chlorine. Although, according to researchers and to what the Government bench would like you to believe, the Startech Plasma Converter is unlikely to emit any type of hazardous element into the air, including the non-risk level of the chemical under discussion, but the necessary precautions should still be taken.

This is primarily because dioxins increase cancer rates as well as pose problems in reference to reproductive and developmental problems. It also causes an increase in heart risk problems as well as diabetes. It is as if our Government is trying to fix one problem and cause another. The machine should, when considering the location, keep the health status of the population at the current level it is.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, I am glad to know that our Government is more than sitting ducks and has taken into consideration the accessibility of the machine from the current landfill as this would pose more problems than benefits. I am also glad that they have noted that due to developments such as roads, houses, businesses or any other sort would not be impeded since the machine would be on the current landfill. But I will restate, where will the current garbage be placed in order to accommodate space for the building of the system?

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Government to once again please explain to the Opposition where this profitable fuel or gas, for that matter, will be stored? According to scientific and chemistry knowledge, no matter what gas it is there is always the potential of combustion.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

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

I call upon the Honourable Minister of Health.

**Hon. Kalesha Edwards:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Many concerns have come up regarding landfill issue. The location of the landfill is easily seen by the general public and is very unsightly, not to mention the stench that emanates from it. I sometimes question what happened to dead animals and other garbage which appeared after the devastation of Hurricane Ivan. Mr. Speaker, was it just buried in the earth, or taken to the landfill and dumped?

If this hazardous material is not properly disposed of it means that this can cause diseases by virtue of the fact that water and agricultural products

that we use are affected by the bacteria. Currently there is a growing rodent infestation and this is being caused by the increased garbage on the Islands. This can cause rodents to carry such diseases as rat bite fever and leptospirosis Mr. Speaker, these diseases can be prevented if the country had a proper way of disposing of garbage. We need to protect our country's environment. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we, the Government, would like to introduce a new public waste system on the island. After much research and consultation we propose to introduce the Startech Plasma Converter which will help to create a better garbage disposal system and get rid of the issues we are now facing with the present landfill. This converter is able to take any type of waste, whether it be hazardous, medical, or other waste, and it can destroy many diseases and convert them safely into a gas that is called Plasma Converted Gas. This gas is non-toxic.

We, the Government, think that the Plasma Converter should be used because it will properly dispose of the waste and the rodent infestation which can cause disease.

In 2006 the landfill was almost over capacity. They are currently burying the trash at the landfill. Now we are in the year 2008, why would we want to leave the landfill as it is? So that we can contract diseases, and the rodent issue increase? I think not.

Also, the system does not prevent recycling. If in place, the Startech system complements recycling. Sorted waste that is not being recycled can then be placed in the system.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Minister of Health.

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

I call upon the Honourable Minister of Education.

**Hon. Saleicia Samaroo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As my colleagues have previously stated, there is a great concern over the landfill which is also referred to as Mt. Trashmore. To resolve this issue we have chosen to implement the Plasma Converter, generically known as the Plasma Arc Converter, which is manufactured by the Startech Company.

As you already know, Mr. Speaker, what the converter basically does is ionize waste, that is, it heats the waste to a temperature so high that the actual bonds between the electrons and the nucleus of the atom break down. There is no flame or fire used inside of the converter, just electricity.

To comment on what the Second Elected Member for George Town said about the 150 tons of waste and its cost, a Startech machine that costs roughly \$40 million could handle 150 tons of waste

daily. Now, Mr. Speaker, I do not mean that it needs 150 tons to operate; I only mean to say that it could handle that great amount.

This surprisingly compact machine can consume nearly any type of waste. It annihilates toxic materials that are approximately as old as the universe itself. There is no pre-preparation necessary for processing because the converter processes all materials without sorting. So, as you can see, Mr. Speaker, this is not a backbreaking process.

Although this technological invention is newly founded, other countries are investing it because of the tremendous benefits it offers. One of which is that it does not depend on oil to convert electricity. At this point in time the cost of oil is constantly increasing and Mt. Trashmore is growing enormously. So, Mr. Speaker, it would benefit the Cayman Islands to take a closer look at the Plasma Converter which will change the trash into energy.

There are many companies which are investing in the production of this equipment. I believe that this converter would stand to be worthwhile for further investment. So, Mr. Speaker, results have shown that it is a worthwhile venture. For this reason many companies such as GeoPlasma LLC, PyroGenesis, and Losunoco just to name a few have shown an interest in producing the Plasma arc Converter.

Notable benefits were obtained by the following countries which have implemented the converter: the United States, Canada, Japan and Switzerland. Of course, once it is manufactured in Japan, which is said to be the Guru or master of technology, then the world will show an interest in it. So, Mr. Speaker, why should we not investigate and use this new technology?

Let us take a peek at our neighbours to the north. The County of St. Lucie, in Florida, is negotiating use of the Plasma Converter near the local the local landfill.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Minister of Education.

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

I recognise the First Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

**Miss Melody Martin:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, indeed, we need to correct our current waste problem on all three islands. However, the Government should think to sway from this projection a little bit and maybe pass it to a readily available private investor—maybe the Dart Foundation—especially on the Sister Islands. A waste disposal project has not become a problem yet on the Sister Islands. The Government may say that it may some day, but we need more important things at this time.

Why cut back on education funds? They should be looking at more important things like schools. The Minister of Education said to cut back on the education funds. It is clear that there has been talk that we are going to get new schools on the Sister Islands and money wasted on a waste disposal project on the Sister Islands should not be on our minds now when there is something that is way more important—our education.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you First Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

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

I recognise the Honourable First Official Member.

**Hon. Joseph Gracey:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is obvious to this House that a current solution is needed to fix our dumping problem with a massive landfill—you can clearly see it from the Harquail Bypass. The Opposition, I know, has proposed several solutions other than Startech or any other plasma arc converter system.

To being with, several of them, including the First Elected Member for Bodden Town, proposed an incineration type garbage disposal method. It has been proven in other jurisdictions, including the United States of America, that incineration plants do not work. Simply, Mr. Speaker, all they do it vaporize our solid waste into the air for us to breathe. That is not the case with a plasma arc converter.

The Opposition is correct in saying that it is cheaper in financial terms. However, this Government does not feel that it is responsible, nor is it feasible for our environment to have an incinerator form of plant.

This Plasma Arc Converter is much different. As my colleagues on the Government bench have spoken about, it breaks the fundamental bonds between compounds turning it into an elemental form to be refined, recycled and used.

Let me also remind you that today is Commonwealth Day, and the theme is The Environment—Our Future. It is therefore imperative that this Opposition realise that a plasma arc converter is both economically feasible as well as financially. Let me inform you, Mr. Speaker, that even as we sit in these hallowed Chambers, the garbage is not just sitting there. It is releasing toxic gases. It is not raining at this point, thank God; however, if it were the rain would be pushing those chemicals into our high water table and into the North Sound. Now, Mr. Speaker, to me that is unacceptable.

It is one thing to say that we are going to deal with this in the future and it is one thing to say that we are going to deal with it now.

If not now, when?

If not us, who?

Our water table, let me remind you Mr. Speaker, is very high. And yet not many Caymanians use it, it is still part of the ecosystem. Poisoning or polluting our high water table, once it is done, is nearly impossible to reverse. We cannot just dig up our entire water table, stick a filter down there and clean it. The same thing with the ocean. Remember, once it seeps out into the ocean it is impossible to get it back.

Mr. Speaker, let me also remind you that our water is not the only thing being polluted. It is our noses! If you have ever driven by the Harquail Bypass with the windows down, you can certainly smell that stench, or perhaps the aroma. It also hurts our eyes, not just our eyes, but the tourists' eyes at that, Mr. Speaker!

I personally do not like having the highest point in Grand Cayman being a trash heap. Oh trust me, Mr. Speaker, I can see it from the Harquail Bypass.

Also, Mr. Speaker, it ruins our reputation. I am certain not one tourist on these Islands takes pride that the place where they visit has an enormous trash heap. Mr. Speaker, beyond tourists, I am certain that all of us here do not take pride in our trash heap, otherwise known as Mt. Trashmore, Cayman Islands.

Unless this honourable Opposition is going to pave over this trash heap, possibly putting a revolving restaurant on the top and maybe even put a ski lift on the top, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that we solve it. I personally would not like to go skiing down there. I do not know if the Opposition would be inclined to either.

Let me talk about the points already brought up by my colleagues on this bench. The Plasma Arc Converter technology we are planning to implement has the capacity to destroy our garbage. The country of Vietnam is proposing to create a Plasma Arc Converter to destroy left over Agent Orange chemicals. Mr. Speaker, if I may refresh your memory, Agent Orange was a very toxic chemical used to destroy the forests of Vietnam so soldiers could not hide in them. If this Plasma Arc Converter has the capacity to destroy a purposely built poisonous chemical, then I see no reason why we cannot implement it to fix our garbage solution.

This technology has already been proven to solve problems with asbestos, contaminated soil, electronic industry waste, paint and solvents, including paint thinner, sludges from other industries, biological waste from medical departments and hospitals, PCBs, outdated pharmaceuticals, and poisonous and otherwise hazardous bio-waste.

I would also like to stress a point. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition stressed the point that where would we make a road by the dump if we were to implement such a machine to solve our problem. Now, Mr. Speaker, I know from viewing maps and satellite images of areas surrounding the dump that there are many acres for us to build a new highway. [Portion of tape missing] . . . ventilated area.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do not know about you, but I believe that the current proposed area right next to the dump is well ventilated. I do not think our massive mountain really impedes airflow or somehow affects heat dissipation of the machine.

Also, one point brought forth by the Fourth Elected Member for West Bay . . . my colleague brought forth the information that approximately every 300 hours two electrodes would have to be replaced in this machine. My bench in no way, shape or form, talked about replacing the lining after every 300 hours. Surely, the Opposition must have heard us better.

*[The Honourable Fourth Elected Member for West Bay rose]*

**The Speaker:** Honourable Fourth Elected Member for West Bay.

**Mr. Justin Jacky:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** What is your point of order?

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Justin Jacky:** The First Official Member is misleading the House because I am sure that the Third Elected Member would even admit to making those claims, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Honourable First Official Member, I remember from the Government they did indeed say that the electrodes—

**Hon. Joseph Gracey:** Yes.

**The Speaker:**—would be changed in half an hour.

The Opposition did not mention anything about the lining except for the fact that you guys have not mentioned it. So, if you could please refrain from that line of argument.

**Hon. Joseph Gracey:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on another point; we are not an isolated island any more like we were 100 years ago. We have used Government policies to promote these Islands both in the financial sector and in the tourism sector. We have tried to make our point that we are unique Islands in the Caribbean. We have always wanted to be a little island that could do what every big country can do. Let us be a country that can finally stand up against global warming and say *'You know what? I think we are going to do something about it! We are going to implement a system that will help us promote the sustainable future.'*

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable First Official Member.

Proceedings will now be suspended for one hour for our lunch break, and will resume at 1.30 pm.

**Proceedings suspended at 12.36 pm****Proceedings resumed at 1.33 pm**

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

Does any other Member wish to speak on Government Motion No. 1? [pause] Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause] Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause]

I recognise the Honourable Leader of Government Business.

**Hon. W. Marvin Hurlston, Jr:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let me begin by addressing the issue of finance. It has been covered by two Members of the Government bench, but still there is a claim and still the question arises from the Opposition whether the Government is able to afford this.

Mr. Speaker, this does not necessarily have to be a complete Government venture. I cite the example of one of the water authorities in the Cayman Islands that is a publicly traded body, a partnership between government and the public.

I thank the Members of the Opposition for stating that we can have public support on this; that we can seek public support. But I would caution any such move to give over control of this facility to a private investor. It should first and foremost be controlled by Government.

We have considered other forms of waste disposal and management. We have considered recycling. But the same old question always comes up with recycling, Mr. Speaker, when everyone says it is not a viable solution for the Cayman Islands We have considered in depth the sanitary landfill, but again the problem of leachate arises. The problem of production of methane gas arises.

We have looked into the burner, but let me ask you this, Mr. Speaker, how will burning the trash safeguard the environment? By burning it you will be creating carbon monoxide.

One of the goals of the Startech system is to reduce our carbon footprint. To reduce it. Burning will not reduce it. And let me be clear. There is a difference between burning and what is done in the Startech system. There is a marked difference.

In the Startech system all the byproducts are harnessed. None are let off into the environment. All of the byproducts are used. All of the byproducts are recycled. So this is a form of recycling.

The expense—and let me be crystal clear with this—the expense of this machine will not be laid on the backs of Caymanian citizens. Will not be laid on tariffs. No! The Government will work with private investors for the simple reason that the Startech system is actually financially feasible. It can not only pay for itself, it can help alleviate the stress of the people

when it comes to the high light bills we have been paying.

Consider now the rise in gas to \$104 per barrel. Consider this. And that cost is tripled and put into the electricity bill we all pay every month. The cost of that will be reduced if we can use the gas and energy produced by the Startech system.

Let me ask the First Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman the question: just because Cayman Brac is small, just because Little Cayman has a population of 200, do they not deserve a solution to their garbage problem? Just because it is a smaller amount of garbage Can we leave it there, bury it there as is now currently done?

The point is not that it is a smaller amount of garbage, Mr. Speaker, but proportionately it is the same amount of garbage. Even though it is a less amount, they have a smaller land space to put it.

The First Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman should be ashamed of wanting to leave these two islands out of a waste disposal policy.

Who are you representing exactly?

I am sure it was a mistake and a misunderstanding. I am sure no representative of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman would ever purposely do that to their electorate.

Mr. Speaker, let me address the issue of dioxins. We have said before that every single output is accounted for in this system. Dioxins might be produced, but they will be managed. Nothing will leak out into the environment. Nothing will damage the local flora and fauna further around that area.

So I address the question of what will be done with the garbage currently at the dump site. Simple; it will be incinerated—not burned, Mr. Speaker. Incinerated. Not burned. There is a marked difference. Incineration is the process called for and named in the Startech system.

[inaudible interjections]

**Hon. W. Marvin Hurlston, Jr:** Pardon me. Gasification.

[inaudible interjections and laughter]

**Hon. W. Marvin Hurlston, Jr:** Slight mix-up in terminology and I beg and crave the indulgence of this honourable House.

Gasification.

The Government has never stated that we will shift funds from education. Let us be clear on that.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you Honourable Leader of Government Business.

Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause]

I call upon the Second Elected Member for West Bay.

**Miss Marzeta Bodden:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, let me say that I think I speak for the Opposition when I say that we support the Motion itself, that being the implementation of a public waste disposal system. But having heard the debate today, I do not feel that the Opposition can truly support the terms under which the Government proposes it be implemented.

Before I bring my core points to you, I would like to address some questions or problem areas in the Government's debate today.

First of all, I am glad to see that the Government is in agreement and in accord in support for this Startech system. However, I think that it is important for them to note, while they have placed considerable emphasis on the fact that within the three Islands three Startech systems can take care of approximately 175 tons of garbage per day, while 175 tons of garbage per day is indeed a vast amount, it by no means at all can accommodate the some 450 tons per day produced by these Islands. In other words, the Startech machine only has the capability of handling 25 per cent of the Cayman Islands daily garbage disposal.

Mr. Speaker, a benefit that is repeatedly noted by the Government is the intermittent use of the Startech system. At our current waste rate, by my calculations based on the numbers they have given, the Startech system cannot be used intermittently. It would have to be run 60 hours per day. The last I checked, there are still only 24 hours in one day! Hence, using the Startech system to control our garbage issue is impossible.

Mr. Speaker, it is also important to note that this technology in the said Startech system is far too new to speak of any long term results or sustainability. It is at this point that I encourage the Government to not confuse fancy things with practicality or reality or build castles in the air.

Mr. Speaker, the Government also mentioned that the Startech system needs repair of electrodes every 300 hours. That means that the Startech electrodes will need to be replaced every 12 ½ days, if run for 24 hours.

Mr. Speaker, I crave the indulgence of this honourable House to hear from me an alternative to the Island's public waste dilemma. I paraphrase the words of the 41<sup>st</sup> President of the United States in his message to Congress on June 23, 1989. "This country must make every effort to stem the rising tide of garbage through a more aggressive use of waste minimization practices."

Mr. Speaker, while there is no plausible way that I or any of my colleagues can stand here today and refute the fact that our Islands have to address the issue of waste management, I present another angle on this matter. In no way am I disputing the implementation of a public waste disposal system, whether it is an automatic sorting, government funded, privately maintained \$58 million system or not. But

there is a difference between a low maintenance and easily financed machine than one that has no record of long term durability or how easily it is sustained.

I am here today to share with this honourable House and the Cayman Islands my view that any plan to address waste management needs to be complemented by a waste minimization plan. My answer to the need for a treatment of this matter is simple: reduce, reuse, recycle. If we minimize waste by reducing waste, reusing and recycling, then the task of waste management is that much easier. Waste reduction simply means consuming and throwing away less.

The best thing we can do for our planet and our country is to use less of it, Mr. Speaker. Our consumer society is at the heart of our current environmental crisis. According to the 1999 Solid Waste Policy Report from the Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance, increases in waste generation since 1960 has historically been correlated to increased economic activity as measured by GDP and personal consumption expenditures. During times of increased economic activity, consumers continue to produce and discard goods at a rate that leads to constant waste growth.

This honourable House needs to lead the way in encouraging the people of this country to look for ways of producing and consuming goods that stop waste being generated and choose products that can be used productively, be recycled, and have minimal packaging. Reduction minimizes the generation of waste in the first place and so it is a most preferred method of waste management and goes a long way to protecting the environment.

If something is broken at home, fix it!

If something no longer fits, donate it!

If something has fulfilled its purpose to you, sell it to someone else!

Nineteen centuries ago Clement of Alexandria said, "We are not to throw away those things which can benefit our neighbour. Goods are called goods because they can be used for good; they are instruments for good in the hands of those who use them properly." These wise words remain the same today.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that we live in a disposable society is indeed unfortunate. Everyone wants something new; everyone wants something improved—even if the ones that we have still work or just need to be repaired. With technology's advancement over the last few years, many of the goods we buy are quite durable and once we have satisfied our need, if they are absolutely no longer useable for their original purpose, creativity or passing it along can bring new life and new employment of the item, whether it is plastic bags, clothing, tyres or envelopes. Reusing products when possible is superior to recycling because no reprocessing needs to occur before the item is used again.

The Institute for Local Self-reliance said, "The case of our recycling is strong and the bottom line is clear." Recycling requires a trivial amount of our time.

Recycling saves money and reduces pollution. Recycling creates more jobs than land filling or incineration.

A largely ignored but very important consideration is that recycling reduces our need to dump our garbage in someone else's back yard. Why recycle? you ask. Mr. Speaker, recycling has environmental, economic and social advantages. Recycling generates environmental awareness as well as civic pride while saving natural resources and preventing pollution. Most of the content of our current landfill is material that could have been put to higher use and better use doing recycling and composting, like food waste, cardboard, office paper and aluminum.

While presently the Cayman Islands does not formally recycle or have a recycling plant many of our Caribbean neighbours do. The possibility of an arrangement between us regarding the purchase and sale of materials fit for recycling exists, whether it is aluminum with Trinidad, glass with Jamaica, or plastics with Cuba. Why get rid of resources that can be used efficiently by our Caribbean counterparts?

Mr. Speaker, while I highly commend the Government for bringing this Motion to the honourable House and for proposing the utilisation of waste disposal technology, my view remains that the key to addressing our public waste dilemma is reducing the amount and toxicity of trash we discard, reusing products and recycling as much as possible. Indeed, technology has to be involved in these steps and certainly a systematic approach is needed for large scale action. However, it is through the people that most waste minimization will be achieved at home and in the workplace and I call for the Government to champion this cause.

Mr. Speaker, it would be remiss of me to take my seat without further addressing some issues raised by the Government. The issue of safety is a major red flag with the Startech system. I know what 85 degrees or 90 degrees feels like on a hot day. I cannot imagine the intense heat that 30,000 degrees must bring. And to add gases to that . . . at such a temperature anything has to be extremely dangerous. The reason that incineration is presently used is because it is a relatively safe form of garbage disposal. But when you speak of gasification, you are speaking of an extremely hazardous and specialised process. Would you sleep peacefully knowing that at any time this Startech system is susceptible to massive explosions? What about the safety of our people on Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac and, yes, Little Cayman as well?

Another point brought by the Government was the production of electricity. I find it very hard to believe that a machine that breaks down 175 tons of material into fuel for electric generation has the ability to power our entire Island. The present Government of the Cayman Islands has explored numerous fuel generation processes and found that most systems are only capable of providing approximately 25 per cent of our Island's power needs. I ask this Government of

this Youth Parliament to crunch their numbers again and refrain from being over optimistic about the Startech system.

Mr. Speaker, waste management should play an important part of any government policy. Again, I applaud the Government for bringing this forward. But I ask them to look beyond disposal to my suggestions here today of reuse, reduce and recycle. There is plenty we can do to decrease the amount of disposal necessary in our Cayman Islands.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Second Elected Member for West Bay.

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

If no further Members wish to speak, I would invite the mover of the Motion, the Honourable Minister, to exercise her right of reply.

**Hon. Jessica Kong:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, let me assure this honourable House that we have looked into other options such as a sanitary landfill. We have found it unfit and feel it would do more damage than good for these Islands. Furthermore, we would be no further ahead on the issue of the landfill.

We have proposed the Startech Plasma Converter to be the answer to the quandary we are now faced with. The implementation of this system here in the Cayman Islands will open many doors, both jobs and learning opportunities, ultimate elimination of the current eyesore, eliminate health risks and any other threats to our health, material for our demanding constructing industry, and many other advantages which have been discussed in this House. We are by no means saying that this machine is perfect. However the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages.

The Second Elected Member for George Town proposed that we ship the garbage from the Sister Islands to Grand Cayman. Mr. Speaker, I must inform the Second Elected Member for George Town that this is by no stretch of the imagination feasible. In order for it to be cost effective, the barge that would be used to transport the garbage from the Sister Islands would be filled to capacity. In order for this to happen, we would have to wait quite a lengthy time and during this time the garbage would be going through an advanced stage of decomposition and therefore would still be a disadvantage for the waste.

Therefore, looking at it as a long term investment, we are proposing for both islands to have their own Startech Plasma Converter system.

The Second Elected Member for George Town proposed that we redirect our focus to monitoring garbage being produced by households. How do you propose that we go into each and every household and monitor how much garbage they are actually

producing? Furthermore, we are looking at a larger issue of changing of culture and mindset of people.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition raised the issue of what would be done with the current landfill. We propose to either reshuffle the garbage in order to accommodate the space for the housing of the Startech Plasma Converter or use the surrounding land space that is in existence.

The issue of chlorine gas came up. During the refining process every harmful substance is neutralised and cleaned. Therefore, chlorine is neutralised into a clean substance that can be converted into energy.

The question of whether any emissions would come from this machine has also arisen. The hydrogen and carbon monoxide that will be produced will be contained in the PCG tank, therefore the PCG tank would then go to the place where it would be converted into energy and therefore there would be no leakage into the atmosphere.

The Deputy Speaker has misled the House by saying the Minister of Education said the Government will redirect funds for education to this system. We have proposed that funds from health services and gazettes go towards this system.

In response to the Second Elected Member for West Bay, we do not propose to change the temperature of the atmosphere and have 30,000 degrees Fahrenheit exposed to the people. This will be contained in a specifically designed housing for the Startech Converter.

In regard to the average of garbage that is produced on a daily basis, this, as it states, is an average. Therefore on a bad day, this would be the most amount of garbage produced by the people of the Cayman Islands.

The system can also be manufactured to meet the needs of the Islands and therefore will be tailor made for the needs of all three Islands. If the honourable Member realised the system was quoted to be able to produce up to hundreds of tons per day, not just 150 tons per day.

Mr. Speaker, the Second Elected Member for West Bay brought up the solution of a waste minimisation plan. In cutting Startech out of the deal altogether, we are missing out on benefits that this converter will provide for these Islands. Furthermore, what will be done with the current landfill in its current state? Will we just recycle what can be recycled and spend many hours sifting through what is plastic, what is glass, and then ship it off?

[inaudible interjections]

**Hon. Jessica Kong:** Mr. Speaker, the Startech Converter has been known to take any waste substance that is toxic, repulsive, be it bio hazardous waste, be it household waste and convert it into a clean pure substance that can be used to produce energy.

We do concede with the Opposition on their proposal of recycling, perhaps because we cannot afford to buy a machine that will handle the capacity of garbage that is produced on a daily basis. Perhaps we could use the Startech Converter machine in conjunction with recycling.

[inaudible interjections]

**The Speaker:** Can there please be order in the Chamber?

**Hon. Jessica Kong:** Mr. Speaker, we are proposing to revolutionize the way in which we handle our waste. The Plasma Converter goes beyond recycling. The Startech Plasma Converter system will reduce our carbon footprint on the globe; it will eliminate the eyecore along with producing a viable form of energy which can then subsidise the dependence on fossil fuel.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The question is: BE IT NOW THEREFORE RESOLVED that this honourable Youth Parliament implement a sustainable public waste disposal system.

All those in favour say Aye. Those against No.

**Ayes and Noes.**

**Hon. Jessica Kong:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to call for a division.

**The Speaker:** Madam Clerk.

**The Clerk:**

**Division No. 1/08**

Ayes: 12

Hon. W. Marvin Hurlston, Jr.

Hon. Jessica Kong

Hon. Saleicia Samaroo

Hon. Kalesha Edwards

Hon. Corrina Worm

Hon. Joseph Gracey

Hon. Annalisa Wallace

Hon. Geoffrey Grizzel

Mr. Michaiiah Bryan

Miss Raven Ramoon

Miss Heidi Knowlton

Miss Elizabeth Charles

Noes: 8

Hon. Thea Bush

Mr. Andreil Harris

Mr. Duet Berry, Jr

Miss Melody Martin

Miss Marzeta Bodden

Mr. Justin Jacky

Mr. Owen Foster

Miss Latoya Davis

**The Speaker:** The result of the division: No abstentions or absentees; there were 8 Noes and 12 Ayes.

Government Motion No. 1/08 has been duly passed.

**Agreed by majority: Government Motion No. 1/08 passed.**

## **GOVERNMENT MOTION NO.2**

### **Review of the National Youth Policy**

**The Speaker:** I call on the Honourable Leader of Government Business to move the Motion.

**Hon. W. Marvin Hurlston, Jr.:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move Government Motion No. 2, entitled Review of the National Youth Policy. The Motion reads:

**WHEREAS it has been more than five years since the implementation of the National Youth Policy;**

**BE IT NOW THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT this Honourable Youth Parliament reviews the National Youth Policy with a view to improving opportunities for the youth.**

**The Speaker:** Government Motion No. 2 has been duly moved. I call upon the Honourable Minister to speak thereto.

**Hon. W. Marvin Hurlston, Jr.:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The British Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli, once said “The youth of a nation are the trustees of posterity.” To paraphrase this sentiment, I say to you Mr. Speaker, that the nation’s young ones are its cheapest resource. It is with this in mind, so long after the first Youth Policy, that we call for a review of the Youth Policy to update its change in time and to make sure it continues to safeguard our cheap resource.

We are eminently sure that the mandate provided with the formation of the Youth Policy in the year 2000 was able to deal with the new issues the youth face in a rapidly changing world. We propose a complete revision of the policy and the inclusion of some new key points that have developed since the first policy.

Mr. Speaker, we are also going to be reassessing the key points from the 2000 Youth Policy that we feel have not been focused upon sufficiently in the years since the implementation of the policy. That being said, there is no doubt that we have come a long way in the growth and empowerment of young people in every area. There is greater access to quality and affordable tertiary education now than there ever was before. We have made vast strides in the quality of our secondary and primary education system.

We have been able to minimise the number of dropouts due to teen pregnancy and we are finally being able to have our young men step up to the plate of fatherhood.

We are beginning to see the cracks in the glass ceiling of employment as more and more of our young people are able to better educate themselves. We are having greater success in equipping our young people to perform in the workforce. And we are able today to get to hear the voice of the youth like never before. We hear them on the radio shows, we

hear them in the papers, and we hear them in the National Youth Assembly.

This very Youth Parliament sitting here today stands as a testament to the great strides we have made since the year 2000. And it is a great accomplishment indeed, Mr. Speaker. But this is not the time to rest on the praises of what has been done so far. What we must now do is sit down to the table again recognising the strides we have made, yet realising that there is yet work to be done. We must work to ensure the continued success of the Youth Policy and pick up the slack of key areas that were defined but that nothing was done about.

We still have young people killing themselves; we still have them involved in gangs, drugs and other senseless crimes. We still have young people who come in contact on a daily basis with alcohol. We have young people who are falling through the cracks of the education system; young people who are going through high school and middle school, but school is not going through them! We still have young people who feel disenfranchised, and it must be addressed.

We plan to bring together stakeholders once again—the government, educators, youth workers, mentors, social workers and members of the National Assembly, employers, churches, young people and interested members of the public. Let me say again that young people must be included in the formation of this new policy; it must not be done without the voice of the youth.

I reiterate that we propose some readjustments to the Youth Policy. We feel that there should be greater focus placed on the family, Mr. Speaker, as the family is still the primary habitat and setting where the youth develops. And with family, Mr. Speaker, comes the need to reach out to parents and have more social services checks.

In the last Youth Policy it was stated that there was a need to hold parents more directly accountable to the negative influences on their children. I say we need to beef up the Social Services Department and make sure that they hold the right of a child as paramount.

We must examine the legislation dealing with neglect of a child and enforce more rigorous penalties. Along with that, we must have a closer monitoring of students. If a child is failing in school, we need to have counsellors—either professional or volunteer—who are equipped to mentor and guide this child. Too often it occurs that the only time a parent cares about a failing grade is at the end of the term or at the end of a semester. Sometimes not even then! We must bridge the divide between students, teachers and parents, by having the schools send updates on the performance of a child on a much more readily basis—private schools and public schools alike, Mr. Speaker.

Another area where we intend to reshape the format of the Youth Policy is to the grouping and definition of “Youth Policy” currently defined as a young person between the ages of 10 to 25. We propose to

include the younger children starting from the age of 4 or the age when they enter preschool.

The current Youth Policy defines youth as those who are starting to accept more responsibility on the road to adulthood. Well, I say that those children below the age of 10 are youth-in-training and that we must make provision for them in the Youth Policy. For it to be considered a National Youth Policy, their concerns must be addressed.

By the time they are 10, Mr. Speaker, I feel that certain detrimental habits may have been so ingrained in them that it would require good effort to do something about it. We must have them as a target group and begin preparing them to learn the skills necessary to become a productive member of our society. In doing this we must have a focus on teaching manners at a younger age.

Twenty years ago, the majority of us had grandparents who would tell us exactly what was good behaviour and good manners. Unfortunately, today most family members are out working trying to make a living. In the endeavour to make a living we should never forget to teach our children how to live. This Government feels it is imperative to have manners taught in the schools from the very inception.

Manners are a part of Caymanian culture. Some might call it quaint and provincial, but I call good manners Caymanian!

Mr. Speaker, another area that we must see covered in a national youth policy is in finding ways to increase self-esteem in young people, teaching them to respect themselves. The only way they can respect others is by first respecting themselves. Teach them to value themselves first.

Mr. Speaker, some students come out of high school today not knowing how to do simple things like the correct procedure to cash a cheque, to start a bank account, and to manage and save their earnings. Some of our graduates today are not even aware of what is the proper way to address, send and punctuate a letter. We must teach them the mores of business at an earlier age.

There is a great emphasis placed upon the tourism sector in school, but we still need to have high school graduates familiar at a basic level with the terminology and ideas behind our financial industry.

Mr. Speaker, the next key areas of focus we might draw fire from are some of the areas that were mentioned in the previous Youth Policy. And we will back these now to the hilt. We MUST teach our young people the risks of early sexual activity. We must make it clear, Mr. Speaker. Too often, for fear of losing their attention in school, this topic is presented in a wishy-washy kind of way. But I say enough! We must teach students that abstinence is the best safe sex practice out there.

But, Mr. Speaker, we must by no means alienate teen mothers out there. We will make every effort to make sure through a renewed focus on the Parenting Programme that just because they have

had a child their career development is not stopped. You can have a child and have a bright future. The single mothers out there who have worked hard and have been able to provide a good life for themselves and their children are a testament to the hardworking spirit and determination of Caymanians.

I know of not one who would not give you the advice of *have a career first, focus on your career first*. This must be our message.

A key area that we feel was left out completely in the National Youth Policy completely and should be considered in this review is a national Fine Arts programme. Caymanians have always had a talented ear for music. Just think back to the good old days, all the *Gimme a Story* with Uncle Vic playing the fiddle.

Mr. Speaker, one key strategy area that was mentioned throughout the 2000 document was the need for a coordinated team mentoring programmes and activities, i.e., the creation of youth development centres. We feel that this is paramount; there is a need for a place where young people can get together, do homework and have fun where they can feel safe and grow. This should be a wholesome environment for teens to interact with each other. Though I know that there are many organisations on the small group level—and I commend them highly for addressing this service—but it needs to be coordinated at a Cabinet level, at a Government level.

Mr. Speaker, a point that is central to the creation of this type of synergy necessary to get the youth interested in the changes is the utilisation of the media. For too long we have been suffering the effects of television, MySpace, FaceBook, Friendsters, High-Five and YouTube. Now I say it is time that we take back this medium. We must have youth workers, legislators, principals and stakeholders become familiar with these forces that play such a central part in the lives of young people. Take them back and use them to send a positive message and have positive communication between schools and students, developmental centres and youth groups and young people. Let us make sure that we put all of the good information out there on TV, on MySpace, on High-Five and on YouTube. Let us use them to get young people involved. Let us use them to reach them.

I feel that every youth group and organisation that interacts with young people should have a presence on these media. They should all have a presence online and on the TV and on YouTube, to be specific. We have heard the complaints that young people spend way too much time on these sites. We must now make sure that the time is well spent. We must go beyond conventional ways to make sure we reach each and every single young person that we can.

I believe that we as a country have the resources, the ability and the know how to craft the most successful Youth Policy in the Caribbean. The question is, Do we have the will? The youth of our beloved

Cayman Islands are counting on what we debate and decide here today.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you Honourable Leader of Government Business. Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause] Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause]

I recognise the Second Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

**Miss Heidi Knowlton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Leader of Government Business for bringing this Motion, and I rise in full support.

Mr. Speaker, the youth are held very near and dear to our Islands. They are our future and they will be the ones to uphold what we have already built and put in place today. It is to my dismay to watch the direction in which some of our people have chosen to walk recently. I am deeply concerned. I am sad. And I am disturbed to see the rising amount of violence, death and criminal activity which is being carried out.

With these issues continually increasing the way they are, Mr. Speaker, we have reason to realise that something is not right. Mr. Speaker, there is no solid evidence to say why, what, or who is to blame. But we as the Government will assure our nation that we will do all that we can on our part in resolving these issues.

In resolving any problem we need to make sure that all the gaps are filled. The top influential factors that contribute to the molding and making of any child are the parents. Our mission in this Motion today is to focus on the youth, and in doing so the parents should be considered an extension thereof. I do feel that parents have been forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, the setting in of values and morals starts at home. As the saying goes, the apples don't fall far from the tree, and parents are walking role models for their children whether they realise it or not. We have hardworking parents, single parents, young mothers and even guardians who are taking up the responsibility to rear these children.

Mr. Speaker, we could throw out every idea we could think of on how to keep our young people on track and to keep them from falling through the cracks, but if they do not have the love and support of a parent or guardian at home, our efforts are deemed quite useless. Parents or guardians are the main persons held accountable for the actions of our young people today. I feel the parents and guardians today of our young people could use more of our support. So I say let us work together with them, let us work through our parents and guardians to ensure that all the gaps are filled. In doing so, Mr. Speaker, we could implement instruments such as a number for parents to call in and remain anonymous to obtain helpful tips from a specialist on how to deal with their teens or young person. This would be a simple and great kick

start to the government helping out our youth through their parents and guardians.

Furthermore, I feel the implementation of a new customised parent counselling center would be an excellent aid for any parent or guardian today. It is crucial that we do all we can to help our parents of our country and they hold the key to our future—which are their precious children and young people. It is their large responsibility to take special good care of our young men and women. So I say let us do our part and help to take care of our parents.

Mr. Speaker, let us lead the way; let us be a proactive government by providing the aid of knowledge and understanding the parents and guardians need today in the upbringing of our youth.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Second Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

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

I call upon the Second Elected Member for West Bay.

**Miss Marzeta Bodden:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise to address Government Motion No. 2, with regard to reviewing the National Youth Policy and improving the opportunity available to our youth. While the contributions given so far have to be commended and are of great substance, my contribution today is specifically about the part of the Motion that speaks of improving opportunities for youth.

Mr. Speaker, you cannot cross the sea merely by standing and staring at the water. These words are the words that I say to the Government. It is emphasis, not necessarily the improvement of opportunities that the young people need. The National Youth Policy produced in the year 2000 lists a host of youth services provided by different non-government organisations. These all present opportunities for young people to be entertained and grow personally, professionally, and academically. Some of these services listed are, the Cayman Islands Cricket Association, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Youth for Christ, the Boys and Girls Brigade, the Business and Professional Women's Club, the National Council of Voluntary Organisations.

The National Youth Policy stated that the attractiveness and coordination of the services was a prominent feature of the discussion. The Cayman Islands is a flourishing and advanced and wealthy nation in terms of resources. Unquestionably, the government of the Cayman Islands, community service groups and the business community have invested a great deal of time, human resources and financial capital to provide opportunities for the youth of the Cayman Islands. I am sure that many of my colleagues on both sides of this honourable House will

agree with me when I say that in this country, opportunities for youth are not scarce. Rather, what is scarce is the interest, the drive and the motivation of our young people to utilise the opportunities that have been provided for them already.

I am sure we are all familiar with the idiom, you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink. For the few who may not understand this illustration, let me explain what it means. You can give someone the opportunity to do something, but you can never ever force them to accept that opportunity. Now, I can thoroughly appreciate the fact that not all of our young people are inclined or attracted to facilities such as athletics, community service, or academic pursuits. However, in the Cayman Islands we have so much to be thankful for and so much to make use of.

For anyone with any sort of interest, I am sure that an opportunity exists on our shores for young people to find activities that fulfill them. We are surrounded by the Caribbean Sea and have pristine beaches. Even if you are not into exploring the underwater world or having the wind in your face as you ski across the open sea, the beach presents a wonderful venue to gather with friends and eat lunch, or hang around for some solitude by yourself.

The Cayman Islands are renowned for the worlds only Green Sea Turtle Farm and many visitors attend the Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park and are blown away at the vast array of orchid species within the reserve.

No, you do not need to want to be a botanist or a marine biologist to visit these things, but doing so may help you to appreciate your country more, not to mention add some flavour to your week day or weekend outing. The National Gallery of the Cayman Islands, the Cayman Drama Society and the Cayman National Choir are examples of ready-made stimulating experiences to whoever shows up willing to indulge.

There is also the option of exploring our Sister Islands. Many of our young people leave high school not ever enjoying the pristine beauty that our Sister Islands have to offer. The Cayman Islands are extremely unique in the sense that none of the islands is like the other. I implore and I urge young people to explore all three Cayman Islands.

Mr. Speaker, I know there are people who the aforementioned activities may not excite in the least. That is why they should take advantage of many of the other opportunities available to them. We currently have two movie theatres which provide film productions for patrons to enjoy. Additionally, many movie rental establishments supply the resources for what could be a girl's movie night, or a movie theme party.

Cayman has a budding reputation as a gastronomic paradise and although there are some of us who find the culinary arts a lifestyle, many retreat to this part of life for simple leisure, and sharing a meal with friends or loved ones promotes bonding and strengthens interpersonal relationships, something

that our young people and our community as a whole greatly need.

Mr. Speaker, I have never been someone who craved kicking a football, doing laps in a pool, trying to dunk a basketball, or even walking around a track for that matter. But I certainly enjoy being a spectator to all these sports. Cayman's sports scene is in full bloom from Red Bay to tennis, to darts to football, from dominoes to volley ball. Opportunity for youth, as mentioned in the Motion, is a very broad statement. I have addressed the recreational area. However, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the many opportunities our Islands provide for those seeking professional and academic development.

The Junior Achievement Programme is a perfect example of an organisation that enables young people to obtain skills that would be beneficial in the classroom and the conference room. The same can be said of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament which we are a part of today. I will venture to say that this exercise has provided us with some recreation, but it has also helped to improve our reasoning, debating and teamwork skills—qualities that are sure to augment our future scholastic and career performance.

Mr. Speaker, any young person who wants to be active in any area of interest can do so in the Cayman Islands. It is important to note that the freedom that we have in this country is something that so many of our counterparts throughout the world do not have. And for this we all need to be eternally grateful. The Cayman Islands has a diverse offering of opportunities for everyone—not just young people—to enjoy a lawful and meaningful life in which ever way they please.

Will erecting one more youth development centre make the young people more active?

Will providing one more activity make all the difference?

The young people of this Island need to step up and take advantage of the opportunities that already exist and that are being under-utilised before we consider dedicating and earmarking more resources such as time, energy, money and people.

Mr. Speaker, the Government that has been selected by the people of the Cayman Islands needs to redirect its attention to the National Youth Policy and similar documents to address the issue of the attractiveness of existing activities and endeavour to motivate our young people to become involved. It is then—and only then—that improving and adding more opportunities will be rational and fulfilling.

I am all for improving opportunities for the youth, but not if it is going to be done so in vain. Opportunities in Cayman exist in abundance, Mr. Speaker. However, it is initiative that our young people need.

Only as high as I reach can I grow;  
Only as far as I seek can I go;  
Only as deep as I look can I see;  
Only as much as I dream can I be.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you Second Elected Member for West Bay.

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

I recognise the Honourable First Official Member.

**Hon. Joseph Gracey:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in full support of the Motion at hand. At this point let us take a minute to define youth. According to the *Webster's Dictionary for Students* in front of me, youth is defined as "the period of life between being a child and an adult."

Mr. Speaker, at 10 years of age I believe that damage has already been done to these children. Let me just [give] an analogy: When you plant a plant in the ground you can either till the soil and make sure there are no weeds to begin with, or you can wait a couple of years and decide to pick out every small weed from the soil. Mr. Speaker, I believe that is what we are doing right now. Our current Youth Policy mandates that youth is described as a 10 year old. That is exactly what happens—weeds start growing up before the age of 10.

Mr. Speaker, you know as well as I do that the recent spring of stabbings, drunk driving, robbery, and violence has been steadily increasing. It is obvious that we need to do more. In the Government's opinion, we must increase our definition of a youth.

We know it is much harder to reverse something, to take back words and actions and lessons after they have been taught. Mr. Speaker, may I remind you that before the age of 10, at the tender age of 4, we are sending our children out to school. We are also letting them venture out in our communities. We do not shelter them inside our houses, and for good reasons. They learn a lot. However, there are risks out there. Our current Youth Policy does not address them.

If you have ever met a wandering four-year old, you will agree with me that they are a walking, talking little bunch of creatures! They will talk to everyone. They will learn from everyone. If they see somebody doing something, if they have the courage, they will talk to them; if they do not, they will continue doing what they see. Money see, monkey do!

They are much like sponges; pour a little bit of information on them and they will absorb it. They will tell you exactly what you do. This is why I propose that even though these children at four or five years old are not quite youth, they are much like children, they still need to be taught.

Mr. Speaker, we know that at the age of 10 these children have already been talking to many bad influences and we all know that bad personalities, manners and actions, are not caused over night. They are not caused in a week or in a month or in a year.

They are caused by a lifetime of actions. Everything one does, one sees, one thinks goes into one's future actions.

I, along with the rest of the Government bench, do not just want the Government to have a stronger say in what our young people do. We wish to see not only Government, we want to see society, the private sector, non-profit societies, churches, the community as a whole and individuals to take an active role in teaching our young ones.

Mr. Speaker, you know as well as I, when we grow old and we have no voice our children will run these Islands. Our children will eventually run these Islands. I guarantee the greatest influence on their lives is us. It is our responsibility to teach these children—our future—how to act so that they may continue with the policies, laws and legislation that we have slaved, that our forefathers slaved to produce to make these Islands what they are.

Mr. Speaker, our current Youth Policy addresses children from 10 to 25. In the previous parts of my debate I outlined why we need to lower the age. It appears to me that the Opposition seems to have said that our previous Youth Policy (as outlined in the Youth Policy 2000) that our current activities seem to be working. And, Mr. Speaker, I agree. Many of our current activities do work. However, I do not think that we have gone far enough. I think we need to do more. And the recent rash of stabbings, killings, murders, drunken driving, all seem to point towards a lack of knowledge and respect for the law.

Mr. Speaker, the law is set in place to help humanity. And if these children do not understand the law then we as legislators and as people part of the Legislative Assembly of the Cayman Islands have not done enough.

I do not want to put our youth on a roulette table to spin them around like a little ball and let them land anywhere. I do not want them landing on the zeros or the double zeros getting themselves killed. I would prefer to take them out of Sin City and put them right back into our hallowed communities which have the capacity to teach these kids properly. I also want the children to be exposed to the Caymanian way of life. I know Caymanians, and the people are incredibly friendly, knowledgeable and willing to help our younger citizens of this island. We just do not seem to be doing that right now.

That is why I support the Motion to promote and expand our Youth Policy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you Honourable First Official Member.

Does any other Member wish to speak?  
[pause]

I recognise the First Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

**Miss Melody Martin:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I do agree with my colleague, the Second Elected Member for West Bay. There are many opportunities that the Government has been providing for our youth. Education-wise the Government continues to give scholarships not only to Grand Cayman, but also to the United States. Again, I agree with her—will our young people try to obtain and try to make use of these opportunities?

Our youth needs to be encouraged, Mr. Speaker. My stepbrother was given a scholarship to attend school in the US. He obtained the scholarship because he was excellent in sports. He is a role model to younger boys in Cayman Brac who desire to be just like him and achieve what he has achieved. All our youth need is a push in the right direction. We need to first appreciate and consider what we now have before we can do and add more.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you First Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

Does any other Member wish to speak?  
[pause]

I recognise the Honourable Minister of Education.

**Hon. Saleicia Samaroo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as you well know, our current generation is not like the generations past. Having good manners was the acceptable act of the day. Now most young people have lost that channel of thought. This is why I would like this honourable House to refocus on teaching and emphasising good manners at a younger age. Simply put, Mr. Speaker, good manners are displaying the Courtesy Rule, and I quote, "Courtesy is the lubricant that oils the wheels of life."

Mr. Speaker, to begin teaching manners it must come from the ground basis, which is the home. Now I know there are contradictions about the schools teaching manners to young people because manners should be one of the most valuable lessons parents teach their children. But, what we must take into consideration is that some parents themselves have not been taught these important skills fully or have not had the opportunity themselves to learn it, because in our present day children are having children. So there is little to nothing to pass on to their children.

What I propose is that this honourable House implements studies for parents in each community. In this way parents will learn and promote proper courtesy rules in house. They will be able to speak and train children in the proper manner where discipline is instead of basically just sending them off.

Aside from the home, Mr. Speaker, the place young people spend the majority of their time is at school. Unlike the generation of yesterday, the young people of this modern world have learned to negotiate. Students enjoy competition in school, so why should we not make having good manners a competi-

tive and rewarding act? Let us say a reward given to each class with the most mannerly students.

Along with this reward system we should be encouraging young people to join clubs such as Brownies, Girls and Boys Brigade and Cub Scouts. These activities contribute to courtesy lessons and teach them how to become better members of society.

Mr. Speaker, would you not like to see more respectable youngsters and adults in the Cayman Islands?

Another issue in society that has become a problem is the amounts of complaints being made by companies about the behaviour of young people. What has happened to the respect that was once ground into young people? Where has it all gone?

The conduct to show when spoken to by someone who is in authority over them seems to have been forgotten. The proper behaviour ethics need to be ground into them. Young people need to realise that politeness is one of the key factors that will help them to be successful in life. Also, discussions should be held in classes to find out what attributes they believe one must have in the workplace.

Mr. Speaker, respect is something said to be earned. But what has happened to our Christian grounds? Does not the Bible state that we should love our neighbours as ourselves? In that case, are we not to give others preference over us and do kind acts, such as simply opening a door out of common courtesy? Many of our young people do not even think to do little thing such as this.

Mr. Speaker, many of the morals once taught by old Caymanians are now lost to our generation. Does the Bible not say train up your children in the right path and he or she will not turn from it? So then why are we not training up our young people? These morals must be taught and enforced or they will be lost.

Also, since there is a Reading Week, a Math Week and a Teacher's Week, why not introduce a week that is attributed to manners and courtesy? This way manner improvement campaigns could be held as well as drives. Maybe some of the many accidents caused on our roads could be reduced if we all showed politeness on our roads. If we enforce proper manners in our society and have people be courteous to one another, would we not get along better?

As Minister of Education, I propose that this honourable House place courtesy maxims in each classroom, place of employment and other public places. It is said that people are 90 per cent better when they see, hear and do an activity. So, Mr. Speaker, can you imagine what would happen if they saw, heard and used proper courtesy maxims daily?

Thank you.

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

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

I recognise the First Elected Member for George Town.

**Mr. Andrei Harris:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, first and foremost to address a comment made by the Honourable First Official Member . . . I dare say that at age four I was no monkey! And, moreover, a sponge that absorbs grease and smut can easily be washed clean.

Mr. Speaker, I am currently serving at John Gray High School as Year 11 Rep, PRO for Flying Club, consultant for both Prom Committee and Year-book, and also Peer Counsellor/Peer Educator. At John Gray it has been implemented where peer counsellors teach students on sex education, Sex Ed. It has been proven that teens reach teens. It has been proven that the youth can get to the youth.

If this policy has already been implemented and we still see where premarital sex is still at a rampantly high rate here in Cayman, then I would like to ask the Members of Government and their backbench how they think they are going to address this matter. Moreover, I heard the point on fine arts and, Mr. Speaker, is there not the NCFA? Is this not what it is for? Has the NCFA not meant to allow children of all ages, youth of all sizes and ages to come out and compete and express themselves?

Mr. Speaker, even though I am fond of the Caribbean children disciplinary measures, need I remind you that we are a British Territory? And, as so, Human Rights play a large role in what decisions we make. I am certain that those in the gallery would admit, or at least those age 30 and older, can say that they have had experience with the legendary Caymanian Tamarind whip! [laughter]

On the other hand, I can truly testify that I have never been beaten with a Tamarind whip. I've been beaten, but not with a Tamarind whip!

[laughter]

**Mr. Andrei Harris:** Caymanian disciplinary measures or manners, even though this is not the direct words used by the Honourable Leader of Government Business, cannot be brought back to its basics if parents are not allowed to beat children.

The other day while riding on my bus I overheard a conversation where a girl told the next girl that she straight forwardly looked her mother in the eye and said "Mothers and fathers are not supposed to beat children." This is what they are being taught in school.

That said, Mr. Speaker, I leave the Government to contemplate and decide on a response  
Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you First Elected Member for George Town.

Members, we have reached the hour of 3.00. We will now take a short break and resume at 3.15.

**Proceedings suspended at 3.00 pm**

**Proceedings resumed at 3.21 pm**

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

Would any other Member like to speak to Government Motion No. 2?

I recognise the Honourable Minister of Tourism.

**Hon. Jessica Kong:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I will be addressing the need for conscientious effort to build self-esteem among our youth. In psychology, self-esteem reflects a person's overall self-appraisal of his own self-worth. Self-esteem encompasses both beliefs: for example, I am competent or I am incompetent; and emotions, for example, triumph over despair, pride versus shame. Behaviour may reflect self-esteem in, for example, confidence versus caution.

Mr. Speaker, at present the National Youth Policy does not address self-esteem and the need for it in our young people. Healthy self-esteem is a person's armour against the challenges of the world. Individuals with defensive or low self-esteem typically focus on trying to prove themselves or impress others. They tend to use others for their own game. Some act with egotism and disapproval towards others. They generally lack confidence in themselves; often have doubts about themselves and acceptability; and hence, are reluctant to take risks and expose themselves to failure. They frequently blame others for their shortcomings rather than taking responsibility for their actions. Clearly, self-esteem is an essential aspect of our youth, Mr. Speaker.

The Government is proposing that we encourage teachers to foster building self-esteem in youth. However, Mr. Speaker, it is not just teachers who have the opportunity to build self-esteem in our youth but so do role models of the community and thus it should be the responsibility of everyone to foster this fundamental asset.

Our youth are very sensitive and something as simple as being told to improve their grades because John Brown is doing better can erode a youth's self-esteem.

Mr. Speaker, low self-esteem in our youth can result in many negative factors being born. A close relationship has been documented between low self-esteem and such problems as violence, alcoholism, drug abuse, eating disorders, school dropouts, teenage pregnancies, suicide and low academic achievement along with potential feelings of it being necessary to be a part of a gang, sorority or fraternity. How-

ever, it has been difficult to isolate it as a primary cause using traditional experimental research methods, for it is usually only one of several contributing factors.

Mr. Speaker, our youth should not be left with such fates. Without self-esteem, our youth are at a severe disadvantage. As the future of these Cayman Islands, we should address the need for the building of self-esteem in our youth in this National Youth Policy.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Minister of Tourism.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Fourth Elected Member for West Bay.

**Mr. Justin Jacky:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am in agreement with the Motion that was brought forward by the Government that the Youth Policy should be reviewed and changes should be made to create new opportunities for our youth.

Mr. Speaker, I also believe that the current Youth Policy has many ideas that should be followed through. One such would be the National Strategic Plan. A plan to fight crime and drugs was number one on this list which was 84 per cent of the votes. This Plan has not yet been carried through to its fullest as we can see from the Island's current circumstances.

I believe that in reviewing and adding to our new policy we should add important things such as this. I also think that we should implement a rehabilitation system for our youth seeing that drugs are so rampant among our youth nowadays. I think such a system should be put in place because the youth have nowhere to go to rehabilitate themselves from drugs. If a youth wanted a new life but he was addicted to drugs, what would he do?

Mr. Speaker, I think that our youth are a very important part of our future and if plans are not made to protect and create new opportunities for them, we will lose our most valuable asset.

I also believe that while addressing the policy we should address the youth themselves, because statistics say that 49 per cent of our youth in the last 12 months of this survey, have participated in the use of alcohol or tobacco. I see these as troubling statistics, and this was in the year 2000. Think about how much worse it is in the year 2008, seeing the direction once more that Cayman has turned to.

I also believe that counseling and peer-mentoring is an effective tool and more emphasis should be put on this to ensure that all our youth are able to turn from drugs, alcohol and violence, so as to be able to return Cayman to the lovely society it once was.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, honourable Fourth Elected Member for West Bay.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Third Elected Member for George Town.

**Mr. Michaiah Bryan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to further concur with the statements made on this Motion. And I would like to address two main points: The first being more professional and practical training should be taught at an early age in High School, such as teaching students the basics of banking and other activities.

Now, Mr. Speaker, our youth need to be empowered to face the challenge of the outside world. They need to be well equipped in order to be able to operate as comfortably as possible once they leave school and their parents' home.

According to the National Youth Policy, schools are no longer purely academic institutions. In addition to the academic mission they have taken on a broader social mission which must be acknowledged. It is important to redefine this dual mission in the minds of Caymanians so that there is an agreement among parents, educators, business leaders, social service providers, community leaders and policy makers, as to what is expected of schools.

Mr. Speaker, while the responsibility for the training should rely on their parents, schools and other adults, the fact is that in some cases parents are not adequately fulfilling their roles. This leaves a gaping chasm in the educational responsibilities of our community and creates a disadvantageous situation for the youth of the Cayman Islands.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I believe the youth of these Islands could be better served with improvements to the current system of education. First of all, I would like to say that while careers and life-skill courses are being offered in many of the high schools, and other programmes are being implemented outside of the schools, many of these courses tend to cover job-related skills as is their purpose.

The Government proposes, however, that in addition to these courses, training and other practical subjects be made mandatory. Mr. Speaker, these additional facets of training include practical areas that most, if not all, students will have to face once outside of school and when they enter the job market. These are: budgeting, paying of bills (including mortgages), land acquisition and practical banking skills.

Mr. Speaker, as I previously stated, while some of these issues are addressed in extra curricular activities the fact remains that those who are outside of these activities might not necessarily get to benefit from this education. Therefore, I propose that it be made mandatory in schools. The idea is not only to ensure that young people can get a good education, gain competitiveness in the job market and make good money, but to also ensure that these young

people are trained in wise ways to manage and direct the money they will gain from their jobs.

It is our understanding that in some schools on the Island some of these skills are already being taught. However, they must be made mandatory because these skills will enable our youth to approach the adult world with supreme confidence knowing that they are even more prepared for the rigours of adult life.

Mr. Speaker, one concern may be for those students who have already received such training at home. Receiving the same training at home and the same training at school may be repetitive, but this repetition should not be confused with redundancy. It should be seen as reinforcement of essential tools that the youth of the Cayman Islands can use to make their transition into the adult world a smoother one.

Mr. Speaker, the second point I would like to raise is the incredibly important point of the issues of our young men. The situation as you well know, is critical, even beyond critical, Mr. Speaker. Our young men are engaging in criminal activities; they are filling the prison; and they are tragically dying on our streets and in other public places.

Sir, we need to start implementing extra options into the Youth Policy where it relates to teaching these young men self-esteem, as was previously raised by my colleague. We need to let the young men know that self-esteem does not come from the kind of car you drive; from the amount of money that you have; or from even who your parents are, or how much money your parents make. But that being human is the deciding factor in your worth. Just the fact that you were born and that you are a human being gives you self-worth and that these extra additional things such as money, cars and your status in life are only additional things to help you gain perspective. But they are not the deciding factor of your worth.

We also recognise that there are mentors for the young men, and we applaud these mentors. We encourage them to not only continue what they are doing, but if they can, to step up their efforts in trying to reach these young men and to encourage more men to show an interest in mentoring young men. We are not blindly suggesting this, but mentorship programmes should be screening the men that they bring in to mentor the young men, to ensure that we do not have any abuses taking place.

Television ads should be done to encourage the youth and men to get involved in these mentor programmes. We need to use the internet, television media, and print media to encourage people; both young men and their mentors alike, to get involved in these programmes.

Surveys should also be handed out to young men asking if they know the activity options. Sir, one of the points raised by the Opposition was that there are many activities in the Cayman Islands—enough for the youth to engage in. While that fact remains, I believe that it cannot hurt to increase the opportuni-

ties. It is a fact that some of these young men do not genuinely know what activities are open to them, Mr. Speaker. These young men need to be made aware of the activity options available to them and we need to hand out surveys asking them if they know their activity options, and if so, would they like to be involved. And to further continue this process, we will encourage that programmes be advertised to make more publicity available to ensure that the young men get involved.

But, Mr. Speaker, for those young men who do know the activities involved and still choose to lead a life of crime or to engage in suspicious activity, we must show them exactly what can happen to them. We need to run television ads, hand out pamphlets, show videos on the internet; YouTube, MySpace, Hi-Five, and show videos of the damage that criminal activity can cause. Mr. Speaker, if we have to depict scenes of crumpled cars, blood and gore to them, then by all means we will do so. We must save them, even if we must shock some sense into them.

We must also have other young men in a public forum continuously in order to encourage young men to stay away from suspect behaviour and criminal activity. We must have successful young men from all walks of life encourage other young men and let them know that they can be successful as well, no matter what station in life they are.

And to those young men who have already become involved in suspect activities in criminal behaviour, we must let them know that there is a way back into good Caymanian society; that we will not abandon them and that we will place avenues for them to be more involved to get back into Caymanian society and become an integral part of good citizens of these Cayman Islands.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Third Elected Member for George Town.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Second Elected Member for George Town.

**Mr. Duet Berry, Jr.:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

An old saying goes, Mr. Speaker, that *too much of something is good for nothing*. And, as we are all aware within this House, the Cayman Islands boast one of the highest standards of living. As a result, our youth have had many opportunities to excel and put themselves forward in our society.

The problem, Mr. Speaker, is that our youth have lost their identity and as such, Mr. Speaker, they are in search of a new one: a new one of sex, drugs, and quick money and living life in the fast lane.

Many of the problems that we are facing within our Islands—the gang violence, shootings—and considering all ills that are now facing us—it is simply because in the pursuit of economic wealth our community has neglected its youth.

Mr. Speaker, too long have we sat down and passed the duty of growing and nurturing of our youth to organizations. We, as a community need to ban together and teach our youth their culture, their identity and who they are as a people. Let them know that it is not just cool to brag about what it is that you have, and live life as if you hit third base when it was your parents.

There was once a 'Youth At Risk' conference report on a conference held at the Clarion Conference Centre during 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 1999. It was organized so as to address the issues affecting youth at risk. And within surveying the problems, Mr. Speaker, the key issues facing our youth were . . . down a few points, if I should say such— that Christian values and Caymanian culture are not being adequately taught and reinforced in our community. The lack of positive parental and community involvement were not easily found, Mr. Speaker. As said, parents are out working late hours at night and only the maid is left to look at the children. Can we continue in such, Mr. Speaker?

In this review of the National Youth Policy, all these things were mentioned, but we have yet to see an implementation of them, Mr. Speaker. More energy is being placed on getting here and there and getting a few bucks in one's wallet, but not on our youth. Something needs to be done and we, the Opposition, hope that in reviewing this National Youth Policy the Government Bench will come up with some solution on how to make better these Islands so as to promote these opportunities—more opportunities that they say we should do.

Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Second Elected Member for George Town.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Minister of Communications, Works and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Corrina Worm:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it has also been brought to the Government's attention that there are many young Caymanians that are artistically inclined with little or no outlet for their talent. Some of the visual art programmes that are currently established by the Cayman National Art Gallery include artists [from overseas], which is once a year; another is once a month exposure to a local artist; a walkers club which is exclusively for children seven to nine years of age; and a month long summer school internship at John Gray.

The honourable First Elected Member for George Town stated that the National Children Festival of Arts (NCFA) was in place for the youth in the department of fine arts also, but once again, it only takes place once a year. So, I ask you this, Mr. Speaker: How can inspiring artists continue to develop their talents, skills and techniques if they have such limited resources and opportunity? Would you ever advance in your ability at anything if you were only

able to practice or gain new knowledge of it once a year or even months?

The First Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman said: "**All our youth need is a little push in the right direction.**" But I ask you this: What good is it to push in the right direction if there is nowhere on Island to push them to, especially in the field of fine arts? That is why the Government is proposing to instill an institution that will provide aspiring artists with incessant to year long training. The reason this is necessary and will benefit the Cayman Government is because there is currently an over concentration of aspiring bankers, lawyers and accountants, and this could, as a result, put blinders on the economic and cultural growth of Cayman.

To facilitate the prolonging of cultural development in Cayman, which I am sure is in the best interest of every Caymanian, we need to in turn facilitate the needs of those who will continue to bring about its prosperity. If this action does not take place, however, we are at risk of losing many Caymanian artists that could take their talent elsewhere where they could be used as a keystone to the endorsement of Cayman self-identity.

We would execute this plan by creating a facility that would present more career options in the fine arts for the Caymanian youth. This institution will include painting of all mediums, drawing and sketching, sculpture, photography and other visual arts. There will also be a performing arts division of its organization as well as the requirements that will need to be met for those who choose to take part in this programme, which one of my colleagues will address later.

We could employ teachers, coaches and reputable artists who would give the artists a chance to persistently broaden their understanding of the arts that could very well become a tourist attraction but also a beautiful reflection of Cayman's pride and culture and self-identity. We would also like to hope that the Cayman National Art Gallery and the Cayman Cultural Art Association would be enthused to join us in our undertaking in this institution. This will open many new doors for the youth of Cayman that we take so much pride in, and we can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that the benefit will come back tenfold.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Minister of Communications, Works, and Infrastructure.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town.

**Miss Elizabeth Charles:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to begin with thanking the Fourth Elected Member for West Bay for supporting our Motion. As we stated in the Motion, we plan to revise the Motion for the current Youth Policy, not to scrap it al-

together. At no point in time would we want to imply that.

Secondly, I would like to address the Second Elected Member for George Town who was saying that we have forgotten our youth. We are trying now to take the measures to remember our youth. So please, feel comforted.

I would also like to make a few comments towards the Second Elected Member for West Bay. She spoke briefly about the programmes that we currently have. Organisations such as the Cayman Drama Society do promote current activities for socialisation among Caymanian youth, however, there is still a rise in violence and drugs. Therefore, we must recognise that though activities were enjoyable some time ago, we must try new things as generations change, rather than forcing our youth to adapt to our outdated programmes based on an outdated policy that is now in need of revision.

Mr. Speaker, the Noble Prize winning philosopher, Alexis Carrel, once said: "The first duty of society is to give each of its members the possibility of fulfilling his destiny. When it becomes incapable of performing this duty it must be transformed."

Mr. Speaker, in regard to the youth of the Cayman Islands with respect to the performing arts, this society must be transformed. We must do this so that we can better expose talented Caymanian youth to the options they have to fulfill their destinies. According to *Wikipedia Encyclopedia*, the performing arts are those forms of art which differ from the plastic arts and so far as the former uses the artists own body, face and presence as a medium, and the latter uses material such as clay, metal or paint which can be molded or transformed to create some physical art object.

Having said this, I would like to state that I am in complete support of the Motion to amend the current Youth Policy and in doing so, as my colleague just stated, place more emphasis on the arts with the building of a facility to help foster the growth of visual and performing arts for youth in the Cayman Islands.

Mr. Speaker, this facility which would be available for students who are serious about their chosen art, and who, after an audition and admission process would be served with the highest level of education in any given arts field. Classes in the following six forms of the performing arts would be offered: dance, acrobatics, comedy, opera, film and theatre.

Mr. Speaker, you may be wondering why it is that such an institution may be necessary on our Island and that is an issue that I am ready to address.

In addition to [providing] our youth with a wider variety of job opportunities that may not have been previously available because of lack of training, we are also helping to keep our youth open-minded and thinking globally by providing our youth with options such as performing arts. It is also a long known fact that the performing arts are a means of preserving culture. Mr. Speaker, I am sure you would agree

that the old time dances such as quadrille are an integral part of our culture that needs to be kept preserved.

Mr. Speaker, one might argue that with all of the school work that the youth have now, they should not be distracted with another activity, but studies have proven that extra curricular activities, like the programmes that would be hosted by this facility and an increase in Grade Point Average (GPA) are directly correlated. Further research shows that participation in the arts enhances learning in other areas, including the development of higher order thinking skills and awareness of the world that we live in; that is so necessary in these global days.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do recognise the work that is currently being done to support the visual and performing arts, and, I believe, that we should not exclude these organisations, but indeed we should partner with these government organisations—Cayman National Cultural Foundation, the Cayman Islands National Art Gallery, and the Cayman Islands National Dance Company, Dance Unlimited—to build this facility and bring to fruition the general goal of all of these organizations, which is to preserve and showcase various forms of Caymanian culture through the expressions of the visual and performing arts.

Mr. Speaker, you might still be wondering why I believe that it is of the utmost importance to have an institution for the performing arts. To this I would like to end with a quote from a Caymanian youth who when asked why a facility for the performing arts would be beneficial replied: "I think that it would be important because it would finally give us the opportunity to train and polish our skills. It would show that the Government cares about our talents and the very things that make us unique. It will provide an opportunity so that the arts in Cayman can be taken seriously from a global perspective as we are more prepared when we represent the nation to other people through the arts."

So, Mr. Speaker, for this reason, I believe, that it is imperative to amend our current Youth Policy so that youth (like the student who submitted this quote) would be given the opportunity to see these things being realised.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Third Elected Member for West Bay.

**Mr. Owen Foster:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that there is division in the Government. As the Third Elected Member for George Town stated, they should make business skills mandatory in schools. The Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town stated that these things should

not be mandatory because they are outdated. Another thing that has come to mind, Mr. Speaker. . .

[inaudible interjection]

**The Speaker:** Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town.

**Miss Elizabeth Charles:** Sorry.

On a point of clarification, the Government did not say that. The Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town did not say that.

**Mr. Owen Foster:** My apologies, Mr. Speaker.

Another thing that has come to my attention today is that the Government seems to have a larger budget than we expected, for the creation of an institution for the other youth to work on their arts. This costs money also, sir.

On the basis of obedience, Mr. Leonard Ebanks once stated that his generation was the last generation to go to sea. When you go to sea basic obedience skills are taught to you. These skills were then taught to the children of those people. The generations following Mr. Ebanks' generation have not been going to sea and a lot of these disciplines have been lost. That is also a contributing factor to the reason why disciplinary problems have occurred. Next is the desensitization through the media, such as television and video games. Blood, guts and gore are all over the television and video games nowadays and these are desensitizing the minds of the youth to obscene violence and horrific acts.

I agreed with the Third Elected Member for George Town when it was stated that the opportunities need to be looked at, like Scoop and YouthFlex, to reach out to the youth of our country to help them to understand disciplinary morals as well as other morals. That is all, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Third Elected Member for West Bay.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Second Official Member.

**Hon. Annalisa Wallace:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Firstly, I would like to address a concern that was brought by the Third Elected Member for West Bay, about the cost of our proposed plan.

According to the Appropriation Law, 2007 the Cayman Islands Government has budgeted for Children and Youth Services foundations the sum of \$2,045, 000. For the support of battered women and children, which supports the social side of our argument—\$200,000; for youth, education, mentorship, and policy—\$587,000; for youth development programmes—\$46,000; for monitoring national youth policy implementation—\$100,000. This is a portion of the

\$42,735,000 that has been appropriated to the Ministry of Education, Training, Employment, Youth, Sports and Culture. So, rest assured, Third Elected Member for West Bay, we will be able to pay for this.

Secondly, I would just like to address some of the other concerns of the Opposition Members. The First Elected Member for George Town was very concerned about pre-marital sex. I am sorry to say that I doubt we as a government are going to be able to eradicate pre-marital sex entirely through this Youth Policy. And I am not implying that that is what you said. However, we are proposing programmes to deal with self-esteem, self-respect and having proper role models in the society. And I think we do believe that when these programmes are implemented the outcome will deal with whatever concerns you have about the problems that are springing from pre-marital sex.

I would like to reiterate what the Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town said. Fourth Elected Member for West Bay, you are very welcome on our side because you are simply saying what we have already proposed.

Lastly, I would like to make reference to the comments made by the Second Elected Member for West Bay. Impetus is what we need, not opportunities. We have enough opportunities; they were listed countless times. Yes, we do have opportunities in the Cayman Islands and I not in any way going to deny that. However, I am going to concur with my colleague, the Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town, that if we make these opportunities more attractive, we do provide impetus. Also, when we provide self-esteem programmes for our students, this generates a certain level of confidence, and I am sure we can all agree that confidence is impetus to go out and try something new.

When we utilise the media to redirect the images and the influences that our youth are exposed to, we too redirect the impetus and the impetus is placed where we want it to be.

Opportunities do not solve all of our problems but they do increase the odds of us having ultimately successful young people.

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition has found holes in most of our arguments but they have not presented a solution. Most of them agree that something needs to be done. We cannot leave our young people to their own devices. We cannot just accept the statistics; we need to improve the situation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Second Official Member.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Thea Bush:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, other than contributions made by the Minister of Works, the Third Elected Member for George Town, the Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town, I believe that it is safe to say that the Opposition is still a bit confused about what path the Government is taking with their Motion.

The Motion reads that there needs to be a revision of the National Youth Policy in order to improve opportunities for the youth. But, as I said before, other than the presentation of the three Members whom I listed, the honourable House has yet to hear specific plans that are made for improving opportunities for the youth.

With that being said, Mr. Speaker, given that the Opposition recognises that change begins in the house and the Opposition feels that home is where young people obtain the desire to be better; the Opposition encourages the Government to provide more resources for the improvement and importance of the National Parenting Programme. The Government cannot do anything, spend anything, plan anything, but the youth need to be encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities provided for them.

For the most part, from the Government Bench, there has been the notion that we should address the issue of manners, crime, teenage pregnancy, and problems that face the youth which are rooted deep within our young people in our society.

I would like to speak to the statement provided by the Honourable Leader of Government Business when he stated that one of their plans to implement is to educate our youth about the consequences of sexual activity and that abstinence is the key. But then I would like to ask the Second Official Member why she was down on my Opposition Member about premarital sex saying that there is no possible way that the Government can eradicate this problem. I agree that there is no way the Government can eradicate this problem because the youth have a mind of their own. However, how is it that you are in division with your Leader of Government Business when he says that in the education system they will provide a programme that teaches the youth about the consequences of sexual activity?

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, I would like to add that during my years of attending the John Gray High School I was chosen as a peer counsellor, and as a foundation of our training we indulged in learning about how to relate to our peers about sexual consequences as well as abstinence through thorough demonstration. This is possibly the last resort, Mr. Speaker. As you would know, peers listen to their fellow peers, and it has not worked. So, then, where do we turn to, Mr. Speaker? What implementation is the Government then going to provide if there have been educated opportunities available for the youth about this, which have not yet worked?

Mr. Speaker, I rest assured that the Government Bench will not portray ignorance today and will not solely look to improving and increasing opportuni-

ties ranging from academic to professional through recreational opportunities to solving the numerous problems that our youth face today. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I echo my esteemed colleague, the Second Elected Member for West Bay, when she stated that there are numerous opportunities available for the youth. Tackle the problems that face the youth first, then, Mr. Speaker, perhaps there will be an increase in motivation, interest and incentive, for the youth to participate in these opportunities. Because, Mr. Speaker, where there lies no interest or motivation within our youth there lies a slim chance of a possibility of these opportunities being utilised.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Minister of Health and Human Services.

**Hon. Kalesha Edwards:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, lately there has been an increase in teen pregnancies and STD (Sexually Transmitted Disease), such as HIV Aids. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that sex education should be taught in all schools and that it should be mandatory. If students are taught the importance of abstinence from the early teenage years, it may help to alleviate some of the STDs and teen pregnancies that exist on our Islands.

We could institute a programme to promote abstinence by teenagers, as was started in New York City by the Caribbean Women's Help Association. This educational programme called PHAT or Promoting Health in Abstinence Education provides peer educators and parent advocates to promote a sexual activity delay and a healthy development for adolescents. We could start a programme such as this, and once they have completed the programme they will receive a ring called the purity ring and will make a pledge that they will abstain until marriage or delay sexual activity.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the fact that not all teens will participate in this programme, but as the saying goes, "nothing beats a trial but a failure".

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Minister of Health and Human Services.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Fourth Elected Member for George Town.

**Miss Raven Ramoon:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the fact that many physical structures for such youth development centres already exist in most communities here in the Cayman Islands. However, our young people still stress the need to have a place of their own—a safe place where they can engage in youthful activities and

interact with each other and work out their own world view.

We need youth development centres in each community managed by well trained youth development workers who can motivate our young men and women to participate in youth development activities. These centres are intended to foster dynamic relevant approaches to youth development. It is in such centres that a sense of responsibility could be cultivated among young people. Enterprise training and the opportunity to manage both business and social enterprises should be provided. It is where our young people could sharpen their leadership skills in managing small businesses and a range of social political and recreational endeavours.

What is needed now, Mr. Speaker, is for young people to have easier access to existing facilities, and for such facilities to be established in those communities that currently do not have them. Most importantly, all youth development centres should be properly managed.

Mr. Speaker, human beings are social by nature, so the creation of community youth development centres is one means of meeting the needs of the youth. Let me stress again, that these centres will allow large numbers of young people to congregate and participate in a range of activities that are educational, sporting and recreational, in a controlled safe environment. The centres would also provide career advice and training. They would provide an arena for individuals, businesses and government leaders to consult with young people on issues of district and national concern. Opportunities would also be provided for young people to give back to their communities.

Given the fact that no two districts share the same social environment, youth needs are demographic. Therefore it would be more beneficial to work at the district level rather than to develop blanket youth programmes and initiatives. The community youth development centres should specifically cater to the needs of the individual communities while also promoting inter district fellowship.

Mr. Speaker, although it is a general feeling that the current situation regarding our youth is bearable, I am afraid that if change related to rapid physical development of the country and the influx of immigrant workers, and the negative socialisation of children continues unchecked, then the future of Cayman Islands will definitely be dismal.

Mr. Speaker, it is now the responsibility of our whole society to review this National Youth Policy and to improve and approve it. The next step will be the production of a plan of action for each of the objectives dealt with the policy. This Legislature should be required to ensure that these plans are implemented, monitored and evaluated at regular intervals; for example, every three years.

In due course, the effectiveness of this National Youth Policy must be measured according to

the extent to which a positive Caymanian identity is adopted and asserted by young women and men; young people are motivated to excel in a variety of endeavours; young people participate in the decision-making processes which affect their lives; Government continues to invest in young people and the future of the Cayman Islands; the Cayman Islands continue to development along sustainable lines. Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, the National Youth Policy must help young people to make a smooth transition to adulthood to manage the country's resources efficiently, and to pass on to their children a moral, prosperous, harmonious, and sustainable society.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Fourth Elected Member for George Town.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the First Elected Member for Bodden Town.

**Miss Latoya Davis:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we will vote 'yes' to this Government Motion No. 2, but it is clear that the Government is unsure of how to proceed, after listening to this debate. However, we, the Opposition, are willing to work with them to make this happen because the youth are clearly very important to us both.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you First Elected Member for Bodden Town.

Does any other Member wish to speak? Does any other Member wish to speak? Does any other Member wish to speak? If no other Member wishes to speak, does the Mover wish to exercise his right of reply?

**Hon. W. Marvin Hurlston, Jr.:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let me start by addressing the issue of coordination of teen centres. There are tons of teen centres; the list goes on and on and on. But there was never coordination. There are youth groups upon youth groups; there are churches, the Scout Guide, as the Second Elected Member for West Bay pointed out. But coordination was never achieved between those groups. That is what we plan to do with this Motion. We plan to make sure that we do not have a bunch of pool balls going in different directions—one direction going forward for the improvement of young people.

The movie theatre: I wonder, do we just send them there, [say] *just go, have fun at the movie theatre*, and leave them there? Of course!

Do we even bother to think about the morals that they learn from these movies in what they are seeing? In sending them there, what kind of message are we sending? Instead of solving the problem, it is as what the Second Elected Member for West Bay

said, "There are already solutions for the entertainment value because we can send them to watch movies." Great! Great!

[Laughter]

**Hon. W. Marvin Hurlston, Jr.:** We have plans. There has been mention of strategies. The improvement which needs to be done and which we are suggesting comes in the area of family; area of social workers making sure that families and parents have a direct responsibility and are held accountable for the actions of their children in raising them.

Again, like I said, the youth development centres were talked about, but they were never implemented and what we are trying to is to implement them now instead of just having them as something we casually mention every time we bring up the National Youth Policy.

The only youth centre I see is out in front of Subway and Royal Palms where underage young people go and have their fill of alcohol. There is no coordinated effort and this is what we need, Mr. Speaker. Or are we going to leave them out in front of Subway? Are we going to leave them standing out in front of the Burger King next to John Gray High School? I hope not!

Let me elaborate on the points that the Financial Secretary brought. First, we must lower the target age of the Youth Policy; that is a plan. By lowering the target age we can catch them from earlier; we identify problems from earlier and we can provide a solution from earlier.

We give scholarships; many scholarships are distributed in the Cayman Islands yearly. The University College of the Cayman Islands has recently printed a guide for scholarships. But I have heard complaints from teachers in the past about these scholarships that come to UCCI (University College of the Cayman Islands). But there is no guidance. They get these scholarships and they report their grades once a semester. Once a semester, if that! They can be failing and no one is looking into them. No one is there to ask: *'Young man why are you failing?' Or 'Young man how we can help you?'*

I commend the First Elected Member from Cayman Brac. Her brother is a shining example of what we all aspire to. And what we should be doing and will be doing with this Youth Policy is to make sure we can have all young people looking in that direction and walking in that direction. We must have them taking advantage of the opportunity. Are we to expect them to just walk on and find their own way to these scholarships by themselves? Please, I do not think that is what we want our young people to be doing.

To address the comment of the First Elected Member for George Town regarding the sponges: If you think that it is just that easy to squeeze (pardon the expletive) the crap that is put into our young peo-

ple's heads and wipe it out. Ha! It is not that easy. Instead of letting it get filled with (pardon the expletive again) crap in the first place, we should make sure by expanding the age bracket to a younger age so that they do not get exposed to that much in the first place.

**The Speaker:** Honourable Member, I ask that due to the nature of this Meeting and the fact that it is being aired both by television and radio that you minimise and if not, extradite all of the expletives.

**Hon. W. Marvin Hurlston, Jr.:** Will do, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, sir.

**Hon. W. Marvin Hurlston Jr.:** And thank you.

Sometimes in my zeal for the young people of the Cayman Islands, I can get carried away.

[laughter]

**The Speaker:** Order, order.

**Hon. W. Marvin Hurlston, Jr.:** The NCFA (National Children Festival of Arts) is held but once a year, as the Minister for Communications, Works and Infrastructure pointed out, and it is not for every single child, it is only for middle and high schools. There is no policy to have older people involved in music. There is no coordination there and we offer the plan of coordinating for it.

To touch upon the area of discipline in beatings, there are positive ways to enforce discipline than just beating a child. Let me say, that there is a marked difference between enforcement of discipline and abuse. And this Government—I am sure I can take the liberty of speaking for the Opposition—does not support child abuse.

I thank the Opposition for their support. Some of the Members have agreed with most of what we have said and some have not. I would not call this division; I call it having freedom of conscience in having the right to your own beliefs. Just because you adhere to one side of the aisle or the other, does not mean that you cannot think what you want to and that you cannot express your own opinions.

I am glad that some who are a part of the Opposition, have the goodwill of the youth at heart. But when you see young men being shot in the streets; when you hear that a group of young people went out, right down in George Town, Mr. Speaker, and beat up a man and stole his money for no apparent reason—have never seen, met or dealt with this person before, you really think that we can say that too much is being done for the youth? Not enough for these young people and these are the young people we are trying to target.

I agree completely about teaching them their identity. The identity of a Caymanian is a strong thing. It is there but in recent years due to lots of factors it

has been eroded. Factors like the media and let me again state them: YouTube, MySpace, Hi-Five. We must take advantage of these and have a renewed programme of showing Caymanian identity through them. That is a plan!

It will be expensive but, Mr. Speaker, are our young people not worth the cost? We will not survive as an island, as a financial services sector, and as a tourism industry if we do not invest heavily in our young people. And I would say that I would give my last dime if I had to, to make sure that they succeed. Specific plans, again, have been made.

To the spat that went on between the Opposition and the Second Official Member, she is not in opposition of our point. There is some truth in seeing that there is no possible way to completely eradicate the problem of earlier sexual activity. But that does not mean that we should not try. "Raise up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it". Again, let me reiterate, the media is one of the best tools to reach out to young people. Today that is what we have to do. We must teach them the dangers of sex. This Government believes, as a matter of fact, that there is no better prevention and protection than abstinence. It may be unpopular; the young people may not like to hear it but it will be said. And I will say it here today and I will repeat it again—abstinence is number one.

What you see as insecurity on the Government Bench, what you see as our perceived confusion is because we are not offering one plan, we are not offering one change. We are trying to effect change into as many broad areas as we possibly can. There is just not one area of concern, there are many and they have been listed in the speeches made by the Members of the Government Bench. Let me go over some of them.

**The Speaker:** Madam Second Elected Member for West Bay.

**Miss Marzeta Bodden:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

**The Speaker:** What is your point of order?

**Miss Marzeta Bodden:** Mr. Speaker, I feel that the Leader of Government Business is misleading the House. The Opposition did not say that the Government was in confusion in regard to their plan. We said yesterday that they are in confusion in regard to what the topic of the Motion is, and the Motion is about reviewing the National Youth Policy so as to improve opportunities for the youth. So, that is where the confusion is, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Honourable Leader of Government Business, would you like to address that?

**Hon. W. Marvin Hurlston, Jr.:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity of addressing that.

In bringing the National Youth Policy the goal was to get every single Member of this Legislature to express their views. Some of the views may be different; some may be opposing. There is no confusion. Again, I say, there is no confusion.

#### **Moment of Interruption—4.30 pm**

**The Speaker:** Honourable Leader, if I may.

Honourable Members, we have reached the hour of interruption. I now call on the Honourable Leader of Government Business to suspend the relevant Standing Order to allow business to continue after the hour of 4.30 pm.

#### **Suspension of Standing Order 10(2)**

**Hon. W. Marvin Hurlston, Jr.:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the Motion to suspend the relevant Standing Order to allow the House to continue with the Order of the Day after the hour of 4.30 pm.

**The Speaker:** The question is that the relevant Standing Order be suspended to allow the business of the day to continue after the hour of 4.30 pm.

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

**Ayes.**

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

**Agreed: The relevant Standing Order was suspended to allow the House to continue after the hour of 4.30 pm.**

**The Speaker:** The relevant Standing Order has been suspended in order to allow business to continue past the point of 4.30 pm.

Honourable Leader of Government Business, please continue with your closing remarks.

**Hon. W. Marvin Hurlston, Jr.:** Thank you Mr. Speaker.

We plan to bring together stakeholders: Government, educators, youth workers, mentors, social workers, members of the National Assembly, employers, churches and interested members of the public. Maybe there has been some confusion with our aim on this Motion, on the part of the Opposition. I apologise for that. But there have been offers from the first movement of this Motion to come to the Government and we would try to explain and work out some of the things that we were going to talk about; it has been offered. However, I apologise for that.

Mr. Speaker, in passing this Motion let me be clear on what we will do. Once this Motion is passed, it does not mean that the points we have laid down

here today must be included in the new Youth Policy. The points which we have highlighted are points that we, as a government, feel the need to be addressed, and when we take the review of the National Youth Policy it will not be in the Legislative Assembly. It will not be here in this room; it will be out in the community, in the Town Halls, in the schools, in the churches. Those places are where we will further discuss these ideas. That is where the Opposition can come and see if there are some things that the Government has left out. And we will not just go off and sulk because there are things we have left out. We will take them in and include them.

The importance here today, Mr. Speaker, is not who wins this debate. It is not who comes out looking better. I honestly, Mr. Speaker, could seriously care less. What I want to send today is a message that there is need to refocus on our youth. There is need to reassess the policy and I want the message to be heard loud and clear, not just from the Government Bench. We can pass this Motion but please, Members of the Opposition, if you believe that something should be done with the youth; if you believe that they need greater assistance and if you can see one problem wrong with the direction in which our youth is heading, stand in support of this Motion. Again, I say, it is not about who wins this debate or who comes out looking better. There is one issue of concern here: Our young people. Let us send that message today, Mr. Speaker. Let us put our young people first.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Leader of Government Business.

The question is: BE IT NOW THEREFORE RESOLVED that this Honourable Youth Parliament review the National Youth Policy with a view to improving opportunities for the youth.

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

**Ayes.**

**The Speaker:** The Ayes have it.  
Government Motion No. 2 is duly passed.

**Agreed: Government Motion No. 2 passed.**

## OTHER BUSINESS

### MOTIONS

#### PRIVATE MEMBER'S MOTION

##### Preservation and Enhancement of the Caymanian Culture

**The Speaker:** I call upon the Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Thea Bush:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move Private Member's Motion entitled, Preservation and Enhancement of Caymanian Culture.

**The Speaker:** Is there a seconder?

I call upon the First Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman to second the Motion.

**Miss Melody Martin:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the Motion.

**The Speaker:** The Private Member's Motion has been duly moved and seconded.

Would the Honourable Leader of the Opposition like to speak thereto?

**Hon. Thea Bush:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I stand here before you today to underscore a proposed motion that is of utmost importance and concern to the people of these Islands. That Motion is:

**BE IT NOW THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Government considers that greater emphasis be placed on the preservation and enhancement of Caymanian Culture.**

Firstly, Mr. Speaker, it is my duty to ensure that this honourable House is assured the parameters in which I and my fellow Members of the Opposition wish to speak to this Motion. With that said, Mr. Speaker, there are some crucial words inherent in this Motion, which I wish to first define before commencing my argument.

According to the *Miriam Webster's Dictionary*, the word "emphasis" is defined as "the force or intensity of expression that gives impressiveness or importance to something or the special consideration of, or stress, or insistence of something". The term "preservation" is defined by the *Miriam Webster's Dictionary* as "to keep or save from decomposition or to keep up and reserve for personal or special use". According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "enhancement" is the term used to refer to "the increase in quality, value or extent of".

And last, but certainly not least, there have been numerous definitions attributed to the term "culture". According to great sociologists, culture is the values, beliefs, behaviour and material objects that together form a peoples way of life. In another context, according to the United Nation's Educational Scientific and Culture organization, culture is described as "the set of distinctive spiritual material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a socio-group, and that it encompasses in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs".

When assessing one's culture, there are two segments in play that further the term culture and they



the subtleties of present day attitudes towards class and race.

According to Mr. Craton, a subtle slave community probably developed as the land was increasingly worked by logging between 1730 and 1780. As this community expanded to include equal numbers of males and females, as well as younger and older members, those slaves no longer needed in the field probably became domestic bond servants. A handful of the most enterprising and capable male slaves may have become cast men or mariners. It is indeed true that the livelihood of Caymanian slaves was in no way comparable with those slaves in other Caribbean territories who harvested the sugar plantations. But the fact still remains, Mr. Speaker, that this could well be a hidden part of our history that has a distinct impact on our culture and which has still not been fully explored.

As mentioned previously, the Cayman Islands came to be known as the "Islands that time forgot", a phrase coined by visitors which was catchy, but not precisely accurate. The Cayman Islands were undergoing rapid changes and expansions and in the wider world context natives were establishing permanent connections with the United States and other places through migration. Caymanians continued to make the best of their isolation and lack of natural resources. They introduced what they could afford, travelled farther afield to make a livelihood, and in many cases, moved elsewhere with their families in search of an easier life. Those who either decided to stay or had no other choice, endured a life that was often hard and lacking in material comfort. Everyone in society had to have multiple skills in order for their survival to progress.

The numerous challenges faced by Caymanians allowed for the nurturing of their distinct character but they also paved a road for an easier life for new generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, our ancestors resided in simple wattle and daub cottages, consisting of thatch roofs, which were built by them with the use of local materials. Descending from both Africans and Europeans, the traditional lifestyle for Caymanians was preserving occupations such as farming and fishing. Families had a fairly easy access to the sea which they used to obtain meat-kind as well as visits in the bush where they got firewood, lumber and thatch. If fortunate enough, some families were blessed with a luxury of a canoe or even a tough island bred pony. However, typical practice was to move on foot, carrying wood on their shoulders and their produce in homemade straw baskets.

According to Mr. Craton, most of the two hundred horses estimated to be in the Cayman Islands in 1907 belonged to the more prosperous islanders. Similarly, most of the twelve hundred cattle were owned by proprietors of the comparatively rich grass pieces in the centre of Grand Cayman. Raising beef was not practical for small holders and keeping cows

and milk was something of a luxury. Animals for plowing were of no value to farmers whose rocky chucked soils had to be worked by hoe and machete.

Most farmers kept a few free-running pigs and chickens. Chickens were, in fact, kept more for the pot than for their eggs. And goats apparently were rare. Families primarily relied on their ground provisions, which included a scope of two tubers such as cassava and potatoes of different kinds, a variety of corn, beans and pumpkin, and many kinds of African and Asian yams, cocoas and eddoes. Added to these were breadfruit, bananas, plantains, coconuts, sugarcane and fruit from trees growing in the household yard or a nearby bush.

Although it took the comprised efforts of an entire family to raise enough food and produce, it must be taken into consideration, Mr. Speaker, that activities and chores were evidently divided between the members of the family. Men usually did the fishing and were assisted by their sons as soon as they were old enough. Men were also responsible for looking after the hardest physical task, such as cutting wood, clearing bush, digging and carrying heavy loads, as well as building homes and maintaining tools.

On the contrary, women were responsible for not only the bearing and rearing of the children and running the household, preparing food and making, washing and mending clothes, but they also made most of the baskets, hats and rope. They were usually responsible for taking care of the kitchen garden and involved in what marketing activities there were.

Children carried out roles such as sweeping, carrying water, helping to prepare cassava flour, ground corn and stripping thatch leaves. They also had outside duties such as reading, caring for the animals and collecting firewood.

Mr. Speaker, I have just provided this honourable House with some of the family centered activities that took place in our ever dying Caymanian history. However, I am still yet to mention other activities that provide a more common ground for our cash economy.

The main marketable product was in fact Caymanian rope generated from the leaves of the Silver Thatch Palm. The Silver Thatch Palm endemic to the Cayman Islands and highly regarded for its durability and strength was used to make roof for houses, brooms, excellent hats, as well as mats, fans and baskets for carrying provisions. Thatch ropes made mainly in West Bay, North Side, East End, and Cayman Brac, were used by all local fishermen, as well as those in Jamaica to tether fish pots and nets. Although rope may not have generated a large profit it has been stated that for those involved in this livelihood it was vital, especially for women. For many, rope making meant the difference between economic survival and destitution. And for numerous years it represented an admirable and successful effort to maintain economic independence.

Shipbuilding was also among the earliest forms of livelihood in Cayman along with the associated activities that accompanied it. Caymanians developed boats that met their requirements and necessities of local needs. These boats included firstly the Shallop [phonetic] which progressed to Caymanians Sloops around 1970 and was primarily used for short voyages within the Caribbean region. By the year 1907 the Cayman Islands proudly boasted their provisions of various needs of shipbuilding consisting of 30 schooners and 17 sloops. Caymanians also began to formulate dugout canoes. However, the ultimate vessel was the distinctive product of Caymanian boat building and turtling history.

In 1904, Mr. Daniel Jervis, a resident of Cayman Brac who was a turtling Captain, as well as a boat builder produced the prototype Caymanian Catboat. The skills required in building schooners, sloops and catboats became almost instinctive among Caymanians. And not only that, Mr. Speaker, but the launching of a schooner was also a community celebration. It was a symbolic, joyous and hopeful occasion for our seagoing community whose members were well aware of the perils of the sea.

According to research, Mr. Speaker, when a launching was announced, men, women and children of all classes and colours would gather from distant parts of the Islands wearing their best clothes. To the shouting of orders '*walk away, back with the rope now*', all would join in and pull. To the noise of grunts, shouts and laughter, the finish inched across rollers made of thatch palm trunks and into its natural element with a mighty splash.

**The Speaker:** Madam Leader of the Opposition, my sincere apologies for interrupting, but apparently the people in control of the radio broadcast need some time to deal with technical issues. So, we have been asked to suspend our proceedings for a few minutes.

Proceedings suspended until further advised.

**Hon. Thea Bush:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Proceedings suspended at 4.50 pm.**

**Proceedings Resumed at 4.59**

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

Madam Leader of the Opposition, please continue with your debate.

**Hon. Thea Bush:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have painted a picture in the minds of this honourable House of what we have commonly coined the "good old days". As a society in entirety, we Caymanians have seen tremendous transformations in less than a century. These changes have indeed brought about beneficial results to everyone, ranging from economic to social changes. We

have also witnessed changes in our culture as well, Mr. Speaker. Due to the evolutionary process we have passed through, resulting in a collage of cultures, making the Cayman Islands that much more unique.

However, Mr. Speaker, I passionately relate to you, that I, as a young Caymanian, even though I know no difference other than the Cayman Islands I now presently reside in, feel that our very own unique and distinct Caymanian culture that I have taken the time to portray here today in this honourable House has been hidden behind the powerfulness and emergence of other cultures. Although our culture has evolved to include various practices from other cultures, we still have our very own different culture than those who migrate here. So, why then, Mr. Speaker, should our culture be like the needle in the haystack? Somewhere there but yet so difficult to reveal, practice, teach, and be proud of!

Mr. Speaker, with hardly any emphasis being placed on our unique culture, I pose the question: How will there be any possibilities for progression of Caymanian identity and sense of self? It is almost impossible to fathom.

Mr. Speaker, I will not portray ignorance here today, and so I now wish to speak to the fact that according to research there has in fact been concerted efforts taken to preserve Caymanian culture. One example of the controversy faced in trying to cultivate Caymanian past in such a way that it simultaneously attracts tourists was the exploitation of the pirate image represented by Pirates Week, an annual event first held in October 1977. Although the Cayman Islands were never a true pirate's lair, Caymanians have indulged in the festivities associated with Pirates Week. As its progression continued so did its success to its gradual evolution into an authentic national cultural festival. From the commencement all three Islands heavily participated and by the second year every district had its own day for celebration.

In the year 1988, Governor John Owen encouraged visitors and residents alike to take advantage of this time of our community heritage days, to get involved and reflect on the rich traditions and hardships that represented daily life for earlier generations of Caymanians. Pirates Week is always a time for lighthearted rivalry, but it is also an opportunity to appreciate the customs and values that add continuity and character to contemporary Cayman.

Another concerted effort to promote Caymanian culture can be identified in the restoration efforts of Pedro St. James, taken on by the Minister responsible for Tourism and Culture. It was restored to primarily resemble a national historic site, as well as a visitor attraction, enabled to accommodate 100,000 visitors per year.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, featured in the *Caymanian Compass* on February 26, 2008 was an article entitled BT Shop—100 per cent Caymanian. In this article it was stated that in as little as three weeks Bodden Town will be home to a new arts and craft

shop, featuring only things Caymanian. And I quote  
**“But what really makes this establishment so enchanting and unique is that it will feature the works of some of Cayman’s finest cooks and artisans.**

**Straw hats, bags, and baskets adorned with colorful decorations, an interesting assortment of handcrafted wood, coral and seashell pieces, paintings, art supplies, some of the finest fruits and vegetables, breads, heavy cakes, jams, buns, candies, jellies and drinks that Cayman has to offer will be on sale.”**

And as stated by one of the proprietor’s, Mr. Forbes: “What we are trying to create here is a true unique Caymanian experience, for residents and tourists to enjoy. When visitors come to Cayman they want to see and buy something that is native to Cayman. They do not want to come to Cayman and have to buy trinkets and souvenirs, stamps made in China or Jamaica. No foreign art or craft will be imported into the shop. All the supplies and work displayed in the store will be made by Caymanians and stamped one hundred percent Cayman”. And to that, Mr. Speaker, I say, Amen!

Mr. Speaker, what I have just underscored for you and this honourable House are some of the activities and efforts being made to preserve Caymanian culture. But, Mr. Speaker, I strongly feel that it is not enough!

I leave you here today with a poem entitled ‘Proud to be Caymanian’ written by Ms. Alice Andrews:

To be able to swim in our scenic seas  
 To be able to sit down to a nice plate of turtle meat  
 To back sand from our whitest beaches  
 To be able to climb up a mango tree and enjoy the  
 sweet tropical breeze  
 To share best childhood memories  
 To walk down the street carefree  
 To be known as the most friendly Islands  
 Our animals, our fruits, crafts and culture  
 But when time started changing for the worse, I ask  
 you, what will I have to be proud of then?  
 But if we as a country don’t change the way things are  
 going what are we going to be proud of?  
 Just being who I is, knowing who I is and staying the  
 way I is, no matter what anybody say is what make  
 me proud to be Caymanian.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the First Elected Member for George Town.

**Mr. Andrei Harris:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Members of the Government and its Backbench, fellow Members of the Opposition, and members of the Gallery, a pleasant good day.

Mr. Speaker, I crave the indulgence of this Honourable CPA (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association), and ask that in relation to the Motion, Be It Resolved that the Government considers greater emphasis be placed on the preservation and enhancement of Caymanian culture, that the Government will understand that it can only be in the best interest of Caymanian society on a whole, if greater emphasis is placed on the preservation and enhancement of Cayman’s national pride as it relates to the national symbols.

Mr. Speaker, my fellow colleagues, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and the First Elected for West Bay, have already set parameters of this debate by her most clear and vivid definitions. So, Mr. Speaker, it is on these grounds that I find it only fitting to say that preservation of national identity and national pride is without a doubt a means of preserving what little we have left of our culture.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to ask: what better way could we preserve our national identity and pride than by protecting and educating the people of Cayman on its national symbols?

Here in Cayman, the most prominent bodies involved in the preservation of Cayman’s national culture, are the Cayman Islands National Museum, the Cayman Islands National Archive and the National Trust for the Cayman Islands.

The National Museum’s mission is to collect materials relevant to Cayman’s history and to arouse public interest in Caymanian heritage. This, Mr. Speaker, appears to be a task too vast for the National Museum to cope with as it is becoming quite evident that the young Caymanians are losing site of their true roots.

Mr. Speaker, our National Flag could be considered to have grown to be just as indigenous as our prize Blue Iguanas and Wild Banana Orchids, yet still, Mr. Speaker, it has not and is not given the respect and admiration that it rightfully deserves. Set on a navy blue field featuring the red, white and blue British Union Jack in its upper right hand corner and the Cayman Coat of Arms encircled in a pure white ground, and in some cases, pure blue is set in the right hand center of the field. Our National Flag, which in itself tells the history of these Islands, was first adopted in 1959. However, Mr. Speaker, both the Coat of Arms and Flag were not recognized in legislation until 1993. It was then revised in 1998 and further amended in 2002.

Mr. Speaker, International Flag Code Law states that a country’s flag should never be flown while the sun has set unless it is flown with a spotlight pointing onto it. International Flag Code Laws also state that a country’s flag should never be flown torn or pale. However, the sad reality is that the public and private sectors along with the general population do

not seem to see the Caymanian flag to be of that much importance. This is evident, Mr. Speaker, in that even in our very own high school the flag is flown torn and pale along with the Cayman Islands Aviation Authority, the Seventh Day Adventist headquarters in George Town, and the Lighthouse Restaurant at Breakers. Despite the fact that on the 24 August, 2007 Mr. Alfonso Wright, a Member of the Legislative Assembly, moved what is known as a Private Member's Motion, which sought to outline the implementation of established protocol in relation to the management of Cayman's National Song, and management and display of the Cayman Islands Flag.

Mr. Speaker, after Hurricane Ivan the terrible, many Caymanians became more aware of the value of their flag, and ultimately, more appreciative. This was evident in that there were many SUVs, vans, trucks and cars flying the Caymanian flag. Mr. Speaker, do we really need such natural disasters to remind us of who we really are, and if so, what will it take to keep it in our minds? This lack of care and respect has been passed on to the youth of today. In fact, Mr. Speaker, prior to this debate I conducted a small survey that sought to outline how the youth of Cayman felt about the National Flag and Song.

Mr. Speaker, 55 per cent of Caymanian students who were surveyed had something along these lines to say: *'I feel nothing when I see the Caymanian flag. I think that if a person buys a Caymanian flag then it is theirs and they should do whatever they want with it. I don't see how not taking care of the flag is going to affect me. The National song is okay but a little long and drawn out.'* Whereas 85 per cent of the non-Caymanian students had this to say: *'Caymanians do not respect their flag or song so why should we respect them'*.

Mr. Speaker, much more effort and time has been placed in the upkeep and protection of our National Flag than any other national symbol, and still we see where it is constantly being abused. So, what can we as a society now expect to be the faith of our indigenous Caymanian path? It was stated and I quote: "As a group, parrots are a most endangered bird in the world with only 90 species of which 26 are being threatened with extinction. And be assured that the Cayman parrot is on this list." Mr. Speaker, this is all the more shocking in that 1995 the people of these Islands were asked what they thought best represented Cayman. They voted overwhelmingly in favour of the Silver Thatch Palm for their national tree, The Wild Banana Orchid for their national flower and the Cayman Islands Parrot as their choice for national bird.

Mr. Speaker, a statement from the National Trust Silver Thatch website webpage reads and I quote: **"Chosen as the National Tree of the Cayman Islands, the Silver Thatch Palm has played an important role in the lives of Caymanians since the first settlers arrived on the Islands in the early 1700s. A valuable part of Cayman's natural heri-**

**tage, as well as part of the landscape, it is endemic to the Cayman Islands - which means that it is found nowhere else."**

Mr. Speaker, it also states that Silver Thatch Palm leaves were also used to weave hats and baskets and fans. Shoes known as wawmPHUS were made with flat tire soles and held to the foot with straps like a thong or thatch rope. Nowadays hats and baskets are in demand in the tourist and craft shops. Many of them are still made by those who were taught skills over 50 years ago. However, we see where a generation gap is now occurring and teens like me do not know how to cut the leaves of a Silver Thatch Palm and how to weave it. Mr. Speaker, I know that the Government will say that steps are being taken to ensure that students are taught how to do these things, and while this may be so, if it was as effective and adequate would I not know how to make my very thatch hat by now?

Here in Cayman we boast of a number of spectacular native flowers, including 26 different varieties of orchids. Probably the best known and certainly one of the most unique and easily identifiable, is the National Flower of the Cayman Islands, the Wild Banana Orchid.

Mr. Speaker, also found on the National Trust website is an article which reads and I quote: "The Mastic Trail on Grand Cayman is a home to a wide variety of animals and plants unique to the Cayman Islands, and also a large population of trees which has vanished from our accessible places through logging in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century."

Mr. Speaker, in today's society we see where personal and self pride has grown and taken over the place of national pride in the hearts of not only the youth of Cayman but also the elderly. It was said that time changes and so do people. If people change then it can only be expected that their ways and practices will change with them. Changes can be just as good as they can be bad and in so, new brighter opportunities can be revealed and lost. Furthermore, in this fast paced world time is flying by so it can only be expected that people in their cultures will change drastically. Mr. Speaker, I ask that we not change and lose our culture but instead we preserve what little we have left.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I ask that this House take all that I have said into consideration and act in the best interest of the people of our Islands; educating them in regard to the National Flag and Song. It is the key to restoring national pride and ultimately this result in the preservation of our Caymanian culture or at least what little we have left.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, First Elected Member for George Town.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable First Official Member.

**Hon. Joseph Gracey:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in opening I would like to draw attention to the rather long and drawn out speeches by my two colleagues on the Opposition Bench. One of them went on to rant, if I may daresay, about the history of the Cayman Islands, all 500 years of it. The other one went on about the Flag. And now you see, Mr. Speaker, I fully believe the merits of knowing our history and our flag.

Mr. Speaker, I am an outspoken supporter preserving and remembering the old Caymanian way of life. I also believe that these Islands are special, each one of them, and as such, need to be noted. I am, however, against the apparent enhancement of this culture.

Mr. Speaker, several hundred years ago when this Island was found and eventually settled, people made do with what they had. Four hundred years ago people did not have the modern amenities; they did not have the air-conditioned luxury that we are enjoying right now, as I speak. They did not have cars or motorized boats. Their culture grew from what they had. The Cayman culture grew from the abundance of what the Honourable Leader of the Opposition mentioned—fruits and vegetables that grew native and best on this Island; cassava, sweet potato and other tuber vegetables grew quite well here. And that is how we got the culture that we have right now.

Mr. Speaker, in the 1950s and 1960s there was a greater emphasis placed on Cayman by the international community. Financial bankers, accountants and lawyers visited these Islands to fulfill their trade and business obligations. Tourists traveled to this beautiful undestroyed Island because they thought the beach was beautiful and the people were very warm. May I stress, Mr. Speaker, that culture does not occur out of what people want, it is what people have. I guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, that this Cayman culture would not have developed if Cayman had not been so isolated.

Mr. Speaker, when this honourable Opposition says that we must preserve our old time Caymanian culture, I assume that they want us to slow down our modern movements. Over the last fifty years we have seen a gradual increase in modernisation of these Islands. We have more cars than ever; more air-condition houses than ever, and we have fewer wattle and daub houses than we have ever had. And now, Mr. Speaker, that is simply because that is the way that the Caymanian wants to live.

I support having knowledge of our old Caymanian culture; however, I do not support slowing down our modern way of life because of our old Caymanian culture. As it was said by the Leader of the Opposition, there were no fast food restaurants in the olden days of Cayman. But there are nowadays, and they are doing quite well, may I say.

Mr. Speaker, what I have to say is that if every Caymanian wanted to live in this old fashioned way of life they would. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, if Cayma-

nians wish to live in wattle and daub houses, they would.

Mr. Speaker, of the two speeches I heard from the Opposition, I have not heard very much of what we are going to do. I have heard about our old Cayman culture and about the disrespect for the Flag, not much else. If this honourable House—the Opposition, in particular—wishes to implement any plan to stifle our growth, I do not agree with that.

Continuing on, Mr. Speaker. As the two Members have already said, we have supposedly helped our culture by creating Pirates Week. She also said in that same speech that the pirates did not frequently visit these Islands as may be suggested by the Pirates Week festivities. And now I ask, Mr. Speaker, does the Opposition wish to have more of these made up festivities? By the same reasoning that the Opposition seems to mean, they might as well just make another couple weeks of festivities.

The next thing, Mr. Speaker, I believe that this Island has plenty of cultural references to our old times. I myself have helped paint a fence at one wattle and daub house in West Bay. And I would have to say that is the best painted fence in all of West Bay. And I argue that there are many other places on this Island, including Pedro St. James that has already showed our Caymanian culture. I think we have done quite a good job and that every single Caymanian on this Island realises the old time Caymanian ways, and I think they have chosen to perhaps live in a more modern globalise way.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[inaudible interjections]

**The Speaker:** Order in the Chamber please.

Thank you, Honourable First Official Member. Does any other Member wishes to speak?

I recognise the Second Elected Member for George Town, but before you start I would like to remind Members that we have already overshot our time space by an hour, so let us not take this too much further into. . .

**Mr. Duet Berry:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will try to do my best to keep to schedule.

Mr. Speaker, it is apparent to me that the Government Bench does not respect our identity.

Mr. Speaker, as readily known collectively our Islands pride themselves as tropical haven to both tourists and investors alike, and as such we have witnessed over the past thirty years rapid economic growth, which has allowed us to boast in prosperity. However, the road to Eldorado does not seem to be so pleasant after all. We were once a people, Mr. Speaker, seafarers, but now it seems as if we are paper chasers according to the Government Bench.

Gone are the days, it seems Mr. Speaker, of seafarers, fishermen, stay-at-home Moms and communities who subservient nature aided in the social

and moral upbringing of our youth. But lest I lead the Government Bench to believe that my colleagues and I suffer nostalgia, I remind you Mr. Speaker, and all the participants of this Third Annual Youth Parliament, that these were a few of the building blocks on which our identity stands.

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, the Government Bench would like it if we commit cultural suicide for the sake of economic gain where we no longer have an identity. Mr. Speaker, the bodies of our forefathers may rightly be turning in their graves as we now speak.

Mr. Speaker, though economic development is indeed imperative for the sustenance of our current way of life and a high standard of living, which we all enjoy, as our Islands and we, as a nation, continue to mature, it is of dire importance that we engage in policy making that will advocate and embellish our cultural identity as we campaign into the 22<sup>nd</sup> century.

It grieves me, Mr. Speaker, that the First Official Member could pour so much contempt on our identity as a people. I hope this honourable House looks into this.

Thank you, very much.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Second Elected Member for George Town.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Third Official Member.

**Hon. Geoffrey Grizzel:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that I do agree with the Motion that the Opposition is presenting, in that there should be greater emphasis put on preserving Caymanian Culture. But what I would like to point out is that it is very difficult to do in Grand Cayman. How can the Opposition propose such a move to preserve Caymanian culture and only focus on one Island, Mr. Speaker—which is Grand Cayman? The Cayman Islands is made up of three Islands, two of which we unfortunately leave out—the Sister Islands.

It is sad to say, Mr. Speaker, but any hope of restoring Caymanian culture in Grand Cayman is futile. As one drives down West Bay road, they have numerous restaurants from all over the world to choose from, yet there are no Caymanian restaurants. If I were to ask some of the parents in the gallery this evening, Mr. Speaker, if they offered their children a good salt beef rundown or Burger King, which do you think they would choose?

**Some members of the Gallery:** Salt beef rundown.

**Hon. Geoffrey Grizzel:** The smaller children.

Come on now!

[laughter]

**Hon. Geoffrey Grizzel:** You're just being mean to me now.

[laughter]

**Hon. Geoffrey Grizzel:** If they were to be offered fried plantain or rice and beans or fries and chicken wings, which would they choose? You know which one.

[inaudible interjections and cross-talk]

**Hon. Geoffrey Grizzel:** But, Mr. Speaker, in the Sister Islands there are no such fast food restaurants, no traffic, and there are a numerous old Caymanian houses; some which have been restored and opened to the public to see. What I think the Opposition should look into is sending some of the tourists over to the Sister Islands to give them a real taste of Caymanian culture, and help out the Sister Islands.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Third Official Member.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the First Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

**Miss Melody Martin:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, some may say that Caymanian culture is very evident on Cayman Brac, and while this is partially true there is still plenty of room for improvement.

First, I would like to point out that Cayman Brac has no fast food restaurants. What we do have are a few local restaurants and hotel restaurants. The hotel restaurants hardly sell local foods but if you drive past our local restaurants, let's say on a Sunday, you will see they are crammed with cars compared to the restaurants in hotels. This clearly shows that locals and tourists alike desire Caymanian food. I think that we should encourage the hotel to serve at least one Caymanian dish a day.

However, we should begin with our very own Cayman Airways. I think that the meals served on our airline should be Caymanian influence so that the tourists who are entering our Islands would have a taste of Cayman even before they touch down in the Cayman Islands.

Mr. Speaker, I do applaud what the people of the Sister Islands are doing to preserve our culture. We have official functions such as Heritage Day or sometimes called Museum Day. The Heritage Day is when the community gathers and participates in past Caymanian activities. These activities consist of the cooking and eating of Caymanian meals, for example, rundown, turtle meat, et cetera. Also there are games such as gigs and bay vine jump rope. Music is also played by an old time kitchen band and to terminate the day with the sailing of a Caymanian Cat Boat.

We also have the Agriculture Show and the National Trust preserving old Caymanian homes. But

as I have mentioned before, there is always more that can be done.

There is no function official or otherwise to celebrate National Heroes Day on Cayman Brac or Little Cayman. It is important that an effort is made to celebrate this day so that the Brackers, especially our young people, will be aware of the significant contributions our heroes have made towards the development of our Islands.

A point that is indisputable is that our children have to be educated and taught from a young age and this should not stop when they leave primary school, Mr. Speaker. One advantage we have in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman is that we are such a close community that we hear stories all the time of the "good old days" from older people, and we take it in so that we know something of our Caymanian past.

But, Mr. Speaker, how many students in Grand Cayman know about the Sister Islands? Do they know about the caves in the Brac, for example, Rebecca's cave and the story behind it, or even the significance they all played in the 1932 storm?

Do they know the names of our districts or airports? There is a lack of knowledge between the three Islands, each one's individual history, and that clearly should be corrected.

Because Cayman Brac and Little Cayman remain relatively untouched and not commercialised, we still have access to old time remedies. For instance, Mr. Speaker, can you break a fever without any man made medication or seeing a doctor? I sure can! All I have to do is wrap a mulberry leaf from the tree in the back yard around my foot. That was taught to be by my grandmother and she was taught by her grandmother. That information and more have been passed down generation to generation, and yet many people only know modern cures.

Some residents on Cayman Brac and especially those on Little Cayman, wait all year for the Mardi Gras parade. Everyone including both locals and tourists take part. This has absolutely no connection with Caymanian culture. It is organised by foreigners. Will we continue to let foreign activities as such take over the influence of Caymanian culture? Mr. Speaker, who can build on what we are doing? If we do not make the effort, who will?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, First Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Second Elected Member for West Bay.

**Miss Marzeta Bodden:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in great support of Private Member's Motion for the preservation and enhancement of Cayman culture.

Food is a central of mankind and one of the single most significant trademarks of a culture (Choice

Cuts 2002). Food plays a vital role in the Caymanian way of life and it is a wonderful and (not to mention) delicious way to preserve our culture. Traditional Caymanian food is much more than just sustenance. It is a snapshot of our heritage; a tool to transport culture between generations as well as a tie that brings families together.

Cayman has a rich seafaring heritage and many of our grandparents and great grandparents spent a good portion of their lives on the seas. The Cayman Islands was once called Las Tortugas due to the large population of turtles. A few local establishments are named after famous ships that sailed in our waters and beyond.

Our seafaring heritage is something that we should all be immensely proud of and this pride should be shared with and passed on to future generations. What better way to share this legacy of our forefathers making a living on the high seas, than over a plate of conch stew, turtle stew, whelks, fish dinner, Cayman style fish, lobster and yes, good old fried sprats. After all I am pretty sure that one of the key factors in these sorts of seafood dishes becoming traditional Caymanian dishes was due to our maritime heritage.

Presently, many people in our community raise farm animals for slaughter, a skill that has been passed down through generations. Around Christmas time, in particular, we see what a hot commodity Caymanian naturally farm-raised beef and pork becomes.

Mr. Speaker, our Caymanian dishes not only showcase the Islands' history but also the skills of our people. Our ancestors were hardworking people. They did not have the luxury of going to a grocery store where cassava, potatoes, plantain, pumpkin and breadfruit was readily available. Most people had a ground in their yard and they took great pride in it and were happy to use the fruits of their labour in the family meals. Ground provisions have always been a staple part of the Caymanian diet and this is due to the fact that backyard farming was not just a hobby but a way of life back in the day.

In addition to not having supermarkets, our forefathers did not have the treat of refrigeration either. Yet, still they were able to preserve and enjoy the resources of the ground and the sea. Hence, we have dishes like marinated conch, salt beef and corn turtle. The prevalence of rice and beans in many of our dishes today can be attributed to Cayman's ties to Jamaica, which is also an important component of our history, heritage and culture.

Mr. Speaker, back in the days there were no ready made cakes or mass produced candies. Nevertheless, our grandparents and their parents still found ways to satisfy their sweet tooth without the help of Betty Crocker. The same ground provisions from their yard, such as bottler, cocoa, cassava, green papaya, breadfruit and eight others at my last count, were used to make heavy cakes. We are unique in this

sense, as most other countries do not use what would be regarded as savory ingredients to produce sweet dishes. I don't know of Duncan Hines using any of these ingredients in their box creations either. The traditional Caymanian heavy cake is the perfect end to any meal or even by itself. These sweets as well as coconut drops, coconut candy and tart, almond candy and custard are a testament to the creativity and inventiveness of people in Cayman past.

During the year the Islands celebrate many events like Pirates Week and Christmas. Mr. Speaker, if you ask the average Caymanian which part of these events excite them the most, the answer will more than likely be the good food. You see, Caymanian food brings people together and today it ignites the sort of excitement in our people that is truly unique. But, in twenty years who is going to be preparing these dishes for us to enjoy throughout the year? We cannot let our Caymanian culture, and in this case, our Caymanian cuisine, die with our grandparents.

At our family gatherings down the road we want our children to close their eyes and lick their lips as they enjoy the traditional Caymanian meals just like we do. We need to make sure our young people learn how to prepare and pass on the history that exists in our native feast.

Mr. Speaker, the Youth at Risk Conference Report identified key issues facing Caymanian youth, particularly those at risk. I feel, however, that some of those key issues can be applied to all young people. The Report stated that culture of the Cayman Islands, not being passed on, as well as poor cultural awareness by the Caymanian community, were of great importance.

The Vision 2008 National Strategic Plan calls for elements such as a community protective of traditional Caymanian heritage. One of the strategies to address the plan's objective to make young people aware of their identity is to encourage families to discuss, appreciate and respect their cultural heritage.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage parents and grandparents to teach their children how to prepare these dishes and then, of course, sit and enjoy the meals together. After all, there is much joy and pleasure in consuming food together.

Another section of the plan deals specifically with training of young people in healthy life style and life skills with a specific reference to cooking. The plan states if these skills are not learned in the home environment then they must be taught elsewhere. The role of others acting in the place of parents therefore becomes of crucial importance, (that is,. members of the educational system, the social sector and the community in general). It is quite hard for one to appreciate something that they don't understand.

The Cayman Islands Youth Services Review conducted in 1991 states that schools are no longer purely academic institutions. In addition to the academic mission they have taken a broader social mission and must be acknowledged. I urge these institu-

tions to go one step further. Within our education system there needs to be an element that speaks of the culinary aspect of Caymanian culture.

I took food nutrition in high school but that was optional for me. Although I did learn core cooking skills and nutritional information which augmented my passion for cuisine, Caymanian culture was not specifically addressed. Our students from primary schools through to secondary education should be exposed to traditional Caymanian cuisine theoretically and practically.

Mr. Speaker, strategies to satisfy the objective to strengthen the link between Caymanian heritage and our young people are stated in a Vision 2008 Plan. It calls for the incorporation of heritage studies as an integral part of school and college curriculum; organized regular media programmes that focus on Caymanian heritage and culture, and develop in collaboration with the youth cultural activities which are appealing to them. Mr. Speaker, this is one of the plans that the Opposition calls for.

Mr. Speaker, traditional Caymanian cuisine, while a joy to prepare and a pleasure to eat, is not only stimulating to five senses, but also to another sense, that of Caymanian pride. I encourage Members of this honourable House and the young people listening to these proceedings, to take an interest in learning to prepare the dishes we all love to enjoy. To our parents, grandparents, family, neighbours and friends, the next time you go prepare a traditional Caymanian meal invite us into the kitchen with you and give us a cooking lesson while bringing our generations closer together. May your mornings be filled with fish and fritters, your Sundays be filled with salt beef rundown and your afternoons with cassava cake and a glass of fresh cows milk. And at night, may you only want but never really need a glass of fever grass tea.

Bon appétit, Mr. Speaker!

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Madam Second Elected Member for West Bay.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town.

**Miss Elizabeth Charles:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition defines culture as a shared way of life. Currently, I am aware that we share a different way of life today than the century before, and for that matter, the century before from that of the beginning of our history in 1504.

Culture is ever changing, so I would recommend to the Opposition that they perhaps edit their motion to have greater emphasis placed on the preservation and enhancement of early Caymanian culture, which is what seem to have been referred to by the Leader of the Opposition.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition implied that people do not know what should be left untouched. Honourable Leader, I encourage you to take a walk through the Government sponsored Cayman National Museum. I would also like to say that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition stated that not many people would know how to answer the question—what is Caymanian culture. If I may be so blunt as to state, this is an obvious insult to the organizations that slaves to help expose Caymanian culture such as the Cayman National Cultural Foundation and the Cayman National Art Gallery.

In response to the Second Elected Member for West Bay, I am glad that the Second Elected Member for West Bay and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition know so much about Caymanian history and early culture. It just goes to show that this Government did not do such a bad job at educating the youth about our Caymanian history and early culture.

[applause and desk pounding]

**Miss Elizabeth Charles:** In response to the First Elected Member for George Town who stated facts about the degradation of our Flag, I would just like to say that as a member of Triple C School I was taught from the time I moved to this Island about the importance of our Flag. And I would hope that when he was asking people he also went to people who kindly do consider the importance of our Flag. And rather than taking only the negative and slandering local businesses here, he should have spoken up about those who value the Flag dearly and adhere to International Flag Rules to encourage more Caymanians to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard a lot of Caymanian history today, but I would just like to ask the Opposition if they would please tell us more about their plans.

I would like to thank the Second Elected Member for West Bay for her suggestions along with the First Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman who made the suggestion for the food on the airline. We all know our Caymanian history, we studied it well—our Government made sure of that. So would you please educate us more on what it is that you are exactly proposing?

By the way, I would like to differ from the Second Elected Member for George Town who said that our forefathers would be rolling in their graves. Due to the nature of our forefathers (that is in no way bitter) I do believe that they would be smiling at the leaps and bounds we have progressed rather than rolling in their graves.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the First Elected Member for Bodden Town.

**Miss Latoya Davis:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As the Leader of the Opposition stated, I will now rise to combine our arguments over the loss of culture in the education sector.

Our National Youth Policy coming out of our Youth at Risk Conference identified the key issues facing at-risk Caymanian youth, some of which I would like to point out as the following: Christian values and Caymanian culture are not being adequately taught and reinforced by the present combination of family, community, churches and schools. Due to the lack of positive parental and community involvement children were found ill equipped to move into their future because they lack emotional . . .

**The Speaker:** One moment please.

Honourable Leader of Government Business.

**Hon. W. Marvin Hurlston, Jr.:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

I ask you sir, is the honourable First Elected Member for Bodden Town not referring to a matter on which this House has already deliberated and decided, as stated in our point of order rulings?

[laughter and interjections]

**Hon. W. Marvin Hurlston, Jr.:** I am asking you, is she not referring to a matter that we have previously deliberated on?

**The Speaker:** No, that is not a point of order, sir.

First Elected Member for Bodden Town, please continue with your comments.

**Miss Latoya Davis:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Due to lack of positive parental and community involvement children were found to be ill equipped to move into their future because they lacked emotional security, cultural direction and adequate training and educational opportunities.

A cultural value system of the Cayman Islands is not being taught or passed on to young people. Poor nurturing and cultural awareness by the Caymanian community, and the impact of rapid economic and other developments results in adequate life skills.

The National Youth Policy drew heavily on the fundamental principles and values on which Caymanian society was based, namely, the Constitution and Vision 2008—The National Strategic Plan. The principles and values for Caymanian youth will always be as follows: Traditional Christian moral values relating to the equal worth of all people and their inalienable human rights; political freedom practiced through democracy; good governance; self-determination; consultation and participation; sustainable economic and social development with due regard to environmental

conservation together with access to resources and reciprocal contribution by all residents of the Cayman Islands; social responsibility manifested in racial, gender, religious, social, cultural tolerance and diversity.

It is clear to me, though, that the young people of the Cayman Islands today have different values to those of their parents and grandparents. Young people are more materialistic and hedonistic with strong emphasis placed on partying and instant gratification. Perhaps this is because the Cayman Islands is a country committed to economic and social development and citizens therefore consume more as a demonstration of this development. One may even argue that the values of young people today are not very different from those of wider society.

Mr. Speaker, high priority is also placed on personal independence and educational achievement. But there is less regard for responsibility, a good work ethic, and sense of patriotism and family values. Young people should have religious, moral and educational values together with social, community oriented values including respect for their parents and society in general. In fact, patriotism is of significantly low value today.

Mr. Speaker, what would our young people do if they had most of the resources? Most of them emphasise without any doubt that they would want to refine the education system to cater to the varied needs of young people, and also providing youth centres with recreational facilities and programmes. I believe that a sound education will promote healthy lifestyles while dealing with issues such as sex, drugs, violence, peer relationships and life skills.

Mr. Speaker, the preferred values essential for social wellbeing are not being transmitted to our children at home. Why, one may ask. Women traditionally remained at home to raise their children and if they did engage in paid employment they could often do this from home. Today the cost of living and job opportunities have led to more and more women becoming full time members of the work force. Many young people are therefore left to develop their own sense of principles and values with less direct parental guidance. In most cases fathers continue to have less involvement in the day to day running of the family and the raising of children.

Mr. Speaker, let me turn to sustaining our culture.

The process of globalisation has sparked debate about the preservation of national cultures in order to protect them from outside influences, even domination. It is feared that other cultures will so penetrate other environments that if the cultures affected are not robust they will eventually be replaced by alien practices and beliefs. Many countries are therefore seeking ways and means of preserving and sustaining their cultures. Although this is proving difficult since, because of technology and communications, no country can fence itself off from the influ-

ences of others. How can we build a sustainable culture for the Cayman Islands?

There is need for an agreement of the core values and beliefs of the Cayman Islands and the heritage it wishes to project. We have to get the tools to build and enhance that culture. But, then again, what exactly is culture? It is inextricably tied with education and is also commonly regarded as the way of a society and the ideas and habits they learn and transmit to future generations.

Culture also shapes how people perceive and interpret their experiences and helps to make us who we are. It is integral to society and defines all aspects of our lives. In some instances we could argue that the culture of a country is inseparable from the country itself.

As a result the influences of other cultures could impact negatively on a country's identity and its institutions. This could mean a transformation of the way of life of that country and its incorporation into the ways of the stronger culture. This could be good when backward practices which prevent a better way of life are done away with and replaced with practices that enhance the country and its people so that it is qualitatively better off than it previously was.

On the other hand, it could mean the demise of that country with its special characteristics—including moral values, culinary arts, artistic works and the special qualities which the people have based on their history experiences, and their contribution to their own development.

Mr. Speaker, these are the special things tourists would like to see when they visit, and which give a country its uniqueness and a sense of self and wellbeing.

It seems unacceptable that globalisation should result in every country being alike. There is nothing special about everything being the same. I concur with many others that a country must select what can be best developed since everything that occurs in a country is good for it. But once the cultural values and practices are agreed upon, how could they be sustained? This could be done by having a ministry of culture with a research and development emphasis. Research could be done on existing and new cultural developments indigenous to the county, and these should be promoted throughout the country. Having a distinct ministry of culture will demonstrate the seriousness and commitment of the country to the preservation and development of its culture.

Again, culture should be a subject in the curriculum and not an activity that is only celebrated during festivals or other national events. This means that the University College of the Cayman Islands (UCCI), for example, should assist in the research and development of Caymanian culture and publish material on all aspects. Culture will then become integral to an individual's total education.

Culture should also be an important ingredient of the tourist industry with cultural tourists to a wider

extent than what happens now. Visiting cultural sites, preserving architectural buildings along with organised cultural performances on a wider scale so that not only is it appreciated but it becomes a form of income-generating activity as well. Culture therefore becomes a part of the economic development of the entire country. In this way it is sustained as a way of life and not as a series of events that are one-off activities occurring at specific times.

As a means of sustaining culture, there could also be cultural competitions among the different areas or sections of the country to keep the awareness and consciousness of the people always alive regarding their heritage and promote new culture possibilities. This could include creating new developments and dimensions in cultural practices in artistic forms, which match the continued development of the country so that the traditional and what is emerging are merged. This will show that culture is something that is always alive and vibrant rather than being static.

Another way to sustain culture is to have it represented in every area of social life including religion, politics, the way people behave, the treatments of various ailments, everyday speech, and reflect it in how people interact with each other rather than seeing it as just an aspect of each. When culture is therefore seen as an integral to national life a more all-encompassing view will be taken of it so that the people and the country will actively reflect it.

As the Cayman Islands continue to develop there is an ever-increasing concern that the local culture is becoming diluted to a point where young people no longer have the sense of what it means to be Caymanian. Many people believe that this situation could be rectified if there were more local teachers. Through the years, career opportunities for locals have been brought in to encompass a wide variety of options.

With the Islands' growth occurring rapidly from the 1970s many young people have had limited exposure to the diversity of employment opportunities. Teaching as a career is less attractive to many locals, but there are far more lucrative options available to them. Caymanians are looking for opportunities to advance and attain higher social standing and enjoy financial rewards. Many locals have taken up the challenge of becoming teachers, however they subsequently left their profession for careers in which they experience a greater sense of appreciation and are compensated well for their efforts.

The Cayman Islands Government has begun to make changes to address this phenomenon by introducing a leadership training programme as well as continuing to provide scholarships to local students entrusted in education as a career. However, more initiatives are needed to address this situation so that more Caymanians will pursue teaching as a profession in order for Caymanian students to learn more about their culture. Most local teachers, as well as those former teachers, are notably interested in as-

sisting efforts to create a positive environment and experience for teachers by willingly participating in worthwhile endeavours designed to achieve these goals.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, First Elected Member for Bodden Town.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Minister of Communications, Works and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Corrina Worm:** On a quick note I would like to make a statement and agreement to what my colleague, the Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town, said.

The Honourable First Elected Member for George Town mentioned a few precious species that are unique to Cayman or the Caribbean alone. But I ask: Has he forgotten the facilities and institutions already established for the same purpose, such as the Butterfly Farm, Turtle Farm and Botanical Gardens, which also includes the Blue Iguana and conservation programme?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Minister for Communications, Works and Infrastructure.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Fourth Elected Member for West Bay.

**Mr. Justin Jacky:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is my firm belief that culture is integral in our society and it is very important. I would like to thank my colleagues for all the contributions they made pertaining to culture.

I believe an area which the Cayman Islands really need to focus on is the environment and culture in the environment. The Commonwealth Day theme being Environment, I find this also fitting to put into this Motion. The *Wikipedia Encyclopedia* defines the word environment as the external conditions, resources or stimuli with which an organism interacts. It is also noted that the interaction of this organism and its environment helps define and create what this organism will turn out to be in the long run.

Mr. Speaker, I think that these stimuli, resources and conditions that the Cayman Islands were initially built upon are swiftly draining through our hands like sand through a net, and I believe that it is very important that we regain this and preserve whatever little is left of it if we want to retain our Caymanian heritage and culture.

It is very true that some people on the Government Bench may dismiss my claim by saying that the environment must suffer loss in order for progress to take place. And, Mr. Speaker, I very much agree that for progress to take place the environment we live in must be altered. Certainly, I am one who is defi-

nately for the progress and betterment of this country. However, a people who embrace progress forgetting who they are and where they are from have taken just as many steps backwards as they have forward.

Today, when I speak of our environment I will be referring specifically to our historical architectural structures and lands, and our plants and animals that are indigenous and endemic to our Island.

There are attempts being made to preserve certain landmarks in the Cayman Islands, however, Government still has not sufficiently and consistently added its strength or resources to this cause. The National Trust, a non-governmental agency, has made several attempts to protect, preserve and restore significant architectural and land areas of the Cayman Islands. When the National Trust is able to buy a piece of woodland or wetland, or if someone donates a piece of historic land, the National Trust ensures that this land cannot be developed upon. This is known as the Land Reserve Programme and it includes those areas such as the Mastic Trail, Salina Reserve, Queen Elizabeth II Botanical Park, and most of the central mangroves and wetlands.

The National Trust also buys historic landmarks, such as Miss Izzy's School House, the old Savannah School House, Watlers Cemetery, the Bodden Town Mission House and Fort George in George Town. The National Trust, Mr. Speaker, ensures that these structures are repaired, maintained and kept as close as possible to their original condition. This is a very expensive exercise and it is only possible when funds become available through public donations or private investments. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this process would be much easier if the Government made its presence felt much stronger in National Trust endeavours.

From this lack of support it seems that the Government has no care or concern for the environment or the historical landmarks of the Cayman Islands. If that is the case, the Opposition would like to be informed so that we can at least try to assume the responsibilities entrusted to us by the voters of the Cayman Islands and ensure that our culture and heritage live on.

There are many different plants and animals present here. Many of them are indigenous or endemic to either Cayman or the Caribbean. Some of these are: the Brown Bat and the Velvet Tail Bat. Other rare plants include the Wild Banana Orchid which is endemic to the Cayman Islands. We, the Opposition, believe that we can conserve these plants and animals and ensure that the natural and cultural beauty of our Islands is retained. We humans naturally tend to conserve anything that will be in short supply. Whether it is energy, money, water or health, we conserve it. We believe the environment to be in short supply and it also must be conserved.

Often areas of private and public concern overlap. Who owns the birds and the bats and the areas in which they live, their natural habitat? If these

lands were to fall into public hands who would dictate where these animals and plants go? We, the Opposition, believe that a programme or policy should be put in place to protect these endemic and rare species, other than the generally known ones, such as the Blue Iguana, the Wild Banana Orchid and the Silver Thatch Palm.

We cannot divide the world into areas for humans and other areas for animals and plants. So, we must find ways to manage environmental needs so that human needs are met while plants and animal needs are also allowed to continue in their natural state undisturbed. Conservation is not putting plant and animal needs above the needs of people. It is putting the welfare of all above the short-term profits of a few. It is looking at the big picture and planning for the future.

Our Islands are small, Mr. Speaker, and development is moving ahead rapidly, and though it is debatable, we consider ourselves an affluent First World country, and if we are to hold our heads up proudly in the world community our beautiful national symbols and other plants and animals must not be allowed to slip into extinction.

Mr. Speaker, man, animal, plant, ocean and landscape are inseparably linked and mutually interdependent. It is the mortal duty of all of us, for our own sake and that of our own children and grandchildren, to preserve the diversity and harmony of our environment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Fourth Elected Member for West Bay.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Minister of Education, Training, Employment, Youth, Sports and Culture.

**Hon. Saleicia Samaroo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, they say those who keep it short and spicy are always asked back to speak. So, I will try my best to keep this quick.

First I would say and inform the honourable First Elected Member for Bodden Town on her Christian values she says are not taught. In schools RE (Religious Education) is placed in the school system to teach about Christian values and other moral values.

During the disorganization of the Opposition they have not suggested any solution to the lack of knowledge about Caymanian culture. So, what we, the Government propose is that we will do this through education.

One of the things we realise is that in schools history is taught. But I am not talking about Caymanian history, it is basically the history of the Caribbean and they barely touch on Caymanian history. And in private schools Caymanian history is not taught.

I believe we should implement Caymanian history and teach young people more about it.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you Honourable Minister for Education, Training, Employment, Youth, Sports and Culture.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Third Elected Member for West Bay.

**Mr. Owen Foster:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if we want to keep our culture we need to preserve it. All aspects need to be preserved and maritime heritage is one such aspect.

Mr. Speaker, the Cayman Islands has a very rich and long maritime heritage. This heritage is fading as time passes by. In 1503 Christopher Columbus discovered the Cayman Islands. At that time the only way to get to an Island was by sea. The sea is the very thing that brought settlers to the Cayman Islands. During early settlement of the Caribbean the Cayman Islands were left out of colonisation because of its lack of terrestrial resources.

These Islands had very limited means for early mining, plantation endeavours or stock raising. Most of our 505 years of history has taken place around the marine environment and whereas the majority of Caribbean fishermen stayed close to home, Caymanians have always been distinctively renowned for long range nautical pursuits of fishing, turtle and commerce, but that is no more.

Mr. Speaker, over the years marine locations have been given names by the Caymanian people. Locations such as Rosetta Flats in Little Cayman, and Augustus Channel in Grand Cayman, have lost their recognition. The Augustus Channel was named after a ship named the *Augustus Caesar*, which wrecked here during the 1700s. The names of locations such as these only exist today with a knowledge that few Caymanian families still obtain.

The Caymanians are fading from the dive industry as people from all parts of the globe move to Cayman to work in the watersports industry. The Caymanians who are left in the watersports industry are few and far between.

Mr. Speaker, the Cayman Islands have a very long shipbuilding past. One of the first truly Caymanian boats was a canoe that was first recorded in Little Cayman at a turtling station in 1669. Today very few, if any, Caymanian canoes still exist. It was thought to have been an adaptation of a double ended pit pan, which is a short, wide craft that was very manoeuvrable. It would have been well suited for using drop nets to catch turtles. The non-existence of this canoe is because of the loss of interest and knowledge that was passed down throughout the generations. The only proof of its existence now is the account that people have taken of using and seeing this vessel.

There are no blueprints or design criteria today for the creation of this vessel.

Another truly Caymanian boat, Mr. Speaker, which has started to die out over the years, is the Cayman Catboat. In 1904 a turtling captain in Cayman Brac, named Daniel Jervis, decided to come up with a shorter and wider boat to replace the canoe. The Catboat was born. His first prototype was named the *Terror*. The boat was designed mainly for turtling and it worked so well that soon after in Grand Cayman Caymanians were building catboats as well. Unfortunately the *Terror* was lost aboard a schooner that went down with all hands during the 1932 hurricane.

Although the Catboat is still in existence, Mr. Speaker, only a handful of people know how to sail them and even fewer people know how to build the craft.

The Cayman Catboat Club was formed by elders of the community who have experience with these boats. Due to a lack of funds, however, the Catboat Club is struggling to keep the Catboat alive in our heritage. Recently, on National Heroes Day in January, the Catboat was made a National Symbol when a monument was dedicated to it and put up in Heroes Square in George Town. This was a great step forward in the preservation of the Catboat, but the youth need to be educated on this integral part of our maritime heritage.

Mr. Speaker, shipbuilding was a very large industry in the past. At one time there was over a hundred ship yards in the Cayman Islands. Today all the shipyards are gone but remnant to these yards can still be seen on the iron shores of these Islands. The slipways used to launch magnificent sailing vessels like the *Goldfield* or the *AM Adams* can still be seen from the shoreline if one knows what to look for. Without these locations preserved how will the younger generation of today learn about how our ancestors built sailing ships?

There is only one Cayman built ship left in existence. This ship is the *Western Union*, which was preassembled in Cayman Brac and the parts were shipped off to Key West where a Caymanian reassembled it. She was built for the Western Union telephone company as a cable line ship. After she was put out of service as a cable line ship she went back into service as a tourist attraction in Key West taking tourists on charters.

Why is it that the last Caymanian ship is in another country taking people on charters? It is the last vessel built in the Cayman Islands that is still afloat and it deserves to be here with its people, Mr. Speaker.

Shipbuilding has even made its way into our houses of worship. Built in the 1920s Captain Royal B. Bodden, a master shipbuilder, designed Elmslie Memorial Church in George Town. The truss system that was designed for this church came from the designer of a ship's hull. This, however, is not the only example of maritime architecture or the handiwork of this mas-

ter shipbuilder. A look at the ceiling will resemble a structure of a ship's hull upside down. The Town Hall, Library, and original Post Office in George Town were also built with maritime architecture. The house owned by Eldon Kirkconnell in Stake Bay in Cayman Brac contains a stairwell from the ship named the *Magda*, which wrecked off of the coast of Nicaragua.

Mr. Speaker, Caymanians participated in the support jobs for the maritime industry. Thatch rope is one of the most famous examples of this. Made from our National Tree, the Silver Thatch Palm, thatch rope is made for local ships as well as exported to other countries around the world. Silver Thatch was chosen to make this rope because it has strong durable fibres. Thatch rope aided in the making of fishing nets for turtling.

Caymanians used to use the barbs from stingrays as needles for making their nets to catch their turtles. The last known examples of this came from a turtling vessel that was excavated at a careening location in Duck Pond between 1979 and 1980.

Why hasn't this knowledge been taught to us? Mr. Speaker, our ancestors used stingray barbs as needles for making nets—how amazing!

During a census-taking in the late 1800s the occupation of mariners was one of the main jobs in the Cayman Islands. Today, that is not the case. Many locally owned shipping companies have either gone out of business or have been sold due to international companies taking away all of the business.

The Kirkconnell family owned a shipping company named Kirk Line until it was bought out by an offshore company named Seaboard Marine. While the Kirkconnell family owned Kirk Line they would run cargo from Mobile, Alabama to all three of the Cayman Islands.

Soto's Marine, which ran the *Soto Trader*, is not in business anymore. The ship was lost off of the south coast of Little Cayman in 1975. The *Soto Trader* carried cargo from Jamaica to all three of the Cayman Islands. While the Port in George Town was being built the *Soto Trader* brought the cement from Haiti to build the pier.

In the 1930s the *Goldfield* was Cayman's lifeline. She ran cargo from Tampa, Florida to Grand Cayman and had a long life but was sold and bought numerous times. But in 1986 it returned to Grand Cayman where she sunk in Governor's Harbour. She was then raised by my father and taken to Canal Pointe where she sank again. Today, the *Goldfield* sits under water at the end of Canal Pointe leaning up against a rusty old barge.

Mr. Speaker, this vessel is perhaps one of the most famous schooners built in the Cayman Islands. She is seen on our 25 cent piece. How many people know the actual story of her life at sea? She has faded out of history and been lost forever.

The *Cimboco* is another example of a Cayman built ship launched in 1927 and owned by the Cayman Islands Motor Boat Company. She moved

cargo between here and Jamaica. The Cayman Islands Motor Boat Company no longer exists today.

Mr. Speaker, the last Cayman owned shipping company today is Thompson Shipping, which is owned by the Thompson family. Today all other shipping companies in the Cayman Islands are foreign owned.

In the early 1900s these Islands prospered from the coconut industry. Coconuts were grown on the Sister Islands of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman and shipped elsewhere. Today this trade is non-existent and the traces of the coconut walks still exist. Unfortunately, a disease killed out most of the coconuts in the Cayman Islands during the 1970s which killed out the coconut industry.

The Cayman Islands, Mr. Speaker, is estimated to have over two hundred shipwrecks in these waters. Very few of which the youth of Cayman know the history behind today. Over the years, historic wrecks of the Cayman Islands have been pillaged and are deteriorating. Most of the artifacts over the years have been taken off Island and sold or kept elsewhere, which has decreased the amount of historic artifacts in the Cayman Islands.

There is a wreck of an American ship named the *Geneva Kathleen*, captained by a man from East End that wrecked on North Side in the early 1900s. After Hurricane Ivan structural ribs from this ship as well as other artifacts were washed up on the beach in North Side. When people got wind of this they went down to the beach and took what they could find. According to Mr. Bob Soto, there used to be portholes from the ship that were taken after the storm.

Mr. Speaker, the Abandoned Wreck (Law 5 of 1966) (1977 Revision) states that an abandoned wreck is a vessel which is remained on the seabed for over 50 years. This includes all jetsam, floatsam, lagan and derelict found in or on shore of the sea or tidal water. The penalty of this Law is up to \$2,000 fine and up to two years imprisonment. People should be educated about shipwrecks so that they know not to take from these historic sites. If this Law was enforced we would not have the problem with historic artifacts leaving the Cayman Islands. Why have the people turned their backs and let instances like this happen?

When experts come from elsewhere to do work on historical sites in the Cayman Islands the data they collect usually gets taken with them and is not seen by the public. Perhaps the Government should offer a scholarship programme for marine archaeologist to encourage the youth of this country to pursue careers to help preserve our maritime heritage.

In 1905, the *Palace*, a Norwegian steel hull vessel struck the reef and sank in South Sound. Remnants can still be seen jetting out of the water near South Sound Key. When the ship first wrecked, people from Cayman went out to salvage the furniture. They furnished their homes, Mr. Speaker, with the

tables and chairs from the *Palace*. Mr. Bob Soto also stated that these chairs and furniture still exist in some houses in South Sound today. Why haven't these items of historic value been tracked down and put on display for people to see?

Mr. Speaker, there is no education on shipwrecks in the Cayman Islands taught in schools. Some of these wrecks have amazing stories behind them and their stories deserve to be heard. Over the generations, Mr. Speaker, less and less of our maritime heritage has been passed down. Local folklore like the legend of Bloody Bay is not known by many Caymanians anymore.

The Canoe and Catboat are not being passed down. We are on the verge of losing a major part of our integral history. As a partial consequence to this, jobs are leaving the maritime sector in Cayman. This is also due in part, Mr. Speaker, to the Americanization of our Islands and introduction of the financial industry. Too often our youth are encouraged to pursue careers in modern industry, such as commerce, banking, offshore investment, instead of our maritime heritage. Things like the catboat, canoe, schooners, and sloops built in these Islands were never built from blueprints. All the ships were built using half models of ships. If we save our maritime heritage we may be able to stop what we have lost.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to dedicate this speech to the mariners gone before us and those still amongst us for making the Cayman Islands heritage what it is.

I would also like to comment on the First Official Member's statement that piracy was made up for Pirates Week. This, Mr. Speaker, is not the case. A pirate vessel named the *Morning Star* was deliberately wrecked on Grand Cayman in the 1600s. The Spanish ship, the *San Miguel*, which wrecked on the south coast of Little Cayman in 1734 was plundered by a pirate, Manuel Rivero Pardal attacked Little Cayman in the late 1700s, burning ships and kidnapping people.

If we had been educated so well as the Third Elected Member for Bodden Town stated, why does the First Official Member not know this? I encourage him to buy the *Maritime Heritage of the Cayman Islands* where he will find sufficient reasons for piracy in the Cayman Islands.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[applause and desk pounding]

**The Speaker:** Order in the Chamber.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

Honourable Leader of Government Business.

**Hon. W. Marvin Hurlston, Jr.:** Thank you, for stalling. I assure you that my debate will be made as short as possible.

First of all, I would like to thank the Leader of the Opposition for highlighting the role that slaves

have played in the early development of our culture; that is something that I was really impressed to hear, as I have never heard lots of stress placed on the role of slaves in the early Caymanian culture. And I think that that is something important that should be included.

We would like to thank the Opposition for the history lessons. Sincerely, there are a lot of things that we did not know and we have learnt today.

[Inaudible interjection]

**The Speaker:** May I please have order in the Chamber?

Leader of Government Business, please continue with your debate.

**Hon. W. Marvin Hurlston, Jr.:** We would like to highlight one practice that was left out and has been left out since the 1970s; that is the festival of Junkanoo, which we have completely ignored in our culture. It seems that the Opposition has passed this over so I would just like to take the opportunity to insert that and say that this is a real traditional Caymanian festival, and it should be reinstated and we will be working on reinstating it.

I agree with the First Elected Member for George Town who said that we need greater emphasis placed on the National Symbols. But I would like to counsel him to please stay current on the laws as the last review of that Law, The Cayman Coat of Arms, Flag, and National Song Law, was in 2005 and not in 2002. And some of the problems you have mentioned have been addressed in that review.

I would like to elucidate on some of the points made by the Chief Secretary so that the whole House can have a better understanding of what was said. His speech was a summation of a warning that in the preservation of our culture we do not do so to an extent to hamper the growth. He was by no means saying that the Opposition is doing that and neither am I implying the same, but just as a general warning that came out of the convictions of his heart, and should be commended for it.

He was in no way being disrespectful in airing his views and to talk about his ancestors and our ancestors turning in the grave, I think they would turn in their grave the day when a Caymanian cannot express his view on a subject, no matter whether it is against popular opinion.

I would like to address some of the comments made about the Government not having any participation when it comes to the National Trust. It was a law by the Government, the National Trust Law of 1997 that started and empowered the National Trust to take on its mandate. And its mandate was provided for by the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, we the Government, despite the differences on minor points, do support this Motion and we think that it is commendable

that the Opposition has brought a motion in such a timely manner to preserve Caymanian culture. That is something that we must do and we have worked out some suggestions that we will be implementing as a Cabinet.

First of all we will have greater focus in our schooling system on the culture, history and heritage of Cayman and Caymanian arts. We will make sure that more young people today are exposed to the Craft Market that operates down the road. It should not be just for tourists. We will make sure that the young people go there on field trips and be exposed to this culture.

We will be starting a commission to have artists' introduce new text books dealing and focusing on Cayman in our schools in the area of pre-kinder. And we will generally place a larger emphasis on culture in the next review of The Youth Policy.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you Honourable Leader of Government Business.

Does any other Member wish to speak? Does any other Member wish to speak? Does any other Member wish to speak? If no other Member wishes to speak I will invite the Mover of the Motion, the Leader of the Opposition, to exercise her right of reply.

**Hon. Thea Bush:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Firstly, Mr. Speaker, in reply to the First Official Member about my rant, which was perhaps a long historical lesson— if no other Member in this Honourable House needed to hear I can assure you, from his contribution, the First Official Member definitely needed to be taught.

It is sad to see that the Government fails to realise that just because a few of us highly intelligent and knowledgeable youth parliamentarians are culturally aware does not mean that the same can be said about the general populace. I ask the Government— when was the last time either of you made a thatch basket, dance quadrille, or made stewed conch? I ask, can you even do that?

It is important for the Government and particularly the Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town, to realise that Caymanian culture has been defined from before the sitting of this House, and it would have only been sensible to derive from the Motion that Caymanian traditional culture is what the Opposition wants to preserve. It would be nonsensical and impossible to preserve the sort of culture that the Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town spoke of as it is ever evolving.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that the Government will not rest on its laurels and assume that just because our culture exists among a few, that this is efficient.

In reference to the Minister for Education, it seems that the Government is sleeping on their feet. I would ask that you pay attention to the contribution

made by the Opposition before you put in place your contribution. However, on behalf of the Opposition I thank you for your reiteration of what my esteemed colleague, the First Elected Member for Bodden Town previously stated about education.

Mr. Speaker, we provided many plans for the preservation of culture: Life skills in class; greater support for the National Trust; National Museum and the like; and active teaching in homes. So, this Opposition has not only been clear in its creation of a motion, but clear in explaining the need for it and putting forward a plan for it. It is up to the Government to cooperate with the Opposition to duly pass this Motion.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, our very own unique, distinct and intriguing way of life—our history, our beliefs, traditions, values; our culture, Mr. Speaker, which is indeed the core nucleus of our society has yet to be promoted, cherished, valued, taught, preserved or enhanced in such a way that our fellow Caymanians are able to see our culture profoundly visible in every aspect of life.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues on the Opposition Bench have proposed many insights in various aspects of what we would coin as Caymanian culture, ranging from our maritime heritage, our ability on natural environment to our savory delights we intrinsically enjoy from our local dishes.

Mr. Speaker, in order for our society to truly progress in such a way that we are still bonded to our roots we must know where we came from to know exactly where we are going, as a people, as a community, as a society, as a country, Mr. Speaker. Our culture is our life! Our way of living—our culture—is who we are!

We are indeed proud people and we do in fact have a lot to be proud of as Caymanians, both young and old alike. But, Mr. Speaker, if we are unable to clearly differentiate our culture from the others who have contributed to our Islands, then what should we to be proud of? If we are unsure of the many contributions made by our ancestors, in all aspects clarified by my colleagues, then what do we teach our children? Where do we go from here on out, Mr. Speaker?

Has our culture become so unimportant, so unnecessary that there is no dire need to preserve and enhance what is truly ours, the only thing that we as Caymanians can adamantly own? Our culture should no longer be the needle in the haystack. It should no longer be the predecessor to our success that we no longer feel the need to admire. It should be, Mr. Speaker, and I hope will be seen as an integral part of our daily activities—a way of communication to our fellow people, a true and accepted way of life.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[applause and desk pounding]

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

The question is: BE IT RESOLVED that the Government considers that greater emphasis be placed on the preservation and enhancement of Caymanian culture.

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

**Ayes.**

**The Speaker:** The Ayes have it. The Private Member's Motion is duly passed.

**Agreed: Private Member's Motion—Preservation and Enhancement of the Caymanian Culture—passed.**

**The Speaker:** Honourable Members that concludes the business on the Order Paper for today's sitting.

I now call on the Honourable Leader of Government Business to move the adjournment of this Honourable Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Third Youth Parliament.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Hon. W. Marvin Hurlston, Jr.:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the adjournment of this Honourable Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Third Youth Parliament sine die.

**The Speaker:** The question is that this Honourable Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Third Youth Parliament do now adjourn sine die.

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

**Ayes.**

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

**At 6.42 pm the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Third Youth Parliament adjourned sine die.**