



Government of Bermuda
Ministry of Community Affairs and Sports

Ministerial Statement to the Senate

By

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Cup Match and Emancipation Celebrations 2020

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Madam President, Based on how this pandemic is ravaging communities across the globe, it should come as no surprise that our beloved Cup Match was by necessity cancelled this year. However, **Madam President,** despite our disappointment, we saw this as an opportunity for the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs to focus on the crux and true meaning of the holiday. The emancipation of enslaved Bermudians is, in fact, the origin of Cup Match and despite the current limitations on social gatherings, our ability and desire to celebrate that origin is a signal of the deep roots of our culture and heritage.

Madam President, particularly now during this time of shared sacrifice and shared responsibility, the Department has placed a focus on partnering with individuals, organisations and community groups to support and highlight not only the work that is being done in our community, but also those that have historically supported our celebrations and commemorations of Cup Match and Emancipation. This year, the most significant collaboration is visible in our partnership with Somerset Cricket Club and St. George's Cricket Club. We've worked closely with Mr. Vashun

Blanchette and Mr. Neil Paynter to develop a series of events that have been endorsed by the clubs as our signature programme for the holiday.

Additionally **Madam President**, the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs has worked with cricketers, historians, Bermemes, Libraries and Archives, CITV, Method Media, tour operators, musicians, and Friendly Societies to provide opportunities for the public to learn about the connections between Mary Prince's narrative published in 1831, Emancipation on 1st August 1834, our first Cup Match in 1902, the establishment of the Cup Match holiday in 1947, and of special significance this year, the establishment of Mary Prince Day in 2020. It's clear that this observation has evolved over the years, but one thing has remained constant: no matter how it is celebrated amongst our citizenry from year to year, this remains our most culturally significant holiday and we were determined that this year should be no different.

Madam President, in terms of educating our public about our history, Mrs. Shirley Pearman provided on July 21st about how the public art that we see on a daily basis throughout the City of Hamilton tells a larger story of African-Bermudian resistance. There was also opportunity to tune into a webinar on July 23rd hosted by Titan Express and featuring Rashida Godwin as she told stories of Emancipation gifted to us by Mary Prince and the Friendly Societies. There was a socially-distanced walking tour exploring Bermuda's Black Mecca from Princess Street to Union Street, narrated by Mr. Charles Jeffers on July 25. These provided an ideal opportunity to learn more about this area of African-Bermudian economic empowerment. The historical jewel in the crown will be a lecture by Dr. Clarence V.H. Maxwell, made available to the public on our very first Mary Prince Day, as he talks about our eminent National Hero's struggle for freedom. Dr. Maxwell will

follow this talk with another the following week on 8 August, a webinar hosted by the Department of Librarys and Archives in collaboration with the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, which will also feature Dr. Theodore Francis II speaking about black resistance, and Dr. Quito Swan speaking about the black power movement.

Madam President, for those who want to know more about Cup Match and our sporting legacy from cricketers both current and seasoned, there have been a series of conversations and interviews hosted on CITV. We are also excited to partner with Method Media who will provide a series of interviews that will give us the flavour of Cup Match, tapping into the heart and soul of why this holiday is one of our very favourites.

Madam President, Cup Match wouldn't be Cup Match without a nod to at least some of the celebratory parts of the holiday. Bermemes and the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs are teaming up for a virtual Cup Match celebration. We won't spoil the fun by giving out the details at this time, but rest assured this is not to be missed. The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs will also be organizing an Emancipation Tribute Concert in collaboration with Bermemes, made available online as well as via CITV to the public on Mary Prince Day.

Madam President, details for all of the information I've provided today is available on the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs website, at www.communityandculture.bm. I encourage the public to take full advantage of the many and varied offerings, and to celebrate the holiday safely.

Madam President, In February of this year, this Honourable Senate approved an amendment to the Public Holidays Act 1947 to rename the second day of Cup Match from Somers Day to Mary Prince Day.

Madam President, at that time I advised this Honourable Senate that our National Hero, Mary Prince, is recognised on the world stage for the crucial role she played in the abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire by telling the painful story of her life as an enslaved person. It was only fitting that the second day of Cup Match be renamed for her.

Madam President, it is also fitting that we provide a suitable location for education and reflection not only on the legacy of Mary Prince but those who have followed her in pursuing social justice and change in Bermuda with the intention of inspiring those yet to come. To that end the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs assembled an advisory committee comprised of technical officers from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Department of Public Lands and Buildings, and the Ministry of Education; as well as experts within Bermuda's visual arts community and members of the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs' Emancipation committee to consider a suitable site related to Mary Prince.

Madam President, the committee considered a number of sites and based on their detailed recommendations, Devonshire Bay Park was determined as the most appropriate site. Mary Prince was born in Brackish-Pond. Brackish Pond was the colloquial name at that time for the parish of Devonshire and most of the houses where she was enslaved were also in Devonshire. This site not only reflects her connection to Devonshire but the Park's good access, central location, tranquility

and proximity to the Ocean facing south as an acknowledgement of the parts of her life spent in the Caribbean provides an ideal location to commemorate Mary Prince.

Madam President, Minister Foggo announced in the House of Assembly on the 17th July that Devonshire Bay Park will be renamed as “Mary Prince Emancipation Park”. On Monday 27th July, Minister Foggo unveiled the new signage at the Park and I would encourage everyone to visit the park and take in the views South across the ocean and reflect on how far we have come and how far we have to go.

Madam President, there will shortly begin a process of public consultation on the design and siting of a suitable monument in the Park to recognise Mary Prince and provide a focal point for the public to visit and reflect not only on her life but the quest for social justice that continues to this day.

Madam President, in closing, I would be remiss in making a statement regarding the importance of the history and heritage of black Bermudians, if I did not once again publicly acknowledge the loss of activist Dr. Eva Hodgson and, most recently, film legend Mr. Earl Cameron. They each fought against racism and segregation in totally different ways, and our narrative of who we are as a people is much, much richer with these two giants as part of our cultural tapestry.

Finally I wish all of Bermuda a happy and safe Cup Match

Thank you, **Madam President** .