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BERMUDA SENATE

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

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Sen. The Hon. Joan E. Dillas-Wright, MBE, JP
President

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BERMUDA SENATE**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT****12 JUNE 2024****10:05 AM***Sitting Number 13 of the 2023/2024 Session*

[Sen. the Hon. Joan E. Dillas-Wright, President, presiding]

The President: Good morning, Senators, and good morning to the listening audience.

The Senate is in session. Shall we pray?

PRAYERS

[Prayers read by Sen. the Hon. Joan E. Dillas-Wright, President]

The President: Please be seated.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Sen. Kiernan Bell: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I move that the Minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, the 29th of May, be taken as read.

The President: Is there any objection to that Motion?

Sen. Robin Tucker: Yes, Madam President.

We would like to defer approval of the Minutes of the 29th of May.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: There was an issue? Can you give an estimation as to why?

Sen. Robin Tucker: Yes. Thank you. Sorry, Madam President.

We would like to defer the Minutes. There was a procedural issue that had occurred on the 29th of May, and we would just like to have that resolved before we approve the Minutes.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Tucker.

The procedural issue is on a vote that was taken. So, I had prior discussion with Senator Tucker, and I have agreed that the Minutes will be deferred.

Thank you, Senator Kiernan Bell; and thank you, Senator Tucker.

[Minutes of 29 May 2024 deferred]

The President: Moving on.

MESSAGES

The President: Any messages?

The Assistant Clerk: No messages, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Ms. Beale.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The President: There are none.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT**APOLOGY**

The President: I have an announcement of an apology from Sen. Rev. Dr. Emily Dill, who will be absent this morning.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

The President: There are none. Oh, there is one . . . I think. I beg your pardon. There is a Motion, and that was to be given by Senator Dill.

Minister, would you want to . . . the court fees?

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Good morning, Madam President. Thank you.

MOTION**COURT FEES AND EXPENSES AMENDMENT
AND VALIDATION RULES 2024**

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam President, I hereby present for consideration of Senate the Court Fees and Expenses Amendment and Validation Rules 2024, proposed to be made in exercise of the power conferred by section 2 of the Court Fees and Expenses Act 1971. And I give notice that at a later point in the meeting, I will move that said Draft Rules be approved.

The President: Thank you, Minister Darrell.

PETITIONS

The President: There are none.

STATEMENTS

The President: Senators, we have two Statements. The first one is in the name of Senator the Hon. Owen Darrell, spokesperson for Education and the Government Leader in the Senate.

Minister Darrell, you have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President. (One second.)

[Pause]

BERMUDA COLLEGE GRADUATES— CLASS OF 2024

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam President, this morning I present this Statement to the Senate to share information about [Bermuda College's recent graduation](#) events and to provide details of this exceptional Class of 2024.

Madam President, like most universities and colleges, commencement represents the culmination and highlight of the academic year for Bermuda College. This year's commencement, held on May 16, 2024, under the big tent on its sports field, featured TikTok celebrity and *New York Times* best-selling author of *Baking Yesteryear*, B. Dylan Hollis, as the keynote speaker. The graduates' address was delivered by Mr. Jon Hendrickson, a Diploma in Culinary Arts graduate and an aspiring chef.

Madam President, there were 98 graduates, with almost 62 per cent of the Class of 2024 earning either merit (which is a GPA between 3.0 and 3.49) or distinction (which is a GPA from 3.5 to 4.0), including nine Phi Theta Kappa Honour Society graduates. The Associate of Arts (Business Administration) programme produced the largest graduating group with 19 graduates.

Madam President, allow me to share the number of graduates for each programme:

The Division of Arts & Science—

- Associate of Arts (Art & Design), eight graduates;
- Associate of Arts, nine graduates;
- Associate of Arts (Early Childhood Education), two graduates;
- Associate of Arts & Science, six graduates;
- Associate of Science, two graduates;
- Associate of Science (Actuarial Science), one graduate.

Division of Business Hospitality & Technical Education—

- Certificate for Accounting Technician, three graduates;
- Certificate in Applied Science Technology, six graduates;
- Certificate in Electrical Wiring Technology, two graduates;
- Certificate in Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning Technology, two graduates;
- Certificate in Motor Vehicle Technology, two graduates;
- Certificate in Plumbing Technology, five graduates;
- Diploma in Culinary Arts, six graduates;
- Diploma in Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning Technology, seven graduates;
- Diploma in Plumbing Technology, three graduates;
- Diploma in Hospitality Management, one graduate;
- Diploma in Wood Technology, one graduate;
- Associate of Applied Science (Culinary Arts), one graduate;
- Associate of Applied Science (Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning), one graduate;
- Associate of Arts (Business Administration), 19 graduates;
- Associate of Science (Computer Information Systems), six graduates.

Division of Nursing and Allied Health—

- Associate of Science (Nursing), four graduates;
- Associate of Science (Pre-Health Science), one graduate.

Madam President, special recognition must be given to the seven dual-enrolment graduates who earned their associate degrees and certificates before receiving their high school diplomas. Three full-time associate degree students hailed from the Berkeley Institute and CedarBridge Academy, and four full-time students completed technical education certificates. Additionally, six College Promise graduates, four of whom graduated with distinction and two with merit, exemplify the success of our support programmes.

Madam President, as a reminder to my colleagues and the listening audience, as a means to provide additional support to our public school students, the College Promise programme was introduced in 2020. This programme enables any student from CedarBridge Academy and the Berkeley Institute graduating with a 3.0 GPA or higher to attend Bermuda College tuition free. This initiative has empowered many young men and women, and I am immensely proud of their achievements and future prospects, and I wish them all success in their next steps.

Madam President, Other Outstanding Award recipients include the following:

- Most Outstanding Arts Graduate, Leilani Trott;

- Most Outstanding Art & Design Graduates, Alana Frith & Nicole Smith;
- Most Outstanding Actuarial Science Graduate, Justine Tuzon;
- Most Outstanding Early Childhood Education Graduate, Patrice Pedro;
- Most Outstanding Science Graduate, Fabiola Adams (she was dual enrolment);
- Most Outstanding Arts & Science Graduate, Chiaje Rudo (also dual enrolment);
- The Distinguished Dean's Award went to Ms. Chiaje Rudo (dual enrolment);
- Overall Most Outstanding Division of Arts and Science Award Graduates, Fabiola Adams (who did dual enrolment) and Justine Tuzon;
- Most Outstanding Information Technology Graduate, Logan Arruda;
- Most Outstanding General Business Graduate, Anthony Gutzmore;
- Best Culinary Arts Graduate, Jon Hendrickson;
- Business Administration & Hospitality Dean's Award for Excellence, Sari Smith;
- Most Outstanding Accounting/Finance Graduate, Kahlil Smythe;
- Most Outstanding Management Graduate, Shania Wedderburn;
- Most Outstanding Plumbing Technology Graduate, Jamere Jarvis;
- Most Outstanding Computer & Programming Graduate, Troy Wade (dual enrolment);
- Most Outstanding Materials & Mechanics Graduate, Joshua Fleming (also dual enrolment);
- Most Outstanding Electricity Electronics Graduate, Paulo Aguiar (dual enrolment);
- Most Outstanding Applied Science Technology Graduate, Jaysun Paynter [dual enrolment];
- Most Outstanding Electrical Wiring Graduate, Zachary Johnson;
- Most Outstanding Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning Graduates, Damon Mallory and Bradley Adams;
- Director of Nursing & Allied Health Leadership Award, Natalie Young;
- Excellence in Clinical Nursing Practice Award, Vernalyn Williams-Singh;
- Nursing Academic Achievement Award, Natalie Young;
- Nursing Impact Award, Georgia Wharton.

Madam President, congratulations are also due to the five students who graduated with their Bachelor of Business Administration [degree] in association with Bermuda College through the long-standing partnership with Mount Saint Vincent University.

Madam President, during the evening the college's Athora Division of Professional and Career Education (APACE) also held its awards ceremony, issuing 161 awards across 26 different career areas. This includes 37 employees from the Department of Corrections who received leadership and management certificates as part of their succession planning initiative, and 26 students who earned Introduction to Bartending Certificates, many of whom are now employed in the industry.

Madam President, several public high school students and graduates were included in the APACE awardees, as follows:

- Endeavour Maritime Career Springboard Programme, cohort 2024 were 11 students; and
- Certificate for Nursing Assistants were nine students,

Madam President, in keeping with this Government's commitment to supporting Bermudians facing obstacles to higher education, I am pleased to announce that 25 graduates from the academic divisions and 15 students completing the APACE programming have benefitted from grant funding.

Madam President, I ask that you and the Senate join me in congratulating the Bermuda College Class of 2024 and the APACE Award recipients. Together they have discovered and followed their path at Bermuda College.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Owen Darrell, spokesperson for Education in the Senate and Government Leader.

You have a second Statement in your capacity as the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. When you are ready you can present that Statement.

NATIONAL HEROES WEEKEND 2024— CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President. And my Statement this morning will be entitled "[National Heroes Weekend 2024—Celebrating Our Community.](#)"

Madam President, June is the month when we come together to honour our National Heroes, those exemplary individuals whose courage and outstanding achievements have profoundly shaped Bermuda. Madam President, being named a national hero is more than just a title; it is a recognition of extraordinary individuals who have made significant positive contributions to our society. Recognising our heroes provides us with an important opportunity to celebrate our collective history, our heritage, our values as a society and our culture. Our heroes remind us that individual contributions can lead to significant societal change, inspiring future generations to strive for greatness.

Madam President, the desired outcomes of celebrating our National Heroes include fostering a

community that takes pride in the contributions made by individuals or groups, increasing awareness about Bermuda's history, heritage and culture, and enhancing our sense of national unity and social cohesion. These outcomes are essential for building a stronger and more inclusive Bermuda.

Madam President, to honour our eight National Heroes, the Department of Culture will host the annual Premier's Concert on Sunday, June 30. This event, open and free to the public, showcases the best of Bermudian talent. Originally designed as a youth-focused event in 1985, the Premier's Concert has evolved into a tribute to Bermuda's National Heroes, highlighting artists who have benefited from governmental support. This year's concert will feature performances by Rikkai Scott of Rhythflow, Donquili African drummers, Fire Wayne, and more. For more information, members of the public can visit www.culture.bm.

Madam President, our eight National Heroes have each made unique and profound contributions to our nation. We honour the following:

1. Dame Lois Browne-Evans, a tireless advocate for equality and justice. Her powerful voice resonated in Parliament for 40 years as she fought to create a more equitable society. Her legacy is one of relentless dedication to the betterment of Bermuda.
2. Dr. Edgar Fitzgerald Gordon was a founding father of the labour movement and a pivotal leader in 20th century Bermuda. His efforts as a Member of Parliament and his leadership in labour rights have left an indelible mark on our society.
3. Madam President, we honour the contributions of Dr. Pauulu Kamarakafego, who was a civil rights leader and political activist who played a critical role in the fight to abolish the property vote. As the founder of the Committee for Universal Adult Suffrage, his work was instrumental in ensuring fair voting rights for all Bermudians.
4. Sir Henry Tucker is celebrated as the architect of modern Bermuda. A founding father of international business on the Island, his vision and leadership helped shape Bermuda into a global financial centre.
5. Madam President, Mary Prince is a Bermuda National Hero whose legacy is celebrated internationally. Born into slavery in Devonshire, she wrote a groundbreaking autobiography, *The History of Mary Prince*, published in London in 1831. Her story is recognised as a powerful testament to the abolition movement and the fight for freedom and human dignity.
6. Gladys Morrell, the founder of the Bermuda Woman's Suffrage Society, led a 25-year battle for women's voting rights in Bermuda. Her unwavering determination ensured that women's voices would be heard and valued in our democracy.
7. Madam President, Sir Edward Trenton Richards was a lawyer and Member of Parliament who fought against social, racial and political injustices. As Bermuda's first Black leader and Premier, his leadership and vision paved the way for a more just and inclusive society.
8. Lastly, Madam Speaker, Sir John W. Swan holds the distinction of being Bermuda's longest-serving Premier. His negotiations between the United States and the United Kingdom established Bermuda as a major offshore financial centre. Beyond his political achievements, he is also known as a real estate developer and philanthropist who has contributed greatly to our community.

Madam President, in addition to celebrating our National Heroes, June offers a variety of events that highlight our vibrant culture. National Heroes Day also coincides with the Edward Cross Long Distance Comet Race, a historic event in Bermuda's sailing calendar. This year marks the 80th anniversary of this iconic race, which takes place between the West End Sailboat Club, the Mid Atlantic Boat and Sports Club, and the East End Mini Yacht Club. This race stands as a tribute to Edward "Jack" Cross, who created the trophy awarded annually to the winner of the race. As part of this rich legacy of Black Bermudian sailing heritage, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport supports this race which stands as a celebration of our maritime history, as well as the spirit of competition and camaraderie. I look forward, Madam President, to personally traveling from the West End Sailboat Club on Monday morning by boat to view first hand the start on the race in St. George's.

Madam President, National Heroes Weekend is also synonymous with the vibrant celebration of Carnival in Bermuda, which includes the popular Raft Up and the spectacular "Revel De Road" Carnival Parade. It is a time of revelry, costumes, music and dance, bringing our community together in a colourful display of unity and celebration.

Madam President, as we remember the contributions of our National Heroes, let us remember that their legacy is our shared history. By recognising and celebrating their community work, we strengthen our sense of national identity and pride. Madam President, let us continue to honour their achievements by striving for a society that upholds their values: justice, equality and unity. In celebrating our National Heroes, we celebrate the very best of Bermuda.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Minister Darrell. Moving on then with our agenda.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The President: There are none.

FIRST READING OF PUBLIC BILLS

CYBERSECURITY ACT 2024

The President: The following public Bill has been received from the Honourable House of Assembly and is now read for the first time: Its title is Cybersecurity Act 2024. And, Senators, that will be taken up later in our Orders of the Day.

FIRST READING OF PRIVATE BILLS

The President: There are none.

QUESTION PERIOD

The President: Senators, the Honourable Owen Darrell is to provide oral responses to Parliamentary Questions from Senator Dr. De Couto. And I just want to indicate that I am allowing these cybersecurity questions because they were simple and they will be seeking basic answers so as not to touch the remit and the work of the Joint Committee that has been appointed. I will therefore allow these questions, but not allow any supplementary questions.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam President, can I ask that we move to the second set of questions first?

The President: Minister?

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: I need a moment, so can we go to the second one? And then I will revert back to the questions that are for me.

The President: Yes. Thank you, Minister.

The second set of questions then is in the name of Senator Dwayne Robinson to Senator Arianna Hodgson, Junior Minister of Finance, to provide oral responses to Parliamentary Questions.

Senator Robinson, would you like to give your first question?

QUESTION 1: SECURING BANKING FOR CASINO GAMING

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: Good morning to my colleagues and to you, Madam President.

I will just put forward my questions now.

Question 1: Would the Junior Minister please inform the Senate on the progress made toward securing banking for casino gaming in Bermuda with updated

timelines on when this economic pledge will be completed?

Madam President, would you like me to read all three, or is that it?

The President: Senator Hodgson has indicated you can, so.

QUESTION 2: FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE BERMUDA GAMING COMMISSION AND ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE COMMISSION'S GENERAL ACTIVITY

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: Thank you.

Question 2: Would the Junior Minister please inform the Senate as to when the most recent audited financial statements for the Bermuda Gaming Commission will be available, along with the annual report of the Commission's general activity for the preceding year as per the requirements of the Gaming Act 2014?

QUESTION 3: KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TO JUDGE SUCCESS OR ACTIVITY OF THE BERMUDA GAMING COMMISSION

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: Question 3: Would the Junior Minister please inform the Senate of the key performance indicators used to judge the success or activity of the Bermuda Gaming Commission? Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Robinson.

Senator Arianna Hodgson, when you are ready you can respond.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Yes. Thank you, Madam President.

To answer the first question posed by Senator Robinson, the Commission in its statutory capacity as the supervisor and regulator of licensed entities has, over the course of the past year, provided technical support to the Government, the banking industry and potential licensees on the interpretation of the statutory framework and what key operational features for casino gaming, the framework, will be able to afford. The Commission facilitated several discussions with key stakeholders, having secured independent expertise in the area.

Following several discussions with the Gaming Commission regarding all aspects of the Commission's work, technical officers within the Ministry of Finance have recommended that meetings should be scheduled with the banking sector to confirm the status of each bank's interests in providing banking services to the casino industry. This is primarily due to the fact that at least one institution continued to represent the Commission. The banking options were still being considered.

During the months of August through September 2023, the Commission was invited to and naturally

attended meetings hosted by the Premier and the Minister of Finance, along with representatives from local banks to discuss matters related to the provision of banking services to licensed casinos. With effect from May 2024 the Ministry of Finance has completed its discussion with the banks. Accordingly, Cabinet has been advised the local banks are unable to provide banking services to casinos on one or more of the following key grounds:

- The provision of banking services to the casino industry is against group policy.
- The risk/reward ratio did not warrant the submission of an application to the relevant correspondent bank.
- The high-risk nature of the business would include the cost of the banking sector due to the requirement to onboard more staff, to oversee the statutory requirements including AML [anti-money laundering] requirements.
- And finally, there is not enough revenue or potential revenue to discuss the relevant items with the correspondent banks.

Contrary to what the Shadow Minister had indicated in the newspaper, there has been no issue with the gaming regime, and that has been confirmed through discussions with correspondent banks. However, the issue is the size of the gaming sector and generally the willingness of banks to take on this line of business.

With response to Question 2, I can confirm that the audit of the financial statements for the financial year ending 2020 was actually completed in February of 2024. Then the audited statements were submitted to the Ministry of Finance on the 14th of February. The Commission continues to work with the Office of the Auditor General on the completion of audits for subsequent year financial statements.

Then finally, the Gaming Commission's principal key performance indicator in the absence of a casino industry is to become sustainable. So the Ministry actually meets with the Gaming Commission as and when required to discuss all aspects of the Commission's performance. For matters related to other lines of business, the Commission has actually established its own key performance indicators, and I am going to actually provide some of the workstreams.

Pertaining to regulatory reform, we had the regulations to be enacted in support of the Commission's supervisory powers, as well as the Lotteries Act to be amended to enable e-sales. As it pertains to licensing, in 2021 responsibilities for the betting sector (lotteries, cruise ship casinos and Crown and Anchor) were actually transferred to the Commission. And there has been no change to the Commission's responsibilities regarding these matters.

Finally, in terms of NAMLAC [National Anti-Money Laundering Committee], the Executive Director of the Gaming Commission is a statutory member of the National Anti-Money Laundering Committee, and in

this regard the Commission is required to continue to a national discussion regarding matters under their remit.

So those are the three answers to the questions posed.

The President: Thank you, Senator Hodgson.

Senator Robinson, do you have any follow-up?

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: Yes, Madam President.

Would you like for me to give my supplementals all at once or . . .

[No audible response]

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: Okay. Perfect.

I will give my first supplemental for Question 1, which is, I have been informed that there may be an issue with money laundering and also an issue with the Premier having the Ministry of Finance and gaming underneath him. So, my question (as a supplemental) is, Has that been encountered as some of the issues that gaming has been dealing with? And where does the Commission go if the gaming industry is too small to continue or too small to be banked locally?

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam President, through the discussions that have been had, it has not been indicated that the Premier's role as the Minister of Finance has resulted in any additional concerns. As I stated, the key grounds which pose challenges to being able to move forward were the fact that in some instances it is against their group policy; in some instances again the risk/reward ratio does not make sense for operations. Of course, as you know, there is the high-risk nature of the business which increases costs. So that would be another conversation. And then again we are not sure about the revenue or the potential revenue and the justification to take on the business. So, it has nothing to do with the Premier and his capacity as the Minister of Finance.

Again, we had a question about, you know, What next? I can say that we are still pushing forward. Again, the view that you would have completed this initiative was based on the fact that a local bank had indicated that they would bank the proceeds of gaming. However, the position has changed. So we are continuing to work to ensure that we have options to be able to bank the proceeds of gaming in Bermuda.

The President: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Robinson.

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: I just have one supplemental for Question 3. And that is, If the aim is for the Casino Gaming Commission to become sustainable, how does that correlate with the increase to the government guar-

antee that they received? And will we see any increases for that guarantee going forward? And is that guarantee meant to support them only this one time until they are able to become sustainable?

[Pause]

[Inaudible interjection]

The President: He has had a supplemental on each of his three questions.

[Inaudible interjection]

The President: I have allowed the supplemental on each of the questions.

[Inaudible interjections]

The President: Senator Hodgson, you have the response?

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Unfortunately, Madam President, I am not able to answer at this time. Right now we are looking to, like I said, progress this initiative so that we are able to complete the initiative. And of course we will report and provide updates in the regular fashion.

The President: Thank you, Senator Hodgson.
Senator Tucker.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam President.

I just have one question. The Junior Minister did advise that a local bank had changed its position. It looked quite promising, but they changed their position. Is she able to tell us why? And certainly if she cannot give us an explanation, could she at least tell us sort of what category that particular bank fell into? So otherwise, was it the risk/reward ratio? Was it, you know, not enough potential? If she could just give us some indication as to what the issue was, that would be helpful.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Tucker, Opposition Leader in the Senate.

[Pause]

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam President, I would say that the short answer is that conversations are still ongoing. But those issues that I identified applied across the board.

The President: Thank you, Senator Hodgson.
Senator Tucker.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Yes, Madam President, thank you. I just have one supplemental.

Is the Junior Minister able to give a timeframe, an estimated timeframe, as to when they expect to have a response, considering that the discussions are ongoing?

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Tucker.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Unfortunately, I cannot identify an exact timeline. But what I can say is that there has been a proposal to expand the type of business that a restricted business could provide to its customers. And that has been approved by Cabinet. So there will be some amendments that will actually come out of those matters. As you all know, we do not disclose the discussions that we are having with the banks. So I would hope that the very detailed response that was given would be satisfactory.

The President: Thank you, Senator Hodgson.
Senator De Couto, you have a question?

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: Yes. Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Supplemental.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: With respect to (I believe it was) Question 3's answer, the Senator indicated that the Government was exploring options to progress this given the pretty tough situation based on her prior explanations. Would the Senator be able to provide an overview of the sorts of options the Government is considering to take gaming and the Commission forward?

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator De Couto.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

As I began to speak to, we are looking at the Banks and Deposit Companies Act 1999 being amended. That would allow restricted banks to be able to provide banking services to entities licensed by the Gaming Commission. An Order to amend the Act will also be published in due course. And if you look actually at the paper entitled "Amendments to the Third Schedule of the Banks and Deposit Companies Act 1999," you will see reference to the proposal.

Reference is also made to the stakeholder notice published by the Bermuda Monetary Authority, which is publicly available on their website.

So at this point, Madam President, I can say that any other additional information received, any further updates, will be communicated in due course.

The President: Thank you, Senator Hodgson.

And that concludes the questions and the supplemental questions on Question 2 that was presented by Senator Robinson.

Minister, would you . . .

Minister Darrell will now provide oral responses to the Parliamentary Questions from Senator De Couto.

Senator De Couto, would you like to present your questions?

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: Yes. Thank you, Madam President. And with your leave, I will read all three out in a row.

The President: Minister, are you prepared to receive all three in a row?

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Do one at a time, Madam President.

The President: He would prefer one at a time.

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: Of course, Madam President.

[Laughter]

QUESTION 1: REPORT ON SEPTEMBER 2023 CYBERATTACK ON GOVERNMENT

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: I am easy.

Question 1: Given that the Minister of National Security stated in the House of Assembly that a report on the September 2023 cyberattack on government systems had been produced, will the Honourable Minister please inform the Senate as to when the report was provided to the Government? Thank you.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam President, the final investigative report was received on November 7, 2023.

The President: Thank you, Minister.

Senator De Couto, you have your second question.

QUESTION 2: REPORT ON SEPTEMBER 2023 CYBERATTACK ON GOVERNMENT

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: Thank you, Madam President.

Will the Honourable Minister please inform the Senate as to whether the report was produced internally within government?

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam President, the report was not produced internally within the government.

The President: Senator De Couto, you have a third question.

QUESTION 3: REPORT ON SEPTEMBER 2023 CYBERATTACK ON GOVERNMENT

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: Yes. Thank you, Madam President. Of course, thank you to the Minister for his answers.

Will the Honourable Minister please inform the Senate as to whether any parties outside of government have had access to the report? Thank you.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam President, those who prepared the report external to government have had access to the report.

The President: Thank you, Minister.

And, Senators, remember I did advise that the questions will be simple and seeking basic answers. And there will be no further supplemental questions on any of the three questions presented and answered.

We will move on then to the questions that have been submitted to Senator Lindsay Simmons to provide oral responses to the Parliament Questions from Senator Tucker, the OBA Leader in the Senate.

Senator Tucker, would you like to present your first question?

QUESTION 1: PROGRESS REPORT FROM THE CANINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Sen. Robin Tucker: Yes. Yes, thank you, Madam President.

So my first question is, Would the Junior Minister please provide the Senate with an update on progress that the Canine Advisory Committee has made on its recommendations for legislative changes to protect the public from dog attacks?

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Good morning, everybody. Thank you, Madam President. Thank you, Senator Tucker.

The Canine [Advisory] Committee has held four meetings in the past year to discuss the issues surrounding the management and control of dogs, specifically restricted-breed dogs. The committee recommendations are currently being compiled for internal review and prioritised. The report will be submitted to the Ministry by the 21st of June 2024, for the Minister's consideration.

[Pause]

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you. I will circle back with a couple of questions. I will just put my three questions out there.

The President: Go ahead.

QUESTION 2: GO-LIVE DATE FOR THE DIGITAL DOG ATTACK REPORTING SYSTEM

Sen. Robin Tucker: Yes.

So my second question is, Would the Junior Minister please inform the Senate of the go-live date for the digital reporting system announced in 2023 that is supposed to make it easier for the public to report dog attacks?

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you.

The plan implementation date is for September 1, 2024. This will coincide with the filling of the vacant Assistant Animal Warden post, which will bring this section up to full strength. This digital reporting system has been developed. The system allows a user to file a report with the Animal Control section on any computer, tablet or smartphone. It should be noted that if the reporter feels the injury is serious enough, they can report it directly to the Bermuda Police Service for an immediate response.

QUESTION 3: NUMBER OF TICKETS FOR MINOR DOG INFRACTIONS FOR 2022, 2023 AND FIRST QUARTER OF 2024

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you to the Junior Minister.

My third question is, Would the Junior Minister please confirm for the Senate the total number of tickets for minor dog infractions that were issued in each year 2022, 2023 and for the first quarter of 2024?

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Tucker.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you, Senator Tucker.

The Department of Environmental and Natural Resources has not issued any tickets for minor offenses, as the ticketing provisions are not yet in force. The ticketing aspects of the Dog Act 2008 require amendment to the regulations. These are currently in process. The format of the ticket has been developed, and an administrative process for entering the tickets into the court case management system has been completed.

Minor offences are being managed through the existing provisions of the Dogs Act. To illustrate, in terms of offences related to minor dog infractions issued for 2024, I can report the following:

1. two cases have led to successful prosecution;
2. two summons are due to be served;
3. one case is with the DPP [Department of Public Prosecutions], and
4. seven cases are being compiled for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, ready to submit to the Department of Public Prosecutions.

I hope that answers your question.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Sen. Robin Tucker: It does.

Thank you, Madam President.

So, I just would like to know with regard to Question 1 if any recommendations [were] agreed upon that the Canine Advisory Board will be presenting to the Minister. Do any of them address offending dog owner behaviour?

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President, that is premature to answer, as the report has to get to the Minister first. So it would be not wise that I answer that question at this time, as the Minister should be the one to receive the report first.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam President.

Well, one of the questions that I would ask then is . . . the Canine Advisory Committee is not new. It has been around for quite some time. And in 2023—

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam President, I think we are doing questions. Thank you.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Madam President, I am framing the question so the Junior Minister understands the question.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam President, with respect, point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: I do not think “framing” is necessary in this. The framing should come from the Junior Minister. And the Senate Leader for the One Bermuda Alliance simply asks the questions, Madam President. Thank you.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Madam President, is it okay if I proceed? Or should I just—

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Ask the question.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam President. It is your Chamber, so I am waiting for your response. Thank you, Madam President.

The President: I do not need to be reminded.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you.

The President: You can ask your question.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam President.

I would like to know, there were some suggestions made in an article in 2023. All I would like to know is if any of the recommendations that were made then will possibly be carried forward? Okay?

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Tucker.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you.

Again, Madam President, I think it is too early for us to report. June 21 is just around the corner. And the Canine Advisory Committee will be reporting to the Minister with recommendations. And then the Minister will be able to let us know where he wants to take this. So I think it is premature for me to speak on this to the public without the Minister's being the first to get this information.

And I will say . . . I just want to put it out there. I am the Chairman of the Canine Advisory Committee. So, I will not be speaking about any specifics because I have to report to the Minister first. Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons, Junior Minister of Home Affairs.

Senator Tucker, you have the final question.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Yes. It is a supplemental.

The President: It is a supplemental. Yes.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Yes.

The Junior Minister did mention that the Dogs Act needs to be amended. You know, is there any urgency around when that is going to happen? And if so, can she let us know when we can expect to receive that updated legislation?

Thank you, Madam President.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you.

Again, I would reiterate that the Minister is going to take all of our points. And then he will be able to then formulate his next step. But we do know that this is an urgent matter and we are pushing forward. So, the Minister will get the information on June 21, and then from there he will set the timetable out of how we move forward.

The President: Thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons and Senator Tucker for your questions.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you.

The President: That completes the questions that have been presented for responses today.

We will now move on to item number 13, which is our . . . Sorry?

[Inaudible interjection]

The President: I am running ahead with the agenda here.

Were there any questions on the Statements that were presented by Minister Darrell, the first one

being on the Bermuda College Graduates—Class of 2024?

Senator Robin Tucker, Opposition Leader in the Senate, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: BERMUDA COLLEGE GRADUATES—CLASS OF 2024

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam President.

I would like to say . . . I would like to *frame* this and just say congratulations to all of the Bermuda College graduates. A very proud moment. I have mentioned here before I am a two-time graduate of Bermuda College. So again, congratulations to them all.

I just have one question. And that is, Were there any sort of unclaimed funds? I just would like to know whether the number of students who were accommodated under the Promise Programme, if it was fully subscribed, or is there room for more?

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Tucker.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President.

While I thank the Opposition Senate Leader for that question and I await to see if I can get the proper answer on that, it is very interesting (and I will answer like this) that she mentioned this Promise Programme. Because, again, that is a reminder of the work that this Government has done to get people into, as the Statement said, higher education to get more individuals in Bermuda educated at a collegiate level. And this is definitely something that has become the calling card and the marker of this Progressive Labour Party Government, as we have seen since 2017 that while one Government previously to that may have cut programmes and cut funding for education, I thank the Senate Leader of the One Bermuda Alliance for putting that question about the Promise [Programme] to remind us what the Progressive Labour Party Government has done so that individuals in the college can go to college.

So while I am very happy with the 25 individuals who did get funding from this Promise Programme, I will answer when I get the responses if we can take on any more. Because surely, as once again has become the history of this Government, Senator Tucker will have to admit that this Government has done great things. And what I will also get is the number that we have supported in the last seven years. So once we have that number, Madam President, we will supply it so that more people can hear about this great news about what the Progressive Labour Party Government is doing and will continue to do for students of this country.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Minister Darrell.

Would any other Senator care to ask questions on the Statement?

If not, we will move on to the second Statement. And that was on the National Heroes Weekend.

Would any Senator care to ask questions on this Statement?

Senator Tucker, you have the floor.

Sen. Robin Tucker: I do. Thank you, Madam President. Sorry. I do not know what is wrong with me today.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry. I do not mean to . . . but I do have the further answer. It has just come in, yes.

I am happy to report (Madam President, if I may), that there is no limit to the number of individuals whom the Government will take on. So in short . . . and I am sure the One Bermuda Alliance would love to hear this because it is a stark difference between what their Government did and what we did. If, Madam President, someone applies for this scholarship, we as the Government will pay.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Minister.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Sorry. If they *qualify* and apply, we pay.

The President: Would any other Senator care to ask questions on this Statement?

Senator De Couto, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: NATIONAL HEROES WEEKEND 2024—CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: Thank you, Madam President.

What time does the sailboat race start, Madam President? I need to make my plans. Thank you.

The President: Minister, that is a nice question for you.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam President, I believe that I am leaving West End Sailboat Club at 9:00 am to head to St. George's. And the sailboat race starts in St. George's at 10:00 am. Now, you know, it can take as long as the entire day based on what the winds are saying. And some in here will know more about sailing than [I do]. But, yes, 10:00 am.

The President: Thank you. Thank you, Minister.
We will now move on.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The President: And there is a procedural change here. The first consideration for the Orders of the Day is con-

sideration of the Court Fees and Expenses Amendment and Validation Rules 2024. And that, I believe, Minister Darrell, you were going to undertake.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 71(2)

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Yes. Thank you, Madam President.

I move that Standing Order 71(2) be suspended so that the Senate may now proceed with the consideration of the Court Fees and Expenses Amendment and Validation Rules 2024.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 71(2) suspended.]

The President: Carry on, Minister.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you.

Madam President, I move that the Senate do now take under consideration the Court Fees and Expenses Amendment and Validation Rules 2024 proposed to be made in exercise of the power conferred by section 2 of the Court Fees and Expenses Act 1971.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.
Carry on, Minister.

MOTION

COURT FEES AND EXPENSES AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION RULES 2024

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I am pleased to present to this Honourable Senate the [Court Fees and Expenses Amendment and Validation Rules 2024](#). The Chief Justice, in exercise of the power conferred by section 2 of the Court Fees and Expenses Act 1971, makes the Amendment and Validation Rules. This presentation is therefore made in collaboration with the Chief Justice in accordance with his power to make these rules.

The amendments being proposed by the Court Fees and Expenses Amendment and Validation Rules 2024 are to increase the fees to be paid in relation to the performance of any function by a court or any officer. The amendments also increase the fees to be paid for any matter incidental to the performance of any such functions. Madam President, in simple language, the fees that litigants are required to pay into court to commence a new action and/or at certain intervals to continue an action already underway are being increased by these amendments.

As shared by the Honourable Premier in his 2023/24 Budget Speech, I quote: "An assessment has

been completed comparing Bermuda's court fees to those in other jurisdictions, and Bermuda's fees were found to be considerably lower than competitor jurisdictions . . . A new scale of fees, which will impact matters being conducted in the Magistrates' Court, Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal, has been developed. It is anticipated that these changes will yield an additional \$750,000."

Madam President, the Supreme Court fees have been increased; the Court of Appeal fees have been increased; and the Civil Appeal fees have been increased. These Court Fees and Expenses Amendment and Validation Rules [2024] are the last round of fee increase amendments. They finalise the necessity to increase and modernise the existing judicial revenue stream shortfall of fees collected by the courts. Rectifying the shortfall can only be beneficial to the welfare of the entire community for the positive impact it will have on the administration of justice.

Madam President, during the budget term 2022/23, the Registrar of the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal submitted drafting instructions to have all four sets of court fees—the Rules of the Supreme Court 1985, the Court Fees and Expenses Rules 1972, the Civil Appeal Rules 1971 and the Rules of the Court of Appeal for Bermuda 1965—amended simultaneously so as to comprehensively update the fees in order for all sets of fees to be effective from the same date. For this to happen, the Rules of the Supreme Court and Court Fees and Expenses Rules must go through the affirmative resolution procedure.

The amendments to the Civil Appeals Rules 1971 and the amendments to the Rules of the Court of Appeal for Bermuda 1965 are not subject to parliamentary scrutiny. Madam President, the Magistrates' Court administration has been historically charging \$10 rather than \$5 in court fees for the reissuing of an ordinary summons, as well as the reissuing of a judgment summons. The Registrar and the current Senior Magistrate, as well as the former Senior Magistrate, Mr. Juan Wolffe, were unable to identify the source of this discrepancy as the fee structure was being utilised at the time that they commenced with the judiciary.

Astonishingly, Madam President, these particular fees of the Magistrates' Court have not increased in over 60 years. However, contrasted against this static position is today's increasing tendency of litigants to pursue legal action. These litigants are also increasingly sophisticated. Their cases are more complex. Higher volume and variation of proceedings are routinely being instituted. These demands increase time and work expended by administrative staff to process proceedings.

The increased cost of office supplies is another cost-incurring factor. Additionally, resources are required to counter ever-changing threats to the safety and well-being of those connected to the judicial system including litigants, judges, bailiffs, counsel and witnesses.

Madam President, these amendments are long overdue and will become even more onerous the longer they are delayed. Furthermore, Madam President, the Magistrates' Court has had jurisdiction to adjudicate proceedings for the recovery of money up to \$25,000 for decades now. And in tandem, such proceedings are quite common. In this area alone the increase in fees will greatly contribute to the revenue collected through the courts. Further, Madam President, it should come as no surprise that research has shown that Bermuda's current fee schedule for payments into the Magistrates' Court is remarkably low when compared to other British Overseas Territories. The increase of fees will put this jurisdiction on par with similar jurisdictions such as Cayman.

In closing, I take this opportunity to thank the Honourable Chief Justice, the Registrar of the Courts, the Senior Magistrate, and all public officers and stakeholders who have contributed to the implementation of this consequential milestone.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Minister Darrell.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

SENATE VISITORS

The President: And before I open the floor to Senators to respond, I would just like to acknowledge the presence in the Senate Chamber of the following persons: The first one is Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Lamb, the Permanent Secretary for National Security.

Welcome to you, sir.

And Ms. Nicole Smith, Assistant Registrar of the Supreme Court.

As well as Lovette Tannock, the Parliamentary Counsel for the Attorney General's Chambers.

And Stuart Daniels, the Chief Information Security Officer for National Security.

Welcome to you all.

[Court Fees and Expenses Amendment and Validation Rules 2024 debate, continuing]

The President: Would any Senator care to speak on [these Rules] on the court fees?

Sen. Kiernan Bell: Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Senator Kiernan Bell.

Sen. Kiernan Bell: Thank you, Madam President.

I just wanted to say I support these changes. They are, I think as has been acknowledged by the Minister, long overdue. And so I fully support this.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you.

Senator John Wight, you have the floor.

Sen. John Wight: Thank you, Madam President. Bermuda has seen a bit of inflation over the last 60 years, so I will be in favour of this increase. Thank you very much, Madam President.

[Laughter]

The President: Thank you.
Senator De Couto, you have the floor.

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: Thank you, Madam President.

We in the OBA also support this increase. As everybody in Bermuda knows, the cost of doing business increases everywhere. That includes our court system. And we have also been calling for fee increases since 2019, including a graduated fee increase that could see certain large cases, large commercial cases and things like that. So [these Rules] are a step in the right direction, and we would like to see even more steps taken.

You know, we can imagine a world, Madam President, in which the judiciary is able to appropriately fund itself and acquire the appropriate financial independence for its important functions in our society. So, we support this. We hope to see further developments in this area from the Government to support this important function, Madam President.

So, thank you very much.

The President: Thank you, Senator De Couto.
Being there are no other responses, Minister Darrell, it is over to you. You have full support.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President.

If I may?

The President: Certainly you may.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: I move that the said Draft Rules be approved and that the following message be sent to Her Excellency the Governor:

May it please Your Excellency:

The Senate, having under consideration the Draft Rules entitled Court Fees and Expenses Amendment and Validation Rules 2024 proposed to be made in exercise of the power conferred by section 2 of the Court Fees and Expenses Act 1971, has the honour to inform Your Excellency that the Senate has approved the said Draft Rules.

The President: Thank you, Minister. And a suitable message will be sent.

[Motion carried: The Court Fees and Expenses Amendment and Validation Rules 2024 were approved.]

The President: You have full support from the Senate.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you.

We will move on to our second item. And the second Order of the Day we will be taking under consideration is the second reading of the Cybersecurity Act 2024.

Minister Darrell, are you undertaking this Bill as well?

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: I will. Thank you. (One second.)

[Pause]

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President, for your indulgence.

The President: You can proceed when you are ready, sir.

Minister.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam President, I now move that the Bill entitled the Cybersecurity Act 2024 be now read a second time.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

BILL

SECOND READING

CYBERSECURITY ACT 2024

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, today I am presenting the [Cybersecurity Act 2024](#). This Bill provides the necessary cybersecurity administrative framework to ensure the protection of computer systems that support the government and other essential services such as energy and water supply, our air and seaports, telecommunications, health care, and financial and banking institutions.

Madam President, Senators will recall that cybersecurity featured in the 2021 Speech from the Throne. Having recognised the importance of ensuring that Bermuda's critical national information infrastructures were adequately protected from cyber threats, the Government promised to introduce a Cybersecurity Act which would establish the minimum standards for cybersecurity for Bermuda's critical assets.

Madam President, Senators will recall that the September 2023 cyberattack on the government systems brought several government provider services

and processes to a halt. Even with existing protections in place, restoration and recovery from the attack was a tremendous effort. While the cyberattack was distressing for Bermuda, it served to accelerate and enhance the development of a cybersecurity legislative framework. This was underscored in the 2023 Throne Speech, which noted that the Legislature would be invited to consider a cybersecurity Bill, the draft of which would be amended to reflect recommended statutory strengthening required in the wake of the cyberattack on the Bermuda Government.

Madam President, the purpose of this Bill is to

1. establish a Cybersecurity Advisory Board, a public-private partnership to advise the Government on cybersecurity matters and the protection of critical infrastructures against cyber threats;
2. provide a legislative mandate for the Cybersecurity Unit within the Ministry of National Security to establish and operate a National Cybersecurity Incident Response Team;
3. designate critical national information infrastructure entities and enforcement authorities that will ensure these entities meet minimum cybersecurity standards; and
4. provide the Minister of National Security with authority to issue policy directions, codes of practice and regulations to ensure cybersecurity of the CNII [critical national information infrastructure] entities.

Madam President, this Bill furthers the Government's aim of ensuring that Bermuda has adequate protections in place to thwart the actions of those commonly referred to in the cyber world as *threat actors* and that the recovery protocols of CNII entities will permit a timely return to normalcy in the event of a significant cybersecurity event.

Madam President, this Bill formally establishes and renames the existing Cybersecurity Governance Board. The board has been renamed to the Cybersecurity Advisory Board to provide clarity of its role as an advisory body on cybersecurity-related matters. The board is made up of the relevant officers within the public service and independent advisors appointed by the Minister from the private sector having the requisite qualifications and experience. The primary function of the board is to provide advice to the Minister, the Cabinet and the Public Service Executive on management and implementation of Bermuda's National Cybersecurity Strategy and the Government's cybersecurity programme. The board will also encourage collaboration between CNII entities and enforcement authorities on cybersecurity matters.

Madam President, in addition to the Cybersecurity Advisory Board, this Bill also establishes the Cybersecurity Unit within National Security as the National Cybersecurity Incident Response Team (or CSIRT). The Cybersecurity Unit is separate from the Govern-

ment's Information and Digital Technologies Department (IDT). IDT is responsible for implementing, maintaining and protecting the Government's information technology systems. The Cybersecurity Unit will be an additional layer of protections through the provision of oversight of the government's internal cybersecurity programme.

The unit will perform centralised security logging and monitoring of the government's information and technology systems and environment to support the detection, analysis, response to and investigation of cybersecurity threats and incidents. The unit will also conduct an annual national cyber risk assessment of critical national infrastructure sectors in Bermuda and provide a report and recommendations to the Minister and the board.

Madam President, in its role as the national CSIRT, the Cybersecurity Unit will lead the detection of and response to cybersecurity events in Bermuda. The National CSIRT will assist Bermuda's cybersecurity efforts by providing early warnings and dissemination of information to relevant stakeholders about risks and cybersecurity events. By fostering cooperative relationships, critical national information infrastructure entities in Bermuda and CSIRT in other jurisdictions, the Bermuda National CSIRT will improve our ability to prepare for and address cyber threats at the national and international levels.

Madam President, an important aspect of the Bill being presented today is the designation of critical national information infrastructure entities and enforcement authorities. Under the Bill, an entity meets the criteria of being a CNII entity if the entity provides an essential service. The provision of that essential service relies on computer systems, and the disruption of that computer system would have significant disruptive effects on the provision of the essential service. The Minister may designate these entities as CNII entities after consulting with the Cybersecurity Advisory Board and a relevant enforcement authority.

Madam President, enforcement authorities are the regulatory bodies that are already established and function to ensure that the entities it regulates are in compliance with all applicable legislation, rules, regulations and codes of practice. For example, for the purpose of the Cybersecurity Bill, the function of enforcement authorities will be to ensure that the CNII entities they regulate are in compliance with the requirements of the Bill.

Madam President, it is intended that the Government of Bermuda will be designated as an enforcement authority responsible for ensuring that the departments of the government are in compliance with the Bill. This means that the Cabinet and the Cabinet Cybersecurity Subcommittee will be the enforcement authority for the Government. The Bill will require the Government to ensure that each of its departments meets the minimum standards of cybersecurity as issued by the Minister of National Security in consultation with the

Cybersecurity Advisory Board. The Cybersecurity Unit will assist government departments in meeting these prescribed standards.

Madam President, Senators will be aware that there was an on-the-floor amendment to this Bill on its second reading in a different place. That amendment removed the designation of the government and private sector entities from the Bill for the time being. It is intended that the Bill will apply to the government and to private sector entities that are the owners of CNII. However, these entities will only be designated following consultation with enforcement authorities and the CNII entities themselves. Removal of these private sector entities from the Bill will allow for further consultation with those entities intended to be designated. As is stipulated by the Bill, no designation of a CNII entity will occur without prior consultation with the Cybersecurity Advisory Board and the relevant enforcement authority.

Madam President, the Bill will empower the enforcement authorities to implement and enforce cybersecurity legislative requirements, policy directions, codes of practice and standards of performance as provided under the Bill and its regulations. In practice, enforcement will follow the same process that currently obtains for the enforcement of legislative requirements for these regulated sectors. Typically, compliance is ensured, as the enforcement authorities or regulatory bodies cannot issue operational licences if the entity is noncompliant with any legislation to which it is subjected.

Madam President, the protections that this Bill aims to standardise and implement are the hallmark of the legislation. The Bill provides the Minister with the authority to issue regulations that require CNII entities and enforcement authorities to carry out myriad planning and testing activities in the pursuit of good cybersecurity practice. These requirements will be the minimum standards of cybersecurity that a CNII entity must have in place to be in compliance with the Bill.

Madam President, these requirements are laid out in regulations, as it is expected that the requirements will need to evolve over time to keep pace with the ever-increasing cyber threats. In addition, the protections required of the computer systems supporting our electrical power supplies will likely differ somewhat from the protections required for health care entities. Similarly, threat levels or associated risks are also varied. Given the diverse range of critical infrastructures, it is intended that the Minister of National Security will issue regulations that establish the minimum standards of protection.

However, the CNII Enforcement Authority will be able to exercise their own discretion and judgment with respect to any industry's specific requirements that are needed and with respect to how the regulations are best enforced within their respective sectors.

Madam President, with our increasing reliance on technology and computer systems, it is critical that we create and enforce legislation that will safeguard

our essential services against cyber threats. This Bill provides the framework for that protection. It is the Government's intention to ensure that the requirements set out in this Bill are not overly burdensome for the affected entities, but provide adequate protection and recovery capabilities in the event of a cyber incident.

This legislation, together with our cybercrime-related legislation, ensures that Bermuda is cyber safe. I am pleased to commend this Bill to the Senate for debate, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Minister Darrell.

Would any Senator care to speak on this Bill? Senator De Couto, you have the floor.

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: Thank you, Madam President. And thank you to the Minister for that presentation, and thank you to the Government for bringing this Bill.

It is a pretty complex Bill, Madam President, and it creates many layers of organisation and accountability. And there are some things in here that are hard to argue against. But I think we can all agree communications, power supply, health care, critical transport links would have to operate. And this concept of important national infrastructure is a key concept.

It is hard for us to assess if this Bill has all the right bits in total, though, Madam President. And I am going to be a little careful here, but I know that there was going to be this Joint Select Committee, and I know there is this report out there. And I feel that those processes would create a lot of outputs, create a lot of information that would perhaps allow us to bring a more informed judgment of this Bill, Madam President. And I hope you can appreciate that. And let me leave it at that. Because one might say that this cart has been put before the horse without anybody understanding what lessons have been learned.

But let me walk through some comments on some of the other details of the substance in the Bill. We hear about the Cybersecurity Board, Madam President, the National Cybersecurity Unit, the Cybersecurity Incident Response Team, the various enforcement authorities have all been laid out in this Bill. And where I am struggling with this, Madam President, is that it sort of makes sense on paper. But ultimately this comes down to, do you have the right people doing the right things? And if you do not have the right people in these organisations, it will not matter that you have set up the organisations. It will not matter what it says on the paper. Without the right people doing the right things, you will not get the right outcomes.

So let me start with the Cybersecurity Board. And I note the Minister's comments that the primary function is to provide advice to the Government, and I think that is very good. But we note that there are nine people on this board, of which six are already essentially government or quango, government-affiliated employees. Only three are private sector. And the Minister

used the words “a public-private partnership.” To me I would have liked to see more private sector individuals on that board to provide a balance of some opinion, perhaps bring in some outside expertise from the relevant industries and experts working on the Island, or even overseas if that is what it requires. Because one might take the view, Madam President, if you have all of these individuals, the government and its staff named on this board already working, it is not clear to me why we need to create a board to say, *Hey, you lot get together and work this out.*

So let me give a little bit of a counter-example, Madam President. Do we have to create a law that specifies how the police service shall organise itself to combat crime? Do we have to create a law to organise how the fire service shall organise its units and where to put its officers and how to structure its own management and carrying out of its mission? They have a mission and we know what they need to do.

So again, while we like this concept of bringing in collaboration of partnership and providing advice to the Minister, I am struggling with the fact that we have to create a law that seems to be intended to get government staff, who I know are working incredibly hard, to get them to collaborate and work together and provide advice to the Minister. Because I think one might assume that they were already providing the appropriate advice up through their various employment structures and management chains and so forth. And if they were not, I am not sure this law is going to fix that. And we would probably have to create a lot of laws about how government shall be structured internally.

I believe that some other Government Members probably had some similar concerns about the balance of the public-private sector in this Cybersecurity Board.

Two more comments on that Cybersecurity Board, Madam President. We heard about collaboration. And to be frank, Madam President, this Government’s approach to collaboration and consultation on this area has been disingenuous and highly lacking, in my personal view. And I do not see that legislation is going to change that.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam President, point of order.

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: That is my opinion, Madam President. And I believe I am entitled to it. Thank you.

The President: Minister, what is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

[Unparliamentary language]

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: The Senator is using derogatory language, Madam President. I do not think it is appropriate to speak about public officers in that

manner. I mean, he has already said a lot about *the right people*. And I just do not think it is right for this place, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Minister.

Senator De Couto, I would just alert you to the comment that has been made. And please make your comments less inflammatory.

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: Of course, Madam President.

To recap, I believe I said that I recognise how hard the public officers are working.

The President: Mm-hmm.

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: I am very, very aware of that. I am going to come to that actually, Madam President.

We hear about the report to the Minister, Madam President. It is our view that these ought to be disseminated and shared with key stakeholders to get the benefit of this information and collaboration. And I did not see that that was indicated in the Bill, that these reports would be shared, even in some sort of redacted or appropriately adjusted manner. Because this is an area . . . and I work in the insurance industry. Cyber is a hot topic, Madam President. And information about sharing about cyber is very important. It is a fast-moving area. Things change month to month, day to day. And one of the things that creates success in responding to and preventing cyber attacks is the sharing of information and best practices, Madam President. So where this board is producing information like that, we would have liked to see something in the Bill that gets that shared outward, Madam President.

Let me now turn to the Cybersecurity Unit, Madam President. I believe this Bill referred to *this unit shall continue*. And I note that in June last year, you remember that the Minister made a statement about setting up this Cybersecurity Unit. So I do have a specific question here, which is, When was that unit actually commencing operations? That would be a specific question that I have here. You know, otherwise it does make sense. Some of the functions of it to me seem actually rather technical. And again it was not clear to me, and I refer to my comment that we would need a specific law to set that up. You could imagine that in a few years it might be the case that how that unit is structured might need to change to respond appropriately to the changing world of cyber threats. But here we are.

The Cybersecurity Incident Response Team, that seemed, again, quite sensible. But, again my comment that how we respond, what they do, what that means . . . I am not sure legislation is the right place to encode that, Madam President.

Now, let me turn to the Critical National Information Infrastructure enforcement authorities, Madam President. I do have a specific question here. I believe

Part 3, clause 9 of the Bill refers to policies and codes that need to be issued by them. And my specific question I have here is . . . Now, I did not see this in the Bill, but would there be specific timelines so they could be held accountable to producing those within a reasonable time?

Then the Bill further requires various reports and accountability. I think consultation is important here, Madam President. I think I have addressed that, so let me move on there.

Clause 15, Madam President, refers to a report from the Minister. And I guess I have a very specific question here. If this Bill had been in effect, let us say, a year ago today, would it have required the Government to have issued a specific report and shared that externally with respect to the attack in October [*sic*]? So that will help people understand what this Bill would have done, given what happened. That would be my third specific question.

And, Madam President, moving on to the regulations, I note that it was \$100,000 fine, maximum fine noted there. And I am struggling to understand whom that fine would apply to. So let us say for example you had a government employee who . . . perhaps this specific employee did not do a good job, and this happens. And they failed to create the adequate disaster recovery plan. Would that specific employee be liable for a fine under this? Or how would that fine be applied to the relevant unit for failing to carry out its responsibilities under this Bill, Madam President?

Then I guess my last comment, Madam President, would be there are some detailed rules about board members. “No member . . . shall take part . . . relating to any . . . business in which he or his spouse is a member or shareholder or has any private interest, direct or indirect . . .” I think that is good. We are glad to see that. I would like to see more of that throughout this regulation in the government, frankly. However, we are a small world, so I wonder how that will impact getting the right people with the right experience on board. Because again, if you are not working in this area, if you are not directly involved, it can be quite hard to have the relevant expertise.

So to conclude, Madam President, we are glad to see this Bill. As you heard, there are aspects of it that we think are good and important such as the designation of the critical infrastructure. And there are aspects of it that, frankly, we are not convinced about. On balance, Madam President, we will reluctantly support this Bill, but would love to hear the answers to those four questions I posed.

Thank you for the time, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator De Couto.

Would any other Senator—

Senator Kiernan Bell, Vice President, you have the floor.

Sen. Kiernan Bell: Thank you, Madam President.

I do have one specific question on [clause] 6. And if I can frame the question in context because I think it will be helpful.

The Act, as was set out, already sets out what the functions of the Cybersecurity Advisory Board are. And that is the public-private (if I can put it that way) advisory board that is stood up. Its function is to advise, and it is limited to providing advice in the Act. So [clause] 6, which is the [clause] that I have the question about, provides for the board to make a report to the Minister every six months. In addition, that board has a statutory responsibility where a significant cybersecurity event has occurred to provide a report of the event to the Minister as directed by the Minister.

My question concerns whether or not it is appropriate for the PPP [public-private partnership] advisory board to be tasked under statute with providing a report on a cybersecurity event when it has no operational oversight or responsibility to respond to any cybersecurity events as they unfold. And the way the [Bill] is structured, that responsibility may fall within the National Cybersecurity Unit and I think certainly falls on the National Cybersecurity Incident Response Team, which are both created in this legislation.

So my question is, Would it not be better to have the statutory obligation to provide a report to the Minister on a cybersecurity event to be with either the National Cybersecurity Unit or the National Cybersecurity Incident Response Team?

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Kiernan Bell.

Senator John Wight, you have the floor.

Sen. John Wight: Thank you, Madam President.

In principle I support this Bill. Being involved both as a retired CEO and Director of a few public companies of some size, I have some experience with the expense and effort involved in designing a fit and proper cybersecurity programme. As we all know, there is no 100 per cent guarantee against a cyberattack. It is often a balance between the costs that an organisation is willing to put forward to it and the risks that it is assuming. This can be a very subjective determination as to whether an organisation has prepared a fit and proper cybersecurity programme.

We live in a very dangerous cyber world, getting more dangerous day by day. So, Madam President, my hope is that the substance of this legislation be prioritised—i.e., improving cybersecurity controls rather than the letter of a law, which concerns me slightly if the legislation is taken to its extreme.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Wight.

Would any other Senator care to speak on this Bill?

Senator Kiernan Bell, you have the floor.

Sen. Kiernan Bell: Sorry. Thank you. I did have additional questions with respect to the board and the makeup of the board, and I suppose the process.

Is it the case that the members of this board are going to be volunteers, essentially providing their time gratis? And I suspect that the answer to that question is yes, but I just thought it was worth asking that question. It does tie in with the obligation to provide reports, because that question then falls in, How are they going to be in a position thus to produce those reports on such a regular basis?

And the second is, Generally, what is the budget for standing up these three different or three new units (if I can put it that way) under this Bill? I did not see anything when we were debating the budget specifically dealing with this, and I just wondered if that answer was now available.

And secondarily, flowing from that, Is the effective date for this legislation, which will be by notice, going to be once the relevant units have been stood up and essentially have the necessary funding to perform their statutory functions? Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Kiernan Bell, Vice President.

There are no other questions. Then we will move over to the Minister, who is seeking responses from his technical team who are here, including the Permanent Secretary.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you very much, Madam President. And I thank the Opposition Senator for his submission, which was very detailed, as we do know that he has some expertise in that area.

I am going to attempt to go through this and kind of answer. So please forgive me if some of my answers may be out of the order in which they were asked. I mean, I know that there were some questions and stuff intertwined in comments and debate. So I will work my way through it as best I can. And then I will also try to answer the specific questions that were put forth by Senator Bell.

So on the first one, it was a bold question from Senator De Couto who basically asked, *Are we putting the cart before the horse?* And my answer will be just as bold: No, we are not. We are definitely [not] . . . and the public officers . . . and I think they are the right people, Madam President, to be doing this type of work as they are experts in their field as well. So the way I will answer that is that this Bill seeks to ensure good cybersecurity practices are being followed. And those practices have not changed as a result of the attack on the government.

And I know some would like to try to take the debate and focus on one particular incident. But as we know, good practices and protocols should always be followed regardless of one particular incident.

There was another question that was part of Senator De Couto's discussion as to, Do we have the

right people doing the right things? And I will let that pass right now as to how that was presented, and I will answer the question, because I think I understand where Senator De Couto was going. But as we have seen in other places, sometimes we do have people who are part of another party that tend to take swipes at public officers—

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: Point of order, Madam President!

The President: Senator—

POINT OF ORDER

[Implying improper motive]

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: The Senator is implying improper motive. And I am not having it, Madam President.

I would like him to retract it, please, Madam President.

The President: Senator De Couto—

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: It is on record, Madam President.

The President: Minister, carry on.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: So I will answer his question. I mean, Senator De Couto did say “right people.” So maybe Senator De Couto, if he would like to get a proper point across, he should use better language. But I will answer the question, Madam President.

The President: Minister, please do.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Yes.

We do have proper structures and functions for the Cybersecurity Advisory Board and Unit. And they were developed in collaboration with an international telecommunications union. So, yes, although some would like to think that they are the only experts who can speak on this type of stuff, I am happy, Madam President, that as you can see with us today we have public officers and other experts whom they can lean on to give proper advice and put proper structures in place for the government and this type of legislation. So, thank you.

Another point that Senator De Couto made was, Is it the case that the members of the board will be volunteers? I think that was a similar question asked by Senator Bell. No. Members on the board will function . . . sorry. A member will be on the board as a function of their post. Private sector members will be paid in accordance with the normal processes of government boards. So they will be paid positions. The public officers, I think that means, will sit on as part of their substantial posts.

The Cybersecurity Advisory Board includes two private sector cybersecurity advisors to advise independent of the public officers, who, Madam President, I believe are the right people in the room. I have to keep pointing that out.

There was a question on clause 6 that was put forward by Senator Bell. The board will be the best place to provide the report after it has considered input of the unit and the team.

Senator De Couto asked a question, Should there be more private sector members on the board? Clause 4(2)(f) provides for representatives from the Bermuda Hospitals Board. It is open to the Minister under clause 4(2)(g) to appoint two persons from the private sector to the board.

There was another question from Senator De Couto about, How is the information shared being facilitated? The Bill provides a mandate for the board and the unit to facilitate the information-sharing.

There was also a question from Senator De Couto on cybersecurity and the starting of their operation. A chief information security officer was formally appointed in June of 2023 to head up the Cybersecurity Unit in the Ministry of National Security.

Madam President, I think I have answered many. I am sure if I have missed one or two, I will be reminded.

The President: Senator Bell.

Sen. Kiernan Bell: Thank you, Madam President. I do have a follow-up question.

When one looks at the functions of the Cybersecurity Advisory Board, none of the functions concern investigating a cybersecurity event. So with that, I would repeat the question and say, If the Cybersecurity [Advisory] Board is to be statutorily mandated to report to the Minister on a cybersecurity event, should we be adding to its functions so that it does in fact have the power to investigate and report on a cybersecurity event? As matters currently stand, its only statutory function is to provide advice. And so I am just confused as to what the purpose of an advisory board is in providing a report to the Minister on a cybersecurity event when it actually has no investigatory powers of its own.

The President: Mm-hmm. Thank you, Senator Bell.

Senator De Couto, you had a supplemental question?

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: Yes. Thank you, Madam President. I do have a supplemental, and I have three outstanding questions which I could remind the Minister of.

My supplemental is again regarding the Cybersecurity Unit as the entire unit. I appreciated his information provided about the appointment of the chief information security officer in June of last year. Could he also provide a comment as to when or if that unit was

fully staffed up and operating at its fully intended capacity and organisation? That is my follow-up question, Madam President.

Would it be okay if I just repeat my three outstanding questions?

The President: You may.

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: Thank you, Madam President.

I did have a question about the timelines in clause 9(3) about the issuing of policies and procedures. I think it is important that that stuff is time-bound.

I did have a question about the \$100,000 fine. How would that apply to, say, an employee of an organisation? And I used the example of a government employee, but you could imagine a BELCO employee or a hospital employee, and so forth, if that would help.

And I would like, and I think the general public would certainly like to know, If this Bill had been in force a year ago today, would the Government have had to produce a report by now outlining what had happened in the hack for the information of the public?

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator De Couto.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President.

And to answer Senator Bell's question, the Minister can, if need be, delegate the investigative power to the board.

Senator De Couto asked, When was the unit established? The unit structure was approved by Cabinet in 2022.

And, you know, I know Senator De Couto is walking a fine line, because what he is trying to ask is something that will be discussed later in the Joint Select Committee. So I will leave that question that he was trying to get at, the last one, for the appropriate time.

The Minister of National Security, though (for his question before that), is now in the process of recruiting for the rest of the Cybersecurity Unit.

That is what I have at this point, Madam President. I see one or two more are coming in, so if you would just give me a slight pause, and I will wait for the final responses to come in, and we will put a ribbon on this debate.

The President: Certainly, Minister. We will give you time—

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you. I am just so grateful—

The President: —to obtain responses from the technical officers.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: —for the individuals who are in the room who are helping. Definitely the right people, Madam President.

[Pause]

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Senator De Couto had a question about the \$100,000 fine. Senior management in the organisation are responsible for ensuring compliance with regulations within the organisation.

There are still a few more, Madam President. I want to make sure I get the full responses.

There was also a follow-up. And I did say this, that the Senator was going down a fine line as to talking about a different incident. But this Bill is distinctive from the cybersecurity attack report in that this Bill establishes a framework for our CNII, whereas the actual attack was on our system. So [they are] two different conversations, and that is why I said we will keep one parked.

The Minister is required to give an annual report on cybersecurity events in Bermuda. So had the legislation been in place at the time, the report would have been part of that annual report.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Minister.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Can I proceed?

The President: Senator De Couto, you have a question?

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: My apologies, Madam President. I have one outstanding question, and I am grateful for the other answers.

But regarding clause 9(3), if you will permit me to restate the question, Madam President?

The President: You may restate the question.

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: Clause 9(3) makes reference to the CNII governing bodies to make policies and regulations. And my question is, Would it be time-bound? Would they have a timeline by which those various policies and regulations had to be produced?

Thank you, Madam President.

[Pause]

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President.

And to that final question, the timelines will be provided in the regulations.

The President: Thank you, Minister Darrell. You may proceed to move your Bill.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I now move that the Bill entitled the Cybersecurity Act 2024 be now read a second time.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 26

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam President, I now move that [Standing Order] 26 be suspended in respect to this Bill.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 26 suspended.]

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam President, I now move that the Bill entitled the Cybersecurity Act 2024 be now read a third time.

The President: Is there any objection to the third reading?
No objection.

BILL

THIRD READING

CYBERSECURITY ACT 2024

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President.

I now move that the Bill do now pass.

The President: It has been moved that the Bill do now pass.

Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection. The Bill is passed.

[Motion carried: The Cybersecurity Act 2024 was read a third time and passed.]

The President: Thank you, Minister Darrell. And thank you to all Senators who participated.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President. And I would like to thank all who were in the room assisting today and will continue to assist this programme in the work that they do. Thank you.

[Crosstalk]

The President: Indeed.

Thank you all. We will move on with our agenda.

The next item in our Orders of the Day is the second reading of the Bermuda Health Council Amendment Act 2024. And that is in the name of Senator Arianna Hodgson.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President. I would ask that that particular Bill be carried over, please.

The President: Thank you, Minister.

The Bill will be carried over until next week, or next sitting.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: The next sitting is in two weeks.

The President: Two weeks' time.
With that, we will move on.

MOTIONS

The President: There are none.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

The President: Would any Senator care to speak?
Senator De Couto, do you want to speak on the congratulatory and/or obituary speeches?

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: Yes, I do, Madam President. Thank you very much.

It is unfortunate that the Minister is not able to be with us at this moment because so many of the great items I want to comment on are well within his remit. (Oh, perfect. There we go.) I want to actually thank the Minister for attending the National Museum of Bermuda opening last week regarding modern Azorean art as part of our celebration of the 175th anniversary of the *Golden Rule* arrival in Bermuda. Unfortunately, I was not able to be there for my professional commitments but was very pleased to see that the Minister was there and appreciate his acknowledgement of all the work that the museum staff and those artists have been doing.

I do want to, of course, in advance wish everybody a great National Heroes Day. I have some other comments on that for later.

And I also want to congratulate all of the fathers and those who are operating in that capacity. As we know, there are many ways to be a father to somebody or a role model and a teacher. So I want to thank those.

And finally . . . no, not finally, Madam President. I am trying to move quickly; I have a few things.

I would like to congratulate Jessica Lewis. She has broken America's record that has stood for 27 years. She continues to impress on the international

stage. There is a lot of information on that online, so I will leave that to that.

I would like to congratulate the team at Dasfete who have been operating the Birdcage entertainment venue on top of the BTA [Bermuda Tourism Authority] Visitors Centre. We know that its time has come to an end. But that is a team that has been bringing ingenuity, passion and innovation to the tourism event space. And I want to congratulate them and hope that they continue. It can be hard as a small business, Madam President, in this area. But I hope that they continue to bring their love for the Island here.

Finally, Madam President, I also want to thank the Minister for reading out all of the graduates of the Bermuda College. For my sins, I spent a long time in academia. I want to congratulate . . . if I did my math right, there were 98 graduates. And I know that all of their friends and family must be bursting with pride at what they have achieved, Madam President. I want to wish them all of the greatest success in their future. My father used to say, *They can take everything away from you, but they can never take away your education*, Madam President. And that is something to live by.

Thank you for the time.

The President: Thank you, Senator De Couto.

Would any other Senator care to speak on congratulatory and/or obituary speeches?

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: I would, Madam President. And I would just like to come behind Senator De Couto.

And I thoroughly . . . I will say this, I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the National Museum on Thursday evening last. As you would know that I was an educator, still am an educator, but I taught in the schools for over 15 years. And this was a topic, Portuguese in Bermuda, that was in the module of Bermuda History. And it was one that I thoroughly enjoyed myself learning about. And, you know, all of the contributions and the cultural connections that the Portuguese and individuals who have Azorean (I hope I said that right) heritage offered to Bermuda. So, you know, many Bermudians whom we have, successful Bermudians as well, in our society have been connected to the Azores, Madeira, Portugal and Cape Verde. As Senator De Couto said, the origins go back to the *Golden Rule* in 1849.

So if anyone has not gotten an opportunity to get up to the museum, this particular exhibit runs until April 7. As [the Senator] did also mention, 175 years. The Government did grant a holiday for 170 years. So like I said, it was really good to be in the company. And also as I understand, as the outgoing Chair of the Bermuda National Museum, Senator De Couto, I will say on record, *Job well done!* Because I have been out there in the last year and a half, and many of the exhibits have been definitely life-changing for a lot of the individuals who have been up there. I have taken my kids

many times. They do a lot of family events. So well done to them.

Also, I would like to send congratulations in advance to the organisers and party promoters of our Carnival in Bermuda. As you know, this is National Heroes Weekend, but we also have some other events that are going on. And this undertaking is not an easy one. I have met in my capacity as Minister of Culture with many of these promoters and creatives over the past couple of months. And I want to give them in advance all the best going forward for success for this weekend.

Also, congratulations to a gentleman who has become very popular in the world of entertainment in Bermuda. And that is Mr. Russell Griffith, also known as RTwoG2, or DJ Rusty G, for the launch of his first rhythm project called *Havoc*. It features songs of Bermudian artists, Fire Wayne, Mr. Fotogenik, Ponaflex and Jamaican super-artists as well. I am sure that if anybody is interested in that music, they can find it wherever they get their music.

Also, congratulations to all of the dance schools on their successful (what we call) this recital season. I had the opportunity to attend a recital of a dance school on Saturday evening. I took my daughter, who is a dance enthusiast. And I have heard great things of all of the dance schools. And it is a culmination of a lot of the hard work by teachers, choreographers, lighting designers as well as parents. There was a time when I used to wake up quite early on a Saturday morning to have my daughter over to the United Dance Productions. So to all parents who are so excited to see their students performing . . .

And finally, Madam President . . . well, two more. I want to say congratulations to CariGenetics on the launch of their new home genetic testing products. And to Dr. Carika Weldon, I want to say *good job* to her. They recently pledged a portion of the proceeds of one of their BeforeYou Ancestry Tests to the Bermuda Day fund. And as you would know, this fund helped creatives to offset some of the costs of being in the successful Bermuda Day Parade. So thank you to her and good luck on her exciting next launch.

Finally, I would end by congratulating the Nspire Bermuda racket extravaganza team. This is a new charity, Madam President, led by retired professional athlete, Mr. Gavin Manders. And he is shaping the future of children and youth through racket sports. And you notice I am saying “racket sports.” It is on today again at the W. E. R. Joell Tennis Stadium. That is the government stadium. And I am pleased that over 300 young people—including my son—were able to attend yesterday and today.

And what is really interesting about this is that, with a lot of the talk in the community, Madam President, about kind of the choice between tennis and pickleball, it is really exciting that Mr. Manders, who for years was the best tennis player in Bermuda, has now been able to reach out to pickleball as well. And yesterday hundreds of students were there playing tennis. I

was able to stop by. And today another hundred different students, or maybe some of the same, will be there to do pickleball today. And I will also stop by once the Senate finishes.

So I want to say congratulations to Mr. Manders for being able to go back between his first love with his tennis, and his current love, I think, which is pickleball, and being able to bring the community together.

So, congratulations to all of these individuals today, Madam President.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Minister Darrell.

Would any other Senator care to speak?

Senator Dwayne Robinson, you have the floor.

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: Thank you, Madam President.

And just really quickly I wanted to congratulate Perform to Learn Preschool for a really well-organised and well-delivered Sports Day. And I have to declare my interest because my son won one of the races there, and it was one of his first Sports Days. And I just wanted to congratulate all of the preschools and teachers for everything that they do to cultivate our young people. And I look forward to next year.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Robinson.

Would any other Senator care to speak?

Senator Lindsay Simmons, you have the floor.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Good morning, Madam President.

I just wanted to congratulate Bermuda Men’s Soccer Team. Well done to them! They did put the work in. They worked hard. Unfortunately, we did not win. But we can see that they are putting in the time and the work. So congratulations to them. I just wanted to take the opportunity to congratulate our Onions out there.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons.

No other Senator wants to speak at this time. So I would just like to join the Minister in his congratulations to Dr. Carika Weldon on her CariGenetics programme.

With that, we will move on.

The President: Would any Senator care to speak on the motion to adjourn?

[Inaudible interjection]

The President: Oh, you have not . . . I jumped into it. You were supposed to—

ADJOURNMENT

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, thank you, Madam President.

I do now ask that the Senate, based on the schedule that was sent . . . I would like to put that on record, sent a schedule in, sent it in about two weeks ago. Based on the schedule that was sent, I do now ask that the Senate adjourn until Wednesday, June 26.

[Pause]

The President: My understanding is that the . . . was it received in the office? Yes. That is the date for the next meeting, June 26. (I beg your pardon, Senators.)

Vice President Kiernan Bell, you have a comment.

Sen. Kiernan Bell: Just a question whether it is just the next session, or whether it is the entire schedule?

[Inaudible interjection]

Sen. Kiernan Bell: So could that be circulated to Senators? That would be very helpful. Thank you.

The President: Thank you.

We will ensure that the schedule for the next meetings will be sent.

Would any Senator care to speak on the motion to adjourn?

Senator Dwayne Robinson, you have the floor.

ONE BERMUDA ALLIANCE OPPOSITION HOLDING GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABLE AGAINST PUNITIVE MEASURES IN BILLS

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: Yes. Thank you, Madam President. And I look forward to receiving that schedule. And I hope that the Minister also upgrades to letting us know when Bills will be deferred before the actual session. Just a suggestion; and that one is not in the *Royal Gazette*.

The President: I will certainly join you [in that].

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: Thank you.

So the main point that I wanted to speak about today was the word “consultation” and the word “listening.” We have just come out of a campaign, a political campaign where these were some of the buzzwords used by the current Government. *We are a Government that listens. And we are a Government that consults.* And what we continue to see is that, as we go along in the legislative agenda, the One Bermuda Alliance’s guardrails that it has placed on this Government continue to yield fruit for the Bermuda public.

When I say this, I want to bring up the fact that we were the party to bring forth amendments toward

the punitive measures that have been placed in several Bills and several pieces of legislation regarding prison sentences and regarding huge amounts of fines. This particular amendment . . . and I will not rehash the debate happening in another place, but this particular Bill reached another place. And our amendment brought forth by our team was denied, only for a U-turn of that amendment to then be included in the Bill.

So what I would like to suggest—

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Point of order, Madam President.

The President: Yes. What is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: This Bill has not been brought to the Senate. And we should not be talking about it, Madam President.

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: I never mentioned the title of the Bill.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: You did not mention the title of the Bill, but you are referring to the Bill.

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: I never mentioned the title of the Bill.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: You are referring to the Bill.

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: I never mentioned the title of the Bill, Madam President.

There are several Bills that fit that description, Madam President.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: He just . . . Madam President.

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: Never mentioned the name of the Bill.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President, we all know what he is talking about.

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: And since the Government was the one to defer that said Bill about letting us know, I think they should be careful not to mention the Bill.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam President, this is totally out of order!

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: It is not out of order. I have not mentioned the name of a Bill.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: We have a point of order.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Point of order, Madam President.

POINT OF ORDER

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: [The Senator] said that the Bill was in another House and got deferred. So he is talking about the said Bill that just was deferred today. The Government has a right to defer Bills. The Bill was deferred, and they have to accept that. This is brought by the Minister and we are going to defer it.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Madam President—

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Well, actually, we are not even deferring it; we are just carrying it over.

Sen. Robin Tucker: The information is in the public domain. Is it really an issue to reference here? It is in the public domain.

The President: Yes. It is in the public domain.

[Inaudible interjections]

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: It is in the public domain. The amendment was brought forward in another place. It is public domain that the Minister of the day and her team decided to vote against said amendment.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam, Madam, Madam President! Standing Orders! This is fully out of order!

The President: Senator Robinson—

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: Just saying this is public domain. And the vote has already carried. I am not speaking about what has happened in the Senate.

The President: Senators!

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President, point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President, we will have a time to discuss this in two weeks. This is out of order, Madam President. We cannot . . . Madam President, this is unacceptable.

The President: Any reference to the Bill at this time—

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Yes. We will have time to debate this Bill. That is what the Senate is for. Thank you.

The President: The decision has been made. There will be no discussion on the Bill that has been deferred.

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: All right, out of respect for you, Madam President.

The President: Would any Senator care to speak on the motion to adjourn, other than the deferral of the Bill?

ONE BERMUDA ALLIANCE OPPOSITION HOLDING GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABLE FOR ADDITIONAL TAXES ON VACATION RENTALS

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: Yes. So I will just continue on through my theme of consultation.

So just to raise the point now, we have had a tax that has been levied onto vacation rental property. And it has been brought to my attention, and to that of my colleagues, that it has caused many vacation rentals to even delist. And I want to acknowledge that the Government has made steps to improve the housing situation of Bermuda, but I believe that it is time for us to defer to looking at the legislation, the Landlord and Tenant Act, and seeing how we can encourage landlords to relist their properties, encourage landlords to re-rent their properties out at a reasonable rate.

I believe that taxing them a triple tax, because they have to pay their fee to be a vacation rental and they have to pay land tax, and then they also have to pay the percentage that has been levied recently, that many have cited in public domains that over 300 Airbnbs were delisted.

So I just wanted to bring this forward to the Minister, because in a previous session it was mentioned that he may meet with the Vacation Rental Association [of Vacation-Home Owners.] And I just wanted to see if the Honourable Minister would be willing to give an update on that meeting and how that has progressed, because we have found that we have received information from that association basically refuting the fact that they are undermining housing stock. And I would like to hear the Government's response to that only because people are still unable to find adequate rentals.

We all know that there is a housing situation happening that is very crucial. And I think both sides of the aisle have spoken on it before. But the reason why this consultation piece is so important is because we have seen a theme from this current Government that continues to say it is listening. But we find that almost every legislative piece that comes forward that affects a certain group, that group comes forward with issues after each substantive Minister stands on their feet and says that they have spoken to the industry, that they have listened to various industries. We have seen it with vacation rentals. We have seen it with taxi drivers. We have seen it with farmers. We are now seeing it with the medical professionals.

We are seeing it with all of these groups who are lobbying us, as the Opposition, because they are either unable to speak out publicly about certain things or keep it professional because nobody wants to be

seen as the person in the private sector speaking out against their current sitting Government.

So it is incumbent on us to hold the Government to account to actually consult, because what ends up happening is we come into each respective Chamber, and we say, *There needs to be an amendment. There needs to be a change. We have heard various things from the industry that they have concerns.* And those amendments, those suggestions are dismissed because we have a 30-seat majority in the government for the Government party. And I just hesitate as to what we may see down the line of legislation being amended, being changed, being done that has blatantly been told in advance that it will affect Bermudians negatively, that it will enforce punitive measures or any other manner of situations on to the listening public, on to Bermudians.

And they are given these warnings constantly from the One Bermuda Alliance. But what we end up hearing constantly is political rhetoric, catchphrases, slogans. But that is not translating to the life of the everyday Bermudian. That is not translating to folks who are coming together and putting forth their concerns on various legislative agenda items. And what we have seen is that this Government is intent on pushing its agenda through. And at the end of the day, if they are not careful, the only friend they may have is the insurance industry. As a labour Government, I think that is very concerning.

So I just wanted to make sure that we in this Chamber speak out about the fact that we have so many pressure groups who are claiming they have not been listened to, that they have not been properly consulted. And we have Ministers on their feet claiming in public space and in another place that they have done consultation. So, I just wanted to bring that dichotomy and let people know that, please keep bringing your concerns to the Opposition because we will continue to voice them on your behalf. We will continue to hold this Government accountable, especially against punitive measures and thinly veiled additional taxes.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Robinson.

Would any other Senator care to speak on the motion to adjourn?

Senator De Couto, you have the floor.

BERMUDA'S EVERYDAY HEROES

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: Thank you, Madam President.

As I alluded to in my congrats and obits, we have a big weekend coming up—Father's Day, National Heroes Day—and it has created a moment of contemplation for me, Madam President, and has given me an opportunity to appreciate everybody in Bermuda who is working hard for our Island. Of course, with National Heroes Day coming up, Madam President, we

have the movies. We have the cake, the tights, the super-powers, but those are not the real heroes, Madam President. We have the bold-face names, the well-known names. And I want to thank Honourable Minister Darrell for outlining them in his prior Statement, you know, people of stature who have made big impacts on this Island.

But, Madam President, I just want to remark briefly on what I would call the everyday heroes of this country. Some days I will be on my scooter going over Trimmingham Hill to work. Actually, most days. This thought normally comes to me around the same place on the road, which is a bit funny if you think about it. But you start thinking about the day ahead and all of the work you have to do. And then I just stop and I reflect. And I think about everybody driving past today, everybody who will walk past. And I think about, as we learn about what everyone is doing in our community, the work that people are doing. It could be you in a hospital and a nurse or doctor or some other professional. They take that extra minute to put you at ease, Madam President, to chat to a family member about a situation.

It could be that person who . . . well, that person. Think about the clubs, the youth sports, the churches, the feeding programmes, the sports clubs. Think about the hours, the passion, the commitment, sometimes money, but the time and the love that all of those people put in in making this community better.

Now, obviously, Madam President, some of us are operating in this more overtly political sphere. We are talking about finance, we are talking about laws, we are trying to get in the paper. We are doing that bit. But I am actually inspired every day by those everyday heroes. And I am grateful to them. That everyday hero, Madam President, they could just be someone who shows up every day whom a child can look to and say, *I know that here's a person in my life every day I can count on.* It sounds so simple! But we know it is not to be taken for granted, Madam President.

So for those of you who are out there, and it is almost everybody in Bermuda. Just think about it. This country is running on their backs. And I want to salute them with National Heroes Day coming up. I want everyone in Bermuda to know that, *You're my hero. Honestly, I am inspired and motivated and incredibly grateful.*

So thank you, Madam President, to you and to all of them. Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator De Couto.

Would any other Senator care to speak on the motion to adjourn?

Seeing none—

Oh, sorry. Senator Robinson.

Sen. Leslie Robinson: Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Senator Leslie Robinson.

TAXES ON VACATION RENTALS

Sen. Leslie Robinson: Yes. Thank you.

Just a couple of things, Madam President. I know that it has been stated today about . . . and I am going to speak specifically right now about the vacation rentals.

The President: Mm-hmm.

Sen. Leslie Robinson: In that this Government is not listening, that this Government is imposing taxes, et cetera. I want us to remember and to go back in time because when we think about vacation rentals, we must think about the fact that how a lot of this came about. And I am now going to talk about back in the time when there was segregation on this Island. And Black Bermudians had to establish guest houses and other vacation rental properties for Black tourists because there was no place. They could not go to any other White established hotel.

So I want us to remember that because vacation rentals really were started by Black people for Black people in a time when there was segregation and there was nowhere else. Just like there is no room in the inn, there was only a sign saying "Whites only." So this Government and our Progressive Labour Party, which has been a party that has been for people to make sure that there is equity for all, we are not going to forget about how the vacation rentals started, and that the majority of those vacation rental owners for years and still now are Black people and for fairness and equity.

So I want to say that we listen and we continue to listen. And I do not want us to leave here today thinking that we are not listening, especially because so many of those vacation rentals now and in the past were set up and are being set up and continue to be set up by our Black people because way back then that was the only place for Black tourists.

PROGRESSIVE LABOUR PARTY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Sen. Leslie Robinson: Now, Madam President, I just also want to mention a few things about this Government. Because again I do not want us to be leaving here thinking that, you know, the Government is not listening or is not doing things for the people. I want to mention the fact that we do as a Government collaborate on solutions that will improve our economy and the lives of our people. It continues to be said out there in social media, et cetera, that we are not doing that. But we actually are. And I want to mention in particular right now about our Economic Development Strategy. Because I know that there have been questions raised about, *What are we doing? And have things taken place? We cannot really see any of the end results from what we are doing.*

But, you know, our Economic Development Strategy has five strategic priorities: business expansion and retention; attracting investment; entrepreneurship and small business development; economic recovery plan execution; and investing in our people. The truth is that the Economic Development Strategy is overseen by our Economic Development Advisory Board, and the meetings are held regularly. There is continuous media out there saying that there are no key performance indicators, but that is not true either. We have done a lot of work to ensure progress. And it has helped to better the lives of our people.

Some things, for example the expansion of the economic empowerment zone to South East Hamilton to create more construction activity, providing jobs for Bermudians. Increased funding for affordable housing, which has seen 70 new affordable units made available for Bermudian families. Also, the Mortgage Guarantee Programme, which has made dozens of Bermudians first-time homeowners. Revising Bermuda's family office framework to attract more businesses to Bermuda and the creation of a National Workforce Development Advisory Board to ensure Bermudians are skilled for jobs of today and tomorrow.

I want to be able to say also, Madam President, we talk much about the economy. Again, there is a lot of negativity around here about the economy. But unemployment numbers have gone down to their lowest since the 1980s. It is now at 2.5 per cent. Wages have increased by 7.1 per cent with increases in take-home pay seen across our economy at nearly every level due to this PLP Government's reduction of taxes for our working people.

Tourism arrivals and spending are up with nearly 10,000 more air visitors during the third quarter of 2023 with increased spending up to \$111.5 million from \$75.3 million. Our economy grew by 8.3 per cent when our figures came out for the third quarter of 2023, the fastest pace of growth in the last two years and the fourth consecutive quarter of economic growth.

I want to be able to say, Madam President, that we hear so much negativity. But this Government is doing much for our people. There is still a lot of work to be done, but there is good work that has been done. And I did not want us to leave this Chamber without our commenting on some of the good work that we have done and that we will continue to do for the people of Bermuda.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Leslie Robinson. Would any other Senator care to speak? Minister.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President. I will take the opportunity to close this motion to adjourn.

The President: Senator Tucker, were you . . . you were not . . . oh, okay.
Minister, carry on.

TAXES ON VACATION RENTALS— PROGRESSIVE LABOUR PARTY GOVERNMENT STRIKING A BALANCE

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you. Thank you, Madam President.

I would just like to remind the listening public that this Government, the Progressive Labour Party Government, is focused on serving the people. You have heard it many times, Madam President. I know I sound like a broken record up here. And it is interesting to me that I gave my last motion to adjourn comments, and it was about silence that I was hearing from across the aisle. So I am glad that the Senator who is very popular for his Twitter fingers has decided to join us today and speak up. But unfortunately, Madam President, the Senator who spoke a few people before me is a little misguided. And I would say he was a little misguided because last time I spoke about the silence and the inability of those on the other side to speak.

But, you know, I would call him the invisible Senator, because if he was out in the community, Madam President . . . and I will welcome him. He can come with me and I could show him what community engagement looks like. This would be a great weekend for him to come—

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: Point of order, Madam President.

The President: Senator Robinson.

POINT OF ORDER

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: I understand opinion, but he is incorrect. I mean . . . and also some of us have day jobs. He may not know about that, Madam President.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Is there a point of order, Madam President? Sounds like a point of information to me, which I am not willing to take at this time.

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: It is a point of order because he is incorrect, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Robinson. Your point is made.
Minister, carry on—

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President.

The President: —without reference—

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President.

I would ask the Senator to speak to his Senate colleague, who seems to know numbers a lot better than he does. And if we could do percentages, you would be able to see that community engagement is not once or twice at a sports day, Madam President. It is day in and day out. It is going up to—

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: Point of order.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam President, if I may.

The President: We are not going to have this. A point of order is not taken if you are referring to his comment.

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: Okay.

The President: All right?

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President—

The President: The first time and—

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: —for allowing me to get into my comments today.

You know, engagement is when you actually do as we mentioned in a previous speaking point earlier, when you go to cultural events and you speak to people. And you hear them tell you directly, *Thank you for the work that the Government is doing*. And I know the Senator spoke about vacation rentals, Madam President. And the reason why I would say he is misguided is because, although he has clearly got some talking points that someone has come and spoken to him about vacation rentals, but we as this Government are looking for a balance. Yes, vacation rentals are important. And yes, as the Minister responsible for Tourism sat down and listened. And we will see some adjustments coming soon when it comes to the tourism industry.

But the other balance, and he crossed by it, Madam President, is about housing in this country. And although it is always interesting that I hear pot-shots coming from the other side, Madam President, again we see no alternatives that are put forward by the Opposition. Absolutely none! And this speaks to the point that my Senate colleague made a moment ago that it just becomes noise.

You know, at a public meeting that I was at earlier this week put on by the Pembroke Parish Council, which I will say there were representatives from both sides of the aisle there . . . But you listen. And you listen to what people are asking for. And you can see that this Government then listens to those concerns. We then turn around, and we have tangible action, tangible results, tangible policies to strike a balance in the case of

what the Senator was speaking about earlier, which is the tourism rentals and what is a fair taxation for individuals in that place.

As well as trying to balance the fact that if the Senator . . . and I do not know if he has, and I do not know how much he does, but if he would go knocking on doors he would notice (maybe not in the area that he intends to run, but he would notice) that the number-one concern with many Bermudians is the lack of affordable housing. You can only get that information, Madam President, by being on the doorstep. I would challenge the Senator on the other side to listen to how Senator Lindsay Simmons, Madam President, went up and down Devonshire and Smith's North—

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: And point of order, Madam President.

POINT OF ORDER

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: Again, my comments are being misrepresented. I clearly acknowledged the housing crisis in Bermuda. I clearly acknowledged Bermudians are struggling to find affordable housing. I also acknowledged what the Government had done in a step to remedy that. So if the Minister is going to speak, he needs to speak correctly and accurately.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam President—

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: Thank you.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: The Senator has missed my point completely. Because I started by saying that I heard no tangible plan from the Opposition on this matter.

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: That is not true. He said I *glossed over*. That is what he said. That is what the Minister said. I *glossed over* the housing crisis. That is what I was referring to in my comments.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Minister, carry on.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam President.

So I just wanted to point that out about the Government listening. This Government, as you can see, and there are tangible pieces of consultation and going on the doorstep and holding public meetings, Madam President, to hear the concerns. And some of the policies that you will see that this Government does bring come exactly from those discussions.

HOLIDAY WISHES

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: So, Madam President, I would just like to pivot a bit. And I would like to finish my motion to adjourn comments along the lines of where Senator De Couto did go, Madam President. And, you know, there are not many times that we are aligned in this Senate, but in this case we are. I do wish all individuals of Bermuda a safe and happy holiday weekend. To the fathers in this community, I would encourage them to take some time and reflect on the important roles that they have of their own children, but also as men in society in general, Madam President.

I would like to encourage those of you who may not know our National Heroes and all that they have done to do some research in advance of this weekend and see what these National Heroes have done and how that represents a change in our lives today. And also go a step further and see how other jurisdictions, other countries recognise and honour their heroes.

And also, Madam President, I would conclude these remarks by wishing that everyone be safe over this holiday weekend. Thank you, Madam President.

HOLIDAY WISHES

The President: Thank you, Minister Darrell.

And I would like to join you and your comments about fathers and the fact that this weekend I hope all fathers have a very happy and safe and enjoyable Father's Day, those who actually have children and those who are fathers to young people who do not have fathers. Because I think there are quite a number of people who do and who have not had a father figure in their lives. So any of the men in the community who can show young people what a father, a true father's value is, I think is important. So I wish all fathers then a very happy Father's Day, and I also want to wish everyone here in the Senate as well as those in the community to have a wonderful and safe National Heroes Weekend.

And until we meet again in two weeks' time, I wish all Senators a very happy week. And thank you for everything today.

The Senate stands adjourned until the 26th of this month. Thank you.

[At 12:34 pm, the Senate stood adjourned until 10:00 am Wednesday, 26 June 2024.]