



2023/24 SESSION
of the
BERMUDA SENATE

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

13 MARCH 2024

Sitting number 8 of the 2023/2024 Session
(pages 153-168)

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

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**BERMUDA SENATE
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13 MARCH 2024
10:02 AM**

Sitting Number 8 of the 2023/24 Session

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

The President: Good morning, Senators.
The Senate is in session.
Shall we pray?

PRAYERS

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

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

[Minutes of 29 February 2024]

The President: I call on Senator Kiernan Bell.

Sen. Kiernan Bell: Thank you, Madam President.
Madam President, I move that the Minutes of the meeting of Thursday, 29 February 2024 be taken as read.

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

Sen. Kiernan Bell: Madam President, I move that the Minutes of Thursday, 29 February 2024 be confirmed.

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

[Minutes of 29 February 2024 confirmed.]

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

MESSAGES

The President: Ms. Beale.

The Assistant Clerk: There are no messages, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Ms. Beale.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The President: There are none.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

APOLOGIES

The President: I have one announcement and that is that Senator Leslie Robinson will be absent today. She is in the UK attending the CPA conference.

There are other announcements and I call on . . . Minister, who will be responding? Thank you.

Minister, you have the floor to present for Senator Robinson who is abroad. You have the floor.

BERMUDA HOUSING TRUST AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FISCAL YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

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

Madam President, I hereby present for the information of Senate the Bermuda Housing Trust Audited Financial Statements for the fiscal year ended 31 March 2023. Senators may access copies of the statements on their tablets or on the Parliament's website, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Minister Darrell.
There is a second one that is in the name of Senator Arianna Hodgson, the Junior Minister for Finance.

Senator Hodgson, you have the floor.

ISSUANCE OF NEW GOVERNMENT GUARANTEES

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I hereby present for the information of Senate the Issuance of New Government Guarantees in accordance with section 2AA(3) of the Government Loans Act 1978.

The Speaker: Thank you, Senator Hodgson.
There is another one in the name of Senator Robinson. Minister Owen Darrell, you will present for her.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT FINTECH 2023 YEAR END REPORT

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

I hereby present for the information of the Senate the Economic Development Department (EDD) FinTech 2023 Year End Report. Again, Senators may access copies of the report on their tablets or on the Parliament's website.

The President: Thank you. And there is another one in—

BERMUDA IMMIGRATION AND PROTECTION (PROHIBITION OF ENTRY) ORDER 2024

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Yes, Madam President, I hereby present for the information of Senate the Bermuda Immigration and Protection (Prohibition of Entry) Order 2024 made by the Minister responsible for Immigration in exercise of power conferred by section 26(1) of the Bermuda Immigration and Protection Act [1956].

The President: Thank you. And you will present the next—

BERMUDA FAMILY OFFICE SOLUTIONS—A FRAMEWORK FOR EMPOWERING YOUR LEGACY

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam President, I hereby present for the information of the Senate, the Bermuda Family Office Solutions—A Framework for Empowering Your Legacy. Again, Senators may access copies of the framework on their tablets and on the Parliamentary website.

The President: Thank you, Minister Darrell.
And there is . . . the last one is also in your name as the spokesperson for the Cabinet Office.
When you are ready, you can present that.

OFFICE OF INFORMATION COMMISSIONER ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam President, I hereby present for the information of Senate the Information Commissioner's Office Annual Report 2023.

The President: Thank you, Minister Darrell.
And I think you have the final one.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: The notice of motion?

The President: In your role as Minister of Culture and Sport.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: The notice of motion? Are we on [Item] No. 6?

The President: Oh, sorry. I beg your pardon. Yes, notice of motion, sorry.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

TOURISM INVESTMENT (AZURA BERMUDA) ORDER 2024

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

I hereby present for the consideration of Senate the Tourism Investment (Azura Bermuda) Order 2024 as made by the Minister responsible for Tourism under section 3 of the Tourism Investment Act 2017 together with written agreement of the Minister of Finance in exercise of the power conferred by section 5 of the Tourism Investment Act 2017.

I give notice that at a later point in the meeting I will move that the said Draft Order be approved.

The President: Thank you, Minister Darrell.

PETITIONS

The President: There are none.

STATEMENTS

The President: There are none.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: I have one, Madam President.

The President: I beg your pardon. Minister Darrell, you can proceed when you are ready.

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

42ND ANNUAL SPORTS AWARDS

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam President, on Saturday, 9 March 2024, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport through the Department of Sport and Recreation, hosted its [42nd Annual Sports Awards](#) at the Hamilton Princess Hotel. This year's Sports Awards recognised the distinguished achievements of the Island's top Bermudian athletes, officials, and supporters for their contribution to sports from 2023. The theme of this year's ceremony was "Sport Matters."

Madam President, our National Sports Policy guides us with a five-year promise to elevate the value of sport in Bermuda. The 42nd Annual Sports Awards exemplified the Government's commitment to this goal. Several awards were presented across various categories.

Madam President, I wish to provide background information on the selection process for the awards. In December of each year, the Department of Sport and Recreation launches a campaign regarding the nomination process for the sports awards.

Nominations are open to members of the public and the National Sports Governing Bodies (NSGBs). Once the deadline passes, the applications are forwarded to a selection committee for review.

The selection committee, Madam President, is tasked with receiving nominations across all award categories and determining their approval or denial of recognition based on the established criteria. This committee is annually appointed by the Minister responsible for Sport (that is myself) and is responsible for voting on candidates deserving recognition by the Premier of the Government of Bermuda within the realm of Sport. The selection of awardees for all categories is conducted through a ballot overseen by the Awards Committee Chair, taking into account a point system.

The selection committee is comprised of representatives from the following sports areas:

- the Director of Sport and Recreation, acts as the Chairperson;
- two representatives from the Sports Media (press, radio or television);
- two representatives who are directly related to Olympic Sports;
- two individuals from non-Olympic Sports; and
- Senior Sports Development Officer, who acts as the Ex officio and Secretary.

The top honour, Athlete of the Year, reserved for athletes who have demonstrated a consistent level of excellence throughout the calendar year in sports, was awarded to the following recipients:

- Female Athlete of the Year: Ms. Jessica Lewis
- Male Athlete of the Year: Mr. Conor White
- Junior Female Athlete of the Year: Ms. Rachael Betschart
- Junior Male Athlete of the Year: Mr. Sebastian Kempe

These athletes have once again demonstrated that sport matters, showcasing an exceptional year of achievements in their respective sports. What a remarkable accomplishment!

Madam President, as the Minister of Sport I have the distinct pleasure of selecting and presenting the awards to athletes of our National Sports, which are Football and Cricket.

The awardees were:

- Female (Cricket), Ms. Chantel Oosthuizen
- Male (Cricket), Mr. Kamau Leverock
- Female (Football), Ms. Jya Ratteray-Smith
- Male (Football), the late Mr. Marco Warren

Awards were also presented in the following categories:

Senior Achievement Award. This award is for participation and achievement at a high standard of performance in international and national competitions.

The female awardees were: Ms. Jessica Lewis, Ms. Leilanni Nesbeth, Ms. Yushae DeSilva-An-drade and Ms. Emma Harvey. The male awardees

were: Mr. Kamau Leverock, Conor White, Tyler Smith and Mr. Dage Minors.

The Junior Achievement Awards, female, went to Ms. Rachael Betschart, Fenella Wightman, Ms. Jaeda Grant and Ms. Elanna Fulton. The Junior Achievement Awards for males went to Mr. Sebastian Kempe, Mr. Oliver Betschart, Cody Rego and Mr. Elijah Daley.

The Special Achievement Award. This award is presented to individuals other than athletes who have made a significant and sustained contribution to sport. The awardees were: Ms. Leatrice Oatley and Ms. McKeisha Smith, who actually is an athlete in her own right, Madam President.

Sport Citation. This award is presented to those who have distinguished themselves in sport both past and present. The awardees were Mr. Keith Smith, for the sport of golf; Mr. Dexter Basden, for the sport of Cricket, and of course, Madam President, and a Cleveland County legend in his own right, Mr. Allen Douglas, Sr., for cricket.

Special Recognition. This award recognises those athletes who have achieved special status or distinction in sport. The awardees were Mr. Reggie Lambe, who is now the most capped footballer in Bermuda's history, as well as the sailing team the SSL Gold Cup team and the Bermuda Girls 4x100m Relay Team who won bronze at last year's CARIFTA Games.

This year, for the first time, Madam President, we have introduced a new category and that is the Team of the Year. This award is presented to a team from a recognised national sport governing body that has distinguished itself within the calendar year in an international competition. The awardees were the Women's National Football Team and the Bermuda Men's National Cricket Team

Madam President, the Ministry was thrilled to showcase this year's event once again, where we celebrated the best and brightest in our sports community. The camaraderie and the national pride displayed during the awards were enjoyed by all and we eagerly anticipate another year—an Olympic year, Madam President—of excellence in sport. I extend my gratitude to the Sports Awards Committee and the staff at the Department of Sport and Recreation for hosting yet another stellar event.

Thank you, Madam President

The President: Thank you, Minister Darrell.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The President: There are none.

FIRST READING OF PUBLIC BILLS

REGISTRAR OF COMPANIES (ANNUAL CORPORATE REGULATORY FEES) ACT 2024

REGISTRAR OF COMPANIES (ANNUAL CORPORATE REGULATORY FEES) (NO. 2) ACT 2024

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AMENDMENT ACT 2024

The President: The following public Bills have been received from the Honourable House of Assembly and are now read for the first time. Their titles are, respectively, the Registrar of Companies (Annual Corporate Regulatory Fees) Act 2024 (Governor's recommendation signified), [and] the Registrar of Companies (Annual Corporate Regulatory Fees) (No. 2) Act 2024 (Governor's recommendation signified), and the third one is the Economic Development Amendment Act 2024.

FIRST READING OF PRIVATE BILLS

The President: There are none.

QUESTION PERIOD

The President: Senators, I would like to inform you that we will be carrying [over] the questions that were asked by Senator Tucker, the Opposition Leader in the Senate. These questions will be carried over until next week. Item No. 13 then, the Orders of the Day. Oh, I beg your pardon. I need to do the questions.

Senators, we will now entertain questions from the Statement that was read this morning by Minister Darrell.

Does any Senator wish to ask questions on this Statement?

Hearing none . . . Minister, you were most comprehensive in your Statement, so there are no questions of you.

So we will move then to the Orders of the Day. The first one is the second reading of the Registrar of Companies (Annual Corporate Regulatory Fees) Act 2024 and that is in the name of Senator Arianna Hodgson, the Junior Minister for Finance.

Senator Hodgson, you have the floor. When you are ready, you can present, please.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

STANDING ORDER 25

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam President, I move that the provisions of Standing Order 25 be granted so that Senate may now proceed with the second readings of the public Bills entitled the Registrar of Companies (Annual Corporate Regulatory Fees) Act 2024 and the

Registrar of Companies (Annual Corporate Regulatory Fees) (No. 2) Act 2024.

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

[Motion carried: Leave granted for the Registrar of Companies (Annual Corporate Regulatory Fees) Act 2024 and the Registrar of Companies (Annual Corporate Regulatory Fees) (No. 2) Act 2024 to be read a second time on the same day as their first reading.]

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Senator Hodgson, when you are ready.

[Pause]

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I move that the Bill entitled the Registrar of Companies (Annual Corporate Regulatory Fees) Act 2024 be now read a second time.

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

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

BILL

SECOND READING

REGISTRAR OF COMPANIES (ANNUAL CORPORATE REGULATORY FEES) ACT 2024

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam President, the Bill before the Senate is the [Registrar of Companies \(Annual Corporate Regulatory Fees\) Act 2024](#). This Bill introduces new regulatory fees to be levied on all entities on Bermuda's corporate register in respect of which the Registrar of Companies has regulatory, supervisory and compliance oversight.

Madam President, the driving force behind the introduction of these new regulatory fees is the expansion of the role performed by the Registrar of Companies in recent years which has resulted in the need to hire significant numbers of additional skilled personnel.

The role of the ROC [Registrar of Companies] historically was primarily administrative in nature. However, with the changing landscape of the international business arena and the impact of external pressures from a variety of sources, the ROC now has responsibility for the implementation of the economic substance regime, the enhancement of the ROC's Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorism Financing Compliance

framework in the real estate and dealers in high value goods sectors, the maintenance of Bermuda's beneficial ownership register, with beneficial ownership featuring prominently in both Bermuda's AML/ATF and economic substance regimes and the maintenance and operation of the Treaty Unit, all with increased scrutiny from global regulatory bodies such as the European Union, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). There is also a need for substantial investments to be made in technology on an ongoing basis to facilitate maximum efficiencies and to remain competitive and at the forefront of developments.

Madam President, now that the ROC has regulatory and compliance obligations of every entity on Bermuda's corporate register, in respect of economic substance and corporate governance, as well as supervisory oversight of the real estate and high value goods sectors, it is important to ensure that the resources are available to enable them to deliver on the disparate demands of all stakeholders and to maintain a regulatory regime that will stand up to the rigour of international scrutiny. In order to achieve this, it is necessary for additional revenue to be generated and in 2021 KPMG was engaged to undertake an independent analysis which included an assessment of the ROC's projected revenues and operating expenditures as well as a jurisdictional comparison which culminated in a determination of the recommended fees.

Madam President, it is proposed that the regulatory fee applicable to exempted companies, exempted limited liability companies, overseas companies, exempted partnerships, exempted limited partnerships and overseas partnerships be set at BMD\$500 payable annually. It is further proposed that the regulatory fee applicable to local companies, local limited liability companies and limited partnerships which are not also registered as exempted partnerships be set at BMD\$150 payable annually. The introduction of these regulatory fees is expected to add approximately \$6 million to the public purse each year.

Madam President, the introduction of regulatory fees and the rationale for it was discussed with external stakeholders, as well various groups representing the international business sector in 2021. This included the Bermuda legal focus group, the Bermuda Bar Association and corporate service providers. An information paper providing details of the proposed changes were circulated to all stakeholders in October 2023. While increased fees are seldom welcomed by industry and this was reflected in the discussions, there is a general understanding of the driving forces behind these additional fees.

Madam President, the Bill under consideration today is pursuant to the Budget Statement in support for the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 2023/24. The Bill confers power on the ROC to provide

for annual corporate regulatory fees. Later this session I will bring forward a subsequent related Bill to the Senate, the Registrar of Companies (Annual Corporate Regulatory Fees) (No. 2) Act 2024 which will amend the Companies Act 1981, the Limited Liability Company Act 2016, the Limited Partnership Act 1883, the Exempted Partnerships Act 1992, the Overseas Partnerships Act 1995 and the Government Fees Regulations 1976 in order to detail the manner in which the regulatory fees are payable.

Madam President, section 2(1) of the Provisional Collection of Revenue Act 1975 provides the Governor with the power to make a declaration that it is expedient in the public interest that this Bill should have statutory effect from its first reading in the House of Assembly. And so the effective date of this Bill will be 9 February 2024.

Madam President, the Bill that we are debating today will assist in the development of an infrastructure that will enable the ROC to perform and deliver on its obligations in a timely and efficient manner thereby continuing to enhance Bermuda's position as a leader in the international business world.

Madam President, with those brief remarks, I now present the Bill entitled the Registrar of Companies (Annual Corporate Regulatory Fees) Act 2024 and welcome comments from other [Senators].

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Arianna Hodgson. Would any Senator care to speak on this Bill? Senator De Couto, Dr. De Couto, you have the floor.

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: Thank you, Madam President, and thank you, Senator, for that presentation of the Bill.

Broadly, we do support the Bill. We recognise the changing and expanding role of the Registrar of Companies in our modern world. We also recognise that it is important that they are appropriately staffed and resourced to carry out this role effectively and efficiently for business. And I believe the Senator outlined in quite some detail all the driving reasons behind it. So we are glad to hear that.

I do have two questions . . . well, I do have a comment in that it is a new fee for companies and for local companies. While it is only \$150, that is, indeed, a new fee that they have to add on to their costs. So I want to highlight that.

Perhaps the Senator could comment on why it is retroactive to the 9th of February, which is not (I think) particularly normal to have retroactive fees. I think there is a good reason, but I think it would be useful if the Senator could explain it to the Senate please, Madam President.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator De Couto.

Senator John Wight, you have the floor.

Sen. John Wight: Thank you, Madam President.

I am fully supportive of the new fees. As the Junior Minister explained, the role of the Registrar of Companies has broadened considerably and especially over the past few years. This is an extremely important role for Bermuda that we must get right. So I think, you know, we must be able to fund the operation appropriately. So I am fully in favour of the increase in fees.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Wight.

Would any other Senator care to speak on this Bill?

Hearing . . . Senator Dill, you have the floor.

Sen. Rev. Dr. Emilygail A. Dill: Thank you, Madam President.

I just would like to commend the Government on the intentionality and the continued development of the infrastructure that would be consistent with the growth in the business industry. Certainly the fees would be consistent with the need to be able to cover the cost of the continued expansion of the Registrar of Companies and the additional staff. So I would like to commend the Government and support . . .

[No audio]

The President: Senator Hodgson.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Yes, Madam President, I just did want to provide a response to Senator De Couto's question about the timing. Given that it was something that was mentioned in last year's Budget Debate, it was purely a matter of timing. In an effort to have this sorted before we enter the new fiscal year, this was simply the date that we received the Governor's assent. [There is] nothing special about the date in particular.

So if there are no further questions—

The President: There does not appear to be any.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the Bill entitled the Registrar of Companies (Annual Corporate Regulatory Fees) Act 2024 be now read a second time.

The President: Is there any objection to the second reading?

No objection.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the Bill entitled the Registrar of Companies (Annual Corporate Regulatory Fees) Act 2024 be now read a third time.

The President: Is there any objection to the third reading?

No objection.

BILL

THIRD READING

REGISTRAR OF COMPANIES (ANNUAL CORPORATE REGULATORY FEES) ACT 2024

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the Bill do now pass.

The President: Is there any objection to the passing of the Bill?

Thank you, Senator Arianna Hodgson. The Bill is passed.

[Motion carried: The Registrar of Companies (Annual Corporate Regulatory Fees) Act 2024 was read a third time and passed.]

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

SENATE VISITOR

The President: I would just like to announce that we do have a representative in the person of Mr. Joel Boisson. He is the comptroller from the Registrar of Companies, and he is here to assist with any questions. Welcome to you, sir. He is in the foyer.

[Orders of the Day, continuing]

The President: We will now move on to the second item on our Orders of the Day and that is the Registrar of Companies (Annual Corporate Regulatory Fees) (No. 2) Act [2024] and that is also in the name of Senator Arianna Hodgson, the Junior Minister of Finance.

Senator Hodgson, when you are ready you can present your second.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I move that the Bill entitled the Registrar of Companies (Annual Corporate Regulatory Fees) (No. 2) Act 2024 be now read a second time.

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

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

BILL

SECOND READING

REGISTRAR OF COMPANIES (ANNUAL CORPORATE REGULATORY FEES) (NO. 2) ACT 2024

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Madam President, the Bill before the Senate is the [Registrar of Companies \(Annual Corporate Regulatory Fees\) \(No. 2\) Act 2024](#). This Bill follows the recent Registrar of Companies (Annual Corporate Regulatory Fees) Act 2024 which will be referred to as the “first Bill.”

Madam President, the first Bill confers powers on the Registrar of Companies to introduce new regulatory fees to be levied on all entities on Bermuda’s corporate register in respect of which it has regulatory, supervisory and compliance oversight.

The current Bill before the Senate (which I will refer to as the “second Bill”) amends the Companies Act 1981, the Limited Liability Company Act 2016, the Limited Partnership Act 1883, the Exempted Partnerships Act 1992, the Overseas Partnerships Act 1995 and the Government Fees Regulations 1976 in order to detail the manner in which the regulatory fees are payable in accordance with section 3(2) of the first Bill.

Madam President, as a reminder to Honourable [Senators], the driving force behind the introduction of these new regulatory fees is the expansion of the role performed by the Registrar of Companies in recent years which has resulted in the need to hire significant numbers of additional skilled personnel and make substantial investment in technology to maximise efficiencies and remain at the forefront of developments in the global regulatory environment.

Madam President, it is proposed that the regulatory fee of BMD\$500 applicable to exempted companies, exempted limited liability companies, overseas companies, exempted partnerships, exempted limited partnerships and overseas partnerships be payable annually on or before the 31st of January each year, except for this year during which they will be due on or before the 31st of March.

It is further proposed that the regulatory fee of \$150 applicable to local companies, local limited liability companies and limited partnerships which are not also registered as exempted partnerships be payable annually on or before the 31st of March. The introduction of these regulatory fees is expected to add approximately \$6 million to the public purse each year.

Madam President, as I outlined in the second reading of the first Bill, the regulatory fee levels were determined following an independent analysis by KPMG and consultation was conducted with external stakeholders.

Madam President, in line with the first Bill, this second Bill will also come into operation on the 9th of February 2024. On the 8th of February 2024, the Governor made a declaration pursuant to section 2(1) of the Provisional Collection of Revenue Act 1975 that it is expedient in the public interest that the first Bill should have statutory effect from the date of its first reading in the House of Assembly.

Madam President, the Bill that we are debating today will assist in the ROC in developing the effective infrastructure necessary to deliver on its international obligations in effective manners therefore reinforcing Bermuda’s position as a blue-chip jurisdiction.

Madam President, with those brief remarks, I now present the Bill entitled the Registrar of Companies (Annual Corporate Regulatory Fees) (No. 2) Act 2024 and welcome comments from other Honourable [Senators].

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Arianna Hodgson, Junior Minister for Finance.

Would any Senator care to speak on this Bill?

Senator De Couto, Douglas De Couto, you have the floor.

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: Thank you, Madam President, and thank you to the Senator for that presentation.

As we said on the earlier Bill, these two Bills go together (is my understanding) and this Bill amends various other bits of legislation so that the fees all work together and have all the right bits in all the right places of the legislation. Therefore, of course, we support this Bill as well.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator De Couto.

Would any other Senator . . . Senator John Wight.

Sen. John Wight: Thank you, Madam President. I am fully supportive of this Bill for the reasons that my colleague just described.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you.

Hearing that, then it is over to you Senator Arianna Hodgson to pass your Bill.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

In light of the support from my colleagues, I move that the Bill entitled the Registrar of Companies (Annual Corporate Regulatory Fees) (No. 2) Act 2024 be now read a second time.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the Bill entitled the Registrar of Companies (Annual Corporate Regulatory Fees) (No. 2) Act 2024 be now read a third time.

The President: Is there any objection to the third reading?

No objection.

BILL

THIRD READING

REGISTRAR OF COMPANIES (ANNUAL CORPORATE REGULATORY FEES) (NO. 2) ACT 2024

Sen. Arianna Hodgson: Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the Bill do now pass.

The President: It has been moved that the Bill do now pass. Is there any objection to the passing of the Bill?
There is no objection. The Bill is passed.

[Motion carried: The Registrar of Companies (Annual Corporate Regulatory Fees) (No. 2) Act 2024 was read a third time and passed.]

The President: Thank you, Senator Hodgson, and thank you all Senators for your support.

Moving on then with our third item on the agenda, and that is the second reading of the Economic Development Amendment Act 2024. Minister Darrell, you are going to—

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam President, I do ask that [Item] No. 3 on the Orders of the Day be carried over to Monday's Senate session, please.

The President: Thank you. The Bill will be carried over.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you.

The President: Thank you very much.

Item No. 4 then is the consideration of the Tourism Investment (Azura Bermuda) Order 2024, and that is in the name of the Minister, the Honourable Owen Darrell, the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Minister Darrell, when you are ready, you can present your [Order].

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 71(2)

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

Madam President, I move that Standing Order 71(2) be suspended so that the Senate may now proceed with the consideration of the Tourism Investment (Azura Bermuda) Order 2024.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.

Minister Darrell.

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

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam President, I move that the Senate do now take under consideration the Tourism Investment (Azura Bermuda) Order 2024 as made by the Minister responsible for Tourism under section 3 of the Tourism Investment Act 2017 together with the written agreement of the Minister of Finance in exercise of power conferred by section 5 of the Tourism Investment Act 2017.

The President: Are there any objections to that motion?

No objection.

Carry on, Minister Darrell.

DRAFT ORDER

TOURISM INVESTMENT (AZURA BERMUDA) ORDER 2024

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

Madam President, the purpose of bringing this Tourism Investment (Azura Bermuda) Order 2024 before the Senate is to enable the grant of tax relief to the developers investing in the tourism product Azura Bermuda, Clearwater Development Limited, which is in the national economic interest of Bermuda.

Madam President, I am pleased to invite the Senate to take this under consideration. Clearwater Development Limited, which I will refer to as "CDL," is a Bermuda registered company and is presided over by John Bush III who was the executive vice president of residential development at Tucker's Point. John Bush has extensive knowledge of hotel and residential development in Bermuda including the associated marketing of these products.

Madam President, in anticipation of purchasing the hotel property, the former Surf Side Beach Club, CDL applied for a Hotels Concession Order in February of 2016. The then Minister of Tourism, with written consent of the Minister of Finance, made the Order—Hotels Concession [Former Surf Side Beach Club Order 2016] in July 2016. Madam President, this Order expired on 31 March 2023.

Madam President, the Tourism Investment Act 2017 was amended in 2019 so that it applies to specific hotel developments presently using a Hotels

Concession Order made under the Hotels Concession Act 2000, and relevant hotel developers are able to apply for a Tourism Investment Order.

Madam President, the former Surf Side Beach Club (now Azura Bermuda) is one of those aforementioned specific hotel developments. CDL submitted an application for a Tourism Investment Order for a new hotel to the Minister of Tourism in October 2023.

Madam President, Azura Bermuda consists of nine hotel residences, which are 60 units, and is actively operating as an upper mid- to high-quality condominium hotel. The units have been sold by way of a 999-year lease to each end-buyer. Each buyer has signed a management agreement in the form approved by the Chief Immigration Officer. This management agreement provides the details by which an end-buyer permits a key of the unit to the hotel inventory for a minimum of six months out of the year.

Madam President, in mid-2023, CDL began work on a new amenity: an interior oceanfront restaurant. Plans for additional amenities include a new ocean view fitness and wellness facility, an expansion of the lobby, the conversion of the gym into executive management offices, a new resort entry and an ocean pool and beach bar. Madam President, CDL estimates that the construction of these amenities will be completed by mid-2024.

Madam President, CDL's total investment for the project costs (including acquisition, renovation, professional fees, transaction costs, reserves and working capital) is approximately \$47,005,000.

Madam President, Senators will note that Azura Bermuda has been awarded the full terms of relief allowed by the legislation.

- Full relief from customs duty for eight years from the operative date of the Order.
- Full relief from hotel occupancy tax for 15 years from the hotel's opening date.
- Full relief from the employer's share of payroll tax for 15 years from the hotel's opening date.
- Full exemption from land tax for 10 years starting from the sixth anniversary of the hotel's opening date.
- Deferral of the landholding charges.

Madam President, Senators will note that exemption from land tax is subject to the hotel confirming in years six through 15 that 70 per cent of the hotel staff must be Bermudian.

Further, Madam President, exemption from the employer's share of payroll tax is subject to a management training programme for Bermudians verified by the Department of Workforce Development is in operation at the hotel.

Madam President, upon the completion of the new resort amenities, the fully open and operating resort will generate significant new hotel and resort employment. Income earning opportunities for service providers including taxis, restaurants, retailers, golf

courses and, Madam President, potential summer employment for students.

Madam President, I am pleased to commend this Order for support of the Senate.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Minister Darrell.

Would any Senator care to speak on this Order?

Senator Robinson, you have the floor.

Sen. Dwayne Robinson: Thank you, Madam President. Good morning to you and to the listening public and to my colleagues.

The Opposition supports this current [Order]. We also support any investments into tourism and hotel occupancy. We retain reservation with the new norm of the 15-year concessions and, for me, I would hope . . . or at least ask or inquire as to whether or not the Government has calculated what that additional foregone tax number is compared to 10 years that we used to do. What is the additional foregone amount? Will that have long-term effects, as we have seen that done now for quite a few tourism investment orders?

Also with the 70 per cent Bermudian ratio, we support this as well. My personal flag would be that, you know, achieving that is an opportunity for Government to really reach out to some of our Bermudians who are overseas to repatriate them. And this is a great way to do that because we see the 70 per cent being put on with the Tourism Order that we support, but the concern is that we have seen a drop in the birth rate [with] Bermudians not producing children or a workforce that is sustainable. And we have also seen a hole in our already existing workforce. To stipulate 70 per cent is a good thing; but I think things need to be done to make sure that this is able to be met by the hotel.

I look forward to hearing . . . if the Minister would not mind, kind of extrapolating on how they may support the hotels in this regard and also whether or not that additional foregone tax of five additional years from the ten that we are used to . . . what impact that is and whether or not they are tracking that. But in totality we support this [Order] and job creation, hotel occupancy and tourism investment.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Dwayne Robinson.

Would any other Senator . . . Senator John Wight, you have the floor.

Sen. John Wight: Thank you, Madam President. I am fully supportive of this relief. I think it is important that, having given this relief to other hotel facilities that it is only fair and equitable to provide it to this one. This allows this facility and all others to compete on price and service. So . . . fully supportive.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Wight.

Would any other Senator care to speak on this [Order]?

Senator De Couto, you have the floor.

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: Thank you, Madam President. If I just may follow on [with] the comments.

Would the Minister happen to know what the current percentage number of Bermudian workers is at this facility, at this property? And I also look forward to the answer to questions from my colleague about plans to help increase that.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator De Couto.

Would any other Senator care to speak on this Order?

Hearing none, then Minister Darrell, when you are ready, you can respond.

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

And I would just like to speak on the two points that were made by the Opposition. And I think the question mixed in with the comment from Senator Robinson was, What are the effects of the 10 to 15 years? And I know he is looking for a dollar amount, and we can take some time and we can find those dollar amounts because every time . . . and I would like to give credit to the Office of the Regulatory Unit which deals with hotels, led by Ms. Rhonda Woods-Smith and her team. They go through these applications with a fine-tooth comb. And I can tell you every single cent and every single dollar, as well as the Ministry of Finance. So we can get those numbers for you.

But the effect of moving this from 10 to 15 years is to give investors in hotel properties confidence that they are going to invest in a jurisdiction, country (Bermuda) that is behind them and supports them in what they are doing to bring investment to this country.

Just this morning, yes, I do work before I come to Senate, Madam President—and I drove there in my GP car. I would say just this morning, I did meet with a hotel investor, and I can tell you that moving from 10 to 15 years is the very least that we as a Government can [do to] show that we are behind tourism in Bermuda and we are looking to take it to the next level.

While I will commit to getting those specific numbers for the Opposition, I know the Senator who spoke on this was not in the Chamber when we did have this debate a few years ago about this where it was very clear as to why it was needed and we also drew comparisons to other jurisdictions which are in some cases giving tax relief and other concessions double to what we are doing. Rather than us sit back and allow those as the term is called, other jurisdictions, to *eat our lunch* when it comes to the tourism product, I think that this is the very least that this Government can do to show hotel investors that we are serious

about investing in tourism and growing tourism in Bermuda.

On to the second point and the second question . . . and I do appreciate that the Opposition did signal their support on this. But to answer the specific question . . . and I pride myself, Madam President, and you would know as a Minister that gets out into the community often and I have in four months gotten to every single hotel property on this Island as well as guest house to speak with the managers, to speak with the local workers that are on property. And, Madam President, I do apologise but this young lady . . . her name is going to slip me right now and I am not happy about it. But in my visit at St. Regis hotel it was the manager of human resources down there—

[Inaudible interjection]

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Meisha Easton, thank you.

—who as we were doing our tour was setting up for a job fair. And I asked Ms. Easton, I said, *Well, how many are you expecting today?* And she said, *Hmmm, anywhere between 20 . . . about 20 people we are expecting.* They had it all set up very nicely. I continued my tour, Madam President, of the St. Regis hotel and as we came back there was a lot of activity in the conference room. I said, *Wait a second. I want to check this out.* There were in excess of 40, almost 50 individuals in the ballroom and they were eager to work in the hotel industry.

So Bermudians are, Madam President, showing up. They are interested in becoming part of the resurgence of tourism in this country. And I would like to just call out a few specifically. I know the Opposition is not going to let me debate on the tourism . . . in the Budget Debate. So I will just use some time now to speak to that question and how Ragul Dill who is at the St. Regis hotel as a bartender, a former student of mine, has shown up to the hospitality industry.

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

POINT OF ORDER

Sen. Dr. Douglas De Couto: I believe we are discussing the Azura property. And we have a specific question with respect to the Azura property—

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam President, we are talking about the question about how many locals are actually in the tourism industry. And I am taking the opportunity to—in detail—answer the question of Senator De Couto's Senate colleague. Respectfully, Madam President.

The President: Minister Darrell, carry on.

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

And to speak more to the 70 per cent of locals that are in the tourism industry. We have Ms. Alexis Roberts who for many years has been working up at the Cambridge Beaches. These are real examples of the 70 per cent of locals who are actually in the tourism industry.

And there are others . . . oh, I forget her name, but she is also working up at the Azura property. Another former student of mine, Gayvonne Smith, Ms. Roydell Neverson who everyone knows who is at the Hamilton Princess. So this 70 per cent as a benchmark that may look like a very high benchmark to most, is being met by not only the Azura property (and I am getting that exact number as well) but by tourism properties all over this country.

Madam President, I am happy that the Opposition has signalled their support for this Order and . . . let me just check to see if I have those numbers . . . 2024, the Azura has . . . by 2024, the Azura has signalled that they will have 60 full-time staff. And I think we spoke about projections (going back to question number one) as to how much money (tax) has been given over the time . . . we only project projections up to about five years out. Anything beyond five years becomes unreliable. So we will get those projections up to five years for the Opposition. And Azura, rest assured, Madam President, is expected to exceed the 70 per cent requirement by far.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Minister Darrell. You will now move your Order.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you.

Madam President, I now move that the said Order be approved and that the following message be sent to Her Excellency the Governor.

The President: Is there any objection to the Order being sent?

No. Carry on, Minister Darrell.

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: [May it please Your Excellency:]

The Senate, having had under consideration the draft Order entitled Tourism Investment (Azura Bermuda) Order 2024 as made by the Minister responsible for Tourism under section 3 of the Tourism Investment Act 2017 together with the written agreement of the Minister of Finance in exercise of the power conferred by section 5 of the Tourism Investment Act 2017, has the honour to inform Your Excellency that the Senate has approved the said draft Order.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Minister Darrell. The message will be sent to the Governor.

Thank you, Senators, for your support of this [Order].

Sen. the Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you.

[Motion carried: *The Tourism Investment (Azura Bermuda) Order 2024 was approved.*]

MOTIONS

The President: There are none.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

The President: Would any Senator care to . . . yes, we have Senator Lindsay Simmons. You have the floor.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, first I would like to congratulate Ms. Tammy Richardson-Augustus, JP, for being awarded the Woman of the Year for International Women's Day on Friday. I mean, I don't know many people who are more deserving than her, personally. Tammy is definitely an amazing person. She is actually a partner at Appleby and the Deputy Chair of the Bermuda Monetary Authority. She is a mother. And she accepted this award this year to highlight the work that still needs to be done to address domestic [abuse] awareness. So congratulations to Tammy.

Madam President, I also want to say on Friday I had the honour of being at CedarBridge Academy and Ms. Shoa Wolfe actually had an International Women's Day assembly led by her and first we had Ms. Olivia Hamilton sing *I am Superwoman*, which was very fitting. She did an amazing job. [Shoa Wolfe's] daughter, Shia Bean, actually did a dance and that was just phenomenal.

But, Madam President, to highlight Friday there were some honourees that were honoured. Ms. Kalmar Richards, was unable to come as she had another engagement, but there were some women there who actually spoke to the students and teachers at the assembly. And they were the Governor Rena Lalgie, the First Lady Kristin Burt, the US Consulate Karen Grissette. We had Ms. Joanne Anderson who is a teacher at CedarBridge Academy. We had Ms. Winifred Simmons [who] is a counsellor at CedarBridge Academy. She also counselled me at the Berkeley Institute. We also had myself as the Chairman of the Board at CedarBridge Academy and a special guest Arianna Hodgson, Senator. She actually came up and gave a few words as well.

But, Madam President, what was the biggest highlight for me was the superwoman that came up and spoke. And when I saw her name, I did not know her, but at CedarBridge Academy she is known as a super

mom, a superwoman. Her name is Catherine Fubler. Catherine Fubler got up on stage and she said she didn't know what to say, she didn't know why she was being an honouree. But she is a single mother who raised 10 children who walked the halls of CedarBridge Academy. Her last child is set to graduate this year and her story touched us. I think everybody was in awe with her story of even one of her sons passed in a motorcycle accident. But she just was so grateful for CedarBridge and what they have done for her children.

But we are grateful for her raising her 10 children. So I just want to highlight her because she is phenomenal. She is a superwoman and she is a woman that we should honour for . . . raising our numbers for society. Ten children is a lot of children nowadays. And she has done a phenomenal job with 10 of them. So thank you to Ms. Fubler.

I also want to take the opportunity to congratulate Gold House at the Berkeley Institute for winning Sports Day this year. And . . . like I said, I am a—

[Inaudible interjection]

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

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: I think my Minister, my Senate Leader, needs to take that point of order back.

So, congratulations to the Berkeley Institute's Gold House and Green House for trying again but were defeated.

As the Chairman, the newly appointment Chairman at CedarBridge Academy, I want to congratulate all the athletes today that are down at National [Sports Centre]. Go Blue House and Red House. May the best team win today. I am sure myself, Minister Darrell, I know the Minister of Education is stopping by today. So good luck to the students today and let the best house win.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons. Would any other Senator care to speak?

Senator Tucker, OBA Leader *[sic]*, you have the floor.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Good morning, Madam President—

The President: Leader in the Senate.

[Laughter]

Sen. Robin Tucker: Senate Leader.

The President: Sorry, let me correct myself.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Thank you.

The President: OBA Leader in the Senate.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Good morning, again to all of the listening audience and, of course, the Senate colleagues.

I would like to start my comments with condolences. I would like to express condolences to the family of Althea Simmons. She was 93 years old when she passed away. I . . . put it this way, she has known me my entire life. She was very, very good friends with my aunt and she has been around my family for as long as I can remember. I actually called her "Aunt Althea." I just want to express condolences to her [family]. She was a lovely, lovely woman and of course she will absolutely be missed by her family and friends.

I also would like to express condolences to the family of the Denise DeShields who I have known most of my life. I have known her as "Pinky." I saw her not too long ago, maybe a few weeks ago actually, and one of the things that has always been sort of a hallmark of whenever I would see her, she would always say *Hello, lovely!* And she was just a beautiful, beautiful person. So I would like to express, again, condolences to her entire family, particularly to her mom Norma, her stepdad Peter, her sister Sharon and Wayne and the rest of the family.

On a lighter note, I have a few congratulations since we haven't had an opportunity to get together for a little while.

The President: Mm-hmm.

Sen. Robin Tucker: Congratulations to Chris Spencer on becoming the director of the Transport Control Department. Anyone sort of in . . . certainly in my age group and above will likely have been stopped by Chris Spencer when he was in the Cycle Squad. Again, I would like to express congratulations to him.

I would like to express congratulations to the Honourable Speaker of the other House on his 35 years of celebration as the Speaker in the House of Assembly and I believe he celebrated that anniversary last month. Again, congratulations.

Congratulations to Dr. Terry-Lynne Emery who was recently celebrated for her outstanding achievements as our first female Bermudian obstetrician and she has absolutely paved the way for many over her 28-year career. An extra special congratulations to her from me. She has delivered two of my grandchildren so that is worth celebrating in itself.

I would like to say congratulations to the principal and the teachers at Northlands [Primary School]. I recently saw something in the newspaper whereby the students had increased their reading comprehension scores from 54 per cent to 85 per cent. And I do think that is worth noting. Again, congratulations to the teachers that have put in all the hard work and the children who also put in the work . . . and the parents not to forget them.

Congratulations to Genesis Lynea. Genesis, I have also known from a child, as I was good friends with her mom. Her mom and I had gone to high school together and Genesis is a Bermudian born actor and she lives in the UK and she has starred in a couple of UK sort of Netflix shows. And most recently she is going to be starring in the latest season of a worldwide hit TV show called *Dr. Who*, which is a UK sci-fi series.

Two more and then I am done.

I would like to say congratulations to Dr. Neletha Butterfield, who is the founder and director of the C.A.R.E. Learning Centre and she was awarded certification as an Adult Education Retention Specialist last month. Everybody knows who Dr. Neletha Butterfield is. She has many, many accolades including being an author and she was a former PLP MP and Minister of Public Information Services and Minister of the Environment. So congratulations to her.

I would like to associate with my Senate colleague, Senator Simmons, on her congratulations to Tammy Richardson-Augustus. Tammy is a tireless advocate against domestic abuse and is very deserving of the International Women's Day Woman of the Year award. So again, congratulations to her.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Tucker.

Would any other Senator care to speak?
Minister Darrell, you have the floor.

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

Madam President, I want to start by sending condolences to the family of Mr. Charles Daniels. Madam President, Mr. Charles Daniels, as many Bermudians would know, was one of Bermuda's top architects of his time. Mr. Charles Daniels was very much involved in community service and as many would know and would have seen that Mr. Daniels was also a dedicated father to his children. [He was the] father of Christopher (who many individuals would have always seen with Mr. Daniels), Margaret and Catherine. I want to send condolences to his family.

Mr. Daniels and I had a personal connection as when I returned from university, as most individuals do and they decide that it is time to build a house. Madam President, the first thing you have to do is (after you get your finances in order) is figure out who is going to design that house. And I was fortunate enough . . . I will say that, Madam President, I was fortunate enough to have Mr. Charles Daniels in my corner as my family's architect. He offered advice and I was always appreciative every time I saw Charles to let him know and to let everyone know that he was my architect and he was the brains behind the beautiful product that you see in Smith's Parish.

I was shocked and saddened . . . and I am still having a hard time understanding and, Madam

President, shocked to hear of his passing and I want to send condolences to his family.

Also, Madam President, the public would be aware and would have heard, but I want to officially (in this place) send condolences to the family of a Bermuda icon, a heritage icon, Mr. Leon "Sparky" Place, who passed away a few weeks ago, Madam President. His influence on Bermuda's cultural heritage cannot be measured. Madam President, he was one of the oldest surviving members of the Place's Gombey Troupe. If you speak to many of the Gombey fraternity, there are splinters of his influence up and down every single Gombey troupe on this Island.

I will have much more to say about the life of Mr. Leon "Sparky" Place as his family have asked that the Department of Culture give a tribute at his funeral which will be this weekend. So I wanted to send condolences from the Senate to the family of Gombey and cultural icon Mr. Leon "Sparky" Place. Specifically, his brother Andre, his other siblings and his children.

On a brighter note, Madam President, I want to congratulate first the National Gallery for the completion of their public art mural programme. This is one specific programme that they have and this was putting large murals, three large murals, in the North-East Hamilton area. You will recall last year I congratulated them for the idea and the theme and at that time they had not selected the artists. But a year later, the murals have been completed and I can tell you, Madam President, that as I saw the artists, the creatives—and I will call their names in a minute—actually doing their work . . . a few times I had the opportunity to stop by and just congratulate them personally and encourage them and tell them how I thought it was really, really intriguing to watch how they started with the sketch and then they started with the outline and then they put the colours.

So I want to call the three artists. The first one is Ms. Selaah Stephenson who painted the mural of *Earl Cameron* and that one is on the wall of the Belvin's Variety store on Happy Valley Road. A beautiful portrait of Mr. Cameron.

Also the second artist that I want to highlight is Ms. DaeNyce' Keile Rabain and she painted the mural just on the bus stop at the Pembroke playground on Parsons Road and that is another striking mural of our children playing and it is called *Outside*. And Ms. Rabain, she would tell you, I would like to point out is the niece actually of Minister Diallo Rabain. Also a former student of mine. I would stop by many times and just encourage her and say, *Wow, this looks amazing*.

And the third artist was . . . the name is . . . give me one second. The third artist is Ms. . . . one second . . . Alshante Foggo, thank you. Alshante Foggo has a mural just next to the Pembroke Laundromat and congratulations to her as her mural is entitled "*One Love*" and that is another very vibrant piece there on Parsons Road.

I want to say thank you to the National Gallery for coming up with this idea and I want to congratulate

the artists for their three beautiful portraits and murals that they have and encourage anyone to register for the National Gallery's run/walk 5K which is coming up soon so they can actually walk through North-East Hamilton and view the striking murals for themselves.

Thank you, Madam President.

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

Sen. Kiernan Bell: Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Kiernan Bell, you have the floor.

Sen. Kiernan Bell: Thank you, Madam President.

I just wanted to associate myself with the comments of my fellow Senators as Senator Robin Tucker, Senator Lindsay Simmons, particularly as it references the recognition of our strong and powerful women in this community who have been recognised this past week during the celebrations for International Women's Day. And a particularly personal congratulations to Tammy Richardson-Augustus who was one of my partners at Appleby and who I worked with for many years. I just wanted to extend my sincere congratulations on her achievements which never fail to amaze me.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you.
Would any other Senator care to speak?
Senator De Couto, you have the floor.

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

I of course also would like to associate with the comments regarding Ms. Richardson and all the women of Bermuda. I will leave it short like that. What can I add?

I would like to thank Casa dos Açores on their ninth anniversary celebration. I was not able to be there but I understand that a great time was had by all. And I just wanted to mark that in this Chamber.

I know we had the statement on all of the athletes and I just want to call out on how struck I was by the breadth and depth of the numerous athletes in there. And there are many of which I have connections to personally or through the constituency, but I will not name them out because I think everybody on that list deserves praise. I think that we are such a small country and sometimes people get upset that we don't have a top-class team in this, we don't have a top-class team in that. It is easy to see where we don't have things. But when you look at our size and how we perform, I think the passion and commitment and the work that is put in by all these athletes and, importantly, those supporting them (many of whom were called out in the Senator's statement) is really important to acknowledge. I think the dynamism of our athletes and sportsmen and

sportswomen continues to impress me every single day and I want to congratulate them all.

Thank you, Madam President.

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

Sen. Rev. Dr. Emilygail A. Dill: Thank you, Madam President, and good morning once again to our listening audience.

I would like to associate myself with the condolences offered by Senator Darrell to the family of Mr. Charles Daniels who was indeed an extraordinary individual. And I would also like to offer some congratulations this morning on a lighter note.

I would like to associate myself with the comments earlier regarding all of the different celebrations regarding International Women's week and, in particular, I would like to highlight and congratulate the Berkeley Institute on their second annual Women of the Future conference which was held last week in celebration of International Women's week. It is a brainchild of the Reverend Lashonna Smith who is one of the educational therapists there. And they had a wonderful celebration with an international guest, Ms. Bria Greene as their keynote speaker. So I would like to commend the Berkeley Institute for the work that they are doing in cultivating pride and respect amongst the young women in that institution.

I would also like to take the opportunity to congratulate the African Methodist Episcopal Church here in the Island of Bermuda for a successful 138th session of their annual conference. It was truly a glorious event and certainly one of the most well-attended since 2020 and we would like to congratulate our host which was Reverend Nicholas Genevieve Tweed and the Reverend Dr. Jahkimmo Smith, but we also like to ask for the Senate to send special commendation along with thanks and farewell to Bishop Julius McAllister who completed his final session as our presiding prelate, prior to his retirement which will take place in August 2024. Bishop McAllister has led with compassion and courage as we have come out of COVID-19 and the challenges that it presented and we would like to thank him for his service to the Bermuda community in particular and the First Episcopal District of the AME church.

I would also like to offer congratulations to Dr. Conway Simmons and his wife Evangelist Joan Simmons and the Koinonia Training Centre which celebrated its 10th anniversary. The Koinonia Training Centre is a Bible school that they started in the Island of Bermuda which has had numerous graduates and they offer bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees and we would like to commend them for the work that they are doing and congratulations to the students and alumni of that institution.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Dill.

Most Senators have spoken so . . . I would just like to associate myself with the condolences that have been expressed by Senator Robin Tucker for the family of Mrs. Althea Pearl Simmons, who was also a close family member to myself. Her funeral was yesterday. It was well attended, and I would just like to associate myself with that, with her.

Also I would like to express condolences to the family of Mr. Archibald [Herbert] Douglas who was also funeralised yesterday. He was a very good friend I remember in my school years and that is just . . . but he did have a very good send off. So condolences to the family, then, of Archibald [Herbert] Douglas.

I would like to associate myself with the congratulations that have been expressed this morning, especially to Mrs. Tammy Richardson[-Augustus] and you have all spoke to highly of her, and she was more than well-deserved. So I associate myself with Lindsay Simmons and all Senators here who have spoken in support of her.

I would also like to congratulate . . . in fact, most of the Senators here have spoken of various women who have been recognised. But I would also like to associate myself with all the comments that have been said of all whom you have recognised, but to say that there are many women in Bermuda also, as Vice President Kiernan Bell has mentioned that, you know, there are many women who probably do not go . . . who are not always recognised. But from this Senate, I think I would like to congratulate each one of you for your work here and all women in Bermuda who may not always be recognised, but they deserve to be acknowledged. I join you all in that.

I would also like to associate myself with Senator Robin Tucker on her recognition of Chris Spencer and TCD for his work that he does.

Finally, I would like to offer congratulations to the Prayer Breakfast group who had a luncheon on Sunday in recognition of three Premiers. And that is Premier . . . former Premiers Alex Scott, Dame Jennifer Smith and Sir John Swan. It was a fitting ceremony.

With that said, we will now move on to the adjournment.

Minister Darrell.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Madam President, I ask that the Senate do now adjourn until Monday, March 18, 2024.

The President: Thank you.

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

Hearing none, Senators, the Senate stands adjourned until March 18. Have a wonderful weekend.

[At 11:19 am, the Senate stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Monday, 18 March 2024]

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