



**2018/19 SESSION
of the
BERMUDA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

05 July 2019

*Sitting number 24 of the 2018/19 Session
(pages 1933–2060)*

**Hon. Dennis P. Lister, Jr., JP, MP
Speaker**

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BERMUDA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT****5 JULY 2019****10:09 AM***Sitting Number 24 of the 2018/19 Session**[Hon. Dennis P. Lister, Jr., Speaker, in the Chair]***PRAYERS***[Prayers read by Mrs. Shernette Wolffe, Clerk]***The Speaker:** Good morning, Members.*[Gavel]***CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES***[Minutes of 21 June 2019]***The Speaker:** Members, the Minutes of the 21st of June have been circulated. Are there any amendments or corrections required? There are none.

The Minutes are confirmed as printed.

*[Minutes of 21 June 2019 confirmed]***MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR****The Speaker:** There are none.**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER
OR MEMBER PRESIDING****APOLOGIES****The Speaker:** Although we did not include it on the Order Paper, there are two Members who have indicated they will be absent today: Minister Simmons and MP Atherden have both indicated they will be absent.**PAPERS AND OTHER
COMMUNICATIONS TO THE HOUSE****The Speaker:** There are four papers this morning. The first is in the name of the Minister of Finance.
Minister.**ANNUAL REPORT ON THE OPERATIONS OF THE
BERMUDA DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION
[BDIC] FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2018****Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly the Annual Report on the Operations of the Bermuda Deposit Insurance Corporation [BDIC] for the year ended 31 March 2018.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

The second is in the name of the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning to everyone.**The Speaker:** Good morning.**ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE
REGULATORY AUTHORITY FOR FISCAL YEARS
2014/15, 2015/16 AND 2016/17****Hon. Walter H. Roban:** I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly the Annual Financial Statements of the Regulatory Authority for the fiscal years 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17.**The Speaker:** Thank you, Deputy Premier.

The next item is in the name of the Minister of Transport.

Minister of Works, are you going to do it for him?

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Yes, I am, Mr. Speaker.**The Speaker:** Continue.**MERCHANT SHIPPING (FEES) AMENDMENT
REGULATIONS 2019****Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch:** On behalf of the Minister of Tourism and Transport, I have the honour to attach and submit for the consideration of the Honourable House of Assembly the Merchant Shipping (Fees) Amendment Regulations 2019, proposed to be made by the Minister responsible for maritime administration in exercise of the power conferred by section 250 of the Merchant Shipping Act 2002. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The next is in the name of the Minister of National Security.
Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: If it pleases you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Continue.

PENSIONS (WAR SERVICE) ORDER 2019

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to attach and submit for the consideration of the Honourable House of Assembly the Pensions (War Service) Order 2019. And we propose that it be made by the Minister responsible for defence in exercise of the powers confirmed by section 16A of the Pensions and Gratuities (War Service) Act 1947.

The Speaker: Thank you.

PETITIONS

The Speaker: There are none.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS AND JUNIOR MINISTERS

The Speaker: Yes. We have Statements.

Your Order Paper has six Statements on it; there is actually a seventh. There was the Statement that should have been in line with what the Minister of National Security just made reference to, the pensions, which inadvertently was left off of the Order Paper. But it is here, and it will be included when we get to that point. And the Minister of National Security will present that.

We will start with the Statements this morning. The Deputy Premier has the first Statement this morning. Deputy.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE REGULATORY AUTHORITY 2014–2017

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as the Order Paper indicates, I have tabled the [Annual Financial Statements of the Regulatory Authority for fiscal years 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17](#).

Mr. Speaker, the Regulatory Authority (as it is known as the RA [or the Authority]) is a self-funding body responsible for the implementation of policy through the application of the relevant legislation, and although it is independent, it must account for its activities and expenditures in annual reports. According to section 47(2) of the Regulatory Authority Act 2011, the

audited annual financial statements must be laid before both Houses of Legislature. And so, in order to be compliant with the law, I present these documents here today. These reports have all been audited by the Office of the Auditor General, also as required by the Regulatory Authority Act 2011.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to point out some of the Authority's achievements year by year. In order to give some context, from its inception in January 2013 until October 2016, the RA was responsible for the regulation of the electronic communications sector. In October 2016, the Regulatory Authority was given the additional mandate of the regulation of electricity, since which time the RA has been a dual-sector regulator.

Mr. Speaker, in fiscal year 2014/15, the RA implemented the Model Access and Interconnection Agreement, which effectively applied ex-ante remedies to those who were deemed to have significant market power and resolved conflicts between providers on matters of interconnection and network access to create a more competitive environment. That year also saw the administrative process of consultation that led to the adoption of adjudication rules, which are the established procedures the RA follows in its decision-making process.

There were also various cost reductions applied, as in the case of the local access charge and the BTC [Bermuda Telephone Company] MAIA [Model Access and Interconnection Agreement] Discount Order.

Mr. Speaker, among the highlights of fiscal year 2015/16 was the freeing up of the 700-megahertz spectrum, which allowed that band to be used for the mobile communications subsector. This paved the way for the introduction of the high demand spectrum, otherwise known as 4G, providing better service to customers.

There were also concentration reviews undertaken in the electronic communications sector that were necessitated by various mergers and acquisitions, among which was the Digicel/BTC concentration. Other activities of the RA in that fiscal year included improvements to its information technology network and information management system, vital for ensuring that security and effective management of information were maintained and enhanced.

Mr. Speaker, fiscal year 2016/17 saw the acquisition of an overdraft facility to assist the RA with the funding needed to take on the regulation of the electricity sector, as noted previously. This involved significant preparation and the engagement of consultants to ensure that the RA was sufficiently prepared for this expanded mandate. Additional staff were hired, including subject matter experts and legal counsel, ensuring that capacity would be built to handle the increase in responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, the RA conducts all its activities under the watchful eye of the public, a public that de-

mands quality of services from its utilities and that requires constant vigilance from its regulator. In these early, formative years of the Authority, it should be expected that there is a great need for external consultants, who have typically used a good portion of the Authority's working capital. It is also expected that, over time, the RA will rely less and less on these external services, as they build capacity and experience within. All the details of the activities of the RA from 2014 to 2017 are found in these audited reports.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I did not note another important function of the RA, which is the collecting of revenue on behalf of government paid by the various carriers into government authorisation fees. The RA collects these fees and passes them through to government, amounting to over \$36.5 million during these three years of annual reports alone.

Mr. Speaker, the RA has done and continues to do vital work for the people of Bermuda, and we look forward to tabling the 2017/18 report once it has been audited. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Deputy.

The next Statement this morning is in the name of the Minister of Works.

Minister.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Good morning.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: You will recall that it was March 5th last year that this House considered a proposal—

The Speaker: One second, one second.

Are copies available for us? Oh, the copies are being circulated now.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Yes.

The Speaker: Continue.

SANDYS 360 PATI REQUEST

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: You will recall that it was March 5th last year that this House considered a proposal for the government to purchase the Sandys 360 facility. Since that time, there has been a concerted effort on the part of the daily tabloid newspaper to litigate to death all aspects of the arrangements surrounding that facility.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: I do not propose to continue down that path, but rather to report on the most recent public attempt to force the Department of

Public Lands and Buildings—a department within the Ministry of Public Works—to release the 2016 financial report.

Mr. Speaker, KPMG were commissioned to produce the report by the trustees of the school who own the Sandys 360 facility. The former Government rejected a [PATI request](#) to release the report, stating it was exempt from disclosure because it was provided in confidence. Following the change in Government, a subsequent appeal was made to the Information Commissioner, who concluded that there was no express communication or understanding that it was given in confidence, and she ordered its release. This Government disagrees with that decision, as well.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that it appears to me that the Information Commissioner, Mrs. Minors, is going out of her way to provide all manner of support to the daily. I will give a few examples. She noted on June 3rd this year, and I quote, "The Government is now in the process of buying the centre for \$1 million from the trustees of Sandys Secondary Middle School." And she said, "The Government has provided limited rationale and factual information concerning its decision-making around Sandys 360, primarily provided during parliamentary debate."

Mr. Speaker, the last time I checked the Bermuda Constitution, it indicated that Parliament was supreme, and matters presented, debated and passed in this House generally become the law of the land. The preceding quote displays a breathtaking naivety about our parliamentary system of governing. Such a cavalier dismissal of the proceedings of this House should be as offensive to the other 35 Members as it is to me.

As I indicated earlier when I presented the proposal to purchase Sandys 360, on March 5th, it was a comprehensive, fulsome and compelling rationale and reasoning for doing so, which was generally supported by the Opposition. I will not repeat my comments here. But suffice it to say the full text can be found on page 1424 of the [Official Hansard Report](#) dated March 5, 2018, and I would invite the Commissioner and anyone else who is interested in the full debate to continue their reading to page 1427.

For context, though, Mr. Speaker, I repeat a small section here of what I said then. And I quote: "Mr. Speaker, the Government considered options in relation to the property and are of the view that the property is of such operational significance to the school that Government should purchase it from the trustees. The land used to secure the original \$9.5 million loan from HSBC Bank of Bermuda to build the centre includes part of the school playing field and some school buildings. At present, Government owns the land on which the majority of the school sits, and the Government will be acquiring the remainder through this purchase."

Mr. Speaker, that statement alone is clear reasoning for the decision reached; but there are others contained in Hansard.

I can also report that the Information Commissioner has been advised that we will not release the KPMG report, as it was not commissioned by, nor is it the property of, the Department of Public Lands and Buildings. Further, Mr. Speaker, the actual sale has not been concluded due to a number of legal hurdles that remain. Once there is a final resolution, I will report further to the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

The next Statement this morning is also in your name, Minister.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Minister, would you like to do your second Statement?

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Yes.

The Speaker: Continue.

BERMUDA HOUSING CORPORATION HOME START PROGRAMME

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Speaker, we are well aware that we have a housing crisis in our country. Having not invested in proper maintenance nor carried out any new building in almost a decade, the result is a dearth of affordable and adequate housing for the people of this country. But be assured, there are a number of irons in the fire to address this, and I would like to highlight just one of them today—the [Bermuda Housing Corporation Home Start Programme](#).

This programme is available to Bermudians who have never owned a home and are looking to obtain their piece of the rock through first-time home ownership. Mr. Speaker, this programme is a partnership between the Bermuda Housing Corporation [BHC] and Clarien Bank. And the details are as follows:

- Clarien provides up to 100 per cent mortgages for homes listed in the programme.
- It is available to Bermudians only who are first-time homeowners or those who have never owned more than a 25 per cent share in any property.
- Homes listed in the programme are those that are either owned by BHC or by Clarien Bank.
- The list can be found at the BHC website [www.bhc.bm/homestart] and is updated on the first of each month. (The website also contains the details on the programme.)

- The programme allows for a total of up to \$25 million in mortgages to be issued.
- The mortgages are fully funded by Clarien, with BHC acting as the guarantor for the 25 per cent down payment amount.
- Once the down payment has been repaid, the bank releases BHC from the guarantee obligation.

Mr. Speaker, in order to ensure that the valuations for the homes being purchased are appropriate, there are two valuations carried out on the properties, the first before the property is listed on the website to establish the listing price, and the second once an offer has been accepted to support the value of the client's mortgage.

The credit underwriting is conducted by both BHC and Clarien; BHC is responsible for pre-screening all applicants and doing the initial vetting of all documents. This includes confirming salary, identifying a likely approved mortgage range to determine which homes will fit within a client's budget, and the credit risk of each client. A secondary credit check is done by Clarien during the mortgage approval process once an offer is accepted and before the mortgage is granted.

Mr. Speaker, Clarien homes are included in the programme once the mortgage foreclosure process has been completed. BHC homes are identified from current stock and added to the programme. The pricing of the loan must be reflective of the credit support that BHC is providing in the form of a guarantee. A discounted interest rate is offered to clients who purchase a home through Home Start. As an example, on a typical home of \$500,000 with a 30-year mortgage, the client would save approximately \$50,000 over the life of the mortgage due to the lower interest rate.

Mr. Speaker, in order to mitigate clients getting into difficulty with their loans/mortgages, BHC conducts pre-screening at the outset and discusses these types of issues, which include reviewing appropriate size of the mortgage based on income and age. Additionally, BHC receives a monthly report on clients, which allows staff to follow up to discuss any challenges.

Mr. Speaker, thus far, nine unit sales have been completed under the programme, with 13 more units under contract. There are currently three homes left available, while there is scope to expand the number of available homes. For example, BHC has been negotiating with existing BHC mortgage holders who have fallen into significant arrears and who are unable to repay their mortgages. BHC is seeking to list their homes in the programme, as this will enable them to obtain the best price and provide some relief from the debt burden. Listings are updated on a monthly basis on the first working day of the month. New units are added to, and sold units are removed from, the list.

Mr. Speaker, one of the more satisfying aspects of this programme is the graduation of two rent-geared-to-income families previously housed at the Perimeter Lane complex, who have spent the last several years in the programme and have saved enough money to put a down payment on their own home. The sense of accomplishment and pride of these families serves as an inspiration to all of us to continue to provide opportunities for more Bermudian families to own a piece of the rock.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen the success of first-time homeowner initiatives in the past, and I draw specific reference to the Loughlands complex, where 96 units were sold to both individuals and families, most of whom are still there and successfully managing their mortgages, and many who will, in short order, have paid them off.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, there was a small percentage that fell behind and had to exercise the option to sell their units, but they are clearly the minority.

So, Mr. Speaker, we certainly can reap what we sow, and see the rewards of our labour in just giving someone an opportunity that they may not otherwise have had. In addition, this initiative allows us to build greater relationships between Government and the private sector.

Mr. Speaker, we are utilising various approaches to address the housing predicament that we face, and I anticipate making another significant announcement in this arena before the House rises for the summer recess. Of course, just as I have done today, informing my colleagues and the wider community, I will continue to do the same as these initiatives are implemented. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

The next Statement on the Order Paper this morning is in the name of the Minister of Labour.

Minister Foggo, would you like to present your Statement?

REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION CONFERENCE AND THE MODERNISATION OF BERMUDA'S LABOUR LAWS

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to the House, and good morning to the listening public.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to provide the Members of this Honourable House with an update on my attendance at the [International Labour Organization's Conference](#) in Geneva last month, as well as the proposed consolidation and modernisation of Bermuda's labour legislation, which is long overdue.

Mr. Speaker, the International Labour Organization (or ILO, for short) brings together governments, employers and workers of 187 member states, to set

labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men.

Mr. Speaker, it is the only tripartite UN agency. The unique tripartite structure of the ILO gives an equal voice to workers, employers and governments to ensure that the views of the social partners are closely reflected in labour standards and in shaping policies and programmes. The main aims of the ILO are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue on work-related issues.

Mr. Speaker, it was a pleasure to attend the 108th Session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva in June on behalf of the Government of Bermuda. The International Labour Conference is the ILO's highest decision-making body. It meets annually, bringing together the tripartite delegations from the organisation's 187 member states, and a number of observers from other international actors to consider a series of topics placed on its agenda by the Governing Body of the ILO. The conference is composed of a plenary, and a number of committees set up to consider the standing items on the conference agenda, and technical committees to deal with technical items.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that at the conference was the historic adoption of the Violence and Harassment Convention 2019 and the Violence and Harassment Recommendations 2019. The new convention and accompanying recommendations to combat violence and harassment in the world of work were overwhelmingly approved by many ILO member states.

The convention outlines and reminds member states that they have a responsibility to promote a general environment of zero tolerance of harassment of all kinds. The new international labour standards aim to protect workers and employees, regardless of their contractual status. The resolution includes persons in training, interns and apprentices, workers whose employment has been terminated, volunteers, job seekers and job applicants. The convention meanwhile also recognises that individuals exercising the authority, duties or responsibilities of an employer can also be subjected to violence and harassment.

The ILO indicated that this is the first new convention agreed by the International Labour Conference since 2011, when the Domestic Workers Convention 2011 (No. 189) was adopted. The Ministry will keep a watching brief as the ILO develops a comprehensive strategy for the ratification and implementation of the Convention.

Mr. Speaker, I also wish to provide an update on the consolidation and modernisation of the labour legislation. This project has been ongoing for some five years, and progressing these changes is both a Progressive Labour Party platform and a Throne Speech initiative.

Mr. Speaker, to provide a brief history, the Labour Law Reform Committee, a subcommittee of the Labour Advisory Council, was created in 2014 to review all of the existing labour legislation in Bermuda and to recommend changes that they thought were appropriate. This subcommittee consisted of union representatives, employer representatives, independent representatives and ex officio members of the Bermuda Government.

Mr. Speaker, following extensive consultation with key stakeholders, a report was prepared with numerous recommendations on legislative changes. Mr. Speaker, the proposed changes include the consolidation and modernisation of most of the labour legislation. However, the intention is for the Employment Act to remain, albeit with amendments. These changes are currently being drafted at the Attorney General's Chambers, and it is the Government's intent to bring forward the changes before the end of this year for the consideration of this Honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, the changes will include (but are not limited to) [the following]:

- Reduction from 10 arbitration/assessor/tribunals in four Acts to a single tribunal for all labour and employment matters. This will reduce the administrative costs and streamline the functions of the tribunals.
- Provision for increased maternity leave. Currently, employees who have been employed for one continuous year are entitled to eight weeks paid maternity leave. This will be increased to 13 weeks, as promised in our platform and the Throne Speech. Employees who have been employed for less than one continuous year are entitled to eight weeks unpaid maternity leave. This will likewise be increased to 13 weeks, but again remains unpaid.
- Provision for paternity leave. There is currently no provision for paternity leave, and the amendments will allow for five days paid paternity leave for employees who have been employed for one continuous year per calendar year, and provide for five days unpaid paternity leave for employees who have been employed for less than one continuous year per calendar year.
- Provision for zero tolerance of violence and harassment in the workplace. In keeping with the ILO adoption of the violence and harassment convention, the amendments will also deal with bullying, harassment and, in particular, sexual harassment in the workplace. Employers will be required to have in place a zero-tolerance policy for harassment in the workplace and recourse for employees for any contravention of the policy.

Mr. Speaker, as some of the labour laws were prepared and drafted more than 30 years ago, and in

one instance more than 50 years ago, Bermuda can look forward to legislation that is fit for purpose in the 21st century, with streamlined and simplified processes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

The next Statement on the Order Paper this morning is in the name of the Minister for the Cabinet Office.

Minister Furbert, would you like to put your Statement at this point?

BDA POST OFFICE UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION (UPU)

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to provide this Honourable House with a report on the state of affairs pertaining to the [Bermuda Post Office](#) [BPO] in particular, and the postal services worldwide, in general.

Mr. Speaker, it is an accepted fact that the postal services worldwide have undergone significant changes due to several factors, including technological advances such as email, as well as the emergence of competition in the parcel post business, such as couriers. Regrettably, the postal service in Bermuda and around the world have not kept pace with these developments.

Mr. Speaker, the entire postal service industry has been dramatically and negatively impacted by the evolution in the manner in which people ship their goods and transmit their mail. This evolution has been taking place for years now, and it is clear that our postal service has to change its model or face certain demise.

Mr. Speaker, against this backdrop, this Government has a vision to implement far-reaching and innovative changes in the way we deliver our postal services and products in Bermuda. To that end, this Government is now in the process of enhancing the information technology services and products that the Bermuda Post Office provides, in order to bring it up to the 21st century. Mr. Speaker, I am therefore pleased to report to this Honourable House that the Bermuda Post Office is currently undergoing major upgrades in its systems that will have great benefits to the general public.

Mr. Speaker, we are currently in the first phase of installing an IT programme called SWIFT 1, with the second phase, SWIFT 2, being completed within the coming weeks. Once these major IT enhancements are completed, the Bermuda Post Office will be able to provide a wide range of products to the general public, including online services, bill payments and other transactions not normally associated with the postal service. Eventually, these will be available in every post office throughout Bermuda and will provide a greater convenience to the public, while ensur-

ing more efficiency in how government provides its services to its people.

Mr. Speaker, we are confident that these new services will make life simpler and more convenient for the general public once they are up and running.

Mr. Speaker, on the global issues facing the postal service, I recently attended a conference hosted by the Universal Postal Union (UPU) wherein the serious challenges facing postal services worldwide were discussed at great length and detail. The UPU is a United Nations chartered organisation that was founded in 1874. It currently has 192 countries amongst its membership, and it sets the rules for international mail exchanges, which includes the setting of postal rates.

Mr. Speaker, the brief synopsis is that the United States has issued notice of its intention to withdraw its membership from the UPU with effect from October 18, 2019. Should the US proceed with this notice, the adverse ramifications for Bermuda and the rest of the world will be significant.

Mr. Speaker, at the heart of this matter is the disagreement on the rates charged for parcels shipped internationally. The US has stated that it costs more for mail and parcels to be delivered within the US, say, from New York to Florida, than it does for a parcel shipped from China to the US. With the vast number of parcels shipped from China, this is causing anguish with the US, and they subsequently are seeking to leave the UPU.

Mr. Speaker, should the US withdraw from the UPU, they would be able to set their own postal rates, and this, in turn, would cause turmoil and volatility in the worldwide shipping rates, with a resultant increase in costs for mail and parcels. Equally worrying with the US withdrawing from the UPU would be the devastating logistical effects it would have on worldwide postal services. For example, the United States Postal Service could refuse to handle international post and parcels, and we would be forced to contract an independent vendor in the US to deliver our packages within the United States. And this is not only Bermuda, but worldwide.

Mr. Speaker, to resolve this matter, the UPU is hosting a special congress in September during which several options will be discussed and, eventually, voted on. We are hopeful that, after discussions and resolutions are reached in September, the US will remain in the UPU and that an agreement can be reached on the way forward with the setting of universal rates that are agreeable to all members.

Mr. Speaker, I hasten to point out at this juncture that the UPU recently awarded Bermuda with its Gold Star Award, a highly prestigious and coveted award. UPU inspectors were recently in Bermuda conducting a thorough examination of the security systems of the Bermuda Post Office. The overall process of this security review included the review of documentation and observation of our processes. Mr.

Speaker, Bermuda achieved a 26 out of 26 for Satisfied in the Rating Outcome and a 59 out of 59 for Characterisation Outcome. In addition to these brilliant outcomes, these inspectors reported that they were very impressed with the high standard of professionalism amongst the Bermuda Post Office staff.

Mr. Speaker, this is a significant accomplishment not only for the BPO, but also for all of Bermuda, since we are the first in the Caribbean region, and the second in the world, to be given this award. I offer my commendations to the Acting Postmaster General and the entire team at the Bermuda Post Office for this outstanding achievement, and all of Bermuda should be proud of this milestone.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I look forward to the innovative upgrades we are making to the Bermuda Post Office's products and services, and I am certain that all of Bermuda will reap the benefits of these improved services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

The next Statement on the Order Paper this morning is in the name of the Minister of Education.
Minister.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, colleagues.

The Speaker: Good morning.

2019 SENIOR SCHOOL GRADUATIONS

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, I had the distinct pleasure of attending the graduation ceremonies for both the Berkeley Institute and CedarBridge Academy on June 27th and 28th, respectively. As I sat and listened intently to the myriad outstanding achievements of these amazing groups of students in the [graduating Class of 2019](#), I felt a deep sense of pride in our graduates and about what can be accomplished by students in the Bermuda public school system.

Mr. Speaker, I will share some of the graduates' outstanding achievements with my honourable colleagues and the wider community today; however, first I want to take this opportunity to extend my profound gratitude to the Ministry and Department of Education staff, school boards, principals, teachers, support staff, parents and guardians, students, volunteers and community partners for their steadfast commitment, unwavering support and persistent efforts during the 2018/19 academic year.

Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Education, I am committed to the vision for the Bermuda public school system, which is to see students educated to lead personally and professionally, to compete locally and contribute globally. Further, Mr. Speaker, the Government and I pledge to continue to work in the best interests of Bermuda's children, to support educators and parents, and to work with the community to en-

sure that Bermuda's senior school graduates are well prepared to transition to postsecondary educational programmes and the workforce.

Mr. Speaker, Plan 2022, Bermuda's five-year strategic plan for public school education, defines the trajectory for the changes that we will make in public education. These changes will enable us to build on our strengths as we execute strategies for the transformation of our public school system. This Government is committed to Plan 2022, committed to improving the quality of education, committed to improving the quality of teaching and learning experiences for our children and committed to ensuring an improvement in the outcomes for the public school system. This is evident, Mr. Speaker, by the encouraging achievements of our graduates shared at the two senior school graduation ceremonies.

Mr. Speaker, the Berkeley Institute invited Ms. Gherdai Hassell, an alumnus from the Class of 2009, as the guest speaker for their graduation ceremony. Ms. Hassell, an artist who presently resides in Japan, delivered a passionate message to the graduates. She challenged them to set and pursue audacious goals, to ask for what they want, to exercise their faith and to be determined in their actions to achieve their goals.

Mr. Speaker, please allow me to share some of the achievement data for the Berkeley Institute graduating Class of 2019:

- There were 135 graduates.
- [There were] 126 graduates who received the Bermuda School Diploma (BSD).
- Five graduates received the Bermuda Alternative School Diploma (BASD) from the Functional Academics Programme for the first time.
- [There are] 38 graduates who will attend colleges and universities in the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada.
- [There are] 57 graduates who will attend the Bermuda College.
- Nine students will enter into the workforce.
- One S3 male student graduated a year ahead of his peers.
- Four young men earned the Penn Foster High School Diploma completing high school one year ahead of their peers, as well.

Mr. Speaker, three students graduated from the Bermuda College with their Associate Degrees. Ten students graduated with Applied Technology Certificates from the Bermuda College. Four students graduated with a Nursing Assistant's Certification from the Bermuda College. One student graduated from the Bermuda College with a Diploma in Hospitality, for the first time in the schools' history.

Mr. Speaker, one student will be travelling with "Up with People" in the upcoming year. Three graduates were awarded Rotary Exchange placements out of a possible four spots. One graduate earned a scholarship to the United World College in

Swaziland. And 28 graduates received scholarships and awards totalling approximately \$117,000, with students also receiving scholarships from ABIC, Deloitte and Chubb.

Mr. Speaker, the guest speaker for the CedarBridge Academy graduation was Ms. Daishawnai Richardson, a graduate from the CedarBridge Academy Class of 2003, and one of our very own, a primary school teacher in the Bermuda public school system. Ms. Richardson delivered a powerful and passionate call to graduates to "level up" as they prepare for their future. She told them that if they choose to do so, they will win. Ms. Richardson concluded her message by performing a liturgical dance to the popular gospel song, "You Will Win."

Mr. Speaker, from CedarBridge Academy graduates there were 94 graduates; 86 graduated with the Bermuda School Diploma. Four students graduated with the Bermuda Alternative School Diploma. One student graduated with a Bermuda Senior School Leaving Certificate. One student graduated with a Bermuda Functional Skills Certificate. Two students graduated with the Penn Foster High School Diploma. And two students completed the Bermuda School Diploma programme within three years instead of four.

Mr. Speaker, two students graduated from Bermuda College with an Associate Degree. Eight graduated from Bermuda College with a Certificate in Applied Technology. Five students graduated with the Nursing Assistant Certification from Bermuda College. Twenty-three graduates will attend overseas [colleges and] universities. And 52 graduates will attend Bermuda College in the fall.

Mr. Speaker, one graduate earned a Rotary Exchange in Bolivia; this means that all four Rotary spots were filled by public school students.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: One graduate will join the newest cohort of "Up With People"; two graduates will travel to Tanzania; and two graduates will travel to Nepal this summer with Raleigh International. At the age of 15 years, one graduate earned the Bermuda School Diploma in three years and will attend the United World College in India.

Mr. Speaker, graduates of the CedarBridge Academy earned scholarships and awards in the amount of \$155,000 in addition to internships and apprenticeships. Two students were recognised for earning the NCCER Core Certification in the area of technical education; and from winning awards over the years, they contributed over \$100,000 to educational programmes at the school. Mr. Speaker, that is commendable!

Mr. Speaker, of the 135 graduates from the Berkeley Institute and the 94 graduates from CedarBridge Academy, I am pleased to report that this year recorded an increase in graduates who have applied

to the Bermuda College. We have a total of 109 students from Berkeley and CedarBridge enrolled in the Bermuda College. This is up from 85 students last year, a difference of 24. This is in spite of the total number of graduates decreasing this year by six.

You will be reminded that, in the last Throne Speech this year, the Government introduced the merit-based College Promise Programme, awarding scholarships to public school students with appropriate GPAs who wish to attend Bermuda College. It has been noted that the increase in public school students enrolling in the Bermuda College is due in large part to the introduction of this College Promise Programme.

Mr. Speaker, the Berkeley Institute and CedarBridge Academy graduates are amazing, and they have made their parents, the senior schools and all of us proud. I wish every graduate continued success in the future, and I definitely look forward to hearing about their personal achievements and collective contributions to our Island as they mature into our future leaders.

Mr. Speaker, I am very much encouraged by the accomplishments and successes of our public school senior graduates. I extend a sincere thank you to all the teaching staff, support and administrative staff at the two public senior schools under the competent leadership of Ms. Keisha Douglas at the Berkeley Institute and Mr. Kenneth Caesar at CedarBridge Academy.

Mr. Speaker, the Government will continue to work diligently to create opportunities for students in the Bermuda public school system so that they can thrive, succeed and achieve their goals, dreams and aspirations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

As indicated, we were going to allow an additional Statement this morning from the Minister of National Security in support of the paper he tabled earlier.

Minister.

WAR VETERANS PENSION BENEFIT INCREASE

Hon. Wayne Caines: Thank you for your indulgence, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise this Honourable House of the Government's intention to increase the pension benefit for [Bermuda's war veterans](#).

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members will be aware that Bermuda has a long history of military and war involvement. Unfortunately, our veterans have not always gotten the respect and recognition they deserve due to myriad racial and economic injustices that were inscribed into the laws and policies of the day.

Mr. Speaker, during the First World War, the Bermuda soldiers were members of the Bermuda Militia Artillery, and as it was decided that they were too small and too inexperienced as a unit to be involved in combat, they served as essential support staff behind the lines in Italy and in Egypt. The 1919 War Pensions Act stipulated that you needed to serve overseas to receive a pension, so these particular soldiers did not have an issue.

Mr. Speaker, pension issues arose for those soldiers who served at home in later wars. These Bermudians volunteered for service, but were not sent overseas for a number of reasons. Volunteers in reserved occupations including masons, builders, engineers, shipwrights, carpenters and police. And they were kept in Bermuda as their skills would be required if our Island came under attack. Men with families were not sent overseas. Soldiers who remained in the Bermuda guard, some for over six years, included members of the Bermuda Militia Artillery, the Bermuda Militia Engineers, Bermuda Militia Infantry and the Bermuda Volunteer Rifle Company and comprised both black and white veterans. But until amendments to the Act in 2007 brought forth by the then PLP Administration, these soldiers were denied benefits and even the title of war veterans.

Mr. Speaker, it is especially disheartening that these men and women, and their widows and widowers, have had to fight for their just recognition, as they are seniors in our community. This Government is committed to advancing policies that will help right the wrong.

Mr. Speaker, recently the War Pension Commissioners, a group of former military members, submitted a proposal to increase the pensions for war veterans benefit recipients. There has been no increase to war veteran pensions since 2007, when the monthly benefit was increased from \$400 to \$800. For 2019, the commissioners recommended a further increase of \$200, an increase from \$800 to \$1,000 per month.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share that the Government has accepted the recommendation of the commissioners and intends to continue to honour those who fought for the people of Bermuda in previous years by introducing an additional benefit to the Pensions Benefit. The reality is that, over time, the living expense for war veterans has increased. It is intended that this pension increase will provide additional assistance to our veterans and to their families.

Mr. Speaker, the rate of pensions for war veterans is prescribed in accordance with section 16A of the Pensions and Gratuities (War Service) Act 1947. Earlier today, I tabled the Pensions (War Service) Order 2019 that will officially amend the rate.

Mr. Speaker, the cost to Government for the proposed increase will be approximately \$162,000 in this fiscal year, 2019/20. Partial budgetary provision has already been made within the budget allocation

for the War Veterans Programme administered by the Department of Social Insurance. The additional cost will be funded from savings within the Finance Ministry budget allocation.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members are reminded that, in addition to the pension benefit, war veterans also receive various medical benefits, which include all expenses for treatment at KEMH, including vision care, unlimited prescription drugs, medical office visits to general practitioners and specialists, and denture coverage. Funeral expenses up to \$5,000 are also covered under the Act.

Mr. Speaker, even with the various pulls on the government purse, the Government is committed to ensuring that our veterans are adequately supported. We remain sympathetic to the financial needs of our Island's veteran population. These men and women served their country in this capacity because it was the right thing to do. They have never sought handouts, and they deserve to be honoured at every opportunity. The Government is hopeful that this increase will assist not only the veterans themselves, but will also offer some relief to the family members who now care for them.

Mr. Speaker, we pay tribute to Bermuda's military veterans, including those of all ethnicities, who made the ultimate sacrifice to help provide the peace and freedoms that we enjoy today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

That brings us to a close of Ministerial Statements this morning.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The Speaker: The next item on the Order Paper this morning would be that of the Reports of Committees. And we recognise the Member from constituency 2.

Honourable Member Swan, I believe you have a report that you would like to table this morning.

PARLIAMENTARY JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE EXAMINING THE EVENTS OF DECEMBER 2ND, 2016, INCIDENT AT THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, BERMUDA

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly the [Report](#) of the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee Examining the Events of December 2nd, 2016, Incident at the House of Assembly, Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and solemn duty to present to this Honourable House on behalf of the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee the report of the regrettable events of December 2nd, 2016.

Mr. Speaker, your Parliamentary Joint Select Committee experienced many challenges outlined within the report that caused delays. Whilst the committee was originally mandated three to six months to submit its report, we found it necessary to seek two extension periods to meet the mandate set out in the motion.

Mr. Speaker, your committee met 49 times. And it was necessary to call on your office as legal considerations mounted. The committee are appreciative of your wise counsel, as it was necessary to rise and report progress as we approached the six-month time period and sought our first extension.

Mr. Speaker, your committee kept to its task and had to issue summonses, which led to continued challenges and delays. Notwithstanding, key witnesses connected to the decision-making were interviewed, which enabled your committee to begin to put some of the pieces of a complex situation together.

Mr. Speaker, as your committee neared the end of its first extension, more information and witnesses were coming forward. [Reluctantly], the committee requested a final extension, which was granted, which led to the conclusion of a unanimous decision.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to thank all the members of the Legislature who served on the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee, the consultant Clerk, Mrs. Alberta Dyer-Tucker; including valuable assistance from Mrs. Sierra O'Meally; Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr. Arnold Allen; and Ms. Jessica Bowers.

In addition to myself, Mr. Speaker, the Members of the Legislature who were also on the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee are as follows: MP Michael Scott, for a period; former Senator Andrew Simons, for a period; former Senator Robyn Swan for a period; MP Tinee Furbert; MP Neville Tyrrell; MP Scott Simmons, for the final period; MP Ben Smith; Senator Marcus Jones, for the final period; and Senate President, [Senator the Honourable] Joan Dillas-Wright.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Members for acquitting themselves admirably to the task, which involved considering sensitive information of national significance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: Good morning, Members. We are now at the Question Period. And we will start with the written questions. We note that the first question is from the Opposition Leader to the Premier, and it was deferred from the last sitting. And we note that the Premier is off the Island today. I have not been informed that anyone else is going to be providing the answer.

So, are we seeking to have the [Question] deferred until next week?

Will someone ask for it to be deferred until the next sitting?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Mr. Speaker, I do request the House's dispensation to have it deferred until the next sitting.

The Speaker: Until the next sitting?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Please, on behalf of the Premier.

The Speaker: On behalf of the Premier.

**QUESTION: LIST OF MPs PAID TO
SERVE ON GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE,
BOARD OR QUANGO**
[Deferred]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Will the Honourable Premier please inform this Honourable House of the names of all the Members of the Legislature from July 2017 until present who have been paid to serve on any Government Committee, Board or Quango and the remuneration paid for that service?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Just as a question. This is the second, going into now the third deferment. Not just one deferment. I do not understand why it is now taking four weeks to get these together. I know that there are complications.

If there are complications, then just let us know. You know? Just to continue to defer and defer without any correspondence is not helpful.

The Speaker: Thank you.

A message will be sent indicating that we would like to have it done for the next sitting. Okay?

[Inaudible interjection]

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
APOLOGIES

The Speaker: Oh. Thanks for bringing that to my attention.

When we made the announcements this morning, it was omitted to include that the Premier is actually off the Island today. And he will be absent today, as well. And I believe it is himself and MP Famous who are at a conference together, at a CARICOM conference.

So, both of those Members will be absent, as well, today. So, it is now duly noted. It was not included in the notifications that were mentioned earlier.

[Question Period continuing]

The Speaker: The second question this morning is another . . . the second written question, rather, is from MP Dunkley to the Minister of Finance.

Minister of Finance, there were three questions for oral responses.

**QUESTIONS: BERMUDA CASINO
GAMING COMMISSION—COSTS**
[Deferred]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Will the Honourable Minister please provide to this Honourable an update on the progress of hiring an Executive Director for the Bermuda Casino Gaming Commission (BCGC), and please provide details of the recruitment process since the Minister's statement to the House on March 1st, 2019 including the dates and contents of any advertising, the number of applicants and if an applicant has been selected for the position?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Will the Honourable Minister please provide to this Honourable House details of the costs to run the BCGC on a monthly basis from April 1st, 2018 through to June 30th, 2019 breaking down the total cost for each month into the following areas; salaries and wages, consultant fees, administrative costs, rent and general overhead and other expenses?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Will the Honourable Minister please provide to this Honourable House details of the staff and consultants as of June 30th, 2019 at the BCGC and the remuneration including all benefits of each person?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to also request a deferral in providing responses to those questions. I have some answers from my team, although I am not satisfied with the completeness of the answers that have been provided.

The Speaker: So, you would like to improve on the responses that you have?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Yes, please, sir.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Obviously, we would like the Finance Minister to be able to provide complete answers. But this is getting to be a habit, generally. And I look forward to next week.

The Speaker: Thank you. We will have them for the next time that we do sit. Thank you.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

This is the first time that I have been asked Parliamentary Questions. And this is the first time that I have asked for deferral. The point of order is that the Member is mistakenly misleading the House.

The Speaker: It is noted—

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Minister, Minister, it is noted that it is your first. And I think the Member was generalising about deferrals that he has seen. And both points are noted.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is correct. I said “generally.”

The Speaker: Yes. Both points are noted. Both points are noted.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah! I have spoken! I have spoken! I hear both Members, and I have noted both Members’ points. And we would expect to have the responses at the next sitting.

We will now move on to the questions that have been asked in reference to Statements that have been given this morning. And of the seven Statements this morning there are Members who wish to ask questions of, I believe, four of the Statements.

The first questions this morning will go to the Minister of Works in reference to his Statement on the Sandys 360.

And the question is from the Opposition Leader. Honourable Member, would you like to put your question?

QUESTION 1: SANDYS 360 PATI REQUEST

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to everyone.

I just wanted to ask two questions of the Honourable Minister. And the first question is, Is it the intent to purchase 360 within the fiscal year, notwithstanding the legal issues that we are well aware of, as well?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Speaker, the intent was to have it completed by now. The challenge is that . . . I do not know how many we have in this House. But when lawyers get in a conversation . . . be careful. I am challenged speaking the truth.

[Laughter]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: They give you advice, and then they come back and give you contradictory advice—

[Inaudible interjections]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: —to their own advice. So, I have left them to fight it through on their own. But it is my hope that it will be in this fiscal year.

The Speaker: Any supplementaries?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: No supplementary. Second question.

The Speaker: Second question. Continue.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will concur with the Honourable Member thus far what he said.

The Speaker: About the lawyers?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Well, yes.

The Speaker: Continue.

QUESTION 2: SANDYS 360 PATI REQUEST

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. I have a bunch of them around me, as well. That is why my hair is all grey.

Will the initial purchase price be the same, or will it increase, decrease?

The Speaker: Minister.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Speaker, well, first of all, it cannot increase unless I come back here.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: And so, I do not . . . That is not the challenge that I think they are having at the moment. But anything is possible. But at the moment, the challenge has nothing to do with the price. That has been agreed, or was agreed. But I guess it could change. And if it does, then we will see where we go from there.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Supplementary? Yes.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes. I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

Just curious whether [or not] the duplicate payment that had been made in respect of that Sandys 360 facility initially to the trustees would be recouped in the purchase price. Is that part of the agreement that is being negotiated?

The Speaker: Minister.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: The short answer is that I do not know. The Ministry, the Department of Public Lands and Buildings have made no payments to Sandys 360, nor do they owe us any money. So, I am not sure who made the payment. I think it is the Ministry of Education. And so, I am not certain as to where we are in that regard.

The Speaker: Thank you.

No further supplementaries? We will move on to the next question. And that would be for the Minister of Labour.

The Member from constituency 22 would like to put a question to you in reference to your Statement that you presented this morning.

Member Pearman, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION CONFERENCE AND THE MODERNISATION OF BERMUDA'S LABOUR LAWS

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Minister, the first question relates to page 3 of your Statement and your statement that it is the intention of the Government for the Employment Act to remain, albeit with amendments. And you said that this would occur before the end of this year. Do you mean the end of this parliamentary year or the end of this calendar year?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: I will give you the safe answer and say definitely before the end of the calendar year. But the intention is to have draft legislation in place by this summer, with a view to hoping that we can get it addressed before the end of this legislative year.

The Speaker: You have a supplementary or a new question?

Mr. Scott Pearman: Supplementary.

The Speaker: Continue.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Mr. Scott Pearman: Will those changes to the Employment Act include the four items that you have identified—the maternity leave, paternity leave, the zero tolerance and the consolidation of the tribunals? So, all four of those matters by the end of this year?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: Yes. That is the intention.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Mr. Scott Pearman: Second question.

The Speaker: Second question. Continue.

QUESTION 2: REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION CONFERENCE AND THE MODERNISATION OF BERMUDA'S LABOUR LAWS

Mr. Scott Pearman: Second question for the Minister: In terms of the consolidation of tribunals, you have identified that there will be 10 tribunals that are being consolidated and that there will be four Acts that are being amended.

I do not anticipate that the Minister knows all the different tribunals, but could you tell us which of the four Acts you are proposing to amend?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: In particular, you are looking at the Labour Act, you are looking at the . . . I cannot think of the exact names, the Act that deals with the unions. I do not have the names written in front of me. But they all deal with labour. I will get those exact names and give them to you.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: Yes. But I want to get the other two, as well.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.
Is this a supplementary or a new question?

Mr. Scott Pearman: A supplementary.

The Speaker: Continue.

Mr. Scott Pearman: In relation to the amended legislation, will the Minister undertake to have this tabled in

the House two weeks in advance of any debate and not to rush these through?

An Hon. Member: That's the norm, isn't it?

Another Hon. Member: Say no!

[Laughter]

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: What I will say is that when the report is done, it will be tabled in the House.

The Speaker: Well, I suggest you say yes so that we give it the proper time. The answer should be yes.

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: Yes.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Any further question or supplementary? None?

We will move on to the next Member who has questions this morning. And the next is for the Minister of Cabinet Office.

Minister Furbert, you have four Members who would like to ask questions of you, in fact. And the first is the Member from constituency 10.

Honourable Member, would you like to put your question?

QUESTION 1: BDA POST OFFICE / UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION (UPU)

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on page 2 of the Statement by the Honourable Minister, there is a paragraph where the Minister refers to a wide range of products to the general public, including online services, bill payments and other transactions. And then he talks about the greater convenience to the public, while ensuring efficiency in government providing services to the people.

This is all well and good, Mr. Speaker. But the bottom line for the post office shows that they lose millions of dollars every year. So, the question for the Honourable Minister is, How will this efficiency mean more revenue and increased business?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That is a good question. I think there is about \$5 million in deficit regarding the post office. And so, right now, if we look at the retail sector, the courier gets about \$11 million in revenue. And the post office receives about a half a million dollars in revenue. I am well aware of other post offices around the world—

Curacao, I believe also Aruba—which literally compete with the courier service. And so, we are looking at making some arrangements with other entities that we can provide a service that will compete with those individuals, through the post office.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Supplementary or further question? Supplementary?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: I thank the Honourable Minister for that answer. And I think he has hit the nail on the head. However, how will Government be able to compete with the courier services, based on the fact that the revenue is overwhelmingly going that way? What is the intention?

Obviously, it is clear to me that courier services appear to be quicker and, in many cases, less expensive to move a package. So, how will Government compete with that to get that business?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Again, a good question. And we hope to look at improving the efficiency, decreasing the value, improving the time.

As you know, right now, post office, when you go to a post office and ask for a package, they ask you to open up every package. Bring it to a courier, they do not ask you to open up a package at all. So, these are things we will be looking at. And we do not expect to get the whole \$11 million per month that the courier gets. But I think if we improve the efficiency, we can find some ways to compete. I mean, right now we do collect money from . . . half a million dollars. So, if we can improve it by 100 per cent, then we are up to \$1 million. But at least we can get there. And it is a half a million dollars per month that we collect right now for parcel post.

The Speaker: Supplementary or new question?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Supplementary.

The Speaker: Okay. We will take your supplementary, your second supplementary.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Yes. Final supplementary on this.

Mr. Speaker, is there any consideration for the Government to introduce new lines of service, such as

delivering parcels on a much quicker basis, like overnight delivery?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: We are looking to that and will do the best we can. But that is one of the purposes we will work on.

The Speaker: Okay.

Would you like to put your supplementary? Supplementary?

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, please, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I just wonder if the Minister could indicate whether one of the options that they might be looking at is to reduce some of the rates for parcel, international data, international parcel post?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: What I would like to say to the Honourable Member is that right now we are looking at the whole package. And some of these things we might take into consideration. But right now, I am not at the liberty because I do not have that information in front of me.

The Speaker: All right.
Supplementary? Yes, yes, yes.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes.

In light of what the Honourable Member has said, I guess I want to get a bit more specific with the efficiencies of the IT, as he mentioned on page 2. Will these efficiencies do away with some of the satellite offices in any way?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: No. I mean, right now, as you are aware, we have, I think, probably about six now. Courier services do not have any satellites. So, right now, I have to leave Hamilton Parish and come up to Mills Creek. If we had that same type of service in Hamilton Parish, I would just have to go from Radnor Road over to North Shore.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: So, no?

The Speaker: Right.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: As far as it stands right now, no.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes.

Bearing that in mind, is it anticipated then, with some of these changes, understanding a bit about SWIFT 1 and then SWIFT 2, that we will be needing more staff to help implement this, IT-wise or otherwise?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: No. We do not anticipate that. We can provide certain services right now that people coming from town can pay for—dog licence. We hope to provide a lot of those types of services at the post office.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Do you have a further question now?
No, he used his two supplementaries.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I have a new question.

The Speaker: No. It is his still question still. We are still on the Member's question here.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Can I defer to the Opposition Leader?

The Speaker: But he has used his two supplementaries.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: No, he has a question. Can I defer?

The Speaker: But it is your turn. He is down to ask questions afterwards. So, we are still on yours.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just going to defer to the Opposition Leader. But I will follow your guide. I will follow your guide.

The Speaker: Okay.

QUESTION 2: BDA POST OFFICE / UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION (UPU)

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: The second question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on page 3, the Honourable Minister makes some comment in regard to the US Postal Service and their withdrawing from the UPU. It appears, Mr. Speaker, that postal rates in the States are much more expensive than courier services. So, in the Minister's view, question to him, If the US does withdraw from the UPU, how will that affect worldwide

shipping rates in light of the fact that couriers ship cheaper in the US than the US Postal Services ships? Would not the competition allow for the couriers to pick up that business and be more efficient?

The Speaker: Right.
Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Honourable Member, those are concerns that we have also, because with the United [States] Postal Service pulling out . . . Let me just say how it works.

They are broken down into four tiers. And so, developed countries such as the US, Canada and some other countries are considered in tier 1. Bermuda is considered in tier 2. So, we are paying more for rates than those in tier 4, such as China. So, what the United States is trying to do—because everybody is losing money in postal services—is to allow the countries to set their own rates. To do that is going to cause just a whole havoc.

Because the Universal Postal Union is the overall body that controls and works in over 669 postal offices around the world, they are the union for the postal service. If the United States pulls out of the UPU, the UPU will no longer work with the United [States] Postal Services. So, their discussion in September—and it is close—with everybody who is looking at it, is try to come up with a plan B. I do not know what the plan B is right now. As a matter of fact, I asked that question. Why is it taking so long to produce a plan B? But they are looking at plan B, hopefully, by September for everybody to work with.

But you are right. The cost of that could escalate significantly. I too have that great concern.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Continue.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, is the UPU competitive with couriers around the world?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes.

I am trying to think about that question. I know that probably here we are not. But remember, postal service . . . and I think I said it was 1800-something when it all came into existence. And the mind-set of what was there now continued for a long period of time. The unionised postal union never really changed. We never changed. And so, a new entity comes in, such as courier, and provides a better service, better quality and everything else. And what we

need to do is, as we said, move ahead for what we want it to look like in the future.

And as far as rates, we may have to form some kind of alliance. And again, depending on what the Universal Postal Union comes up with, are there . . . and I do not really not know how they are going to do that, to be honest with you, how we are going to deal with it going forward on this. I really do not know.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Final supplementary.

The Speaker: Okay.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: To the Honourable Minister: Has the Government considered any privatisation of the postal service?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: No.

The Speaker: All right.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: But that is not going to change the rates either.

The Speaker: Okay. Minister, that concludes the questions from the Member from constituency 10. However, there are other Members.

Member from constituency 23, would you like to put your question now? Honourable Member Gordon-Pamplin.

QUESTION 1: BDA POST OFFICE / UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION (UPU)

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on page 2, the Minister speaks to the installation of IT programmes SWIFT 1 and 2. Could the Minister give us some indication as to the cost of the implementation of those two programmes with those two systems, SWIFT 1 and SWIFT 2, please?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I cannot remember. I am looking at the former Minister, whether he remembers the number for SWIFT 1. I do not know that number. But SWIFT 2 is probably going to be around approximately some \$370,000. SWIFT 2 will be roughly probably \$370,000. But I do not know what SWIFT 1 will cost.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Supplementary or new question?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I have a supplementary.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes.

The Speaker: Okay.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Given the recommendations of the efficiency commission, will SWIFT 1 and SWIFT 2 be compatible with existing IT systems within government? Or are we creating another silo mentality of these two particular implementations?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Another good question. Interestingly enough, I had a meeting yesterday with the individuals who provide the TIMS for the Office of the Tax Commissioner. I asked that very same question, said yes, it can be done. Yes, it can be—yes.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Incompatible, yes.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you.

The Speaker: Further? Okay.

Minister, the next Member who has questions for you is the Opposition Leader.

Honourable Member, would you like to put your question?

QUESTION 1: BDA POST OFFICE / UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION (UPU)

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In light of some of the answers that the Honourable Minister just gave concerning the UPU and the US Postal Service, I guess I wanted to ask, Would it not be prudent, or would he find it prudent and proactive to at least explore the option of a private service so that we may not be caught out by the fact that the US does pull out, so at least we have in front of us what those realistic options are, what the costs are, our concerns, so that we can make a speedy decision at that time, if in fact it does happen?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: It is a challenge. Because we are a member of the UPU, if we were to form, say,

an alliance with the United [States] Postal Service, the UPU will cut us off tomorrow. That is the first thing.

So, I just got back on Sunday (regarding the discussions), and we were having discussions with other Caribbean Islands on how they are going to do it. So, I am not at liberty right now to decide or to tell you exactly what it is, because we are just in the basics. And like I said, I am concerned that it is taking so long from when the United States gave the answer, way back in October last year they were pulling out. Why is it taking so long for the UPU to come up with any real direction? I am concerned about that.

So, we are at one minute to twelve. We are having our meeting in September. The United States pulls out in October. And no one can tell us exactly what track we will take, going forward. I have that big concern. So . . .

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Well, yes. Yes. The Democrats get the next election. I do not know. The whole bunch of things can take place. But if they pull out . . . and that is why there are options. There are three options on the table. One, if we all agree that we set our own rates, the United States is not pulling out, that is the first thing. The other option, I believe, allows rates to increase for those countries which are underdeveloped—China, the African nations, Guyana, all the rest of that group, and a whole bunch of other people. I think Brazil falls into that category—to allow their rates to increase over a period of time, six or eight years. I think that is what they are looking at. I mean, that is the recommendation coming from the United Kingdom.

So, there is still a chance that the marriage will not fall apart. But we will see in September.

The Speaker: Further questions? Supplementary?

No further question? Okay.

Minister, you have one other Member who would like to put a question, the Opposition Whip.

Would you like to continue with your question, or put your question, rather?

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

QUESTION 1: BDA POST OFFICE / UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION (UPU)

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: My question is just around a statement that was made under the former Minister responsible for the postal service. And there was some discussion about our having or entering into a contract with a third-party US courier. Is there any sta-

tus update on that and how it could change our model with this new development?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: That is still . . . and the Member is right. That discussion is still going on. That is why I mentioned about, if we can provide services for Bermuda using the same type of courier concept, get your information, get parcels here faster, we might be able to do some things that compete against the current couriers, as we speak.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Supplementary or new question?

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: Supplementary.

The Speaker: Continue.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Ms. Susan E. Jackson: So, would this sort of mixed-bag model of the general post office, along with the courier service, create any kind of risk with our relationship with the UPU?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: No. As I said, Curacao and, as I said, Aruba and a few other countries, Caribbean countries, actually do that right now. And I had a discussion with the gentleman while I was there. And hopefully, they will be coming here so we can have further discussions.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Supplementary?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, I have a supplementary.

The Speaker: Yes.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in light of the Minister's response that they are looking at some kind of liaison or cooperation with another service, will the undercutting of the existing courier service by the post office taking its business serve to not just undermine, but to put a challenge with respect to jobs that are being provided by the courier services at the moment?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Right now, the courier service is putting jobs at risk within the government. So, we can compete. I do not see any problem with that.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Supplementary?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Supplementary.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes. Could the Minister explain what he means in terms of the courier service putting jobs at risk in government?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: That is very simple. The government's budget right now has a \$5 million deficit. And let us say all the parcels go to the courier, and the post office is not receiving any parcels. If it is not receiving any parcels, the question is, Do we need any people? And so, we need to find a way to compete, bring the revenue up so we can at least try and break even within the postal service. And as time goes on, we might even be hiring more people.

The Speaker: Any more supplementaries? No further questions? Well, that brings an end to the questions for that particular Statement.

The last Statement that has questions this morning is the Statement by the Minister of Education. And, Minister, you have questions from the Member from constituency 8.

Member, would you like to put your question?

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, can you indulge me for one half-a-second just to provide congratulations to the graduates of 2019?

The Speaker: Well, that comes up next. We have not [reached] that.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Fair enough, fair enough, fair enough. I will do that next.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Yes, yes. You can do that next.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: I will do that next.

The Speaker: Yes, yes.

QUESTION 1: 2019 SENIOR SCHOOL GRADUATIONS

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Okay. Mr. Speaker, in 2016, approximately 50 per cent of the graduating class of secondary school students had acceptance letters

and went off to overseas universities and colleges. In 2018, approximately 39 per cent of the Berkeley students had university acceptances overseas. In 2019, when you combine the CedarBridge graduates and the Berkeley graduates, approximately 25 per cent were going to university overseas this fall. So, we have gone from 50 per cent to 55 per cent in 2016 down to approximately 25 per cent in 2019.

Can the Minister confirm the percentage of the graduates who actually received acceptance letters from overseas universities and colleges?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, I certainly would ask indulgence for the Member to restate his question. Because he spoke of the percentages, and now he is asking me to confirm . . . Is he asking me to confirm what he spoke of?

The Speaker: Member, just [provide] a little clarity for the Minister.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Yes.

In his Statement, he spoke of the number of students who will be attending overseas universities in the fall. My question to him was, What percentage of our graduating secondary school class actually received acceptance letters from the universities and colleges overseas?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure if I had a moment, I could calculate what the percentages are. But I will read from the Statement.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: So, your question, for clarity then, . . . the Minister's Statement made reference to (and I am just going to draw a number) 20 people who are going overseas. Your question is, of the 20, how many have actually received their acceptance letter?

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: No. How many of all the graduates received acceptance letters? Because some of them may have rejected and decided not to go.

The Speaker: Oh, oh. So, more than 20 may have gotten a letter, and only 20 decided to go.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Right. Exactly.

The Speaker: That is what you are asking. Okay.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, I honestly cannot answer that question. We can endeavour to reach out to the students and see how many of them received acceptance letters through multiple schools and which one they are attending. Because some of them listed Bermuda College; they are going to Bermuda College. Or they may go elsewhere. We just simply cannot [answer that question].

All we can do, Mr. Speaker, is reflect on the statements that were made by the principals and the information that was received from the schools on where children, where the students have said that they will be going.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Supplementary?

SUPPLEMENTARY

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Supplementary.

As I said earlier in my opening remarks, the number of students in 2016 who attended universities overseas went from about 50 [per cent] to 55 per cent. In 2019, that number is [now] at approximately 25 per cent.

Can the Minister provide information on strategies that his Ministry and the high schools will put in place to ensure that those students who wish to [but] are not going to attend overseas universities are better equipped to increase the percentage of acceptance and attendance? Because it has gone down from 50 per cent, Mr. Speaker, in 2016, to approximately 25 per cent in 2019.

The Speaker: That is an open-ended . . .

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, as I read the Statement, if you add up all of the students, they equal to the graduates who are graduating.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that the Bermuda College has worked diligently to enact matriculation agreements with overseas universities to provide our students with an option to attend the Bermuda College for those two years, save some money and then go overseas, has been a significant part in our students going to the Bermuda College.

To stand up here and absolutely say and dismiss the Bermuda College and state that all students must go overseas—

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. Point of order.

The Speaker: Ah, ah—

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: That Minister is misleading the House.

The Speaker: Clarification. You have a clarification. Put your question. Clarify your point. Clarify your point.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Mr. Speaker, I said the point of order because the Minister is misleading the House. I have never dismissed the contributions of Bermuda College—*ever*.

The Speaker: Okay. Okay.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: And, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member started out by stating the percentage of students going overseas. What he is implying is that . . . what he implies . . . what I take that to be implied by that is that going overseas is better than going to Bermuda College.

The Speaker: Ah—

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, I can explain why I am saying that. I can explain why I am saying that.

The Speaker: It is a matter of opinion. It is a matter of opinion of how you took that. I did not clearly indicate . . . get that same impression from what he stated. His question—

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: I was just asking a question.

The Speaker: His question basically was trying to get around a clearer number of who was going and who did not go.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: I am trying to help this question for both of you, to give some clarity to it.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Just give me one second.

The question was basically trying to say, *Can we more define the number of children who may have been receiving the opportunity to go away, even though they did not go?*

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Yes!

The Speaker: That is basically what it was. And I do not think he was implying that local was better than overseas, or overseas was better than local.

Your question is a difficult question for an answer, though. Because if an application came to me, if I applied and I got accepted, and I chose not to go,

nobody necessarily knows, outside of my household, that I got that letter. That is not something that I am going to take to the school.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Well, Mr. Speaker, I understand what you are saying. I did some research on this. And I have read a statement that was produced by a former Education Minister prior to my time. And he was able to quantify the number of students who received acceptance letters during his tenure.

An Hon. Member: So what?

The Speaker: But is that . . . the question is . . . the response you will want from the Minister is something that is factual that we can produce. I do not know if that is factual in that it may not be something that is recorded regularly as to how many got acceptance letters. So, the answer . . . I think he earlier indicated that he does not know the answer. He does not know the answer. And I think we are just beating a dead horse by going back and forth and trying to produce an answer that cannot be produced.

If you want to move on to a different question?

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: I'm fine.

The Speaker: You are fine?

We can bring the question-and-answer period to a close and move on to the next item. Thank you, Members.

**CONGRATULATORY AND/OR
OBITUARY SPEECHES**

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 36. Honourable Member Scott, you have the floor.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for catching my stand.

Mr. Speaker, today marks 50 *[sic]* years of gospel broadcast in our country by a prominent—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Yes, proponent of this, icon of this, Elmsford Kelly Zuill. And, Mr. Speaker, the House is going to be asked to be associated with my commendations.

The Speaker: The entire House, yes. Yes.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Fifty-five!

Hon. Michael J. Scott: And is it 55?

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: The Minister of National Security is indicating to me.

Mr. Speaker, I declare my interest as the Chair of the Broadcasting Commission as I add my remarks of congratulations to this fine former graduate of Sandys Secondary School. It was there, Mr. Speaker, when I was speaking with Mr. Zuill, at the point of his graduating from Sandys Secondary, that he decided, when he was working out what he wanted to do, that he would like to become a gospel radio broadcaster. And so, Kelly Zuill got the opportunity when asked, as a young, just fresh graduate from the Sandys Secondary School, to conduct an interview of some of his peers, a youth interview, at ZBM—I beg your pardon, at [ZFB-FM] pointing across to Berkeley Hill.

And in those days, as you know, that nascent organisation being led by the also-imminent pioneer, Mr. Montague Sheppard, had heard Mr. Zuill's interview of his young kids and peers, and was impressed by the preparation that Mr. Kelly Zuill had made in connection with this interview. And in discussions with Mr. Montague Sheppard about what his career aspirations were, and when Mr. Zuill indicated, *I want to be a broadcaster in the gospel area*, he was immediately (I am advised by Mr. Zuill) immediately hired by Mr. Montague Sheppard, and there began his career, some 55 years ago (as I am advised).

And so, at the time that he was negotiating these beginnings of his career, Mr. Wendell Simmons, also another legendary communications man in our country, suggested to Mr. Zuill, *Why not go to RCA and take a course?* And Mr. Zuill followed that sage advice, did an 18-month course, and it improved his communications and broadcasting experience.

So, I am so happy to stand this morning to speak [on behalf of] us as an Honourable House and I am glad for the entire association of, Mr. Speaker, yourself and the House, to commend this legend communicator—

[Timer beeps]

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: —on the occasion of his 55 years in broadcasting of gospel music. Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you.

I now recognise the Minister of Labour and Sport. Minister.

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think it must be because, you know, I hail for blue and blue that you—

The Speaker: Well, I think you have just expired your time. Who else would like to speak?

[Laughter]

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: Mr. Speaker, I only rise today to give two congratulatory remarks—one to our Men's National Football Team, who—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: I am going to associate the entire House, yes—who acquitted themselves extremely well, having competed for the first time in the CONCACAF Gold Cup Championships. And they did do us proud. And we as Bermudians only see this as a chance to go from greater to greater heights. And we hope that their experience and indeed their win are the motivating force for them to really turn it up once more when Panama comes here to compete against them. And I think at some point they will be competing against Mexico. I have every confidence that they will do a stellar job.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to congratulate Nikki Bascome on his win. I will associate the House once more. And I will say, no pun intended, but it just is indicative of the fact that Bermuda always punches above her weight. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

I now recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 21. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, today I wish to commend a constituent of mine by the name of Abdul Rahman, otherwise known as Wayne Brown. Mr. Rahman has just been appointed to one of the foremost supernational bodies, that being the OECD, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. And I wish to associate the Member from constituency 36, and hopefully, maybe other Members here as well. He is sitting on a vitally powerful decision-making body, that being the coordinating body for tax treaties.

Some of us here who follow this sort of esoteric, but yet vitally important, area of governance, global governance and regulation, would know that Mr. Rahman has been at the forefront of Bermuda's work in trying to stay ahead of the changing global tax compliance regime for the last 10 to 15 years. You may remember that term "TIEAs" [tax information exchange agreements], which we heard quite often during that 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 period.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: That is right. And he was at the forefront, operating on behalf of the Bermuda Government vis-à-vis the Ministry of Finance. He is one of only four members of that coordinating body. And those members are the Chairman, who is John

Nash, from New Zealand; Vice-Chair, Paul Marsh, of Britain; Nancy Tremblay, of Canada. And so, this is a very prestigious appointment, and Bermuda should be proud. We continue to produce very, very talented individuals who could operate in so many different domains globally. And his appointment is just another example of that. And so, Mr. Rahman has been an unsung hero.

I want to also turn my attention, although very quickly, Mr. Speaker, in my remaining two minutes, perhaps, to a *sung* hero or heroes.

The Speaker: One minute.

Mr. Rolfe Commissioug: That being the members of the remaining members of the Theatre Boycott group, that being the Progressive Group. I would like to note, Mr. Speaker, that my mother had her birthday on the fourth. I associate the whole House.

[Desk thumping]

Mr. Rolfe Commissioug: And that birthday yesterday—

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Mr. Rolfe Commissioug: I am going to need injury time on this one, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: No. Your time is ticking.

Mr. Rolfe Commissioug: That birthday was held yesterday on the 4th of July. Two days prior to that (I think it was two days prior to that) she was in a groundbreaking interview in the *Royal Gazette*. This is the first time my mother had spoken publicly about her role in the Progressive Group and the Theatre Boycott, and was very poignant in the things she had to say. And I am glad that she did share that history. I thought it was so important that our younger people understand the historical context and realities that their parents and grandparents went through during that period, particularly during the 1950s.

[Timer beeps]

Mr. Rolfe Commissioug: So, I am very proud of her and proud of all of those members.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Mr. Rolfe Commissioug: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Honourable Minister Caines. Minister, you have the floor.

Hon. Wayne Caines: If it pleases you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had the privilege of attending a general education diploma graduation at the Co-Ed Facility. Five young men from our community had been given periods of incarceration. And, Mr. Speaker, they finished the GED programme. What I thought was most poignant was that the auditorium was full. It was full to capacity with family members, and well-wishers. And it was full with community support. I was buoyed by the number of community teachers who were present, who we have no idea give of themselves privately and personally to go into our correction facilities and help these young men with their GED.

I would like to highlight Ms. Shawnette Somner. She is the Education Officer for the prison. Yesterday, we saw the work that she did within the facility. And we were able to see the young men just really, really . . . They all told stories, Mr. Speaker, about having—none of them passed the first time. And some of them took—one took six, one took eight, one took four. And they all talked about the times that they had to go and try, and try again.

And I believe it was a perfect metaphor for their life, where they had had a failing in life, but they were not failures, and that indeed our country was behind all of them.

To the prison, Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight all of the prison officers who work tirelessly with these young men to make sure that they are indeed given the opportunity. One of the young men, Mr. Speaker, said that he is going to open up his plumbing business. One is going to study culinary arts at the Bermuda College. One described wanting to be a painter. Every young man there had what they believed is a plan for after they left their incarceration.

It was good to see members of the Treatment of Offenders Board who came to support these young men. And so, it was indeed a community effort. They for the first time donned cap and gown. So, it was a proper graduation, with music. And it was something to behold for a number of young men. Inmate David, Inmate Cholmondeley, Inmate Simmons, Inmate Ford and Inmate Richardson. I would just like to salute them for their milestone in achieving their GED at the Co-Ed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.

We now recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 2, Honourable Member Swan.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes. Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognise the Bermuda National Jump Rope Team, who are competing in the Jump Rope Championships in Norway.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: And indeed, between July 2nd and the 12th, as I speak. I had the opportunity to interview these young people. And what stood out was that this less-known sport is encouraging young people to get away from the computer and, much to their amazement, exciting them about a sport that actually is used by other sports to create endurance and the like. And I just want, Mr. Speaker, to make mention of, with your permission, some of their names: Judah Smith-Dyer, Xade Ingemann-Whitter, Ajani Robinson, D'Angelo Williams, Sebastian Lee. And the Berym [Bouncers], as well, form part of . . .

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes, Berym [Bouncers].

But, Mr. Speaker, these young people were so passionate when they demonstrated their skills to me that I had to actually ask one of them, *Ease up*, because they were right next to the steps going down to Liberty Theatre, and I was afraid that, you know, they might not make the trip. And I could not bear to deal with their moms looking at me for asking them to jump and injure themselves.

But it is great. It is really great. And I am encouraging the schools to embrace this initiative, because as a youngster, I remember how jump rope used to be prevalent in schoolyards. And this sport has great potential to embrace those who might not be on the football, cricket, netball, softball teams like others. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Did you attempt to participate, yourself, with them?

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

[Laughter]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: I yield!

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Would any other Member like to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Member standing next to you, Mr. Swan, the Honourable Member from constituency 28.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Good morning.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: I would like to send congratulations, associate with the comments made about Nikki Bascome for his successful victory on last Saturday night.

Also, Mr. Speaker, last Saturday, along with the Premier (I forgot who was also there)—the Prem-

ier; yourself, the Speaker of the House; MP Neville Tyrrell; MP Derrick Burgess; and also Minister Burch, we attended the opening of the Seventh-Day Adventist Camp Week, along with Minister Caines. And it was—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Scott Simmons was there in spirit, yes.

It was a great opening, and I look forward to seeing the rest of you in church tomorrow, also. And I would like to also associate MP Kim Swan.

Also, Mr. Speaker, last week in England at the Oxford University, there was a conference held on the Racialisation and Publicness in Africa and the African Diaspora conference. And there were hosts of Bermudian speakers, namely, Dr. Dana Selassie; Ms. Rosemary Hall; Ms. Sydney Hutchinson; Ms. Leyoni Junos and young Ms. Alexa Virdi; and also, there was also Ms. Kristy Warren of Bermuda. All of these were lecturers who spoke at the conference at Oxford last week. And I send congratulations to them, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

I now recognise the Government Whip. Government Whip, you have the floor.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I would actually wish that this House send a letter of condolences for Minister Rabain's father [Vincent Victor Vernel Rabain], who is, unfortunately, no longer with us. And I will associate the whole House with that.

Now, on another note, on a lighter note, I would like a letter of congratulations to be sent to the UT-7 Tournament. And UT stands for Uthmani Talbot, who is, unfortunately, no longer with us. But his brother and his family put on a football tournament. It started, more or less, for football skills for the younger generation. But it has grown over the years, and this is its fourth, going into its fifth year, I believe. And this is the first year that they actually had a tournament that you could join. And I declare my interest. I did play in that tournament.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: No, I played. And my team ended up in the finals against—

Some Hon. Members: You lost?

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: We ended up in the finals. And, well, I would like to preface the fact that—

The Speaker: Allow the Member to take time to explain himself.

[Laughter]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Out of the two teams that made it to the finals, we came second. But, mind you, the team that won was made up of the same members who were on the Gold Cup team. So, we were playing against National Team players. And as goalkeeper, I held my own. We lost 6:5. But the thing is that, the official score is 6:5; the unofficial score was six—all. It should have gone to penalties, but we did not have VAR [video assistant referee].

An Hon. Member: Oh, VAR.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: We did not have VAR. But the thing is, getting back to it, it is for a good reason. And I actually encourage more Members in the House here to participate. There is another tournament that is coming up called Conquer D'West, which is coming up at the end of the month. So, any Members who would like to play so that we can . . .

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Well, we will come to the Russian Cup Match. I do understand that. That is correct. But, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.

We recognise the Opposition Leader. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I also would like to extend condolences to our Minister on the passing of his father. I do understand, his father made it very clear to me, that he and my father were very good friends. And I know what it is to lose a father. So, condolences to you. I know it is a tough time amongst the busy schedule that you do have. But you are thought of. And this House will always come together when one of us loses a very close family member.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: So, condolences to you.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. And on a lighter note, I also would like to congratulate Rolfe Commission's mother. I was at the celebration, the 1959 Theatre Boycott. And, my goodness!

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Did I say . . . what did I say? Yes!

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Oh, no, no, no. I was not there at the celebration. I am so sorry.

[Laughter]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I was born four years later, so . . . Thank goodness they got that out of the way!

[Laughter]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: So, I definitely would like to congratulate the efforts by those members back then of the Progressive Group, who kept it extremely quiet. And I did say in my remarks that it was remarkably *brilliant*, incredibly smart and a miraculous move that they made—a very strategic move that they made. And this was by college kids at that time, who were making an impact on a Bermuda that would, quite frankly, impact other areas, as well.

I took note that it was about the theatres. But the restaurants and the hotels all caved in before that two-week period of time. It was the theatres that were last, but the impact was, quite frankly, felt. And when I looked out into the audience, there were black kids, white kids. They all had benefited from that particular event. And so, my congratulations to them.

And on a greater note—well, not a greater note, but on another note, I would like to congratulate our Honourable Member Ben Smith and his leadership with our Swim Team.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Meet after meet after meet, we continue to see our Bermudians are coming [home] with gold medals, silver medals, bronze medals. In the last Caribbean and Central American Championship, our 12- to 18-year-olds netted 30 medals, Mr. Speaker! And they came in fifth out of twenty-six countries.

And so, to him I want to say *thank you* again for not only your leadership in the House, but also your leadership in the community. Well done! Thank you.

The Speaker: I recognise the Minister of Education. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to now formally extend congratulations from the House, in its entirety—

and I want to associate the entire House—to the graduates of 2019 from the Berkeley Institute and CedarBridge Academy. Mr. Speaker, these children have achieved remarkable things. With CedarBridge Academy's graduating class showing 93 per cent of them, and with Berkeley 76 per cent of them will, after their graduation, attend either university in Bermuda or overseas, Rotary Exchange, Raleigh International, Up With People, and United World College. Those are phenomenal percentages, Mr. Speaker, and we should celebrate our students each and every time to show that we care and we see that they are doing really well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Honourable Member, Minister of Works. Minister, you have the floor.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to be associated with all of the congratulations and condolences that have been expressed already and add two of my own. Congratulations first to Mr. Owen Simons, who was honoured last week at a gospel concert at the Bermuda Institute.

The Speaker: Yes.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: I mean, he is quite a remarkable, as everybody knows, musician. He demonstrated that.

Mr. Speaker, I would really like to spend my time this morning, though, congratulating Mikayla Douglas and Caleb Scott, both of whom won scholarships from the Farmer's Market. I had the pleasure of actually presenting the awards, Mr. Speaker. And I am always amazed at the amount of money they actually raise. In fact, I asked them, *How do you make any money when you offer a \$5,000 scholarship in the normal course of events?* This year, they had 16 applications. And these two students were so impressive that they had to come up with a way of offering one a full scholarship and one a half scholarship.

They always select students who have been successful by the nontraditional route. And in this case, Mr. Speaker, they each were asked, *Why should you get this scholarship?* And the reason why they were left with having to award it to both of them is because they both said, in their own individual way . . . Caleb wants to be a lawyer, and he said because he will not forget what help they provided, and he will return to make a contribution, not just to the market, but to others in his professional career. In Mikayla's case, she said that the scholarship is not just for her. It is going to be for all the students that she is going to help, because she is going to be a teacher.

Well commended, Mr. Speaker, and I commend those persons who sell their wares at the

Farmer's Market for having the foresight to be able to carve out some of their profit and put it aside to help the young in this country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

I recognise the Member from constituency 4. Honourable Member Furbert, you have the floor.

Mrs. Tinee Furbert: Good morning and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to send out a couple of congrats to Mr. Delano Ingham, who was recognised for a Queen's Honour, a former Progressive Labour Party colleague of ours, but who also has a history with a career in broadcasting. So, I want to send congratulations out to him.

And also, Mr. Dennie O'Connor, who won an International Certified Tourism Ambassador Star Award, which is an award that sets him apart because he would be up against many other persons internationally around the world. He was described as being the best of the best in exceeding customer expectations. And I think that is very important, particularly in the area of tourism, when we can go beyond-beyond, 110 per cent, or even more, to be able to provide our tourism industry with the Bermuda experience.

I also would like to congratulate—

The Speaker: Oh, oh!

[Gavel]

The Speaker: You got off on that one.

[Laughter]

Mrs. Tinee Furbert: Congratulate, actually, all of those students who participated in leaving ceremonies. And that also includes our primary students, our middle school students, as well as our senior school students, who would have reached a milestone. And it was just great to also acknowledge them because it is a journey that they also have had to experience, both in primary and middle, and senior schools.

The Speaker: Have a glass of water.

Mrs. Tinee Furbert: Excuse me.

The Speaker: Have a sip of your water.

Mrs. Tinee Furbert: A big congratulations to all of those students who participated in their leaving ceremonies.

But I also want to recognise Dellwood Middle School. They had a celebration of the Mirrors Programme.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mrs. Tinee Furbert: Sorry. Yes, Mirrors Programme, where they have a leadership component to the programme, which is supported by the Ministry of Legal Affairs. And I have to say when I attended that celebration and that ceremony, it was quite evident of the relationships between the students and the teachers. Every time a teacher went up to get an award for their participation in this programme, the students were very elated and gave them lots of roars and cheers. And that just goes to show the testimony of how our educators are making a commitment to our students, because if they did not, the students would not be giving as much roaring and cheering and support as they did to their teachers. So, I want to say *Well done!* to the Dellwood Middle School family.

And then, I would also just like to say congratulations to all of the students at the prize-giving at the Dame Marjorie Bean-Hope Academy. Many of the students there do not have the opportunity to go on to further their education to somewhere like college. And I actually want to thank the Ministry of Education, because sometimes when they turn 18, there are very limited resources for them to be able to participate in things outside of school.

So, I want to say congratulations to them.

[Timer beeps]

The Speaker: Thank you, Member. Thank you.

Any further Member?

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 8. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to associate myself with the comments made by the Minister of Education in regards to the graduating classes of 2019, the primary schools, the middle schools and senior schools. When it comes to the senior schools, I would like to recognise those students who were enrolled in the Dual Enrolment Programme, the Penn Foster Programme and the Rotary Exchange. I would like to also acknowledge the contributions of the parents, teachers and principals—for the senior schools, in particular, Ms. Douglas and Mr. Caesar.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to also associate myself with the comments made in regard to the scholarship recipients from those who gathered funds from the Farmer's Market. The Farmer's Market team is very entrepreneurial. They care about what they do. They have a passion for what they do. They have the passion for this community.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to also associate myself with the comments made in regard to the Education Minister's father, Vincent Rabain. He was a friend of mine. He was like my big brother. I learned a lot from him, growing up. He could be difficult, but you know that he had your best interests at heart. And he

could cut right to the chase and right to your conscience. I mean, the way he did it—*Hey!* And he was right at you. And many a times, I said, *Man, ease off. Ease off.* But I know that he did that because it was out of care, compassion. And he cared for the people who were close to him. He supported his family; he supported his close friends.

And he will be sorely missed. The funeral was a true testament of his life. Obviously, I was the butt of the joke at the service because of my affiliation. But all of our friends on the other side said to me, *Cole, we know you have big shoulders, and we love you because you are part of our family.* So, again, to Vincent Rabain, you will be sadly missed.

[Desk thumping]

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: And you were a humble servant and made a contribution to more people than you can imagine. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Would any Member wish to further contribute this morning?

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 23. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I too would like to offer my condolences to the Honourable Minister. I was absolutely stunned when I heard it. Because sometimes, you may not—you know, read a newspaper, [you may] not see something or just miss something that I would have absolutely reached out. So, my condolences to you. You dad was special—special to me, said exactly what he thought. It was never a time when you had to wonder what he was thinking—

An Hon. Member: No!

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: —because he would tell you. And that is the kind of individual whom you can always appreciate, irrespective of where you come down on which side of the political divide. It was always a mutual respect. And that I will always appreciate.

Mr. Speaker, on the positive note, I would like to associate myself with the condolences—I am sorry, with the congratulations that were sent to the Swim Team. Mr. Speaker, I am going to be very selfish in this because, apart from the 29 or 30 medals that our team won—

An Hon. Member: Show-off!

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I am not showing off. I am just very, extremely proud that my great-

niece, Elan Daly, in the 13- to 14-year-old age group, *crushed* the 200 IM record, which was previously established at 2:29.06.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: And she touched the wall in 2:25:44.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: She knocked almost four seconds off of this record. And if this is not something of which we can all be proud, then I do not know what would be.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would be sure that the whole House would want to join me, join us in congratulating our team in the numerous gold, silver and bronze medals. The excitement for our young people, the development as they have, that they have been able to achieve as they have gone for swimming excellence. And I would certainly like for Elan to know that we are tremendously proud of her accomplishments.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Would any further Member wish to contribute to this this morning? No further Member? We will now move on.

MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE

The Speaker: There are none.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

The Speaker: There are none.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS FOR THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE ON MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

The Speaker: There are none.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

GOVERNMENT BILLS

The Speaker: We have some five Bills to be introduced this morning.

The first is in the name of the Minister of Finance.

Minister.

FIRST READINGS

PUBLIC SERVICE SUPERANNUATION AMENDMENT ACT 2019

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Speaker, I am introducing the following Bill for its first reading so that it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: The Public Service Superannuation Amendment Act 2019.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The next is in the name of the Minister of Health.

Minister of Cabinet, are you doing it for the Minister?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Continue.

HEALTH INSURANCE AMENDMENT (NO. 2) ACT 2019

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Speaker, I am introducing the following Bill for its first reading so that it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: Health Insurance Amendment (No. 2) Act 2019.

The Speaker: Thank you.

I think the next is in the name of the Minister of Labour. Minister.

EMPLOYMENT (WAGE COMMISSION) ACT 2019

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am introducing the following Bill for its first reading so that it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: Employment (Wage Commission) Act 2019. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

And the next is in the name of the Minister of Cabinet Office. Minister.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION AMENDMENT ACT 2019

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am introducing the following Bill for its first reading so that it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: Public Access to Information Amendment Act 2019.

The Speaker: Thank you. And the last is in the name of the Minister of Transport, who is not here. And I think the Minister of Works is going to table it for him?

Minister.

SUPERYACHTS AND OTHER VESSELS (MISCELLANEOUS) ACT 2019

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: I am, Mr. Speaker.

I am introducing the following Bill on behalf of the Minister of Tourism and Transport, which according to section 36(3) of the Bermuda Constitution requires the Governor's recommendation so that it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: Superyachts and Other Vessels (Miscellaneous) Act 2019. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

MOTIONS

The Speaker: I think we have two on the Order Paper this morning. We are going to recognise the Member from constituency 2 with his Motion.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE, REPORT AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE EVENTS OF 2 DECEMBER 2016

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that [I propose to move] the following motion at the next day of meeting:

WHEREAS this House ratified a resolution to establish a Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on December 1st, 2017, and subsequently passed in the Senate on the 21st of February 2018, to carry out the said Inquiry into the said events of December 2nd, 2016;

AND THEREAFTER, pursuant to Part IV of the Parliament Act 1957, that a Parliamentary Joint Select Committee be appointed:

- 1) to inquire into the events as aforesaid as thoroughly as may be;
- 2) to bring closure to this event by the making of all proper and necessary findings, recommendations and where required sanctions; and
- 3) to submit its report to the House of Assembly within three to six months (with the approved extensions);

AND WHEREAS the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee undertook and has completed its inquiry into the events of December 2nd, 2016;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House supports the report, together with the findings, the recommendations and sanctions of the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee as contained in the Report.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

There is a second motion this morning, to be tabled by the Honourable Member from constituency 10. Honourable Member.

CONSIDERATION OF INITIATIVES TO REDUCE THE ECONOMIC PRESSURE ON BUSINESSES AND PROTECT JOBS

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I give notice that I propose to move the following Motion at the next day of meeting:

WHEREAS there are increasing challenges faced by small business and businesses in general;

AND WHEREAS there is a declining economy lacking business confidence with escalating costs and increased regulation;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House consider initiatives that will reduce the economic pressure on businesses and protect jobs.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

That brings us to a close of motions being tabled.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Speaker: We have now moved to the Orders of the Day. And the understanding is that [Order] No. 2, which is the second reading of the Medical Practitioners Amendment Act 2019, is to be taken up this morning by the Minister of Health.

Minister.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move that the Medical Practitioners Amendment Act 2019 be now read a second time.

The Speaker: Any objections?

No objections. Continue.

BILL

SECOND READING

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS AMENDMENT ACT 2019

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I stand before this Honourable House today to present to Members the Bill entitled the Medical Practitioners Amendment Act 2019.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Health is responsible for the legislation that provides the framework for the regulation of health care professionals. The Medical Practitioners Act 1950 (and, Mr. Speaker, I will hereinafter refer to that as "the Act") is the legislation that establishes the Bermuda Medical Council and the

Medical Practitioners Professional Conduct Committee. And it guides the regulations of doctors.

The council is the regulatory authority charged with ensuring high standards of professional competence and conduct for the medical profession. The committee is responsible for receiving and investigating complaints against any doctor registered with the council in order to determine whether a complaint should be referred to the council for possible disciplinary action.

Mr. Speaker, currently, the Act allows seven members on the council, with one alternate each. It also provides for the committee to be comprised of three members and three alternates. This number of alternates has proved unworkable due to the intensity of the work involved in investigating complaints and conducting disciplinary hearings.

Mr. Speaker, both the council and the committee are comprised of members with full-time commitments within their respective professions, and securing their engagement for complaints is unreasonably onerous and unworkable. On average, Mr. Speaker, the committee receives about 10 complaints per year. Most complaints are dismissed, while only a few have been mediated due to a misunderstanding. Each complaint is investigated in order to determine whether an allegation sets out grounds for disciplinary action. The investigation of a complaint can be a lengthy process and require intensive consultation, coordination and research.

It is also important to note that, during an investigation, the committee members are coordinating and balancing their personal and professional schedules in order to ensure a thorough investigation.

Mr. Speaker, in a small community such as ours, persons are often conflicted. And establishing a committee that can meet the particulars of a complaint is challenging with the current membership structure. The changes proposed today are small, but necessary, to improve the timeliness and efficiency of complaint-handling for both the person making the complaint and the registered doctor who is the subject of the complaint.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill entitled the Medical Practitioners Amendment Act 2019 proposes to improve the administrative handling of complaints made against doctors by increasing the number of alternative members available for both the council and the committee. In addition, Mr. Speaker, the Bill proposes a provision for an ancillary committee to be constituted when the committee is unable to deal with all of the complaints before it. It is important to note that the reason for constituting an ancillary committee can be due to the volume of complaints received, time constraints and conflicts of interest.

The proposed amendments for ancillary committees regularise what has been in practice over the past few years and makes provision for decisions of such committees to be the decisions of the commit-

tee. Overall, Mr. Speaker, the Bill entitled the Medical Practitioners Amendment Act 2019 will improve the complaint-handling so that the council and the committee can continue to uphold high standards of professional competence and the conduct essential for safeguarding the public health.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I invite Honourable Members to participate in this debate.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 23. Honourable Member Gordon-Pamplin, you have the floor.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this Medical Practitioners Amendment Act, on the face of it, given the Minister's explanation, is a fairly nebulous, innocuous kind of legislation. There is not a whole lot to it. It is kind of making a procedure more favourable in order to be able to ensure that any complaints that are brought against medical doctors are dealt with expeditiously. And clearly, if someone has a complaint, if they are on the giving side of the complaint, they want to make sure that there is a resolution and that any problem that exists has been taken care of.

The challenge that I have here, Mr. Speaker, . . . and we are supporting the legislation. Let me say that at the outset.

But the challenge that I have is that this is another piece. It is almost like having a 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle. You get all the pieces put together. But you do not have a picture on the outside of the box so that you know what you are trying to put together as a completion. We have not seen anywhere any overarching vision that the Government and the Ministry may have in terms of where the health care system is likely to end up. And that is a concern that we have.

We are doing all kinds of pieces piecemeal. We are doing Health Insurance Amendment, we are doing Medical Practitioners Amendment, we are doing a piece here, we are doing a piece there. And we do not know how it fits into the overall scheme of what the vision might be. And therein lies my concern, Mr. Speaker.

And specific to this legislation, it is important to understand that there are subcommittees that will be enacted or be empanelled in order to hear complaints and to make decisions. And based on the legislation, any decision that is made by a subcommittee is deemed to be a decision that is made by the whole of the committee. And that I understand. But the question that I have is, What if a subcommittee comes up with a resolution to an issue that they are deliberating, and that resolution is not supported by the committee? Will the subcommittee automatically override any sort

of, I guess, dissent that the CMO [Chief Medical Officer] might have?

This is going to ease up the CMO, because obviously, she has had the requirements to sit on all of these panels and listen to complaints and stuff, historically. But I am just curious as to how the subcommittees are likely to impact if their decisions create any kind of variance with what the overall direction or guidance of the CMO is likely to be. And what would be the methodology by which one would express that this decision that is made by the subcommittee is creating a problem? So, I think that if we can just have some explanation of that, then that would be helpful.

The other question that we would have is, What kinds of issues are outstanding that have created this backlog that is necessary to make sure that we have this expedience, this legislation enabling expedience to be brought to the floor of the House? We have heard over the course of the past week, 10 days and the like, that because this vision is not clear, Mr. Speaker, you have medical doctors who appear to be in a state of flux. And it is because there seems to be things going on that they do not quite know what is happening.

So, if we had an overall, an overarching vision that everybody can kind of buy into . . . obviously, we need improvements in the medical profession. But when we hear of doctors who are completely against the Hippocratic Oath that they take to conduct themselves in standards and in ways in which they will put moral and ethical considerations above all else, and to ensure that their concern is for their patient, Mr. Speaker, I have never heard in my lifetime doctors saying that, *The system is ready to implode, and we are ready to go on strike*. I mean, that, to my mind, is an unacceptable, an upset in the norm that we should expect. If nothing else, when one is ill, Mr. Speaker, you want some kind of calm and some kind of serenity concerning the whole situation.

When we have got these kinds of bits and pieces being thrown at them, and the doctors coming, you know, saying that the whole thing is so upside-down, then we have to adopt an approach, because we need the doctors. Irrespective of how the Medical Council, how the Ministry, how BHeC [Bermuda Health Council] . . . irrespective of what we might think, we need our doctors. And we need them to be on the side of the patients. So, we cannot afford to have an attitude or an approach that helps to alienate them from the job that they are required to do.

So, my only concern is to see whether we can have a more collaborative approach in looking at all of the bits and pieces of legislation that we are bringing, to make sure that everybody is on board. We should not be having patients concerned as to whether somebody on whom they are relying is likely to withdraw services.

If complaints against a particular doctor are being delayed and they are not able to be heard in an

efficient kind of way, then very clearly, this legislation is going to assist. But it is only one peg in the orange, if I can put it that way. What we need to do is to make sure that we have something that embraces, something where that vision is shown, and that everybody can buy into so that we can have, not just a collaborative, but a cohesive output so that we know exactly what is coming up. And these bits and pieces are not quite doing it. We want calm. We want serenity within the medical profession. We want to ensure that we do it by embracing one another, recognising the importance of the medical profession to the patient, and the importance of the patient to the medical profession and that we are able to have just a wonderful relationship.

And I think that what we are doing, in piecemeal fashion, is just not quite getting us there. And I would like to see us taking a slightly more progressive step in ensuring that we can see the picture that is on the carton of the jigsaw puzzle.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

No other Member?
Minister.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Honourable Member and the Opposition for supporting this Bill, which, like I said, does deal with some administrative issues. It is supported also by the council, who have requested that this be presented.

Mr. Speaker, one of the comments that was made that was incorrect by the Honourable Member is that this was being done to, I guess, alleviate some of the challenges and the busyness of the OCMO. The OCMO, Mr. Speaker, the Office of the Chief Medical Officer, does not sit on the panel. In fact, currently, the panel comprises three members—two doctors and one lawyer. And you can appreciate, Mr. Speaker, in a jurisdiction the size of Bermuda, that if a complaint is coming from a member of the public, it may very well be likely that the composition of the panel may very well exist with a member who may even be related to the complainant.

And what we are finding is that, in order to ensure that the process is going smoothly and efficiently, as is in accordance with the rules of national justice, the reality of the situation is, because of things like conflict, because of things like . . . or perhaps the physician, because of their own personal practices, cannot meet in an expedited time as the complainant would like, because they have got surgeries or whatever, whatever, then there become challenges.

And it is not actually a subcommittee that will be established under this legislation. The legislation allows for ancillary committees. So, if an ancillary

committee meets and makes a determination, that committee, under this legislation, that determination is as if it was made by the substantive committee. So, effectively, what we are doing, in short, is allowing for more alternates so that we can have simultaneous ancillary committees meeting if need be at the same time so that persons' complaints can be handled in an expeditious way.

And on that, Mr. Speaker, I move that this Bill be committed.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Deputy, would you like to take the Chair?

And I suggest . . . do you want to just take your seat and then just move us into Committee and then do lunch? Okay.

[Crosstalk]

The Speaker: Okay. That is what I am asking. Do we want to do lunch or just move . . . ?

House in Committee at 12:28 pm

[Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr., Chairman]

COMMITTEE ON BILL

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS AMENDMENT ACT 2019

The Chairman: Members, we are in Committee of the whole of the House for consideration of the Bill entitled [Medical Practitioners Amendment Act 2019](#).

Minister, you have the floor.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, with your leave, I move that all clauses be considered together.

The Chairman: Continue.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, clause 1 provides the citation for the Bill.

Clause 2 amends section 5(3A) of the principal Act to provide for multiple alternate members of the Bermuda Medical Council.

Clause 3 amends section 12AA of the principal Act by inserting new subsections (7) and (8). Subsection (7), Mr. Chairman, empowers the Chief Medical Officer to constitute one or more ancillary committees made up of alternate members of the Medical Practitioners Professional Conduct Committee to deal with such complaints as he may specify, if he determines that the Committee is unable to deal with all of the complaints before it, whether due to volume, time constraints, conflict of interest or otherwise. Subsection (8), Mr. Chairman, provides that sections 12AA

and 12A of, and Schedule 2 to, the principal Act apply to ancillary committees as they apply to the Committee, and any decision of an ancillary committee shall be taken to be a decision of the Committee.

Clause 4 amends paragraph 4 of Schedule 2 in the principal Act to provide for multiple alternate members of the Medical Practitioners Professional Conduct Committee.

Clause 5 deems the new section 12AA(7) and (8) (inserted by clause 3) to have applied in the case of any ancillary committee of the Medical Practitioners Professional Conduct Committee constituted by the Chief Medical Officer before the commencement of this Act and deems any decision of such an ancillary committee to have been a decision of the Medical Practitioners Professional Conduct Committee.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Pat Gordon-Pamplin.

You have the floor, Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I thank the Minister for her clarity. It is the Chief Medical Officer who appoints the members; it is not the Chief Medical Officer who actually sits in the hearing. So, I just wanted to make sure that the Minister is aware that I accept her clarification and that I understand it, also that we have no further comments on this. And we support the legislation.

The Chairman: Minister, do you want to move—

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Mr. Chairman, I would like to move that all clauses be approved.

The Chairman: It has been moved that the clauses 1 through 5 be approved.

Are there any objections to that?

There appear to be none.

Approved.

[Motion carried: Clauses 1 through 5 passed.]

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Bill be reported to the House as—

The Chairman: Do you want to do the preamble?

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. Thank you. I am rushing to lunch. Sorry.

[Laughter]

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: I know how we enjoy our meals. Mr. Chairman, I would like to move that the preamble be approved.

The Chairman: It has been moved that the preamble be approved.

Are there any objections to that?
There appear to be none.
Approved.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I move that the Bill entitled the Medical Practitioners Amendment Act 2019 be reported to the House as printed.

The Chairman: It has been moved that the Bill be reported to the House as printed.

Any objections to that?
The Bill will be reported to the House as printed.

[Motion carried: The Medical Practitioners Amendment Act 2019 was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without amendment.]

House resumed at 12:31 pm

[Hon. Dennis P. Lister, Jr., Speaker, in the Chair]

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS AMENDMENT ACT 2019

The Speaker: Members, are there any objections to the Medical Practitioners Amendment Act 2019 being reported to the House as printed?

There are none.

It has been reported and so moved. That now brings us to . . . Deputy, would you like to?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

I move that we adjourn for lunch until 2:02, since a couple of minutes have been taken?

The Speaker: Well, 2:00 pm will be fine, 2:00 pm will be fine.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: So, 2:00 pm? Well, you know, a couple of minutes for you?

The Speaker: Yes, 2:00 pm will be fine.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: I am just trying to make sure Members get their fair lunchtime.

The Speaker: No. We will be back at 2:00 pm.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Yes, Mr. Speaker.
I tried, Members.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Members, we stand adjourned until 2:00 pm for our lunch break.

[Gavel]

Proceedings suspended at 12:32 pm

Proceedings resumed at 2:02 pm

[Hon. Dennis P. Lister, Jr., Speaker, in the Chair]

The Speaker: Good afternoon, Members. Welcome back. I trust everyone had a nice lunch.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: You did not?

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Oh, you did. Okay. All right. Well that means you want to go home early this afternoon. I understand that. I appreciate that. We all do.
But good afternoon, Members.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Members, we concluded [Order] No. 2 this morning, which was the Medical Practitioners Amendment Act 2019. And the remaining item on the Order Paper that we are going to do today is the motion to be moved by W. L. Furbert, notice of which was given on 31 May 2019.

Is that on everyone's desk?

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Oh, Minister, you supplied this?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes.

The Speaker: Oh, okay, we were wondering where they came from. You can explain it while you are on your . . . during your debate.

But with that, we will turn the floor over to Minister Furbert to begin his debate on his motion.

MOTION

CONSOLIDATED OVERALL REPORT OF THE EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE, DATED APRIL 2019

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let me first of all move that this House do now take under consideration the following motion, notice of which was given on 31 May 2019:

That this Honourable House take note of the [Consolidated Overall Report of the Efficiency Committee, dated April 2019](#).

The Speaker: Any objections to that?

None?

Continue, Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Speaker, we are here today to discuss the report of the Efficiency Committee. I would say, Mr. Speaker, that the work that was done by the Efficiency Committee was taken very seriously.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that in March 2018, the Premier and the Minister of Finance appointed the Efficiency Committee on the authority of section 61(4) of the Bermuda Constitution.

The Committee, as I said the other day, met 32 times between the dates of March 2018 and March 2019. I would also, first of all, like to acknowledge the Premier who, I believe, had the wisdom to recognise the need for such a committee.

Mr. Speaker, we should be clear on the understanding of “efficiency” and “inefficiency.” Inefficiency—those are the things we are looking at—is defined as *the state of not achieving maximum productivity, failure to make the best use of time and of resources*. Another way to define that word would be *not organised, skilled, or able to work in a satisfactory way, wasting time, money, energy or other valuables*.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose and remit was to review the function of all government departments, to recommend improvements in the efficiency of operations. I would say, Mr. Speaker, that it was very difficult to do and that we did not accomplish every department in that short time.

I would like to, once again, recognise the Committee which was: Cherie-Lynn Whitter, Permanent Secretary of Government Reform; Ms. Tina Tucker, which is the Director of Budget; Miss Ianthia Fox, Senior Management Consultant; Edward Ball, Jr., BPSU Representative; Glenn Simmons, BIU Representative; Senator James Jardine; Mr. Richard James; and Karamoko Darrel-Dickens, who was at that time the Government IT Representative, who no longer works in that department.

The Committee made 93 recommendations covering a wide range of departments. This included 24 recommendations for immediate change [and] 69 recommendations for medium to long-term changes.

If you recall, Mr. Speaker, at the time we said that the cost for the Efficiency Committee was approximately \$122,000. However, with the improvement in efficiency and better controls, the Committee was able to obtain revenue for the taxpayer [of] over \$12 million—a return of 9,130 per cent. And we will kind of break down where that \$12 million came from.

Mr. Speaker, we are not here today to point our fingers at any particular government or any particular one. Inefficiency has always been in government departments around the world and, as time goes on, some of the recommendations that we have suggest-

ed will become antiquated due to technology, et cetera. Hence, why it is important that we need to continue to review and improve the way government works. What was good yesterday may not be good in regard to efficiency tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, the Committee determined to focus on those areas where the greatest value could be achieved. Its work included: review of the Office of the Tax Commissioner; Register of Companies; Social Insurance; Office of Project Management and Procurement; overtime and wages in various departments; boards and committees; cross-ministry expenditure on materials and supplies, to name a few.

Mr. Speaker, the Office of the Tax Commissioner, the department charged with the administering the collection of taxes. First of all, let me say, if you can see on page . . . I think it was in a section really . . . Appendix . . . (Just give me one minute, Mr. Speaker.) In Appendix C you will see the number of people that we actually met with during that time, and the [the number of] individuals was considerable. They also included at that time not only people from within government, but people outside of government. And people outside of government could have been the . . . Mr. Cunningham, which was an IP lawyer; Mr. E. Schaefer from FLUENT; we met with many people from the private sector, the realtors’ representatives; and we met with representatives from the legal profession. Most other individuals came from the departments, like the Registrar of Companies, Finance, Bermuda First representatives, also the Project Management and Procurement; Permanent Secretaries from many different departments, particularly, Works [and Engineering], National Security, Tourism and Transport; the Department of Social Insurance, and the list goes on.

Mr. Speaker, I guess two of the most crucial things that we found during the time of the Committee were over \$300,000 worth of cheques—uncashed cheques—sitting in a drawer. And I have given you a copy in detail, without putting the people’s names here, of the cheques and the date of the cheques.

If you look at the cheques from the list, they go back as far as . . . one goes back as far as 2006, and then 2010, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016. And the total amount of uncashed cheques sitting in drawers was \$354,972.90 worth of uncashed cheques sitting in a drawer.

As of May the individuals have had to reissue new cheques worth \$315,579.77 and, at that time, \$53,000 of uncashed cheques which they are trying to recollect have not been collected. Two of the larger ones are \$27,000 and \$8,000.

Now, most of these cheques sitting in drawers were made by law firms because, remember, they represent clients who were trying to buy property, so they were really lawyers’ cheques. And as I said when I first saw this list, I said to tell them that I will come and pick that cheque up myself and they better have

the cheque ready. Because lawyers are supposed to keep their cheques in a trust account, so they cannot tell us they did not have the money. So that is why we were able to collect a considerable amount of these funds very quickly because, at the end of the day, even if the cheques were uncashed, it still should have been sitting in the trust accounts of the law firms.

The two large amounts, like I said, \$27,000, one of them dated back to about 2011 and . . . well, as a matter of fact, both of them, \$8,700, both of them were dated back to 2011. That is now eight years. I have not followed up to see whether they have collected that money yet, but we will see exactly where it is.

So these were the uncashed cheques.

So it showed that there was a weakness in the system. That now has been, as far as I understand, corrected. And hopefully we will never see this again, as far as cheques sitting in drawers. So that is \$354,000, you can put that down towards the \$12 million if you want to start adding it up.

Then we had all these stamp . . . and the Honourable Member is laughing, because, at the end of the day if you only cashed the cheques, the money does not go into the accounts of the bank or the government's account and it is not accounted for in revenue because the government accounts for money received based on the cash receipts.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: No, I am just telling you.

So, Mr. Speaker, in addition, there were over \$8,000 worth of documents that had not been assessed—dollars' worth—roughly about 1,600 documents that had not been dealt with. Some of these documents go as far back as 2011, I believe.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes. And so what was amazing to me . . . and we met with . . . this is one of the particular departments we met with over and over, which I found to improve the efficiency of collecting stamp . . . well, first of all, we had to get people to do this because the Office of the Tax Commissioner was very much understaffed. Very much understaffed. And so there were four additional staff hired, particularly on the collection side (and I will talk about that later on). But the Office of the Tax Commissioner hired outside lawyers to do some work for them, particularly [those] who understand the stamp duty, to get some of this processed. If not there was no way, because they only had one lawyer in the department who was in charge of, particularly, the stamp duty side, and he would never have been able to accomplish this. And you can see today that they have processed \$6,800 worth of stamp duties that were sitting on top of cabinets.

So if you look at the budget for last year and compare it with actual, you will see that stamp duty revenue went up. And it is for one reason and for one reason only—because we started to collect stamp duty revenue for that period of time. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, the revenue that was budgeted for at that time by the Government for 2018/19 . . . I thought I had it readily available. Just give me one minute. On page A-4 the actual budget amount was \$23 million; the actual amount revised for 2018/19 was \$27 million or \$28 million. So you can see the impact on a budget when not collecting the revenue. Most of that comes from the actual, now, collection of the stamp duty of what we were able to accomplish within the Efficiency Committee.

So I said \$12 [million], you add \$7 [million], now you are up to \$7,300,000. So we still have about another \$2 million to collect in cash-wise because if you notice from the . . . and, unfortunately, I did not have information for everyone. I just copied it for the Shadow Minister . . . and I am not sure he is going to be replying to me, but I copied it for the Shadow Minister of Finance.

And conveyance, you can collect pretty easily because, again, that money is sitting in the trust accounts of law firms. Voluntary conveyance is a little different. So you will see most of the money that is still outstanding to be collected is voluntary conveyance, because you can voluntarily convey your property, get the assessment of the stamp duty, but it is not held by anyone. So the person who owes the money, when they got their voluntary conveyance done, does not necessarily pay that at the time. So there is a weakness that is something that I think that we need to take a look at. So, as I say, most of the work that is outstanding is voluntary conveyance. You will see that the conveyance side is pretty well collected.

Now, here is the problem that they had, Mr. Speaker, as far as time-wise. So a lawyer will send in a document to be stamped and it is set in the drawer or wherever they set it, and then that document would go to Land Valuation to be assessed once again. So, here you have a bank who is involved (because they are lending the money for the conveyance for the property) who also has probably done their assessment, a pretty reputable surveyor has assessed the amount, and then we send it over to Land Valuation. So the time period for doing it and collecting it became time spent as far as efficiency is concerned.

So I said to them, *Can you tell me whether the work that is done by the Land Valuation Department . . . did you find many mistakes, once the law firm or the surveyor (who had done the work before) . . . did you find many errors?*

And they told me, *No, maybe small, insignificant, immaterial* (as we use an accounting term). But it was insignificant.

So I said to them, *[Do] you know which surveying company has come pretty close within reason to your testing [over the] years?*

[They said,] Yes.

So what we have done now . . . and I said, but if you know Wayne Furbert is going to assess the property, you are probably sure that my number is going to be pretty well far off, you should test me. So what we have put in place now is that those companies that they have tested in the past and which have come very close to what they have done, they will not test every one of them, but from time to time do—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: What did you call it?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Spot checks. And that is absolutely what we should be doing.

So the system that we have had in place for years, while it may have been right, and was right because that is the way the government had it from time and eternity, is not probably appropriate for today. Because most quantity surveyors have a responsibility under their certificate to make sure that things are done right. So that is what we put in place for the stamp duty, and I believe it is working now.

Another thing was to do with the \$750,000 where Government gives stamp duty relief on property that is purchased under \$750,000. So what happens is an individual, a lawyer, would collect the money, the stamp duty, and it has been sitting there for . . . well, some of them have been sitting there for five years in a law firm, and so that has not been appropriate. So we are trying to find a way to make that much more workable.

Mr. Speaker, I see the time is going by quite quickly, so I am going to try to move on.

The Speaker: Both yourself and the opening speaker from the other side will have 60 minutes.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes, that is why I am concerned. Can I have two hours, Mr. Speaker?

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Sixty minutes.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Speaker, so the additional staff that was hired by the Office of the Tax Commissioner—I think it was four temporary resources—have collected over \$3 million of old debt from that time, which I think they took their place in October or November of last year until now.

So in case anybody is keeping track, that is \$7 [million] plus \$3 [million], we are now up to \$10

[million], so \$10,300,000. People were wondering how we were able to make \$12 million on behalf of the government, so \$3 million in old debt.

Mr. Speaker, the Office of the Social Insurance. This is an interesting department because the Social Insurance Department would have people who owed money . . . so let us use Wayne Furbert as an example. So they would show that there is money that is due [from] me for the Honourable Member Renee Ming, as an individual, and it has been on the books for years. But Wayne Furbert is now dead. And so some of the challenges that I see in the department are that when Renee Ming goes to get her pension there is no place that Wayne Furbert could . . . because Wayne Furbert is dead. So, now we have a problem because Renee Ming is at a disadvantage at the age of 65 years old, because the pension was never paid for on her behalf. So those are some of the challenges.

So what we need to do is find a way so individuals, from time to time . . . and I believe it is in place now. I know the Honourable Member from Hamilton, [constituency] 5, is on that Committee, is able to go to Social Insurance and see whether their money is up . . . if their pension is up to date so that they can now go to their employer and say, *By the way, you haven't paid.*

But most people—95 per cent of the people—are not aware of this. And so it is important for that department to become more active to inform the public that they can go to (I'm just using a name) socialinsurance.gov.bm/payments and see whether their social insurance is up to date. And we need to do some more marketing and promotion on that side to make sure . . . because that is the only way. Because there are many people who show up at the age of 65 and are not able to collect their payment.

And there are millions of dollars outstanding in social insurance. And this is something that we have got to tighten up on.

I will pool Social Insurance and the Office of the Tax Commissioner together when it comes to outstanding debt. There are millions, and millions, and millions of dollars in both of those departments that the government will never ever collect. And so what we were working on was a programme called "Starting Fresh."

Here is an example without calling any person's name. And unfortunately, I was going to bring you a graph which we worked on showing the jobs or the entities that had the larger amounts of accounts receivable outstanding. And if I asked the Members in this House which types of companies they believe have the highest outstanding payroll tax, what would they say?

If you want to shout out one, just give me one. I am not calling it. What entity do you think, at the end of the day, owes . . . has the largest payroll tax? It is construction. It is construction. Construction has gone

down considerably. And so people were using cash flow in those olden days to go to the next project—collect the money and never pay the money on behalf of their employees.

So with construction, if you looked at the graph . . . and, again, I am disappointed I did not bring it here. But if you looked at it, it was this high for construction—let's say a foot high—and the next one drops down to about three feet. And I do not want to call the entity which . . . of that one, because I think we would all be embarrassed.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Which entity, I mean not companies, but which group it falls under. But it was huge.

So one particular construction company owes \$1.9 million. The courts ordered that he pay (yes, I can say “he” because it still doesn't identify the person) \$500 per month. It would take 360-some years, Mr. Speaker, for him, his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, if they were liable, to pay for it. So that is out of the question, it is not going to work.

So what we were trying to do, and if we continue to work on this sometime in the future, is to come up with what we call “Starting Fresh.” *Mr. Construction Company, how much do you think we can work with you on this?* And then you are going to be responsible going forward.

Now there are some things within government where they will have, working with construction companies, if they employ them again, that they will start deducting money out from their account. I think what has happened over the years, unfortunately, is that there have been construction companies that have done work for government and government never withheld the payroll tax. And it is general. I mean it is humungous! And so you would never collect that money. And so we might as well just face what is there, write off what is realistic, because every year we say there are millions of dollars . . . 200 . . . I would say \$80 million in accounts receivable. We will never collect it, never collect it.

And so we are hoping that a miracle happens. It is not going to happen. And likewise, on social insurance it is the same way. We will never collect that money. I am sorry to tell them, if the person is dead. I think we should find another record to keep where (and I used the Honourable Member Renee Ming as an example) inside where we know that this person was supposed to be collected, by Wayne Furbert at the time, but who is now dead, it has got to be kept in another drawer. And let us get a true figure of where we stand as far as . . . and as my Honourable Member would understand the provision for bad debt, which is accounted for in the financial statements, and get down to a real number.

So those are the numbers when I come to . . . we are up to about, roughly \$10 million that the Committee had worked on.

Mr. Speaker, the other issues that I think will . . . I am going to try and move quickly on these ones, because there is only half an hour left. We talked about stamp duty, also the Tax Commissioner. We found cheques. That the first thing I asked, *Is anybody who is receiving cheques? Do you have any cheques in drawers?* Now I am getting nervous because I just found out that the Office of the Tax Commissioner had cheques in drawers, so I asked the question from another department, *Do you have cheques in your drawers?*

They told me no. So I asked the question again, *Do you have cheques in a drawer?* They told me no. I asked the question again (maybe they did not understand what I was saying), until someone smiled at me, because I was already ticked-off already because I knew what the answer was myself, and they said, yes. Because at the end of the day there were cheques that were bounced. Okay? So there were cheques that were bounced, they were not . . . so . . . but we did not have the team in place, enough of them to follow up on the bounced cheques, and they were in the millions.

So all these things were coming together and we were saying, *Well, you know, . . .* and then, again, there are receivables in the department which needed to be written off. [The] company has gone, disappeared, all gone. So we need to get the things . . . those in particular, because the Office of the Tax Commissioner, which is the highest tax collecting body in Bermuda, if we can get those numbers to a realistic . . . and then work on them, and we made some suggestions at the end of the day, as far as going after provisions for bad debt. It had to do with . . . first of all, analysing the debt enforcement unit of the Attorney General's Chambers, it needs to take more action, we must find a way, I think, to outsource some of this stuff to other law firms because all of the burden cannot fall on the Attorney General to move quickly enough to get these things done.

So those are some of the provisions. There is a whole bunch, if you read the report, that talk about provisions for bad debt.

And then we talked about e-filing. As you know, the e-filing of accounts payable payroll, I think it was about a million dollars. So if you had a million dollars in payroll tax you can do e-filing. No, we want to . . . let us try to get more people on the e-filing for payroll tax, and I believe the Government is now reducing it to half a million dollars, but eventually everybody should be pretty well on e-filing returns.

We have always talked about the government itself as far as infrastructure. We operate in silos. One department does not talk to the other department. Nobody knows what is going on. So if I owe money for my boat and if I owe money for the dog and the cat

and if I owe money for payroll tax and if I owe money . . . because there are 17 departments in the Government which collect revenue. And every one of them—nobody talks to each other. What we need to do is have . . . everybody has in Bermuda a social insurance number. So let that be the identifier number for everyone.

So when you bring up 1-1-1-2-2-2 everybody comes up. Wayne, you owe money for the dog, your cat, your rat, and the boat and everything else. But to get . . . [presently] you have got to go to everybody. You have got to go to every department and say, *Well, how much does Wayne owe at the Land Tax, how much he owes for this, how much he owes for the rat, and cat and everything else?* So those are things that the government is working on.

Alien licences, Mr. Speaker. Let me explain what an alien licence is. And I appreciate the . . . we worked with the real estate people on this one.

An alien licence is when a foreigner purchases land, property. The document goes from a lawyer to Immigration. Immigration notes the information and then sends the full document off to the BMA, which does something. And then the document is sent back to Immigration, and then the whole document is then sent to Land Valuation. And then it is sent back to Immigration. And then it goes to the Estate Department and then it is sent back. If there is a mistake in one of those departments, it starts all over again.

So the country has lost millions of dollars because the individual [buying property] has become frustrated and said, *Forget about it.* So I called everybody into a meeting. I said *How can we improve this?*

It was a civil servant who said to me, *Minister, what we could do is when the information is received by the Immigration Department, at the same time they can fax—fax?—courier or scan the information to each department what is needed, not the whole file.*

I said, *Brilliant! How long do you think [before] the process will take place?*

Everybody said *about a month.*

So we are now . . . and I hope that is in place, I need to double-check. That will save months of work and we will get, hopefully, the money on time in the government's coffers. So if you look at the budget for . . . and so it has an impact, so if you look at the budget (and I think I told you [page] A-4 last time) if you look at the budget for foreign currency purchase . . . no, that is not the one. Sale of land to non-Bermudians, \$7 million was budgeted for. Guess what the actual revised figure was—\$2.4 million. Why? Because the processing took too long. It is not that there were not persons purchasing the land; it is because of processing time.

I mean, there was one for \$1.7 million that the government could have collected. If we had collected it on time it would now amount to \$4 million. So we are talking about inefficiencies within the government system. So that should be in place.

Mr. Speaker, leases. [Have] I got up to my \$12 million, I am up to 10, right? Up to 10. So, the leases. If you will recall, again, I thank the real estate people. I met with them and said . . . because I started checking legislation for leases from Cayman Islands. And I saw Cayman Islands did it differently. And so the government was losing a lot of money.

So I called in the real estate people, and said, *Hold on, if I rent a place for . . . I think it was 4,000 square feet (I cannot remember the exact number, I will use 4,000 as an example) I pay, I think it was, \$500. If I have a place for 100,000 square feet—renting—I still pay \$500.*

I said, *That does not sound right.* And so, we called the real estate people and said suppose we did this. We looked at the Cayman model. And Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report, I got an email, a text message from a real estate person today (I am not going to call their name) but they said to me . . .

[Pause]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: As far as feedback on stamp duty . . . hold on . . . she . . . he, . . . they talked about making good progress and that the government is seeing an increase in revenue from leases. We have budgeted for [an] increase [of] between \$2 million and \$3 million in this budget. Mainly by changing the idea, making it more efficient, and more people accountable, \$2 million to \$3 million more in leases.

For years we underestimated . . . I mean, I was almost in the process . . . and the Honourable Member, Mr. Pearman, I believe his firm has a law firm—Conyers, Dill and Pearman—in the Cayman [Islands]. Cayman charges for immigration. If you are an accountant or you are a lawyer, they charge immigration fees of \$25,000–\$30,000. The Honourable Member can confirm that. But do you know how much we charge in Bermuda? Probably \$5[,000]. That was the next thing I was really going to tackle. We are losing out on so many things that . . . and we talk to people, we understand it. But everybody has been praising Cayman for so long, I am saying, *Let me look at their immigration charges—\$25,000 to \$30,000!*

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: The Honourable Member missed the part where I said at the beginning I am not going to blame anybody, but he is trying to pull me out . . . I am not going to go there.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I am not going to go there.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I am going to try to stay on the high . . .

My point is what we need to do is start looking at some of these charges so . . . and I think that business will understand it.

As you will recall, Mr. Speaker, for the last two years we have kept payroll tax down for international business, but they understand. Like I said, the Honourable Member Pearman—I called him because I knew they had a law firm down in Cayman—that law firm pays, if they want to hire a non-Caymanian, it is \$25,000 to \$30,000. For a top business person, it is huge! And we are charging \$5[,000]. That is another story. That is not in this report.

So let me move on.

So, Mr. Speaker, what I found out also is the idea of overtime . . . wow! Overtime is huge! And we are trying to come to grips with how do we do that? And every government has had that problem. How do we come to grips with overtime in many departments? It is not the easiest thing to come to grips with. I am not going to tell you which department it was, but it . . . I just thought maybe I should go work in that department, man. They make a lot of money. I talked to the Member from Hamilton East about a certain division. I said, *What?* It is like . . . part of it, they budget for it, you know. And so those things are costing the government money.

And let me get to the list of boards here, Mr. Speaker. Boards have become another part, as far as the efficiency is concerned . . . you know, you make a board and the board gets together and they decide, at the end of the day, how much they are paying each individual. The Regulatory Authority . . . most people did not know this. I almost decided to quit politics and go work on the Regulatory Authority Board. They are making \$110,000 on that board—\$110,000!

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I mean, \$110,000? I said, *What?* And they are making more per hour than us, I am talking about Ministers—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: —because we know the hours that they . . . how much time they put in.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to go there. I am trying my best just to ignore the Honourable Member from Smith's Parish. He is trying to pull me in, Mr. Speaker. He is trying to pull me in, but I am not . . . I am trying to take my time, Mr. Speaker.

So, \$110,000 . . . so we asked ourselves . . . and I understand when the RA was set up board members used to work kind of full-time, working, trying to get things together, because I talked to some of the old members. But nowadays when you have a CEO and everybody else in there, you ask the question, *Am*

I still paying you \$110,000? And they were trying to justify it. We pulled them in and said justify it.

And the Minister about “that big” all right? And I am saying, *How many hours?* And so we started looking at them.

And so the Committee came up with the idea of putting board members into tiers—Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3. And so we looked at putting . . . let's say the Bermuda Monetary Authority, which is a very important board. Those members make \$25,000. A very important board! But the Regulatory Authority makes \$110,000. How can we justify that?

How?

I mean, how can we justify it? I mean, we are all responsible. How can we justify that, that if you are on the BMA Board you are making \$25,000 and \$110,000 on the Regulatory Authority? It just . . . the logic did not make sense to us.

So we tried to put things into perspective in regard to . . . and it is now up to the Government and Ministers. I think one Minister has put it in place by tiers. In other words, we talked about BMA, RA and the Hospitals Board under Tier 1. And we are making some recommendations, if you look at the recommendations on what those structures should be. And then we had Tier 2. So Tier 2 could have been the Airport Authority, Merchant Shipping—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Who?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: The Tourism Authority.

And then I think there was Tier 3, that is all the other little small boards that we are familiar with here, you sit there on—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: The Honourable Member says, *Working boards.*

And you know something, another thing we are looking at . . . there are too many boards! So the Government is looking at how we shrink boards down to make people more accountable and make some people . . . which may go from \$100 to \$200 for a chair, but how . . . it was just boards, boards, boards.

So we made some recommendations going forward, Mr. Speaker, on boards, and the information is in the report.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Well, you can read it, Honourable Member.

And so we made these recommendations. My time is about 15 minutes and I want to move on.

So, it is the boards, how do we make boards more efficient? And if you look at it there were savings by the recommendations that the Committee came up with.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing that we looked at was Financial Assistance. We felt that there should be some more accountability on the Financial Assistance side. Materials and supply, so the government can buy more bulk items instead of every department getting a wish list and going out there. Funded but vacant positions.

Mr. Speaker, this has been a pet peeve of mine for a long time. And I think most . . . the most. So when you look at the Government Budget Book, the amount of positions that are funded for is 5,000 . . . well, last year it was 4,921. We have budgeted 5,000 this year.

But to be honest with you, Mr. Speaker, the actual number of people that actually work in Government on kind of a monthly basis is roughly 4,600. I remember saying . . . and I said I am not going to point any fingers, but I did say to the former Minister Bob Richards, *Look at the vacant and funded positions*, because there were millions of dollars in there. And when you put it there, you kind of spend it. You know, you find something to do with it.

So what we need to do is become more . . . more . . . measurable and accountable—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes, but it has been going on for years. Like I said it has been going on from time and eternity, that everybody has been, *okay, we have got 5,000, let me budget for it*. And Ministers know that at the end of the day they know how many staff they need, or their department knows, and you need to work with those numbers.

But there are certain departments that just because it was funded that does not mean that it has to be filled. So those are the things that we talked about as far as trying to make it more efficient, that is the funded and vacant positions.

Mr. Speaker, other recommendations that the Committee talked about were . . . many people may be aware that there was a car tax report done. We believe that some of that stuff can help out with the Office of the Tax Commissioner going forward to improve the reorganisation of the Office of the Tax Commissioner.

We talked about the high level of accounts receivable in the Department of Social Insurance, which has an effect. For example, \$29 million for outstanding accounts receivable was in that area, 64 per cent of the total outstanding received by November 2018 was over 120 days old.

Mr. Speaker, we talked about carrying out of internal audits of certain special Financial Assistance

payments to ensure that they are valid and properly supported.

Again, we talked about implementing or revising the government boards to make them much more efficient; proper structure or coordination of buying between government departments.

We talked about, interestingly enough . . . and I know we all get into this. When we looked at the performance measures . . . and we all talk about that, everyone on both sides. When we look at the performance measures within the budget, we ask the question, what does it really mean? And let us be honest. So we had some discussions with individuals and, like I said, reducing the fall . . . let us say from 50 per cent to 10 per cent, but why not zero? We are happy at 10 per cent fall, those type of things. Performance, you know, or . . . and so we have always gotten up and asked about performance budgets—the actual performance measures. Some of them just do not make much sense. And as I say, I am not pointing . . . it is just that, overall, and it is through every government since time and eternity has started doing these measures.

Let me give you an example. *Increase the completion rate of all clients entering treatment annually to 80 per cent*. How do you come up with 80 per cent? Why can we not complete everybody? There are these types of things that I think overall, as a government, we can do to improve efficiency overall and reporting standards. As we said, review the relevance of Blue Budget Book performance measures.

Again, we talked about the SAGE Commission and looked at some of their recommendations. And there are certain aspects of the recommendations of the SAGE Commission, as outlined on pages 11 and 12 and pages 72 to 76 of the SAGE [Commission] report, the Efficiency Committee believes that they can be met.

Mr. Speaker, in the last few minutes that I have left, as I said, I did not have time to go through the whole report today because it would take much time, but it does not mean . . . like I said, it is not about trying to blame any particular Government or any particular Minister or any individual. Efficiency can be improved overall from time to time. And as I said earlier, the things that we have or will put in place for efficiency will one day become inefficient because things do change. And so it is important that we all continuously look at improvements.

I believe there is still a lot more to be done as far as improving efficiency in government. We did not complete all the departments. Hopefully the Premier will continue the Efficiency Committee in some form, moving forward. But, again, I would like to thank the Committee who, as I said, worked diligently to ensure that the response that we had and the correspondence and the dialogue that we had between law firms and real estate people.

I wanted to mention one department, but I am not going to mention it. But there are some things that I believe we really can make better. How, at the end of the day, do we increase efficiency so we collect more taxes so that we can bring down . . . not increase taxes, but increase revenue, but try to bring down taxes as we move ahead?

So, Mr. Speaker, I will [end] on that and, again, I hope everybody had time to read the report, and I am willing to do my best to try to answer any questions if need be.

Thank you.

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

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Leader of the Opposition. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and to the Minister for his briefing and the overview.

I guess I should start off my comments by saying that, of course, we all acknowledge that we can do better. I believe that this has been said repeatedly year after year, administration after administration, decade after decade, and so on. And I preface that comment because . . . and as I move on with what I have to say I will speak to some of the other reports that have preceded this particular report as to why I say that we all acknowledge that we can and we must do better as we move forward in governing the country.

What I would like to say in my opening comments is that I want to thank the Committee, as the Minister has duly done so. I also would like to thank the Committee for the work that has been done. I must say that there are a lot of appendices here, a lot of reports here—when I say reports to certain departments. There is quite a bit of information that is detailed in here. And then, of course, we heard from our Minister giving us even more details about the fact that he was finding cheques in drawers and the likes.

And then, of course, there was a lot of fuss around the fact that he was going around and saying that he had found \$12 million. And he has come to the table to, I guess, point out to us exactly where he found these savings or earnings, if we will, as he has gone through this whole process of this Efficiency Committee.

And so, again, I would like to say to the Committee, well done job in getting this report together so that we could come to this House and, of course, be able to debate it, talk about it, concur where we can, point out where we feel there are some areas where we can even do better as we move forward.

I understand the remit; it is not a new one. We have seen reports in the past, Mr. Speaker. In my short period of time in the House of Assembly I was . . . when we became Government, I was made aware of a report, the National School of Government Report, that came out in 2010/11 that spoke to efficiencies that we should have been looking at within government. It was a thorough report. Certainly, it was controversial as well. Many people felt that there were some things that could have been done, some things that could not have been done. But it was done in the effort of trying to make our government more efficient.

And then, of course, you have the SAGE Commission, which is well-known and well-established, led by Brian Duperreault, led by other business and community people in Bermuda who did a similar report, who went through the painstaking hours upon hours of ensuring that they interviewed and talked with as many people as possible to help Bermuda move its way through as it was coming out of—and attempting still to come out of—a recessionary period so that we could move Bermuda forward in a better financial position.

I also know that even with that report it did not come without its scrutiny. We had a SAGE [Commission] report only to hear folks talk about a “Rage Report” in response to it. And so these reports . . . and now we have the report of the Efficiency Committee, and it certainly will come under scrutiny from the public. We now have the opportunity, as it has been tabled, to be able to look at this report and to give our comments as well to this particular Efficiency Report that was commissioned by our Premier.

Again, I say this: This Committee, led by the Honourable Minister, certainly, as it has gone under scrutiny like the other reports, will continue to come under scrutiny. I can only say that as of recent we were delighted with comments from our Chair while talking about this Efficiency Committee, that we all know Junior Ministers do not do much—which caused a great deal big stir within the community and, I am sure, with his own Junior Ministers, as if pointing out that he was spending a lot of time doing work. But to make such a comment might have been reckless in some people’s eyes. But certainly to make a comment by the Minister, in my estimation, was a bit reckless.

But, of course, we had even others looking to back up the fact that with all the hours that were done concerning the Honourable Member, with all the hours that were put in, he must have been getting paid—one Member said—like \$4 or something an hour. And we certainly know, as parliamentarians, that we put in a lot of hours when we are doing the people’s business. To justify it in that way was probably unmerited and not needed.

We also have already just heard the Honourable Member when he was talking about looking at the boards and how we can level out the playing field when it comes to remuneration for these boards and

committees so that it is fair and equitable across the board. But I think that was missing the point when he mentioned, or did not mention—the lack of mentioning—the fact that . . . and it was not in the terms of reference in this report, that the members of this board were being paid. And maybe as we move in the future, when we have terms of reference we should probably include that so that these new committees will be transparent and they will show the actual fact that, yes, we are getting this work done, it is a good work, it needs to be done, there is nothing to hide behind it and that we are actually going to pay members to move forward with these particular types of reports.

And so the scrutiny on the Minister was the fact that he had not declared it. And then, when it was declared, it was as if, hold on a second, we find out that it is even more money than initially was said.

And so, we are grateful that the Honourable Member has led with this here. But I think the lesson had been learned that it would be nice to be transparent if possible—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: The Honourable Member is misleading the House.

The Honourable Member said that we found out that it was more than what was said. That is not true.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Before you continue—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

HOUSE VISITOR

The Speaker: I would just like to acknowledge that former Premier Dame Jennifer [Smith] is in the Gallery.

Good afternoon.

[Desk thumping]

[Debate on the motion to consider the Consolidated Overall Report of the Efficiency Committee, dated April 2019, continuing]

The Speaker: Continue on.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes.
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I believe that a number was put out at the time of \$60,000—not by himself. But it was not refuted by himself, only to later, as parliamentary questions were asked, that, in actual fact, when you looked at the dates and the period of time, it was longer than what was stated in his statement and that, in actual fact, it was more than what was anticipated. That is what I was referring to. And we can back that up by the response to his parliamentary questions to support that, Mr. Speaker.

So at the end of the day I believe that it is important that we declare our interests as we move forward. And a lot was said about that as well. We still continue to have challenges around that fact that Members are not declaring their interests, and so we will continue to seek out opportunities to ensure that that happens. And I am sure that you will back that up as well, Mr. Speaker, in the interest of Bermuda in conducting our business.

As I was going through the report, Mr. Speaker, it became very evident to me—

[Timer beeps]

The Speaker: Ah, ah . . . no.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Time is up?

The Speaker: Not yet.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: It became very evident to me, Mr. Speaker, that there was an economic impact concerning this report. Now we are listening to the Honourable Member in the vein of, you know, he is finding efficiencies where we can raise more revenue through efficiencies, and the likes, and finding these cheques in drawers. But this report goes much further than just finding cheques in the drawer in talking about efficiencies.

Throughout the report, repeated over and over and over is the fact that we are going to need to hire more people. It continues on to say that we need to have more professionals. That will help us to get to the required position that we are in.

I quote again from the report: We must pay for small groups or “active property attorneys”—it continues on through the next pages—we need “more qualified experienced staff” that will be needed. It continues on to say the staff must be, therefore, be hired. It goes on and on. And this is a repeated theme throughout the report and I get it. We certainly need to figure out how we move forward.

The unintended consequence of this, I am sure, is how are we, as an Island, how is the Government going to be able to create a budget around ensuring that we build in the efficiencies that are needed, but as cost-effective as possible? So the question begs then, how are we going to pay for the necessary

changes that we need to do in order for us to get to the point where we are efficient?

And I believe that the Honourable Member, he has not quite articulated . . . I will give him the . . . I will assume that he believes that this is a project of progress through time that is going to be needed. But it is very evident as you go through the report, all of these things that were needed. And we were just looking at a select few areas within the government that need to be addressed.

And so, again, I am concerned about how we come up with a plan. There were some thoughts about different ways in which we can do things, but an overall plan on how we are going to address the issues that have been highlighted by the . . . as I mentioned before, that have been highlighted by the National School of Government, highlighted by the SAGE [Commission], highlighted by the now Efficiency Committee. What is going to be the plan going forward as to exactly what we address first, those major areas that we are going to address, and how we are going to afford to pay for these things? Where are we going to glean the money from?

And I know that in pockets, there were certain areas that were laid out. *Well, we will do this and we will do that.* I am hoping that what follows from this Efficiency Committee is that we have an overall plan for the Government and running of government that addresses the myriad of issues that are out there.

Now in my estimation, Mr. Speaker, there were three areas that I had, in my opinion, highlighted that I felt that we could . . . and it is the fundamentals of trying to get efficiencies built within the running of government.

The Minister has highlighted many of the certain areas that he felt that we could be doing certain things. But at the foundation of all of what we are doing, when it comes to running government, it is getting fluid, seamless pathways established so information is passed and shared and communicated throughout all sectors of government.

One of the biggest gripes for governments is getting information transferred from one [department] to the other as seamless as possible, which seems to be almost impossible. And the general populous and the general public, who we are looking and meting out services to, have got to go from one building to the next building to the next building. [We are] creating frustrations for our customers—which are the people of Bermuda—while running the government. At the same time, information within the ministries, as highlighted by the Minister, is not seamlessly being passed back and forth throughout ministries. That [takes] more time. That creates, in many cases, more confusion and is a huge open window for challenges, for wrong information, and for the wrong interpretation of the information going forward that will create, and is creating, havoc on the efficiency of running government.

And if it is creating havoc amongst ministries, think about the people who we are serving. And many times I continue to hear how, *I have got to now go from this place to that place. I just left here; I have got to get a copy of this here when I could have just gone next door to get a copy of this.* And you have to go from one place to the next place to the next place and it is extremely frustrating.

And I know that this Government is hearing the frustration from our people in the fact that we are not as efficient as we should be, and that is why I am saying I am grateful for this Efficiency Committee and the report that it has produced. My main concern is, what do we do now? And how do we fix it?

I will give the Minister kudos for having articulated his \$12 million that he has identified, that he sees will come into the coffers of government. But I must highlight that in the report itself . . . and the report admits the fact that these things were already being worked on. I guess the concern of mine is where is the accountability when we are finding these things? And what are we doing about it? And, again, that is a situation that each government will continue to address, and will need to address.

But at the basis of all of this, as I have read through this report, is that we have to get our biggest issue of getting information between ministries flowing fluidly. You cannot have a Minister and civil servants having to truck back and forth just to get information when we live in an electronic world and we can make things so much easier.

So we can find all these other things and look at all these other things. But the first thing that we must be doing is getting to the raw issue here. And that is we need a system that integrates everything that we are doing. It is not like it is rocket science; it is being done all around the world. So if we—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Just a point of information, Mr. Speaker, if you do not mind.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Information, if you do not mind.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Sure, sure.

The Speaker: Point of information?

POINT OF INFORMATION

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes.

In case the Honourable Member is unaware of it, the Government is working on those things right now. And one of the reasons why we mentioned about the Post Office this morning is about pulling all the systems together.

The Speaker: Continue on, Member.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do not think that he is telling us anything new. What I am talking about is that we certainly need to identify this as the basis going forward—the first thing that we do is this.

Now, certainly within ministries, you know, we need to be accountable within those ministries to ensure that the management of the . . . in these particular areas are following up on what they should be following up on. And if the Minister and the PS going over issues . . . certainly there is opportunity to talk about how well you do things, how well you are not doing things. And I am hoping, and I am sure, that it is a regular part of the Minister's meetings within his Ministry.

But at the basis of all of this here, we have heard similar Ministers talking about how they have got to get up and walk over to the other place just to get the information to somebody. That costs serious money! And in the tune of running this government I can guarantee you that \$12 million is a drop in the bucket to the inefficiencies that are found in not having seamless information going back and forth.

And just for the edification of the Minister, I am just confirming some of the things that have been said already. If he wants to get excited, he can. I am just confirming what most of us already know. We have heard it in reports from 2010 and 2011, we have heard it in reports from 2013 and 2014, and now we are hearing the same information again—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: And so what we are saying is . . . We fixed a lot of things. You can tell by the economy right now that we fixed a lot of things. We have now gone with 13 months of decline in retail sales, if the Honourable Member wants to go there. And now we just get a little blip in this last, in this 14th month, where it is stagnant over 0.5 per cent. So do not sit here and talk about, *Well, what did you do?*

We are talking about a report where we can build in efficiencies here.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Mr. Speaker, I am just—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Point of order.

The Speaker: Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: The Honourable Member is misleading this House.

Because it was not for those Honourable Members who gave the ability to buy taxis overseas, motor vehicle sales would be up.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Continue.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Mr. Speaker, I do not understand the Minister. He continues to get up and give these frivolous comments and confidence is at an all-time low. And for a Junior Minister . . . well, a Minister now, who supposedly is learned in numbers and the likes, to get up and make comments like that, I can understand why confidence is where it is right now!

An Hon. Member: Amen!

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I can understand why. I can understand why Bermudians are concerned about the fact that the basket of goods that they buy this year is more than last year because taxes have gone up!

And all I am simply saying here is that this is just a fundamental area. He is getting exercised over the fact that I am just saying we need to get our IT issues and our telecommunications issues because that, in and of itself, is millions upon millions of dollars in savings.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Millions of savings.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Well, yes, we will wait to hear the report. He is doing it, he is doing it. Okay, so hopefully . . . hopefully we will see that this will happen under this particular Government. He said that he is doing it and so . . . I do not see where he is doing it. I have not seen any seamless information going back and forth.

In fact, if you go through this report, Mr. Speaker, you will find that many . . . when it comes to purchasing, which is highlighted in this report, purchasing by many individuals is still being done on Excel spreadsheets, when we have got a system in place that does not allow that to happen.

Not too long ago, I saw one of our members, a chief actually, flying away because it was cheaper for him to actually fly away and get the actual part than to sit and allow somebody—who refuses to take up the IT technology and use it—to do it on an Excel spreadsheet. That is not efficient. It may be costing us less; but you know, your chief is gone for a couple of days.

And so, we are talking about efficiencies here and the Honourable Member need not get exercised. I am on his side. I am supporting the fact that this report has been done. But to sit here and tell me that it is being done . . . all these different things . . . well, give us a statement that it is being done, and show us some tangible things that are happening that are making it go on right now. You cannot do that right now because we cannot identify it. It is not being done.

You are saying it is being . . . you might be looking at it.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: That is right.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: You are looking at it; that is not getting it done. Get it done!

An Hon. Member: There you go.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: And at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, in supporting this report, you know, we go reflecting back and forth, *Oh, you didn't do it, and you didn't do it, and you didn't do it, and this and this and this and this.*

Well, Mr. Speaker, as I said already, under the OBA we were seeking out to improve the lives of Bermudians. We are now at a point whereby a basket of goods still costs more. And what we are saying is that we can start helping by getting on the bandwagon and moving fairly swiftly in getting some of these things done.

These things are not new, Mr. Speaker, many of these things. The report actually says, *Well, you know, according to the SAGE Commission and according to this and according to . . .* and I am glad that they took up the SAGE [Commission] report and took a look at it—this Committee. So a lot of this information is not new.

What should be new, and what we did not hear from the Minister, was the fact that, you know, these are concrete things that we are doing right now. So I hope that following this debate that you are going to come to this House with a statement saying these are the other concrete things that we are doing, because we know that, you know, we may be finding cheques in somebody's drawer. That is all fine and dandy, it makes for a great story as well. But at the end of the day I am telling you that millions upon millions—way more than \$12 million—in inefficiency can be found through getting down to the fact that we need an IT system in place that communicates throughout all.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: We certainly do agree. So why in the world are you interpolating? Why are you interpolating?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Why are you interpolating? Because you are not getting it done. So get it done! That is why you are getting your knickers all up. Get it done. If you want to start with me I am going to . . . we can start.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the other things, as I said, the report concluded by saying that it had taken into consideration many of things that were in the SAGE [Commission] report. And I am actually grateful for the fact that they have done this. Certainly, I am giving the Committee the accolades for taking a look at the SAGE Commission and making these recommendations.

One of the second things that concerns me . . . and I have highlighted three main areas that are concerns of mine concerning this report. The second one is the concern that, at present, we still have far too many areas where performance appraisals are either not being done or they are insufficient. And that is also a major, major concern as we move forward in building in efficiency, Mr. Speaker.

We still today—and I did not see it necessarily . . . I saw it touched on in the report, but we did not see where it was reported by this Committee, that maybe we should be sitting down and renegotiating some of these things. Because there are certain sectors and departments where there are no performance appraisals at all. How do you build efficiency in something when you have—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: —particular departments, I mentioned this already. I got up in this House a couple of months ago and talked to the actual areas where this is, where performance appraisals are not being done. So, many of the issues that we may be having with overtime and the likes have to go back to some of these real issues of performance appraisals and the insufficiencies of these here.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: So, how do I know they are not being done? Because it is negotiated by the Union to not be done.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, it is. Follow up with your bargaining agreements within different departments and ministries and you might learn something, okay? Because it has not been negotiated.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: What I believe is important is . . . listen, you need to concern yourself with declaring your interest. That is what you need to do, okay?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, after the fact . . . after the fact. Yes, after the fact. We had the report right here. You did not declare your interest while you were on the Committee, so do not chirp and interpolate. And you know it.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I am talking about you, I was very clear.

So the second thing I believe is important—

The Speaker: Members, Members, throw your conversation this way.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Mr. Speaker, these performance appraisals . . . I believe that we can do better in this area here which will build in many of the efficiencies.

I am going to move on to the third area, which I believe, and I just mentioned it, I was . . . and a lot of training. This report goes into the fact that we need to do a lot of training with many of people that are working within the ministries. I do believe that they are seeking out to do the best job that they can, and training is going to be needed. A lot of money is going to have to be spent in training. So I am concerned as we move forward in our budgeting that these things are going to be put in place.

You know, this report is not reflected in the last budget as to the amount of money that is going to be needed in order for us to become as efficient as possible. So it will be interesting to see what happens throughout the latter part of this fiscal year and what money is spent to get us to where we need to be.

But the area of major concern for myself, this third area, was in the purchasing area, really and truly in the purchasing area. I believe . . . and we started cleaning up. And the Honourable Member wants to know. We were cleaning up in certain areas where we realised we had parts, and these parts had been sitting around . . . they were wrong parts, they were parts that did not even . . . I mean, you could not even put them into anything that was in Bermuda. How we wound up with them goes back to those efficiencies. And I see the Honourable Member over there shaking his head. I know he knows some of these areas that we are talking about. I was shocked.

And so when we sat down we said we need to do training to get this thing in place whereby people importing and purchasing materials and the likes are using the up-to-date services that we do have to avoid this kind of thing. And then, when I saw the report of

the value of some of the goods that were in our storehouses and they were of completely no use . . . Now, I do not know if it started under UBP and became a PLP problem and continued to be a OBA problem. All I know is that we have this issue and it needs to be rectified. And we need to get rid of many of these things.

At the same time, we are not here to beat up on civil servants. But, we are here to ensure that they are accountable. Just like we have to be accountable in this House, just like you as a Minister have to be accountable, we certainly need to build in the accountability that is necessary.

Now, the Honourable Member brought up . . . and I wanted to use this scenario. He brought up this issue about social insurance, and there are many companies who are behind and the likes. And I wanted to point out this fact. During the recessionary period—and I am going to point out specifically, if you will, Minister, a certain sector of Bermuda. I am talking about black business entrepreneurs.

When the recession hit, many of them went under. Obviously, we recognise that they did not have the legacy of money over many decades of being in business and blah, blah, blah, blah. They went out of business. But they also went out of business in conjunction with other businesses that were black-owned who had charge accounts and the likes and 30-day accounts. And these companies who went out of business owed millions of dollars, if you add it all up, throughout the Island to other black businesses.

And I am intrigued by this whole thing that he . . . what did he call it? Starting new? Is that what it is called it?

An Hon. Member: Starting Fresh.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Starting Fresh . . . Starting Fresh . . . Starting Fresh. I am very interested in how that is going to play out, because many of the black businesses that are existing today are still suffering because that money will never be recouped from the other companies that owed them money. And we are talking about massive amounts of money.

And now they have had to go into debt and they are trying to get up and survive in this economy today. And I am talking about that sector of business.

Now, it is not just them, but I am talking about many of the black-owned businesses—my buddies—that I know who were multi-million dollar companies, [who] went out of business. And they owed massive amounts of money. And some of them lost their homes and all kinds of things. But the businesses that they owed money to, who are black-owned, they are struggling. They are the ones that are still trying to pay their taxes.

And so the unintended consequence that has happened is that now we are trying to recoup money from people who are still trying to recoup money

whose businesses are out of business. This is a major, major, major issue. And if we are going to get down to the real crux of being able to solve this thing we cannot be myopic in our approach to this thing. We need to sit down and really understand what those unintended consequences are and were, and why businesses are where they are today.

The Speaker: You can just pause for one minute.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

HOUSE VISITOR

The Speaker: We have a former Member who was struggling to get out the door. I just wanted to acknowledge him before he left. Mr. Lister. He is gone now, though. It was nice to see Walter Lister in the House today.

[Debate on the motion to consider the Consolidated Overall Report of the Efficiency Committee, dated April 2019, continuing]

[Crosstalk]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, yes. My apologies, I did see him. I did acknowledge him, nodded my head to him while I saw him there, and it was good to see him.

And so, Mr. Speaker, as he is looking at this here, I am not sure exactly who he is talking to as far as giving advice, the Honourable Minister, on how to address this Starting [Fresh]. But certainly, if he were to talk to some of the business owners that are out there he would be able to hear many of the stories that are going on out there from businesses who are trying to survive. And it may help and go a long way in helping him build in the efficiencies that he is looking for.

And one of those unintended consequences is this, Mr. Speaker. For many of those businesses it is this e-filing thing that he mentioned too, being able to get everything electronic. And it ties directly into many of these businesses paying their taxes with a credit card. And the fact that they are . . . the reason they are doing that is because their cash flow is so low that they cannot afford to pay. So they use their credit card because at least it gives them some terms.

I am talking about small businesses, I am talking about medium-sized businesses, and I am talking about large businesses that are black-owned in Bermuda that are having to do this.

So I hope that the Honourable Member in his desire to raise the revenue, but also at the same time to build efficiency in, is thinking about the unintended consequences, because the report talks about how

the public needs to be more accountable and the likes. I am hoping that the Minister also is going to do likewise as he maps out what is the best way forward.

Now, I will give him credit. This Starting [Fresh] sounds like something intriguing. You know, we just heard a little titbit of it; it will be interesting to hear a little more about how he is going to put that in place.

Now, for the most part I have been agreeing with the Honourable Member, but there is one area that I do not agree with him on. He talked about alien licences and this land acquisition fee. During the budget period I brought this out, and had lengthy discussions with the Minister of Immigration on the issue of these land acquisition fees.

Because it had gone from actual \$6 million in 2017/18 . . . in fact, let me just get the figures. I want to make sure I have got those figures correct. The Land Acquisition Fees went from \$6 million in 2017/18 to \$2.414 million in the revised amount in 2018/19. And that was not due to the fact that, you know, we had all of these efficiencies because just the year before—the same amount of staff just the year before—we had made \$6 million in this area.

Now some of it we can attribute, potentially, to inefficiencies. But within a year we went from \$6 million to \$2.4 million. Now I understand that he is working on this here, so I am hoping that we hear a little more about this because I do not think that that is the case of just inefficiencies in this area.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Point of clarification, maybe?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Okay, yes.

The Speaker: I will take your point of clarification.

POINT OF CLARIFICATION

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member does not have to believe me, I am just telling the fact truth. I am not saying that the actual that came up could have been \$6 million, but I said that it could have been about \$4 million, and that is because, at the end of the day, it was the delay in getting processing done. It is the truth.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes.

The Speaker: Continue, Member.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, well, maybe that came after the Budget Debate, because when I asked the actual question—the same question that he is attempting to answer—we were not given an answer, at all. In fact, the technical officer was unable to say exactly what was going on there. Maybe the Minister has found out. So I am anticipating that not only will we get back to our \$6 million, but that we will get back to

some of those revenues that were even higher in the previous years in this particular area.

He certainly has laid out some of the inefficiencies in this area, which it is important that we understand. And it is really going to be interesting how he moves forward in some of these areas in fixing this stuff when we get to the next budget period. It will be very, very interesting to see how that pans out.

He also mentioned . . . and I am just going to give him a little hint here. He mentioned also about leases and how they were adjusting things concerning leases. Well, I would encourage the Honourable Member also to take a look at some of the government departments that have not been paying rent in certain areas for quite some time. And those areas—to their own other ministries—which will go a long way, a long way—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I will talk to you in private about it. It will go a long way in bringing in efficiencies that are necessary. And I believe that we need to look at that because that is a major, major problem—

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: —that if we cannot even get our own departments communicating . . . it goes back to the whole thing about transference of information. I am telling you it is in the millions that we can save that will avoid even the issue that I am just highlighting and bringing up. And so, as I promised, I will talk to the Minister about it in private so that he is aware, and some of us may actually be aware, but this has been going on for years and years.

Now one of the other things he mentioned was overtime. And I found that interesting because that was a challenge that all of us as Ministers have faced in the particular areas that we do have overtime.

Now, I will say this here: The public would prefer to pay overtime for two weeks pick-up of trash than to deal with the headlines that we have seen about rats, rats, and rats. So sometimes we need to prioritise whether the overtime really is worth it. And sometimes there are unintended consequences. And the unintended consequence is that we still do not have a policy in place that tells our people, *Don't put your trash out in just a plastic bag. Or, Don't put your trash out in just a brown bag.* And so, with the two week pick-up we were able to avoid the fact that rodents, dogs, cats, you name it, are going out and just brutalising, mutilating the plastic bags that we do put out, and trash is all over the place. It is an unintended consequence.

And so I believe, in my opinion, that that is one area that the public will agree to paying the overtime to ensure that the trash is picked up, until we get a policy in place that says, *You've got to put it in a bin.*

Because that is the case right now; it is not being put in a bin.

And so when we make these decisions, again, they need to be well-rounded and taking all kinds of things into consideration, because of the realities of life. It is just the way that it is. And so that is no pound on anyone, that is just my opinion of some areas that we need to concentrate on and some areas where we need to say, *You know what? For right now let's just leave that alone while we build in the bigger efficiencies that are going to affect the Island as a whole.*

Which is why I said the three things of concern of mine are, again, going back to the way that we need to get our IT systems . . . because it affects all of Bermuda, not just one specific area. Why I said that we need to build in performance appraisals and the likes and ensure that they are being done properly, because that affects all of Bermuda and the efficiencies built in. And the reason I brought up the third thing about the purchasing is because that affects all of Bermuda, not just one particular area.

And these are some the areas where the big bang is that I believe, in conjunction with some of the other areas, as he has found \$12 million, that we can be going after. And at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, when you go back to . . . I will just turn over the page here, and it is in relation to the ROC—Register of Companies—it says this here, I am quoting: “As with the OTC, it became clear that poor IT systems, poor connectivity and interaction with other . . . departments, is seriously hampering . . . efficient operation.”

Now I do not know why the Honourable Member is getting all exercised with me. I am quoting the words that are in *his* report that says that these are the issues that they face. This is it right here! “It became clear that poor IT systems, poor connectivity and interaction with other Government departments . . .” This Honourable Member has run a business before. The process needs to be seamless. And if it is not, money is lost. And major money is lost.

So I know that other Honourable Members within in this House on my team are going to want to weigh in on some of the economic impact of this Efficiency Committee and some of the recommendations that it has made. But it is clear to me that there is room to grow and that there is room to improve.

What we are looking for now, as this Minister has said, he is on it! You know, he has got something going on, talks are happening. Well, we want to see some action here as we follow through with this particular Efficiency Committee that a plan—a concrete plan—will be put in place that will go after some of these big areas, that will build efficiencies in place to honour the taxpayer of this country who is seeking for our assistance and our help. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Deputy Speaker. Deputy Speaker, you have the floor.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank the Minister and the Efficiency Committee for this report. I really believe that it was money well spent. Had we had that report constructed by someone on the outside we would have paid, probably, three times as much as we paid for it. So I think it was money well spent, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that hiring extra people is the way to be proficient.

An Hon. Member: Amen.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: I believe that people must be accountable. I believe that we must promote people that are competent to do the job.

Mr. Speaker, we are owed about a quarter of a billion dollars in accounts receivables, and each year it increases. And the situation that they had with the department at the Tax Office should never have happened. But I will dwell on that later on.

But I certainly agree with the Efficiency Committee about the location of the Tax Office . . . should pay their help. But first I believe that the Tax Office should be located in a place that is user-friendly, probably where people can drive up to and walk in, ground floor, and pay their taxes. So I think that we would do well if we looked for a location that can accommodate everybody, regardless of their age or regardless of the physical challenges that they may have.

Mr. Speaker, one area that I think we must look at is the performance appraisals. We have got over 4,500 government employees. And each year each employee has a performance appraisal, regardless of who it is done by. But why would you have a performance appraisal on someone who has been there 30 years? These performance appraisals are not read by the Human Resource Department. There are too many! They cannot read them. And they are not for punitive measures, they are not negotiated in the collective bargaining agreement, it is just a policy that they have.

Now, certainly, I would agree with performance appraisals maybe for people for the first five years of employment. But after that, if they are working in the same area, by then it should be known whether that person is proficient in the job, and that should be recognised by the department head or the area supervisor. That should be recognised. And so, to me, there is no need to be having performance ap-

praisals, wasting government's money, wasting precious assets just to have this and put them in a file. For what reason? You cannot use them for punitive measures, so I think that is something that needs to be sorted with.

And I heard the Opposition Leader talk about ordering of parts. He is absolutely right about that, Mr. Speaker. I think the system that they use is outdated. It causes us to lose revenue. And I make the point on that because I remember when I was in that position, they needed a part for, I think the RO plant. And going through the protocols it would take six weeks to get that plant up again because you have got to go get this and wait for the part. When you calculate the revenue that would be lost in that time, you might as well put somebody on a plane, go pick up the part, bring it here and we continue to get revenue.

Even during my time—I hope it has changed—they had a protocol in place where if they wanted a part for a Toyota, they wanted three quotes. Well, that is crazy. There is only one company in Bermuda that brings in Toyotas.

[Laughter]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Why would you go and try to get three quotes? This is the nonsense that went on, I know, when I was there. I do not know if it is still happens. It makes no sense, common sense. It is certainly not common [sense] because it has not prevailed in these areas, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: The Minister says the person has said they have fixed it but they are in trouble. I can understand that.

But most importantly, we must not promote people because they have been there 20 years. We must promote people because they are competent, they are well-trained, they know what they are doing.

The Speaker: Amen.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: And we just cannot reward folks because they have been there 20 years. And you know, I am all for promotion. I am a trade unionist by trade, by nature in my heart. But I agree that we must have people that are competent and people that are accountable.

We must have that because, Mr. Speaker, when I read about what was found by the Efficiency Committee, of files going back to 2006 that were not documented, they were not even posted, cheques that were on file. I question the Auditor, because if there is one area that should be audited it is the Tax Office. Obviously, that was not done.

Mr. Speaker, I can go back to the 1998 Audit Report. There was \$16 million not collected in stamp

revenue because in the Auditor's Report of 1998 it said that law firms had undervalued assets in order to pay less money.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what makes it so insulting, I would say, and it incenses me, is that this was recognised in 1993 by the then Accountant General who later became the Auditor. And even though it was reported in the Auditor General's Report of 1998, there was no suggestion that an investigation should take place, no special auditor's report. It was just put in a report and forgotten. And you wonder why. Why do they do these things, Mr. Speaker?

The Auditor also . . . they really . . . I do not think they even do the type of audit that they should be doing in Works and Engineering, Mr. Speaker. I can recall when I was there a quote from the technical officers was [sought] to outfit a building. And their quote was \$1,258,000 to outfit this office. And we questioned it. We challenged that. And we sent the tendering documents out again to two different firms. One firm came back with a quote of \$287,000; one firm came back with a quote of, I think it was about \$310,000 or \$311,000. Needless to say, that was one of the firms that was chosen. The question you ask is, where was that million dollars going?

And then there was another building to be outfitted, and I can tell you that building . . . it was Fort Knox. And we were putting the Education Department down there. And we got a quote from our technical officers in the Ministry of Works and Engineering for \$1.8 million. I said, *Oh, man, I've seen this story before*. And so we gave the tendering documents to the . . . I think it was the manager at the BLDC. And we asked him to get a quote, if he could get a quote to do the work, to complete the work at the Fort Knox. They came back with a quote of \$800,000—another million dollars! So you ask yourself, *What is going on?* You can see a little variance here and there, but a million dollars on \$800[,000] job, a million dollars on a \$300,000 job?

Those are the types of things that we expect the Auditor General to pick up. But, you know, it makes me think, *What was going on? What was really going on in the Audit department that they were not auditing certain departments?*

But when we came along, then they . . . you saw special Audit Reports on this and that. They made reports, never even talking to the people that they were talking about—never. I was one of them. They never had a conversation with me. But they did the special Audit Reports, Mr. Speaker.

So the auditors, even though they have a lot of power under the Constitution, have not done the job they should have been doing for this country over the years under both Governments—not only us, under both Governments.

And, you know, Mr. Speaker, what puzzles me is . . . you know I am trying to figure out how much has been lost in government revenues. How much

has been lost in jobs that have been tendered out? I say, I would challenge it. With my little bit of knowledge of construction, I used to challenge it. So you just could not put that to me, I wanted to know why. And I know a lot of them did not like that. And so you got what you got, and they tried to make us all out to be like villains.

Mr. Speaker, I think that in the workings of the Efficiency Committee we must come up with a better system of letting employees know how their social insurance contributions stand. I know at one time, probably during Colonel Burch's years—he is much older than me—that they had stamps. You would buy a stamp and put it on a card (I am told by people older than me), and you were able to go and see your card—

[Laughter and inaudible interjection]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Dunkley was there, he knows about these stamps. He is much older than me too, as you can see.

[Laughter]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: But they had these stamps. But today, Mr. Speaker, you . . . not many are . . . you can go down there and they will tell you, but it is not so easy for people to go there and have the time to go there and line up.

We have got to have a better system. Because I do know of two elderly gentlemen (let me say older people) who worked steady jobs, paying their monies in. And the boss was supposed to be putting the money in social contributions. And when they went for a pension, there was nothing there for them. And so they had to apply for the Non-contributory Pension, Mr. Speaker.

So I think we just cannot put it on people to go down and check, even though I am for that. But if we all did that, that office would not be able to accommodate you. There has got to be a better way to fix that, because that is what people depend on for their . . . you know, one of the areas they plan on for income when they get at that age. And to see someone not get that because some employer did not pay . . . and some of those employers had gone out of business at that point, and I do not think then there was any liability on them. They just did not pay, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, also, we must be serious about collecting our money. As I said earlier, we are owed over a quarter of a billion dollars in accounts receivable. And by the time you take into consideration the doubtful collection of it, you have lost millions again, if you able to get part of that, Mr. Speaker.

We cannot mess with this here. We cannot mess around with this here, because I am pretty sure in the USA and other countries, when you owe government money, it is serious business. And that is the

way we have to do it here. We are not . . . you know, I guess one other way we could do it is if we went to income tax. You would get your money first. But I am not advocating it at this point without the proper conversations. I know the Honourable Member at that time Mr. Plowman had advocated for income tax at one time, but the Government then shut him down.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Now, maybe it was the right time to shut it down; maybe it is time to have that conversation again, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, the other thing is if we are paying social insurance, and health insurance, and payroll tax today, and it happened some time ago that, particularly in the construction area, these bosses gave these guys contracts, and under these contracts they had to pay their own health insurance and social insurance contributions and what have you. And most times it is not paid because at the rate of pay they are getting they need every dollar they can to take care of their family. So this creates a burden on those when these folks get of age and they need assistance, the taxpaying folks have to pay for that.

So we have got to come up with a better system where, okay, I am not saying to outlaw contracts. But there are certain benefits that are mandatory regardless of the contract, [where] the employer is responsible, along with the employee. They are paying without fail. That must be taken into account and one of them is social insurance contributions because, as we all know, that is part of the . . . people depend on that for their income.

And then we get a lot of employers—the Minister alluded to one employer who owes \$1 million-plus. And I do not know if he is in the red at this point or not . . . I really do not want to know who it is at this point. But many of these folks, they have trucks and vehicles they need in their business, and they are able to get them relicensed because they agree to a payment plan. And they will go on that payment plan for a couple of weeks or months and then they stop. And how I know they stop is because their accounts receivable—their accounts payable—the accounts receivable to the government increases at the end of the year. And when they need a truck to licence again, they will go back in and agree to a payment plan. That is so. It is obviously not working properly, it is not working right. It is not working to the benefit of collecting government revenues.

And then, Mr. Speaker, you have some of these folks . . . one employer that I know of, and I do not know if it is happening . . . it is happening many times in this country, where they pay people and then do not give them a pay stub. And that is against the law. In fact, one of the areas that I was dealing with not so long ago, one of the owners is a lawyer, so you would think that a lawyer would know the law, but ob-

viously we had to go to the Labour Department under Minister Foggo to get that sorted out, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, overtime, there is no reason to have the millions of dollars of overtime in this country. I am told some of the overtime is self-made by employees. I know one particular area they said, *Well there was going to be some ruckus this weekend*, so automatically everybody goes on overtime, and not necessarily that was going to happen. Some people know how to create their own overtime.

And the thing is, I believe that if a department or a Ministry has a budget, each department must be given a monthly budget to work by. This is your payroll budget for the month, and you must adhere to that budget. But if you are not given a budget, you are not given any guidelines, department heads just let it go. Department heads . . . I think, a lot of department heads in the government are not managing the department as well as they should. And I think they need to pick it up. Let us pick it up! We have got to do it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the overpricing . . . and with, again, the situation with the Tax Office it is quite obvious there are quite a few people there that should be held accountable for that action in the Tax Office. When you have files dating back to 2006, not only not audited by the Auditor General, but the department head must have some type of accountability that they know that each department, each person, is doing their work. It is obvious reports are not made because normally when you send in a document to government it is recorded. But it is something that went wrong there. It would appear nobody was disciplined. And so if you leave it like that, people would tend to do what they want to do, and that is what has happened up in that office.

I think that is one office that the Auditor General, the Ministry, the Minister . . . because it is the Tax Revenue Office. It is very important; that office has got to be run at the best. It has got to be very proficient. We are talking about government's money. And I do not think they saw in this report all those cheques in a file way back from 2006 . . . this is something that is not acceptable. In any other . . . if this was in the private sector, that whole department would have been dismissed, along with the CEO who was in charge. They would have been dismissed.

We can no longer keep folks on that are not doing their job. I am a trade unionist, I represent . . . we represent people, try to save them their jobs. But at the same time you will hear Chris Furbert, you will hear Otti Simmons, you have got Molly Burgess [saying], *You have got to do your job. We cannot do the impossible.* And we want our employees, we want our members to be the best, not go to work and just say, *Well, I went to work.* You know, we expect the people . . . if your time . . . if you have to make 7:30, arriving to work at 7:30, you are late. You have got to be ready to roll at 7:30. Because you know some people come

in at 7:30 and have got to get a coffee first and whatever else, right?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr. That is not how it goes.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I worked for all my life—not just a long time. But Mr. Speaker, there is no employer that I had that could fire Derrick Burgess for being late—never. That is one thing . . . because I believe in making time. I believe in doing my work. And I believe in being proficient in what I am doing. I am going to do the best and I am not going to let anyone disrupt that.

And that is why when we take on a Ministry, we question everything. And I tell you there has been a lot of over-expenditure of government money over the years, under both Governments—not both, the whole three Governments, the UBP, OBA and PLP. And we must have people that are there to protect the taxpayers' money.

I do not think people really understand how we get our foreign exchange. We do not print our own money. It is the taxpayers' money. Every time you ask for something, it is those people that are working that pay taxes. That is who pays for it. Government does not print. We are not the United States, we are not England. We do not produce anything to print our own money. Our money is backed by the money that we earn. And so, people have got to be taught that. When you ask for this here, you are asking to pay more taxes.

So we have a duty to each of us to see that our tax dollars are spent wisely. And asking for overtime, I do not agree with garbage collection twice a week. If you handle your trash properly, if you want to open up a can of sardines, do not just throw it in your trash, rinse it out! Rinse it out! The rats are not coming to get that. The ants are not going to come and get that. Rinse that stuff out and you put them in the proper containers, that is all you need, you know?

We are not the only country in the world that has trash collection once a year . . . I mean, once a week.

[Laughter]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: No, no. We have a good crew that collects our trash . . . a good crew. But it is not the crew. It is not the trash. It is the people that put their trash out—that is where the problem is.

So, having trash collection once per week is what we should do. We are saving a lot of money. We are just asking people to take care of whatever they do; do it right! Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 10. Honourable Member Dunkley, you have the floor.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I start out my comments on this motion here today in regard to the Efficiency Committee, let me just start with these words so it sets a backdrop for what I wish to talk about.

Here in the House, as Members of Parliament, whether we are in the Opposition or the Government, or as Government Ministers of Cabinet, we are the lawmakers. We are the policymakers. We are not the day-to-day managers of the government. So, when we come to debate a report like this, the Efficiency [Committee] report, it is important to remember that in the context. I want to go on by saying that I, and I know my colleagues, support anything that will make government more efficient and, obviously, as we talked a lot about today, collect any money that is owed.

Mr. Speaker, I think you would have heard some of the comments over the years by members of the public who are concerned about efficiencies, about money being collected, about the lack of transparency and openness, and all those types of things. So when we have these debates today, I think it is very important that as the policymakers, the lawmakers, the legislators in this country, we get up here and we have a full and frank disclosure. I think that is healthy.

Now, having said that, I support the tenets of why this Committee was formed. But I do have some concerns, Mr. Speaker, because, to be fair, I want to thank the members of the Committee for the work that they have obviously done. It is clear there were 32 meetings, as the Minister said, and there was time and attention paid to a very important subject. However, Mr. Speaker, if you get real at it, there were a couple of areas that jumped out at me, and I want to speak about those for a few moments this afternoon.

One of them was that in my first read-through of the report I found that the report lacked substance. There were a number of pages of an update on it, concerns they had and issues we should look at. But then there were many more pages of appendices in the report. And I thought that did, perhaps, a disservice to the work that the individuals did, because I think if more detail had been put into the report we could get some more comprehensive conclusive movement initiatives out of that report, which would help us and the people of Bermuda as we move forward. So I was disappointed with the overall breadth of the writing of the report in itself, Mr. Speaker.

The other important thing I will tag onto that is that the Minister (who has, unfortunately, left the Chamber; but I am sure he is listening as he is outside, because I like to speak when he is in the Chamber, but I am sure he is listening) made great speed

about \$12 million being collected. I think that is important. But the fact of the matter is, if we collected \$12 million because we have done this report, and that is the only thing we do from that, then we certainly are leaving a lot of pages unturned because there is still a lot more money out there that has to be collected. So it is important that we make sure that we continue to follow up.

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, because the Minister and the Committee did the report, that \$12 million was collected because they pushed it. But now that that Committee has done their work, it is our hope that they will continue to push to collect money that is owed to the government's coffers, because without that our taxes will have to continue to rise, and people are getting away without paying their taxes. And in many cases that is criminal, Mr. Speaker, because I think it is done in some cases with intent. Sometimes it is done because they are in a difficult position. They think, *Okay, I can make up for it when the rainy day has gone by.* But in many cases I think it is criminal, Mr. Speaker. And we need to plug that loophole and make sure that we move forward.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to go on for a few moments here and go off on what I think is a very important tangent here. This is a critical area within the government, as we hear from our constituents when we canvass. People will stop us in the street and they will continually talk about this thing, especially after we have debates like this, or it comes up that "X" amount of money was spent. And I agree with the Member who just spoke before me, the Member from constituency 5, that this is not about who the Government of the day is. This is about making sure that we can operate as efficiently as possible and collect money that is owed to the government.

However, when I looked at this report, Mr. Speaker, I also took the opportunity to look back at prior reports that we had. And to give the Committee credit, they referred to the SAGE Commission. Well, Mr. Speaker, if you take half an hour to look at the SAGE Commission [report] and go through some of the key recommendations, you will find that this report tells you very little under the sun other than the Minister managed with his colleagues to get \$12 million back into the government's coffers and made some pretty scintillating acknowledgements about what took place.

Mr. Speaker, the "Ten Key Findings" of the SAGE Commission. The first talked about weak leadership. And look at the SAGE Commission. When they said weak leadership, they also said they were "impressed with the talent and ability within Government . . ." but on the whole leadership has not been nurtured to do the job that is required.

Now, Mr. Speaker, remember when I started out I said that we up here are policymakers, lawmakers, we are responsible for the legislative agenda. So weak leadership is a challenge that was identified by

the SAGE Commission and it is a challenge that has been identified again in this Efficiency [Committee] report.

The second major recommendation or finding out of the SAGE Commission was an "Inability to implement change and fix problems." Well, clearly, Mr. Speaker, this report has said the same thing again, because we have found \$330,000 or \$354,000 (I will come back to that) in a drawer. So there was a problem there, and it took 13 years to find it, and probably 13 years to fix it. Now, we do not know if it is fixed or not.

The third key finding of the SAGE [Commission] was "Lack of opportunity and succession planning." And that deals quite a bit with, I think, the first [key finding] of weak leadership. But, Mr. Speaker, clearly, in my view if there is a lack of opportunity and succession planning, it means that high-flyers within the civil service, those who are very good at doing their job, those who are very efficient at doing those jobs, those who are tuned in and do their job at high levels, could get complacent because there is the lack of opportunities and succession planning. Or, they could simply leave. That hurts the organisation, Mr. Speaker.

The fourth key finding of the SAGE Commission was a "Lack of alignment and transparency of outcomes." That is identified in this report as well.

The fifth key finding was "Lack of accountability." Now, Mr. Speaker, I think that is identified in this as well, and that is something that I continue to talk about over and over and over again in my time in politics, the lack of accountability.

The sixth key finding of the SAGE Commission was, "Insufficient utilisation of checks and balances." And you can refer to whether it is the Audit Committee, the Internal Audit Committee; it could be the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Assembly, but any one of those committees. And I think the Honourable Member from constituency 5 referred to that briefly. If the rules are bent or broken and there are no consequences, then that insufficient utilisation of checks and balances just becomes manifest in a larger and a larger and a larger extent, and then you have a real significant problem that you cannot fix and you just keep making excuses.

The seventh key finding of the SAGE Commission was "Lack of effective performance management systems." Well, that was identified again in this report here very clearly by what we have read and what we have heard so far today.

The eighth, "Lack of performance culture." And this goes back to leadership, Mr. Speaker, but it also goes back to the fact that . . . and I am sure that Members of Parliament are aware from their time as Ministers, or their time serving the people who elected us . . . we know where poor performers are transferred within government and given a good reference to be transferred! So, Mr. Speaker, clearly, there is a

lack of performance culture and we just continue to manifest it to a larger extent because poor performers are rewarded and high performers are not rewarded, Mr. Speaker. And that was identified by the SAGE Commission and now by the Efficiency Committee. So, what is new under the sun?

Mr. Speaker, the ninth thing is "Internal services are weak." Well, yes, we have talked about that here in the House. And I think it was referred to subtly in the Efficiency [Committee] report and you can look at it. The Efficiency [Committee] report clearly talks about IT is weak. Another area we have talked about many times is human resources. So that was identified by the SAGE [Commission] and we have identified it again.

The tenth thing, Mr. Speaker, "Effective policies exist by are not utilised." We make excuses why we do not use the code of conduct for Members of Cabinet, or the employees of the government, no matter what area they are in, Mr. Speaker. So, here we are today. We are dealing with an Efficiency [Committee] report. But, clearly, the SAGE Commission has said most of these things, or all of these things, and we are back in the same place.

And, Mr. Speaker, what I find interesting about it is that the SAGE Commission cost very little to the public purse. It was done by people generally outside of government, with the assistance of those inside the government to answer questions. Whereas this report, we know has cost at least \$122,000, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: We will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: The SAGE [Commission] collected no money; we collected \$12 million.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Mr. Speaker, that point of order does not refer to what I was just saying, because I did not criticise that. I accepted that, Mr. Speaker. I already talked about the \$12 million that was collected.

So, Mr. Speaker, if the Member would just listen a little more closely, I will get into more detail.

But here is the crux of one of the challenges that we face as politicians. We learned pretty much after the fact that this report cost \$122,000. And because of questions asked by my honourable colleague, Patricia Gordon-Pamplin, we learned that the chairman was paid \$70,000. And that upset members of the public. Why, Mr. Speaker? Maybe not because of the amount paid, but maybe because of what I have said about indicators about what takes place within government and transparency; that those details were not put out when the Committee was formed, or when

the report was tabled in this House. They only came out with questioning, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, let's face it; perhaps more now than in the recent history of Bermuda what we do is under a microscope, a very acute microscope. And what we get paid as legislators is under that acute microscope, because people are under pressure in many different areas. But what I have also come to understand is that, while people will be under pressure in certain areas, if we as the Members they elected to this House explain to them why we are doing something, how people are going to get compensated, then more often than not there is an acceptance of what has been done. But with this report there is another example of a report being done, very little talk about any costs, and when questions are answered the costs come out. But all through this process we hear people saying, *We're not getting paid for this; or, We're not getting paid enough for this report.* It goes against the grain of what the public expects to know, and has the right to know, Mr. Speaker.

Now, let me be very clear. I support people getting paid for the work they do. But in this world where accountability is at the highest level it has been, and it is only going to get higher because of transparency and because of compliance and because of things we have done, rightfully, as Members of Parliament, such as PATI [Public Access to Information] legislation, when we talked about forming the Committee we should say, *And this is what it is going to cost to get it done, and this is what we are going to compensate people to do it.* There is nothing wrong with that.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: And I hear a Member from the other side saying "We always do that." But in this case it was not done, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, since my honourable colleague asked the question, and we have learned that the chairman was paid \$70,000 and four other members were paid from \$20,000, \$7,500, and \$24,500, I think it is prudent for the Honourable Minister (now, the Honourable Minister) to be able to say how those fees were arrived at and who made the decision on those for true accountability and transparency, and hopefully acceptance about it, Mr. Speaker, because there was one person who works outside the remit of the civil service who was not paid for sitting on the Committee and I think there needs to be some more understanding of that, Mr. Speaker.

So, I made those comments about the cost because everything we do within the corridors of trying to have the best government possible should be done by being efficient and cost-effective at this time, especially since we continue to owe significant amounts of money to people we borrowed from to keep going.

So, Mr. Speaker, let me get into some of the specifics of the report. What I found quite interesting about the report was that there was a great deal made about the “drawer” and the uncashed cheques sitting in the drawer. Before I make more comments on that, in the report, Minister, it says on page 6 that \$330,500 of uncashed cheques was found in the drawer. However, in the handout we found on our desks today, Mr. Speaker, that is now \$354,972. So I just question the difference in those two numbers. I am sure the Minister now has an answer for that. But what is interesting about that, Mr. Speaker . . . and I have to agree with the Honourable Member who spoke before me, Mr. Burgess. . . it is good, but it is sometimes a bit concerning when I agree with my honourable colleague who we disagree with quite often. But, he was very strong about what he thought should take place. And I support that 100 per cent.

As somebody who has been involved in business and running organisations for some time, I found it unbelievable that for 13 years cheques could sit in the drawer and nobody has opened the drawer or come up and identified the problem. Or maybe the desk was sitting in some abandoned office somewhere, Mr. Speaker. Stating that over \$330,000 of cheques was found in the drawer, and that we have cleared it up, is good. But, what this report does not clear up, and what this Minister did not say today, is how we ensure that this problem does not happen again. Because it gets back to what the SAGE Commission said, it gets back to what many of us say all the time when we speak, it gets back to this report, there is a lack of accountability. It gets back to poor leadership. It gets back to poor internal control and the checks and balances that we need, Mr. Speaker.

So, I want to know from the Honourable Minister how we have changed so that will not take place again. And I think it is important for the public to know what I said when we started off. We had many, many strong people working within the civil service. But one thing you hear from people we were elected to serve is that no one ever gets fired in the civil service. I am not calling for someone to get fired. What I am calling for is accountability. And when somebody says to me no one ever gets fired in the civil service, that is a real perception that they have. And issues like this continue to foster that perception. So, give the Minister and the Committee credit for finding a real challenge. But tell us, the people of Bermuda (maybe not the Opposition up here today, but tell the people of Bermuda) how they can feel confident it will not happen again, because there are many other desks within government that could have those drawers that do not get opened. That is the real key, Mr. Speaker.

We need to prove to the people of Bermuda, other than coming up here and having these good debates, that we have made some decisions, steps have been taken, accountability is in there, we have come to the bottom of the situation, and how we are

going to ensure that those civil servants, the small minority of them who do not do things in the right way, have been dealt with and how we can move forward. That is a very important point, Mr. Speaker. And unless we deal with that we are going to be talking about that over and over and over and over again.

So, how have things changed to get accountability?

Mr. Speaker, it talks about the big issue of overdue accounts. Now, the world in which we live changes at a fast pace, and sometimes it is hard for us to keep up with it, because as soon as we do something a couple of other things pop up and we have to do something to deal with those things that popped up overnight. But the fact of the matter is, with accounts receivable it is your money, you have got to get it. Whether it is government, whether it is a business, whether it is a friend you lent money to, you have to go get the money. And I have a problem with the way we have started to deal with accounts receivable generally throughout Bermuda, because with a lot of businesses now, if you owe them money, they cut your services off.

I was away a couple of weeks ago, and all of a sudden, someone staying at my house said *Your phone is not working. Do you want to report it?* So, I called up to report it, and they said, *You haven't paid your bill, we're cutting you off.* Well, wait a second! I have not—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: The Minister says what company? I am not saying which company it was. But he might be correct.

But Minister, I had not received the bill. I had not received the bill online or in the mail. But I was cut off. And I only owed the last month. That is ridiculous! They cut your service off, but they still do not have their money. So they are not going to lose any more money if I do not pay them, but they are not going to get that money if they cut you off. It makes no sense.

With accounts receivable we have to be talking to each other about it to get money. And that is what government has to do. Government can make sure that we have our systems working so if I owe money to Public Works, for example, and I go to try to licence my car down at TCD, they can say, *Okay, Mr. Dunkley, you owe Public Works money, but TCD is cutting you off for that.* And that is all well and good. But you still have to have that personal relationship with people to make sure they pay their bills, Mr. Speaker.

And I do not care who you are, especially in the government, we need to be chasing these people. And I can tell you, in my business the CFO is calling all the time, all the time, because if you do not reach out you are not going to get the money. That is just the way it is. One reason is that people may not be in

a position to pay it; and two, they figure if you don't chase them, they are going to put it off and use it for something else. And therein lies the problem.

Now, Mr. Speaker, clearly, as Members of Parliament we should lead by example. I am sure there are former Members of Parliament, current Members of Parliament, who owe money to government—significant money to government.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: The Honourable Minister says I am meddling. No. I am telling the truth. I know for a fact that there are Members in this House in Cabinet, who owe money. Pay your bills!

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Oh, I am not going to say it on the floor of this House. I will speak to the Minister. I am not going to name names.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: I am not going to name names, Mr. Speaker. I will speak to the Minister, because if we are going to come up here and we are going to say that we need to be more efficient, we have to live by it ourselves, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Talk here; talk to the Chair.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: And Minister, it is not you.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: So, Mr. Speaker, if we are serious, it has to be all the way through to the core.

So, Mr. Speaker, overdue accounts . . . what was that old commercial? EF Hutton: It has to be done the old-fashioned way; somebody has to be on the phone. You can only send so many notices; you can only cut people off. But the reason why in businesses . . . let's face it. Every business—and it should be government—has to write off money every year because they cannot collect money from some of their people. Maybe the business has gone out of business and they could not collect all of the money before they went out of business. There are circumstances you could consider somewhat acceptable, but it still hurts. And others, they just have not done a good job of collecting the account and eventually they have to write it off. That is normal. But in the government, we have seen where that overdue account is way too much, and we need to do a better job.

People cannot take the government of Bermuda for granted. They need to pay their bills, be-

cause if they do not pay their bills then every one of us has to struggle more to pay taxes that other people have not paid, Mr. Speaker. So overdue accounts is a matter of doing it the old-fashioned way—you have got to go chase it. Because money is not going to run to you, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in regard to another one of the main points that jumped out at me in this report, which was the IT systems within government. One of the things we were hamstrung with in the OBA was we had so many challenges we had to deal with. We were trying to control the deficit and our debt, and we knew that IT systems had to be enhanced, but when you look at the size of the Bermuda government and how you tie them all in, it is going to be a significant investment.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, that we are probably getting closer to the period, if we can balance the budget where we can look at a plan to tie these systems in so they can talk to each other, to make us not only more efficient in collecting money, but when a system as big as government can talk to each other, which has been identified as a real problem, and probably contributes to the real lack of accountability that we have, we are in a position to, I think look at a system where everything can talk in a real-time situation. And that is important. But we need to look at it to make sure that we get what we expect, we get something that is cost-effective, and we get something, Mr. Speaker—and this is important when it comes to technology—that is not going to be outdated when it is implemented, because technology is moving quite fast, and systems move quite fast, Mr. Speaker.

So, I support good IT systems. But it has got to be done with an approved budget in mind and it has to be a system that has some lifespan to it and can do the job we are trying to do. So I look forward to the Government looking to see how we can become more efficient in that way so systems can talk to each other.

Now, my honourable colleague from constituency 5, who spoke before me, also talked about additional staff. And we agree again on this matter. I had better sit down, because I can't agree with the Honourable Member three times in one day; twice is enough.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: But, Mr. Speaker, additional staff does not necessarily solve the problem. I found in my time in business, and just in organisational structures, that if the structure is inefficient, if the structure lacks checks and balances, hiring all the additional staff in the world is not going to help you with that challenge. You will just bring more people in and have the same challenge as you go forward. So, before we hire additional staff, we need to make sure that that system that we have, that organisational

structure that we have, is effective and doing what we expect it to do.

As we have seen in reports from the Efficiency Committee, by the SAGE Commission and other things like that, Mr. Speaker, people are becoming complacent in their job in government because they are not rewarded for their initiative, or there is a lack of accountability in dealing with the challenges we face. So I do not support the hiring of new staff, unless I can be assured that the structure that they are going into is going to do the work that has to be done, Mr. Speaker.

So, therein, Mr. Speaker, is a compilation of my thoughts on this Efficiency [Committee] report that has been tabled and debated here today. I want to thank the Minister for giving us an opportunity to debate this. I also want to just commend the Opposition Leader for setting the tone of the debate afterwards, because I thought he was quite comprehensive in what we have to deal with.

Mr. Speaker, I think what we all can contribute, as I wrap up, is that many of us have served in ministries before. So we have an inside knowledge of how those ministries work and the challenges they may face, and the good things about what is done there, Mr. Speaker. So if we can leverage that to get where we need to go, we can see some big improvements. I think overall there are thousands of workers in government who go to work every day, show up before time, put their work in, and are very conscientious about what they do. But many get frustrated from time to time because there is a lack of accountability, there is a lack of decision-making and getting back to them. And that takes away from their ability to want to move on to the next piece of work and get it done. We need to support them with the framework that at least they know when they identify something it is dealt with in the most appropriate way and not pushed somewhere else, or an employee who causes a problem and is not transferred to another department with a glowing reference, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to contribute this afternoon.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member

Does any other Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 2. Honourable Member Swan, you have the floor.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Thank you, and good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Good afternoon to you.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: If I could make a contribution to this motion, I would be grateful. And good afternoon to the Acting Speaker.

[Mr. Rolfe Commissiong, Acting Speaker, in the Chair]

The Acting Speaker: Good afternoon, sir. You may proceed when you are ready.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: First of all, I would like to express my appreciation to the Minister who presented for bringing this Efficiency [Committee] report to the House. It has been a good tone, by and large, with the debate thus far. I think all appreciate the importance.

I would start off my contribution to this debate just to say that where there is a little bit of deviation it has become a little bit of a political hot potato to talk about the \$122,000 that was spent . . . that the Committee spent. But if we boil it down to debt collection, if a debt collection agency had to recover monies for any business in this country today, and they would be able to realise during their time of scrutiny \$12 million, I am sure any and every business, including the government, would be very pleased and consider that contribution heroic. And I cannot think of any other business around today that would not be very pleased with the work of an Efficiency Committee that was able to realise half a million dollars in return, a hundred thousand dollars that they did not have on their books that is going to go to the income side.

So political fallout being what it may, it is easy to concentrate on the \$122[,000], but undervalue the \$12 million. And dare I say I just felt it necessary to point that out and put it into real terms. And if a person were to take the amount that is paid a Junior Minister and attribute it to the actual task that that Junior Minister was doing, notwithstanding comments that were made about policy versus actual workings, the workings of that Committee were the works of someone who would be in the field of audit. And the Honourable Member who speaks in finance in this regard just happens to have a skill set that is only available in this House to one or two other people.

There are only a few people in this House that have the qualifications that the Honourable Member has who could attribute that amount of time. I am looking at one down the end; and when that Honourable Member was working he may not have had the time to be able to do that actual amount of work, but has the skill set to do that work. And it would be a determination that they would have to make as to whether or not they would do that for remuneration or not.

So let us really be fair in looking at the work that was done in that particular sphere. Not just anyone in this Legislature would be qualified to do that. So, with that in consideration, to see the return of \$12 million, let us not underestimate how significant that is.

Now, I am going to roll back the time and look at when I first came into this Legislature, and reflect on a previous debate in another place, when I called on many occasions . . . and we did not have Hansard

then, and down there I don't think they have it now, but it might be coming—

An Hon. Member: They have it.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: I called for internal audit. Internal audit did not exist in this country in the early 2000s. Internal audit did not exist.

Today, as we look at the work of this Efficiency [Committee], some of which was able to be re-deemed but fall under the remit of internal audit. And as we have the report that looks at departments talking to each other, many years ago I ran a government department for eight years. So I have had some experience with audits annually, and what is required. That is why with having successfully undergone that process between '85 and '93, when I became a legislator I saw the value internal audit would have in particular in an area such as health care, the debate in which I was making those comments. At that time, like now, health was the biggest government department. So it requires some scrutiny.

And I will say this: It did not hurt that I was teaching someone who actually had a skill set in internal audit and shared with me the benefits.

Let's fast-forward to 2019. Well, you now can look at the Budget Book. When I first entered the Legislature 20 years ago, calling for internal audits to be functional within a particular area, now internal audit has its own head in the Budget Book. I think it gets \$1.4 million. And what we need to do in the spirit of efficiency is ask ourselves if we are getting the best bang [for our buck], because I remember when I had to answer to chairmen and deputy chairmen of boards, they used to say we were the quango charged to make its income equal its expenditure on operating costs. They said if it was not coming in in income, make sure you trim your sails accordingly. They used to charge us with that.

And at that time, I remember quipping, after being in government in a quasi-civil service for a number of years that, shucks, my name should be "Accountant General" because everything that I received in my area was made payable to the Accountant General. And even back then (talking about 30 years ago) there was great difficulty between management of the accounting style of revenue accounting, versus the reporting style of expenditure accounting who I dealt with in Works and Engineering. And they had a different methodology and the two would be oil and vinegar when it came round to audit time because in order to get audited your income had to be signed off by one and then getting the revenue accountant mind-set to reconcile with an expenditure accountant. It could take a little bit of horse trading and time.

I am saying all of that to say this: In this modern age no one is arguing for internal audit; it exists. And if anyone needs to take (with no disrespect to the

department) this report to heart, it is the head of which this very mandate falls under—a head that did not exist in 1999 and 2000, but exists today. And it is Head 92, it comes under Non-Ministries. It is on [page] B-30, if you still have the Budget Book. It did not exist way back when.

And let me say this: during the times when this country boy was calling for the need to have some internal audit to have some checks before it went toward it, government's expenditure was only around half a billion dollars. It's up to a billion dollars today. So there has been great growth, and our economy has grown likewise. We all know about the boom periods between 2000 right along up to the time of the last big recession came about.

So, I really want to just make the contribution, Mr. Acting Speaker, that arguments can be made for a lot of different things. There is easy political hay to be made when you focus on the remuneration angle of it. But I urge persons who look at it to look at the extraordinary yields that were made by the workings of the Committee. And I am sure there are persons who would know that, had that been farmed out to firms that do that kind of work on a daily basis, it may or may not be quite more considerable.

So that is my contribution on this particular efficiency. Efficiencies are certainly a way in which we must go, going forward. It is a huge step in the right direction, and a huge boon for government to be able to have had that type of yield when the Committee is working. But we certainly need to take on board that the mind-set that will allow a cheque to sit in a desk yesterday needs to be addressed today and tomorrow. And that cannot go unnoticed. And that has to be looked at going forward as we look at ways to make ourselves more efficient and more economically viable in that area.

I will say this, Mr. Acting Speaker, in that as we look at government efficiencies, this area looked at all of those areas that fall strictly under the remit of the government realm. Government has a large realm which also includes quangos that once had their cheques made out to the Accountant General, as I mentioned, that now are scattered around. And efficiency for government extends beyond where this remit has looked. And there is a wider scope that could be looked at when it comes to efficiencies as well. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, Member.

The Chair now recognises the Member from constituency 23. Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin, you have the floor.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

While I have sufficient information in my presentation to go directly to it, it would be remiss of me if I did not take the opportunity to refer to the

comments that were made by the Honourable Member who just took his seat, from constituency 2. I say that because everybody in Bermuda, knowing that you have got to take money out of your pocket to pay taxes, wants to see that those tax dollars are being spent efficiently. Nobody has a problem with that. Efficiency should be the hallmark of any good government regime. So we understand that.

But for the Honourable Member to try to justify the fact that the Honourable Member who was a Junior Minister in the House was paid additional money to the tune of \$5,000 per month for a 13-month period of time . . . sorry, 14-month period of time, totalling \$70,000 in addition to his parliamentary pay, in addition to his Junior Minister pay, and to say, *Well, they brought some money in, \$12 million he brought in . . .* (I don't know whether they actually collected or it was identified, but there is \$12 million identified), *and, therefore, that was a job well done.* Well, let me say, Mr. Acting Speaker, that I looked at the terms of reference.

What were the conditions of the appointment of this particular Committee? It is very clear, if we go to page 1 of Appendix A, which was the Terms of Reference dated March 7th 2018, which indicates it was a correspondence by the Premier which shows the Terms of Reference for the Efficiency Committee, shows the purpose of the Efficiency Committee, the Authority, the Term, the Membership, the Tasks of the Efficiency Committee, the Outcomes, the Meetings, and the Amendments, Modification or Variation.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the meetings, if you look at the bullet points, there were four bullet points in the original documentation, we now see a manuscript which has been put in, which is penned in (on my copy, at least), which says, *Committee members will be remunerated at the rate of (blank) dollars.* That was not included in what the Premier had initially put in, because had it been, it would presumably have been there in typescript. So, the fact that it came in after the fact . . . I just had an issue with that.

If there was going to be a million dollars paid to this Committee while it was in operation, say so! Include it in the terms of reference, and that way everybody knows the premise under which we are operating in order that everything is open and transparent. Nobody rejects the idea that some people want to be paid. But this particular report and this particular Committee did not start off, in my estimation, in an appropriate light that put it under the sunshine of public scrutiny. You don't put in something after the fact in a manuscript that was not part and parcel of the original Appendix A (page 2); that was not part of the original Terms of Reference. So let me just make a point of that.

Before I make Members confused, one of my Members has just admitted that they actually wrote that comment in. It was not there—but it ought to have been there if that was the intent.

[General uproar]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: No, I read the report.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Oh, I read the report. I read the report, and I am looking at what I have in front of me.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: But, that ought to have been . . . I just saw the confusion on the honourable Clerk's face, so I then had the clarity that what I am seeing in black and white in front of me was handwritten in after the fact, and I apologise for that. But what has been handwritten should have been there! It should have been there, because if you are going to constitute a committee, embody and empanel a committee, you should have the full terms of reference. And it was not there; it was missing.

So, that is point number one.

Point number two, Mr. Acting Speaker, the report itself. Now, I know that my honourable colleague from constituency 10, Honourable Member Dunkley, had indicated that our leader had set the appropriate tone for the debate, and therefore was very pleased that the way the debate had gone on was appropriate. But I am going to be as straight up as you have always known me to be, Mr. Acting Speaker. And what I see here is that when we look at the Efficiency Committee membership, and we look at the responses that were provided by the Honourable Minister when we asked about the costs relating to it, the Efficiency Committee was:

- Hon. Wayne Furbert [JP, MP], [Junior] Minister of Finance, the Chairman, who was paid \$70,000.
- Cherie-Lynn Whitter, Permanent Secretary of Government Reform, was paid zero. Presumably her government salary was deemed to be sufficient and this being part of her job.
- Tina Tucker, Director of Budget, got no money.
- Ianthia Fox, Senior Management Consultant, got no money.
- Edward Ball Jr., BPSU Representative, got no money.
- Glenn Simmons, BIU Representative, got no money.

An Hon. Member: He didn't get any money.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: He got no money.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: He got no money.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: He got no money.

- Senator James Jardine [JP] was paid \$24,500.
- Mr. Richard James was paid \$20,000
- Karamoko Darrel-Dickens, who is a government IT Representative, . . . I don't know whether that says he was an employee of the government, because I do not know the gentleman, was paid \$7,500.

Now, one looking at the member who chaired this Committee, who, as I said, was a Government Junior Minister, you just have to question. There are one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine members of the Committee, and of those nine members of the Committee, four members were paid and the other members were not. So one declined the salary.

So the question in this situation is that there are some people—and I wish to applaud those people, Mr. Acting Speaker—who believe that there is something to public service and commitment to country that they are willing to do what they should for the betterment of the country. It is not something that we should be looking at to see how we can create additional salary for somebody. Perhaps at the time there was not a Cabinet position available so there needed to be extra money, it would appear, so that there was supplementing of income for individuals. I don't know if that was the reason, but it appears so to me. That is my opinion.

POINT OF ORDER

[Imputing improper motives]

Hon. Wayne Caines: Point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The [Member] is imputing improper motive. That is conjecture; it has absolutely no basis in fact. And it is actually just improper conversation about him needing the salary. It is just not proper conversation. We have to literally . . . when we are making these decisions we have to stick to the facts, we have to make sure we are doing and conducting ourselves . . . *he might need the money, he needed it . . .* that is just not proper—

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, Minister. You have made your point. I would also just advise that we stay away from imputing motives in that way. Thank you.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Certainly, Mr. Acting Speaker. And I certainly did not intend to impute improper motives. I said it was my opinion. And that is what has come to us by people observing from the public and the comments people have made.

I find it difficult to refute the observation that others have made in the absence of any further information, because this was not included in the original terms of reference. So it just makes one question what initiated that necessity.

So let me just—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognises the Minister.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: The Honourable Member asked a question, and I think she is misleading the House when she asks the question, is what led to the compensation for this particular member. Well, certainly the Honourable Member will know that there was work that was completed. There is no doubt as to what work was done by this Honourable Member. None whatsoever.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I am not sure what that point of order was, Mr. Acting Speaker. But never mind.

Let me move on. Let me look at efficiency, Mr. Acting Speaker, efficiency—finding a better way to do a task, saving time, money and resources on a sustained basis. So, if you find a drawer that is full of cheques for \$353,000 that have been sitting there for varying periods from 2006 (I think the Member said) . . . for the last 13 years, is that something that is sustainable? Are you going to open a drawer somewhere else and find cheques somewhere else?

That is not efficiency. That is uncovering incompetence, poor work ethic. Nobody who is going to get a cheque coming into them is going to take it and stuff it in a drawer and leave it there for 13 years.

Something is wrong! Somebody who has a fiduciary responsibility is not fulfilling that responsibility, either to the taxpayer or to government, as that is their employment terms of reference. They are expected to follow the rules that overlie what civil servants are required to do, the terms of their employment, to say that when you get a cheque you either deposit the cheque in the bank. If you deposit the cheque and it is returned with insufficient funds, you do the necessary follow ups. This is just basic efficiency . . . I'm sorry, basic accountability.

This is not efficiency; this is incompetence. That is what we are looking at. We are looking at how can we be more competent to make sure that money that is due to the government is collected. And it is not the Minister to do it. This is not a criticism of the Minister, or any Minister in any department at any time. It is not the Minister to do it. That is what we have the

4,000-odd members that the Honourable Member alluded to earlier in his report. We have civil servants to do this. And the civil servants have an obligation to follow their duty. So they should be doing that.

This report was unfortunate, to me. It made I think 19 or 20 references, as I went through, to the SAGE [Commission] report. Now, if one is looking at an efficiency report, and we know that the SAGE [Commission] report and the CARTAC report and other reports were done on the premise of government efficiency, it would seem to me that rather than trying to reinvent the wheel, have a broad brush to try to cover the waterfront, throw all sorts of things up against the wall to see what sticks, it would seem to me that you would start with a report that had already identified areas of efficiency, highlight those areas and see how we can enhance or implement things that have already been suggested.

This report, Mr. Acting Speaker, is not one that . . . it certainly is not one that is going to go down in the annals of history as being a literary work of art. That I can say without fear of contradiction. There is significant repetition. This 44 page report could have been précised down to about 20 pages of effective writing. So quantity of verbiage does not equate to quality of reporting.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: There is significant duplication, significant duplications in this report, Mr. Acting Speaker. And I believe that any Minister . . . and the Minister of Finance agrees with me, to the point that he is stomping his feet. And I applaud that, and I appreciate that because I think he appreciates the fact that when a job is meant to be done we have to do it . . . if we are talking about efficiency, we have to do our job efficiently.

We cannot . . . I mean, reading this report was almost like "Groundhog Day." Like, reading it, reading it, reading it; like I read that yesterday, I read that the other day. I went back and eventually I went through my report, Mr. Acting Speaker . . . if you see the number of times I ran a red line through the pages because it was duplicated; I had seen that before. And, really, it could have been far more efficiently presented. So it is not something of which . . . the work is not something of which we could be particularly proud.

Now, I think that if we had honed down and instead of coming up with a broad recommendation that says *Let's do some more work in this area, and let's appoint some more committees, and let's do this and that*, what we could have done was asked, *What do we have? How can we work with what we have? How can we implement some of these? And what is the impact of that?*

Now, that may not have collected any money, certainly would not have collected the \$350,000 of cheques of revenue that had not been received by the

government. But that was not the purpose of this Committee. This Committee was not looking at revenue collection. It was looking at efficiencies of government. There is one very, very valuable point that I saw in this report. And that was the extent to which we can utilise—

An Hon. Member: One?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: There was one out of 44 pages in the Executive Summary.

There was one that said we could utilise a central system that every person who owes money to government should be in that central system so that when the account receivables is generated, and that money is satisfied by way of payment, it is checked for all to see.

So, irrespective of the department, the controls relating to the actual accounting could be centralised and ought to be centralised. And that would be efficiency, so that you do not have to stop and consider, *Do I have to go up to the Tax Commissioner's office? Have I paid my payroll tax? The social insurance is over there. Land tax is over there. Something else is somewhere else.* You don't have to go through all of those different departments TCD, everything. One central location.

But we cannot do that effectively until we are able to have independent identifiers, either by business or by individual, so that we know that if Pat Gordon-Pamplin owes land tax, payroll tax, and social insurance, then Pat Gordon-Pamplin identifier, 1-2-3-4-5, should be able to pick up in the system when you go in to see, this is a new charge, this is something that is owed, and, therefore, when we receive money the money is able to be put against it. And this actually helps the taxpayer.

The taxpayer himself will have the opportunity now to be made aware, when he goes in to government . . . you know, it is one thing to say that eventually it is going to catch up with you, and when you go to TCD you can't licence your vehicle. But you know when you go in to pay your social insurance that that agent who is dealing with you, that cashier can say, *Ms. Gordon-Pamplin, you also owe here, here, here and here*, and realise that there are other things that may be implicated as a result and, therefore, you may be at risk. That way you have it all in one neat package. That is efficiency. That would be in one fell swoop, people would know exactly what they owe and how much they need to pay, and how their money can be allocated. So that is efficiency. And that is something that I can appreciate, because that was recommended in the report.

One of the things that was very clear in this report was that the Minister indicated that we could not do everything that they tried to do in one fell swoop. And, as I said, it means that you are going to start looking at other things and go back and have a

continuing exercise to try to continue to collect money. It is the money collection that seems to be the basis of this report, not the efficiency side of it, the money collection. What we might want to consider doing to get in that money collection is, we might want to start outsourcing some of that, because if we look at what the shortcomings, in terms of the staffing and the work that is required in the Office of the Tax Commissioner, and they do not have the follow-up capabilities.

They are the ones who have to initiate the charges to say that this person is delinquent. Then they have to send it up to the Attorney General's Chambers. You have to go through the debt collection process and what have you. If this is outsourced to an agency, and that agency has a fee, even if it is 20 per cent, if they are getting 80 per cent of the outstanding balance it is better than getting 100 per cent of nothing. So 80 per cent of something is better than 100 per cent of nothing.

I think that we need to start to look, if you want to be efficient, to not try to put further work on the office of the Tax Commissioner, which is already being stifled by the workload they currently have. But, rather, you can outsource some of that.

We have sufficient collection agencies. There are collection agencies that I believe have already proven their worth in that particular industry who can be called upon. And there might even be new ones that will come up, maybe a new entrepreneurial opportunity for somebody to say, *I am going to cause a company to be formed, and have competent people in this company and I am going to approach government to offer our services to do their debt collection.* That is one way of making sure that the Tax Office can then continue to do the work that they are accustomed to doing and that they ought to be doing.

Now, collections is something that is very dear to my heart. I say that because as a bill comes in, not everybody has the ability to say, *I got my phone bill today and, therefore, I am going to go on the computer and pay it tonight.* Not everybody has that capability. But, when you cannot pay one month, it is going to be very difficult to pay two and then three. And it is under that guise you have things like tenant delinquencies that occur. You can't pay one month's rent; you can't pay two. And once you get two months behind it is going to be virtually impossible, and eventually you throw your hands up in despair and say, *You know what? I don't have the money; I am just not going to pay anybody anything.* And before you know it, you are a perennial client walking in and out of the debt collection agency.

So, nobody wants to be in that situation. But if we can manage what we do in an efficient kind of way, then we can find that many of our people, with proper guidance and financial . . . and this is one of the things that is key as well, having financial instruction, financial education, so people can understand what it is that is required of them in order to be able to

make ends meet. It is easy for people who get a paycheque every month and pay their bills every month. There is some left over sometimes. But maybe next month they don't have any left over, and they know they are going to have enough the following month and, all in all, it is going to balance. This is how government accounts work. We know that we are going to receive a certain amount of money, we are going to pay out a certain amount of money. Some months we are going to be short, some months we are going to be a little bit over. But in the overall scheme of things the ideal objective is to make sure we are balanced. And in that light, with that balancing function, that is the ideal; that is the ultimate. That is the Nirvana.

What you do not want to see is that people will look at government as being their creditor of last resort. So they pay for their vacation first, then they pay for their sushi, and for whatever else they want to pay for, and, *Oh, I forgot I have to pay this payroll tax. Or, I have to pay this social insurance,* and what have you. And as an employer to the extent that you are delinquent, it is not just impacting you or your financial situation, it is impacting those employees who have worked for you, sometimes for years. And when they are ready to retire there is no money there in the social insurance part for them to start to collect what they ought to have been entitled to because they have already paid.

If there was an efficiency to be gained, it is a methodology by which we could ensure that those types of things that are people-related are centralised. And I say that so that you don't have to worry about, *Am I going to get my pension at the time that the pension is ready to come?*

And, talk about efficiency, I have said this in this House, and I will say it until I am blue in the face and until the day I die—tell somebody in the Social Insurance Department that when people turn 65 (taking about being efficient) let them know so they do not lose money by not being able to get their pension cheque on time. I have said that before, I will continue to say it!

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I knew I was 65, but I was also working. And I was—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The Honourable Member says I was in denial!

I will be 70 years old my next birthday, and I am very proud of it, because I feel well and I think I look gorgeous! Not a problem.

I knew I was 65, trust me.

So, what I would like to see is that as we look at some of the ideas that have come up when it

comes to things like the Financial Assistance Department, many of the things that have been discussed and recommended in this report are things that had been started somewhere along the line and, presumably, a ball has been dropped, or maybe personnel has changed over and new personnel may have a different focus, maybe in just a learning curve or whatever. But there has to be sufficient succession planning, such that we do not have a slip between the cup and the lip when somebody finishes working and somebody else is coming on to take over those responsibilities. Because when I see things like we are paying in Financial Assistance, you have somebody who may own a home and that home is being rented out, and that senior is in a nursing home and the government's Financial Assistance Department is paying the nursing home fees, because the legislation says that they can, but where is that revenue coming from?

That revenue is not there to say to my sister or my daughter, or my cousin, or whomever wants to come in and feed at the trough of that senior . . . that money is not there for them. That senior has sacrificed and paid for their home and done whatever and now they find themselves in a nursing home that the government is going to be paying out of financial assistance, then surely the revenue that is coming in to that same estate should somehow be able to be used to offset some of the expenses that that senior is incurring. And that was one of the recommendations that was made by the Financial Assistance Department. I think it is certainly one that is well worth pursuing.

One of the areas . . . how much time do I have, sir?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Okay.

One of the areas that struck me as being really interesting with the report that came from the IT individual, which was towards the end of the report, in the executive summary it was indicated that the person who was giving input in respect of IT was suggesting that the systems that exist, that the people who are there effectively are untrainable to new systems. So it would not be effective. I will not say untrainable, but not effective to new systems. And, therefore, this person felt that he needed 38 new staff members, 38 new people to come in to be able to effectively run and manage the IT department.

So, if you bring in 38 new people, what do you do with those people already there? You cannot put out to pasture people who have been there doing the work, however efficiently or lack thereof, over the course of time without at least giving them the opportunity to be trained. You cannot write them off at the outset by saying, *You've been here so long, I need new blood.*

Now, I look at how our children are able to interact with technology. I put my hand up all the time; I am technologically illiterate by comparison. But it does not say that one cannot be taught. So, you cannot just discount people and say, *Just because you learned 20 years ago, therefore you are no longer relevant and those systems are no longer efficient or no longer working, so, therefore, we need to replace you and bring in somebody new.* That makes no sense because people who have been in the government, who have worked in the civil service, have worth, they have value. But we want to make sure, on the other hand, that they are held accountable for the work that they do.

Now, we heard the Honourable Member from constituency 5 mention overtime. And while that may be a sore point, it is important to recognise that many of those issues arise as a result of some union agreements. So we have to ensure . . . and I am not knocking the unions. I don't want anybody to say Pat Gordon-Pamplin is criticising the unions. What I am saying is that with some of the agreements that are in place, we might need to start to look at the agreements that exist to make sure that we are not over-spending in areas where we can make savings.

So, this whole report, as I said, Mr. Speaker, reminds me, as I was looking at some of the poetry that comes around, some of the things that I do, that I sort of came up with, which says, according to the Minister's own representation of himself:

He says, 'I'm just a Junior Minister with no real function.'

But I say he took the taxpayers' money without compunction.

It seems there is little concern for us who pay tax, because of the cavalier attitudes that seem to be so lax.

'Look how much money we found!' the Minister said. 'Our actions have been extremely profound.'

'So shut your mouth and just pay, because we are going to do things our way.'

Mr. Speaker, that is not what we want. It is unfortunately my opinion that every voter is considered to be a mindless minion.

That is not true.

But Bermudians should sit back and truly take note; we want to make sure that we care about people and not about their vote.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, Member.

The House is still in consideration of the motion moved by the Honourable W. L. Furbert, that this Honourable Member take note of the consolidated overall report of the Efficiency Committee.

Are there any [Members] who wish to address the motion?

The Chair recognises the Member for constituency 26. You have the floor, sir.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

I really had not intended to speak on this motion today. But having read most of the 100-plus pages of the Efficiency Committee report, there were some things that came up to me, and I really wished to speak.

First of all, let me thank the Minister and his Committee for such a detailed report which certainly highlighted a lot of things and made recommendations as well. One of the things that it highlighted to me, was the separation that exists between various departments with some departments acting in silos. I have had experiences of this, having to go from one department to another department because that department cannot tell me what is in that department's files, or something like that. So I would hope that this recommendation is looked at so government departments do get to talk to each other, certainly in a more timely way and not be frustrating our people in trying to get things done.

The fact that their IT systems right now do not seem to be able to speak to each other tells me that we obviously need to upgrade in that area. I hope that it is something that the responsible Minister will have a look at. As I said, to have to go from one department to another without one department being able to tell you can be frustrating. And I have had experiences myself, as I said. And I have also had some persons give me some of their experiences which certainly were not too pleasant.

It sounds to me that government has Financial Instructions which I know have to be followed, because I am on a few boards, and I know that the Financial Instructions are waved at me on a regular basis. It sounds like this Committee has found out that some departments might not be adhering to Financial Instructions. That, to me, sounds very, very curious. And, again, having it pointed out in this report, I would hope . . . and as I said, it would appear. I am not saying any departments are not addressing Financial Instructions as they should be. I am just saying that it appears to me that some of the things this Committee has found out are actually taking place.

Mr. Acting Speaker, let me say that I certainly agree, from a layman's point of view, that there probably should be a central collection office in terms of collecting government taxes. That would certainly make life a lot easier for some people who do not know exactly what department they should be going to, either having been billed or been told that they owe certain monies. So the recommendation suggesting that there should be a central collection office, I certainly do support that.

Now, let me say, Mr. Acting Speaker, when I was given this list of outstanding cheques that appear

to have been left, or found, in drawers, I was really aghast! When I looked at the dates of some of them going back to 2006, I really do not know how that could happen, unless . . . and I know for sure, because I worked in private industry and been in accounts departments. Sometimes I guess a cheque could fall down between a crack. But for it to be not found, or followed up in a timely manner, that just totally baffled me. But I am certainly glad that these cheques have been found. I see an amount of \$354,000 having been either identified or collected already. So I certainly glory in the spirit of having found that.

Mr. Acting Speaker, what I would say is that if staffing levels and the expertise of staff who have this responsibility for collecting government funds is not up to par, then it is obviously something that needs to be done, and I would certainly suggest, if it is not already being done, or intended to be done, is that training must obviously be arranged for these people to be able to do their jobs a little more effectively.

I note that they have tiered the fee structure for boards. I certainly think that somebody is obviously looking at something. But one of the things I wanted to say that should be carefully looked at is that you cannot always judge by the name of a board as to what level of work is being done by those persons, be it the Chair or the actual members on the board itself. I know from experience, having been on a committee that lasted quite a number of months without even being paid. So, you cannot just look at what the committee is named in terms of the responsibility of payment there.

Another point that I just want to end up with is, the Honourable Opposition Leader suggested that the payment of a few extra overtime hours should fix the collection of trash until a policy is put out that using bins is mandatory. Well, let me just give you a story, Mr. Acting Speaker.

In my area where I live, the estate that I live, I will say that at least 90-odd per cent of the persons putting out trash in my area do it on the day they are supposed to do it. Another percentage of them put it out the day before. And of that high percentage, most of them put their trash out in bins, because they recognise that if they do not put their trash out in bins what it is going to attract. Now, there is probably only one resident in my area that will actually put trash a couple of days before our allocated day—and in brown paper bags! That does not make any sense. I cannot believe that someone hasn't thought out the fact that it's going to rain probably before the day our collection is to come, and what is going to happen to the trash.

So, it is just a common sense thing. I do not mind . . . if what we need to do is put . . . you know, take the responsibility for our trash. We know the day it is coming in our area. Also, there is the opportunity to take your trash down to Tynes Bay. So, if the Hon-

ourable Opposition Member is suggesting that overtime will correct this until we put out a policy implementing mandatory bins for trash . . . as I am saying, it is basically common sense. We all know how to deal with trash. We should all know basically how to deal with trash.

So, let me wind up—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: And spray. Of course. Those little things that . . . how would you like to be treated by your next door neighbours? It is as simple as that.

Let me just finally say that I again support the Minister for the work that he has done, despite all the personal barbs that he took. I am sure he has broad shoulders and probably will come back and speak to it anyway. But I certainly want to again thank the committee and the Minister for producing this report. I wish them success in the recommendations that they have come up with and hope that it leads to better efficiency in the running of government.

Thank you very much, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, MP Tyrrell.

Are there any other Members who wish to speak to this motion?

The Chair recognises the Member from constituency 30, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Ms. Leah Scott. You have the floor.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Thank you for the opportunity to be able to speak to this report of the Efficiency Committee. I guess I want to start off by saying that I see in the report lots of entrepreneurial opportunities. However, I do not think it is a \$122,000 report. And I do not mean that in a disparaging way. I believe that anybody who sits on a committee should be actually paid because they are giving up their time. I think that in return for \$122,000 we should have a report that actually sets out some recommendations that actually does not have me looking for pieces of legislation to determine things in the recommendation that they say they may do, but they are not sure what piece of legislation they can do it under.

I think that perhaps the money did need to be spent. I do not know that \$122,000 needed to be spent. I do agree and understand that if it had been carried out by, say, KPMG, Deloitte, or one of those other firms, that it probably would have been substantially higher. So I appreciate that. I appreciate the time and the effort that the Minister and the Committee expended in going through government to see what efficiencies could be gained.

I recognise that they have said that they have, I guess, identified \$12 million. I do not know whether that is collectable. I do not know if it has been determined that some of that money will fall under a statute

of limitations and so it cannot be collected. So it would be interesting at the end of the day to see what the real number is in terms of dollars that will be collected.

Now, I have got several notes throughout the report so I am going to go through my comments—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Point of information, if the Member does not mind.

The Acting Speaker: Will the Member accept a point of information?

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Definitely.

The Acting Speaker: You have the floor, sir.

POINT OF CLARIFICATION

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: We clearly laid out and can point out to you that we identified the \$12 million. And the only part, as of May, that has not been collected was about \$2.5 million. It was well over \$12 million, if you wanted to know, really true.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Okay.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, Minister.
You may resume, Member.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Thank you, Minister, for that clarification. I appreciate it.

Well, I am glad to know that we actually did collect that money.

So, I guess starting out, the Chairman of the Committee thought that they were going to identify where they thought inefficiencies existed and then make recommendations for the improvement. So, what I do not understand is if it was the Committee's job to understand the efficiencies, why, on page 7 of the report, that the Committee was of the view that they should find some other people "to review all past reports" to look at efficiencies and what had been done. If that was their mandate, then why have they now passed that mandate on to somebody else? It seems like a duplication of efforts. And that is another expense and another time lag in terms of getting recommendations and implementing recommendations.

So, to my mind, that should have been the starting point. Look at the recommendations of the SAGE Commission, look at the recommendations of the Management Consulting Section of government, identify those areas where they had actually not addressed the inefficiencies, determine why they were not addressed, and then see whether they can be addressed and use that as a platform to go forward.

So I am not sure why they did not do that.

Now, I am going to start with the Office of the Tax Commissioner on page 8 of the report. As I think MP Burgess has said, and my colleague, Pat Gordon-

Pamplin, identified, efficiencies are not created by overstaffing. In fact, if you create efficiencies then you can reduce the number of people that you have working for you because you have set up systems and you have streamlined systems so that they are more efficient and more effective.

Now, the first thing they say under the Office of the Tax Commissioner is that they have staffing needs. Now, I must declare my interests, Mr. Acting Speaker. I am a trustee of a property that was sold last year. And the property was actually bought by a first-time homeowner. However, the first-time homeowner was also in a class of beneficiaries of a trust. So, when the transaction occurred it was not determined whether or not she was eligible for relief from paying the stamp duty.

That application has been in the Office of the Tax Commissioner since November. And it is almost November again.

So, in addition to the Tax Commissioner's Office losing revenue and not being able to collect money, I am losing money, because that is \$10,000 in stamp duty that I could have invested. It is sitting there. I am not getting any interest. I am not getting any return on it. I have a tickler in my file and I write to the Tax Commissioner every single month, *What's the status?* And the last time I emailed him he told me that they had taken on staff to address the backlog. So, if staff have been taken on to address the backlog, then why is that recommendation in this report? If they already got staff and they still haven't addressed the backlog, how much more staff do they need to address the backlog? Do they have a plan? Have they assessed what the real time is in moving this? And what the real cost is going to be in moving it?

I also note that one of the recommendations was that they would like to have a lawyer . . . one of the things that they were looking at in terms of dealing with the property issues and the backlog with the stamp duty and adjudication with the property issues, was to have a group of active property attorneys work together as a "working group" to resolve the huge backlog of files.

The comment I, as a lawyer, find most offensive, is "Our view is that the firms involved might be willing to do this work for a much-reduced fee" (fine, I do not have a problem with the much-reduced fee part, but the comment is) "because it is in their best interests to clear the backlog."

Well, why is it in the lawyers' best interest to clear the Tax Commissioner's backlog? That is their backlog; that is not my backlog! Yes, my client would like to get their money, but, you know, that is not my issue. The fact of the matter is that it is the Tax Commissioner's interest to have it cleared up because it creates a better more efficient department!

I do not know whether the suggestion that they get a "modest fee" will go over well. As you know, lawyers work on a time-spent basis. They get paid an

hourly rate. And while they may be able to assign a junior or some other staff member to assist the Tax Commissioner, at the end of the day, just like the government is trying to make money, lawyers are trying to make money. People are trying to make money. And this is not an inefficiency that was created by lawyers or by law firms.

Now, Mr. Acting Speaker, one of the things you are well aware of is that we have had a slew of legislation come through this House in terms of regulatory requirements and compliance. And, to date, that legislation has only been applicable to those who work in private industry. Now, we know that government is the largest employer in Bermuda. And, for now, government has been exempt from the requirements of having the same compliance and regulatory restrictions that we encounter in private industry. However, just in general business practice, government should have proper policies and procedures in place, they should have an internal audit system, they should have proper checks and balances, they should have files in their proper place, they should have agreements in place with whoever their vendors are. If there are arrangements between government departments there should be service level agreements between those departments. There should be a four-eyes principle on any money that is coming in or going out. And I do not see why government should be exempt from the standard business practices that allow it to operate as an efficient machine that private practice has to do.

And, again, while we may think that we have a lot of time to kind of get recommendations in place to address the inefficiencies and do the things that are necessary, we never know when the EU, or whoever, is going to decide to come and say, *Okay, we have now touched on private industry; let's touch on the government.* And how long is it going to take government to get themselves in shape to meet those requirements without being subjected to penalties and fines and other sorts of things that are being imposed on people in private industry.

So, if that is not a concern, I think that it is something that should be a concern.

One of the things that has been noted in the recommendations, particularly in the Office of the Tax Commissioner, is that they would like for people to file their tax returns by electronic filing. Now, my understanding in talking to a couple of small businesses who do accounting and things for people, is that they can do the online filing. They find it to be fairly efficient. It can be frustrating, because when you are doing the online filing it has data block. So if you are trying to do an online filing, and there is some information that has been changed, it will not allow you to progress to the next level until you input whatever information is required.

The comment that was made to me by one of the small businesses was that both the online and the

manual tax calculation process and forms are difficult for Mr. and Mrs. Smith to complete.

And so, there should be some sort of tutorial. And I noticed on the Tax Commissioner's website, one of the things they say is that they help people in, you know, completing their forms and doing their tax filings. But I do not know how many people actually take advantage of that.

The other thing is that, while they are suggesting that people should do their returns by e-filing, if you go on the Office of the Tax Commissioner's website, and if I may, Mr. Acting Speaker, you go on the website, and in big, red writing, it says, *The e-tax system is not ready to accept payroll tax April–June 9th, 2019, filing. A revised date will be coming soon to compensate for the delay.* So, what that means is the government is losing revenue. Because I am holding onto my money until your system is up so that I can file it. So, you cannot say, *I want you to e-file. I want you to use these systems. I want you to be efficient, when the government is not efficient!*

So, the other thing is that you are charging a 1.45 per cent tax for paying by credit card. Why? If people are paying their taxes, we already have people who are struggling. We have small businesses that are having a challenge. Why are you imposing this additional burden on them? There is a cost of doing business. And I appreciate that we are trying to identify revenue streams where we can. We are trying to get income where we can. But I do not think that small businesses, or businesses in general, who choose to pay by credit card, should be charged a penalty for doing so. If they are paying their money, they are paying their money.

Now, Mr. Acting Speaker, there were a number of solutions that were set out for the Office of the Tax Commissioner. And one of the ones was, there was a suggestion that the Tax Commissioner's Office empanel a board like the Development Applications Board. And that board would meet monthly and adjudicate on property matters, just like the Development Applications Board does. But all that is doing is just adding another layer of bureaucracy. You are adding another expense. You are adding another step. How is that efficient?

In addition, which I found also just disappointing in the report, is that the report does not even know which piece of legislation would empower the Tax Commissioner to be able to set up a board. And they have identified section 22 of the Stamp Duties Act. Well, section 22 of the Stamp Duties Act is in reference to adjudication with respect to liability with stamp duty. So, how does that empower the Tax Commissioner to set up a board? It does not.

So, my point is that you have had a committee that has done a report and should have investigated the proper pieces of legislation, and that should form part of their summary. The fact of the matter is, under the Constitution, the Minister has the power to set up

a board. But why do I have to go, after looking at this report, and identify the correct legislation? This should be a comprehensive document. And it is not, in my opinion.

One of the other things that I am concerned about is the death tax. There is no mention in the report about collecting the estate tax. But there is a concern that . . . I do not know if you are aware that if you make an application for a primary family homestead, if you own a property, if you make an application for a primary family homestead and you file with the Tax Commissioner with your appropriate deeds and the application, then you get an exemption from your death tax when you die. And there are a lot of people who are not aware of that.

But they are behind in those. So, you have got estates that cannot be probated because you have got a backlog. I believe that, in the Taxes Management Act, there is a section that says that if you go beyond three years, then you cannot get the death tax. So, you know, there has got to be a way where they can make their systems more efficient. And I do not necessarily think that adding more people is the answer to that.

Now, in the IT report, which was an appendix to the EC [Efficiency Committee] Report, it talks about, in particular for the Office of the Tax Commissioner, discontinuing a project called the TIMS project. And the TIMS project is a tax information management system. So, what I do not understand is—and if you will allow me to read this, please? “It is also recommended that the OTC discontinue the TIMS project because it was already obsolete when the project began in 2012 . . .”

It was already obsolete in 2012!

It is 2019, and they continued with the project! Does that make sense to you, Mr. Acting Speaker? (That is a rhetorical question.)

[Inaudible interjections]

Ms. Leah K. Scott: We can go back and forth with who was Government at the time. That does not change the fact that we were the Government, and now you are the Government, and it is 2019, and we are still in the same position.

They said that the TIMS project has run into cost “overruns due to implementation delays, and the development of commercial off-the-shelf products that include functionalities based on best practices related to tax management.”

It is inefficient! So, why are we continuing with it?

And we are paying for it! Why are we paying for it?

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Ms. Leah K. Scott: It started in 2012. We got elected December 17, 2012, the end of December. So, it was obsolete in 2012.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker. Point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognises the Member with his point of order. And what is the point of order, Member?

POINT OF INFORMATION

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Acting Speaker, I believe that the person who wrote that felt that the software that was taking place in 2012, right, was not the right software. That is what the person felt.

The Acting Speaker: Member, you are actually . . . Are you giving a point of information? Are you requesting—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes.

The Acting Speaker: —the ability to—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Well, they are saying that . . . I am just saying that, from 2012, they said it was 2012. I am saying for 2012 through 2017. I am just sort of asking, 2012 to 2017, somebody else could have looked at this.

The Acting Speaker: Okay.

Member, you may resume. I am saying, Member, you may resume.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Oh, okay. Thank you. I take the Minister's point. However, we can continue to go back and forth and say, *Oh, well, what happened when you were Government? And what happened when you were Government?* I understand. I understand. But, however . . . okay, we did not address it in 2012—

[Inaudible interjection]

Ms. Leah K. Scott: This is 2019! So, we have had another further two years of revenue. It says right here that they paid the bills up until July of 2018. That is what it says on my piece of paper. And, in fact, it says it started in 2012, and it had goals that it could not achieve. And we have continued to perpetuate it.

That is not efficient! That is not efficient, Mr. Acting Speaker.

So, the IT report says the data that are contained in reports that are currently generated by this management system “could be from a few weeks old to a couple of months, making it nearly impossible, nearly impossible for the OTC team, Tax Commis-

sioner and Ministry of Finance to make data-driven decisions.”

How do you make decisions based on data? We sat on a committee together where you were chair, Mr. Acting Speaker. And how did we come to our conclusions? Data! Right?

So, data is important. And not using improper systems is important, and it reduces inefficiency—it reduces efficiencies.

Now, Mr. Acting Speaker, the Government thinks that it should implement a tax amnesty programme with a timeline to settle the tax amount due. So, what would be the consequences if people cannot meet that tax amnesty programme? Because I think a lot of the challenges that we are facing as a country are not that the people just do not want to pay their taxes; people are not working. They do not have the money. Or, when you have small businessmen who are working, they are just trying to keep their staff employed. You know, they are trying to keep them working so that they can have food on the table, a little bit of insurance so they can look after their families. They are trying to make ends meet.

So, while a tax amnesty may be a good thing in an economy that is overflowing with money and investment, at this point in time, I do not see how suitable that would actually be.

[Inaudible interjection]

Ms. Leah K. Scott: I take your point. I take your point. It is just a suggestion. And these are just my comments on your suggestions.

[Inaudible interjection]

Ms. Leah K. Scott: What am I suggesting? I am suggesting . . . Well, that is not for this forum, but there are whole bunch of—no, no, no.

There are a lot of things that we need to do. And I do not know if you were there at the HSBC Bermuda Index Survey Results. But there are a lot of things that we need to do in terms of addressing a plethora of issues, not just creating government efficiencies. And I think that you will also appreciate, Minister, that anything that we do, actually, this cannot be taken in isolation. Because there are so many other things that are going on in the country that all knit together.

And so, the tapestry that we are weaving is not just government efficiencies. It is about getting people who want to come to Bermuda and invest in our country. It is about growing the economy. It is about getting job creators, innovators and wealth creators here. It is also about understanding and appreciating the need that we have to address our immigration policies, but we have to do it in a way that is respectful of the people of this country, as well as the

people who want to invest in the country. So, we have a number of challenges that we are facing.

And, as I said, you know, I commend you and the Committee for the energy expended in doing this report. And I am just identifying some of the thoughts that I have on the recommendations that have been put forward.

One of the other things that—

The Acting Speaker: Member, just a second.

MP Swan, will you be able to turn that off?

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes.

The Acting Speaker: Okay. Thank you, sir. It was really distracting.

You may resume, Member.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The next point I have, Mr. Acting Speaker, is training. Now, for the Office of the Tax Commissioner, the report identifies that the staff at the Office of the Tax Commissioner have 10 to 30 years' experience in tax collection. And I guess my question is, if you have got people who have 10 to 30 years in tax collection—not tax management, not tax service, but tax collection—why do we have a collection problem? Why do we have people with experience who are not utilising their experience?

And so, that creates a problem because, what are people doing? What are they getting paid for? I do not work in the Tax Commissioner's Office; I have never done it. So, I am not questioning the capability of the people there. But I am just saying that if you have stated that you have people who have up to 30 years' [experience] collecting money, and we are not collecting money, then there is a bit of a . . .—

An Hon. Member: Disconnect.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: —disconnect there. (Thank you. Thank you.)

[Inaudible interjection]

Ms. Leah K. Scott: So, I will take a point of clarification.

POINT OF CLARIFICATION

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes. And I take the point. The Member is saying 30, 40, 50 years. The problem is that you are collecting \$100 million, and any one person is not going to be able to collect it. So, you need more, additional staff. And that is the problem that we had. There was not enough staff in the department. We took four in, and now we have started collecting more of the cash.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you for that point of clarification, Minister.

You may resume, Member Leah Scott.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Thank you, Minister.

So, I guess my point to that is that it had to take a while to get to \$100 million. And so, I refer back to my point that . . . I said it had to take a while to get to \$100 million outstanding.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Your point of order, sir?

POINT OF INFORMATION

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I would certainly, would want to help the Honourable Member. It would not take a long time to get to \$100 million, because you might recall many a Friday I called and stated what the outstanding amount was for, in particular, stamp duty and the adjudication thereof.

The Acting Speaker: Okay. Thank you for that point of information, Minister.

You may resume.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Thank you, Minister. I appreciate that. I agree that it would not take a very long time, possibly. However, it does take some time. It would take some time.

[Inaudible interjections]

Ms. Leah K. Scott: It takes some time.

So, you know, one of the things that . . . as a lawyer, I have to do is I have to do what we call *CLEs*, continuing learning education. And this should be something that everyone has to do, because times are changing, systems are evolving, as we have identified. Processes are changing. And again, I will refer back to being in private industry and now being monitored and regulated by the Bermuda Monetary Authority. We are required every month to have an AML/ATF session, whether it is in person, whether it is through Thomson Reuters, whether it is through somebody coming into the office, whether it is through going to a conference. We must continue to upgrade our knowledge, our skills and our awareness of what is going on in the world around us.

And so, I do not see why government should be exempt from that requirement. If nothing else, they should be required to continually upgrade their skills. And there should be provision in every budget in every department for them to be able to do that.

My next comment is just in terms of—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Just a point of clarification. I just want to make sure I understand what the Member is saying.

The Acting Speaker: Hold it, hold it, Member.
Member, will you accept a point of clarification?

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Yes.

The Acting Speaker: You may proceed, Minister.

POINT OF CLARIFICATION

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Because the Honourable Member earlier said that she knows that there are small businesses that just cannot pay taxes. And she wanted to know why we got to \$100 million. We bill about \$100 million a month in accounts receivable for payroll tax, just in payroll tax. All right? So, it is easy to get to \$100 million, particularly when you said there are people who cannot pay it.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: I'm past that.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: The situation has lasted for years. You know it has lasted for years. You know it.

[Laughter]

The Acting Speaker: You may resume. You may resume, Member.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: I have moved past that point. Now I am talking about how we need to educate . . .

And the Minister over here explained it for me. He did explain it. I take your point. I know that it is easy to accumulate money. I guess I am just referring back to the point where you have people who are in roles, and they have been identified as having the ability to function in those roles. Then why do we have an outstanding amount?

And I know . . . I know that you can get . . . Look, I know that it is easy for it to get away from you if somebody is not staying on top of it. And I understand that there was only one person . . .

[Inaudible interjection]

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Okay. Okay.
Anyway—

The Acting Speaker: Yes. Let us move on there. We do not want to beat the proverbial dead horse here.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Yes. Thank you. Yes, yes. You are right. I think the horse . . . He is not going to get up and gallop away anytime soon.

The Acting Speaker: I think both of you have made your points.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to actually move on to the Office of the Registrar of Companies [ROC], which is one that is dear to my heart because I have to interact with the Registrar almost on a daily basis. And I guess I am concerned, particularly because if you look at Appendix F of the report, and it gives an overview of the Registrar of Companies and the fact that the Efficiency Committee met with the Registrar of Companies and what their discussions were.

And, "The present state"—if you will allow me to read it, Mr. Acting Speaker, "The present state of the IT systems and in particular the time and inefficient method of issuing the various documents from the ROC office [is concerning] . . . A very limited amount of automation of processes is taking place at this time. The ROC staff representatives said that a new IT system had been approved and a vendor had been selected. The installation time to full operational use was expected to be 18 months to 2 years."

Well, let me tell you why this is concerning to me, Mr. Acting Speaker. We have been mandated to file directors and officers registers, to be in the public domain for every Bermuda company, for every Bermuda entity. We now have economic substance and documents that have to be filed with the Registrar of Companies. We now have beneficial ownership registers that are going to have to be filed with the Registrar of Companies.

So, I have two concerns with the Registrar of Companies, actually. Traditionally, the Registrar of Companies has been a place where it has just been an issuer of information and documents and data. So, I can go to the Registrar of Companies. I pay a fee. And I can look at any file. I can get a copy of any document. I can call up and find out, you know, where the registered office is. I can call up and find out who the directors are. I can call up and find out whether anybody has filed their annual return, whether a company is in good standing.

We are now holding the Registrar of Companies accountable to be the repository of information that is going to be confidential. And so, my concerns are the training of the staff in terms of identifying how they respond to requests for information, their understanding of what information should be released and what should not be released. And the fact of the matter is that this should be . . . like the Office of the Tax Commissioner is sort of the heartbeat of government in terms of its revenue collection function, the Registrar of Companies is, I guess, one of the arteries of government. Because that is where businesses are established. That is where taxes are paid. That is where all kinds of entities are set up.

And so, we should have a computer system that is effective and efficient. And that should be a

priority of the Government. We cannot be required to meet the mandates of the OECD and the EU in terms of the compilation and the keeping of information if we do not have a decent system that assists us in managing those documents and managing the process.

Accounts receivable, Mr. Acting Speaker. As of the 31st of March, accounts receivable totalled \$8.9 million. I do not know if that amount has changed. That is a lot of money. And how is \$8.9 million in accounts receivable . . . I mean, I think the Registrar of Companies is almost a pay-as-you-go. You cannot get anything from the Registrar of Companies without paying for it. You cannot get a company incorporated without having your filing fees. If you do not pay your annual government fees, the company is struck off the register. So, I do not know . . .

[Inaudible interjection]

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Okay. Fair. Fair enough.

And then, these not sufficient cheques . . . I do not understand how . . . Well, first of all, what is the process in terms of, why do they not have policies and procedures to determine what happens when a cheque comes in?

In my office, when a cheque comes in, it is identified. The bookkeeper knows what has to be done. And it is in our policies and procedures. Why do they not have the same thing at the Registrar of Companies? And if they do have it, then why are the staff not adhering to it?

How much time do I have, Mr. Acting Speaker?

The Acting Speaker: You have 10 seconds.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Ten seconds?

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: (Oh man!) So, the report is, you know, I think . . . I commend the effort of the report, Mr. Acting Speaker.

[Timer beeps]

Ms. Leah K. Scott: But, oh man, I ran out of time. I cannot believe it! But I think that there are still some things that need to be addressed. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, Member.

The Chair now recognises Minister Zane De Silva, from the constituency 29.

Minister, you have the floor.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker. For a minute there, I thought you were going to give the Honourable Member my time.

The Acting Speaker: I must say it has been a very useful debate thus far. And I am sure persons listening to it have been well informed.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes, yes. I am sure they have.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to start off by first congratulating the Committee for producing this report. And as I stated a few minutes ago, you will know that I called for action up in the Tax Commissioner's Office for what must have amounted to a couple of years under the OBA Government when Bob Richards, in particular, was the Minister. And I had—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: No, it was not social insurance. It was to do primarily with stamp tax on property and the adjudication thereof.

So, I am glad that this Committee was formed. I am glad that they produced this report. Because I am sure that, subsequent to this report being tabled, we will see some efficiencies all throughout government.

Now, Mr. Acting Speaker, there are a few things mentioned by the other side that I think I have to address. And what really disappoints me is the fact that it is several Members on that side who seem to want to make a lot of hay out of \$122,000 that was spent on this report. And in particular, picking on—

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognises the Member from [constituency] 23.

Your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you.

The Honourable Member is misleading the House. We are not making hay out of the \$122,000 spent on the report. It was the failure to disclose at the outset that this money was being spent, and no transparency.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, Member.

You may resume, Minister.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Well, I tell you what, Mr. Acting Speaker. That Honourable Member, I think, spends a lot of time in this House. And over the last several weeks, there has been a lot of noise made about the Honourable Junior Minister Wayne Furbert, at the time being compensated. Do not stand up here and say that there has not been any hay made. They are talking about the disclosure, because I am going

to talk about disclosure in a minute. I am going to talk about some of their nondisclosures when they were in Government. So, I will get there. Just give me a little time. I will get there.

But what is interesting, Mr. Acting Speaker, is this. It is the noise! For \$5,000 a month! When that Honourable Member who just took her seat on a point of order to me, the Honourable Member Pat Gordon-Pamplin, paid a former Member of this House, the Honourable Member, my good friend, Louise Jackson, the same amount of \$5,000 a month for consultancy work. That is right. And she says *and* . . . Exactly right!

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Yes.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: There was no comparison. The person to whom the Honourable Member refers was not a sitting Member in this House and was not being paid out of the government purse as either a Member of Parliament or a Junior Minister. It was an outside consultant who was brought in. So, the Honourable Member cannot use that as a corollary to try to substantiate his arguments. Nonsense!

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I tell you what. I tell you what. I tell you what, Mr. Acting Speaker. See, that is where they try to . . . or that Honourable Member tries to trick the public who may be listening. And I will explain it. She very clearly said . . . she very clearly said—

POINT OF ORDER

[Imputing improper motives]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker. The Honourable Member is imputing improper motives. I do not try to trick anybody. I do not need to trick anybody.

An Hon. Member: Amen!

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I state the facts as I know them. I state the facts as they are presented. And I put that for the edification of the public. I am not like the Honourable Member to try to do that. And I do not even want to go there. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, Member.
Let us be mindful of our language, Members.
You may resume, Minister.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

And let me clarify that. The Honourable Member Pat Gordon-Pamplin is absolutely correct. Louise Jackson, the former Honourable Member of this House, the late Louise Jackson, who was a good friend of mine, Mr. Acting Speaker, I am sure you know. Right? She did not . . . she did not—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Acting Speaker, let me get on track. Okay? Louise Jackson, when she was paid that amount of \$5,000, did not . . . and I agree, did not have any Junior Minister responsibilities, did not have any MP's responsibilities. But guess what? Wayne Furbert did! That is the big difference!

[Laughter]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Because, as we all know—

[Inaudible interjections]

[Gavel]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: As we all know, as we all know, the Honourable Member Pat Gordon-Pamplin used to get a full-time paid salary from, I think it is Sullivan and Associates (was it?), where you worked, or wherever you worked full-time? But she was a part-time Minister. And she got her part-time pay. She did not have any problem taking her part-time pay.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: And getting paid while she was working in the private sector—not at all!

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order. Point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Just a second, Minister.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you.

The Acting Speaker: What is your point of order, Member?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The Honourable Member is imputing improper motive. The Honourable Member must appreciate the fact that the rules permitted for Members of this Honourable House—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: That is not improper motive, Mr. Acting Speaker! That is not improper motive!

[Crosstalk]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: —to be able to . . . well, he is misleading the public! He is misleading the public.

The Honourable Member has to understand that the rules of this House allow for each Member of this House to be able to maintain a primary job.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: She is taking my time!

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: To the extent . . . to the extent—

The Acting Speaker: Okay.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Because to the extent that I served in a Ministry in a part-time capacity—

[Crosstalk]

The Acting Speaker: Member, Member, please take your seat. Please take your seat.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I got a part-time pay.

The Acting Speaker: Please take your seat. Minister, you may continue.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I did not say anything different. I did not impute improper motive, Mr. Acting Speaker. I stated very clearly she was a part-time Minister. I stated it very clearly.

That is my point: When Wayne Furbert received that stipend, he was also still Junior Minister and also an MP. And if anybody in this House can stand up and say, *Well, I took a consultancy job and my responsibilities as an MP were less . . .* are you joking? How many of us get stuff everywhere we go every day as MPs? So, you are going to tell me that that stopped? You are going to tell me that Wayne Furbert stopped taking care of his 1,200 constituents? You are going to tell me that he stopped doing his Junior Ministry work?

Mr. Scott Pearman: He got paid extra.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: No, he got . . . no. The Honourable Member, Mr. Pearman, says he got paid extra. He got paid for extra work that he was doing!

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Why are they making all this noise over \$122,000? I did not hear all this—

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Point of clarification.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Not a clarification, no. Sorry.

The Acting Speaker: Okay.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Now, you people have taken enough of my time.

The Acting Speaker: Just speak to the Chair, Minister.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you. Thank you.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, it does make me wonder, right? I have not heard anyone from that side say, *You know, this is fantastic that \$10 million was collected for \$122,000!* Ten million dollars? Let us talk about that for a moment.

The Honourable Member Dunkley says, *Good way to spin it.*

It is factual, Mr. Acting Speaker. Ten million dollars? I tell you what. I am a businessman. I am not going to say where my accounts receivable is, but I tell you what. If somebody came in tomorrow and said that for \$122,000 they would collect all of mine, I would give it to them. In fact, I will give them \$250,000.

Because, let me tell you something, for those who may not know and do not live it, do not live what that kind of accounts receivable is, I tell you what. That is damn good value for money, Mr. Acting Speaker; really good money, really good value for money.

The Acting Speaker: Be mindful of the language there, please, please, Minister.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes, yes. My apologies, my apologies.

The Acting Speaker: Please, Minister. Thank you.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: My apologies.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: The lady said, *Not very Parliamentary.* She dropped the “F” word here not long ago.

Some Hon. Members: Ooh!

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Tell me about that. The same person that dropped the “F” word in this House.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: No, Member! Member! Member! No! We are not going to entertain that, please.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: No, I am not going to . . . Well, the Honourable Member—

The Acting Speaker: Member, have your seat, please.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The Honourable Member needs to withdraw that—

The Acting Speaker: Have your seat, please!

[Inaudible interjections]

The Acting Speaker: Minister, speak to the Chair, please.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Well, I will tell you what, when you have been around—

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: And your point of order, sir?

POINT OF ORDER
[Accusatory statement]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: My point of order is that he makes an accusation that needs to be withdrawn.

An Hon. Member: It's true.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: It's not true.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: It needs to be withdrawn, Mr. Acting Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Mr. Acting—

[Gavel]

The Acting Speaker: Members! The debate has been very, very good. Let's maintain a . . . let's maintain the level that we have been able to achieve over the last couple of hours.

[Crosstalk]

The Acting Speaker: Minister, you have the floor. Please, go ahead.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you, very much.
Mr. Acting Speaker, the other comment that was made by the Honourable MP Dunkley was that he

had a problem with the amount of money not being stated beforehand. This is the same former Premier—

An Hon. Member: Oh-oh!

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: —the same former Premier that ordered a commission of inquiry for \$480,000, and before we knew it we were back in and it was over a million, \$1.2 million.

This is the same Premier, okay? And let's talk about that for a moment. See, I do not hear any points of order on that. See? This is what happens.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Let me tell you what happens, Mr. Acting Speaker. Right?

When you form committees and commissions, you may say, *Well, listen, you know, this may cost about 'so much.'* But we have seen time and time and time again, in the history of this country, where you have a commission, or some kind of inquiry, or some kind of committee, that starts out with "X" amount of dollars, and it may finish at "Y." Over and over and over. It happened before you and I got here, Mr. Acting Speaker, and it will happen after we are gone, because it is the nature of the beast. It is the nature of the beast. This was . . . this was (and I will repeat) good value, great value for money. And I think, really, if we throw out the political gamesmanship in this House, everyone will admit that that was really good value for money.

An Hon. Member: Twelve million dollars is good money.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: For a hundred and twenty-two, it wasn't bad. It wasn't bad at all.

See, because, Mr. Acting Speaker, we have a CPA with 20 years' experience that makes \$350 to \$450 an hour. I think the Honourable Member Furbert even gave some hourly rates of what it worked out to be for him to do the job that he did at that rate. And I think it was something crazy like \$3.00 or \$5.00 an hour, for the work that he did. And if we know in this House as MPs, if we were to log every hour, every hour,—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: —every hour that we put into the work, that we do during a five-year term, I tell you what, because I have said it many times publicly before, MPs in this House should be making double than what they make. And Ministers should be making double or triple than what they make, if you are doing your job. And we are. For the most part, I think we do in this House. We do our job.

So, when it comes to all this noise over the amount of money that was paid to MP Furbert, in par-

ticular, I look at things like lawyers who make \$450 to \$600 and sometimes \$1,200 an hour. Wayne Furbert, I think has . . . and he can correct me if I am wrong. I think he has been a CPA for 15, 20 years. But we do not have any problem paying KPMG or one of those firms hundreds of thousands of dollars for maybe the same report.

An Hon. Member: Absolutely!

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: So not only did they collect \$10 million, but they probably saved another \$400,000 or \$500,000 in fees because we did it in-house. Come on! We should be saying, *Thank you, Wayne Furbert and committee.*

[Pause]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: And Mr. Acting Speaker, I think we have to make one other point too in that when the Deputy Finance Minister was clapping his hands and stomping the desk when the Honourable Member was on her feet, some might call it a “pugnacious pessimistic Pat.” I’m just saying. You see, Mr. Acting Speaker, because—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: You like that one? But it’s true!

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I will wear it as a badge of honour.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: But it’s true. When we should be commending this committee, you get Members on the other side who tend to want to make political gamesmanship out of it. I do not think that is fair. And it shouldn’t happen.

Now, the Honourable Member, the [Deputy] Opposition Leader, another one of good friends on that side, Leah Scott, spoke very passionately and I agree with her, because she never gets personal with any of the friends on this side.

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: So I will continue to give her respect.

The Acting Speaker: Speak to the Chair, Minister, please.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes. I will give people the respect that they deserve.

But, Mr. Acting Speaker, the Honourable [Deputy] Opposition Leader, Ms. Scott, talked in-depth about, you know, we have people who are working in the various departments, and I think there about 17 all

throughout government who collect money. And she talked about, well, if you have people in position, and they are there working, they should be able to collect. Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, I could tell you from where I sit in my other life, it makes no difference how many people you have, what their qualifications are, but if somebody does not pay their bill, you could have 20 people chasing your accounts receivable. If people are not paying, you have to take it to another level. And you can call and call and call all you like, unless you take legal action, or the threat of legal . . . and even sometimes that does not work either. Because some people are just in a difficult situation, so it does not always work that way. And we must be conscious of that.

So with regard to the work that this committee has done, I commend them. I look forward to . . . because I think it is important to know that one of the . . . I think, one of the most significant things that came out of this report is the fact that we are looking at a system where all of the 17 departments can communicate, because there are some tricky people in business.

I may come to you and buy some milk, Mr. Acting Speaker, and I charge it to Zane De Silva. But I may go down to MarketPlace and charge some groceries under Zane J. S. Junior De Silva. And then I may go to another government department and charge something under “Company X.” Go to another one, “Company Y.” So you see, I think if we can get all the government departments, when someone wants to charge something to government, then their name should come up.

And you know what? Sometimes . . . because I tell you what I do. I know we have some characters out there, Mr. Acting Speaker. And I will tell you what I do. If I know that John Smith is charging under John Smith today, and he is charging under John J. C. Smith tomorrow, and he charging under “XYZ Company” the next day, I put all three of them in there so when that name pops up, all three come up. So if we can get our system, our complete government system, to do something similar, I think that we will find our accounts receivable will be collected a little bit faster.

So, again, I would like to finish by saying, I congratulate them. And I will congratulate the Honourable MP Wayne Furbert, for not only collecting that money, but his committee, if you would have put it out to one of the other firms, KPMG and the like, I think if you would have put it out to them, I think that it would have cost us several hundred thousand dollars, maybe even half a million. I don’t know. Maybe the Honourable former Premier Mr. Dunkley, who I know is familiar with getting a price for \$480[,000] and then finished at \$1.2 [million]. I am sure he knows what it is like. And he should be congratulating Mr. Furbert instead of crying him down. And we all know, and I will say it one more time, that when you have these committees and these boards—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Now, don't you go that way.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Okay? Right? All these boards and committees, all of them, all of them, Mr. Acting Speaker, all of them cost money. And you can do estimates and then you are going to have finished products. Okay? And, we don't have any shredders when we do that work.

An Hon. Member: Ooh!

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

The Chair now recognises the Member from [constituency] 22, Mr. Scott Pearman.

Mr. Pearman, you have the floor.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The previous Member I think has changed the tone of the debate, which is slightly unfortunate because we were—

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Scott Pearman: —we were doing quite a good job, I thought, Mr. Acting Speaker, thus far.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Scott Pearman: I think the—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker. Point of order.

The Acting Speaker: Your point of order, Minister De Silva?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: The Honourable Member is certainly misleading the House. And I know he just came in about 15 or 20 minutes ago, maybe he missed it—

The Acting Speaker: How is he misleading the House? I'm sorry.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: He is misleading the House because he said that I was the one that changed the tone of the debate. But, obviously, if he had been here—

An Hon. Member: Sit down, sit down.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: —he would have seen the tone from the other side.

The Acting Speaker: Yes . . . ah . . . I'm sorry.

The Chair now recognises the Member again from [constituency] 22. You have the floor, sir.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

It actually has been a pleasure to be here all day.

An Hon. Member: Yes!

Mr. Scott Pearman: Ahem! Not that that was noticed by those absent.

[Laughter and desk thumping]

Mr. Scott Pearman: But, no, there are two—

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Scott Pearman: As you should, and as you can afford to do.

There was an important point here.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Scott Pearman: There is an important point here, Mr. Acting Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

[Gavel]

The Acting Speaker: Members! Members!

Mr. Scott Pearman: There is an important point here, Mr. Acting Speaker, and it must not be lost in the toing and froing, and the political barb throwing, and these unhelpful comments that seek to blame.

We have had a debate where we have recognised, mutually, on both sides of the aisle, the importance of government efficiency. And it is nice to see this House actually agreeing on something, for a change. So, I will graciously commend the Minister for his efforts in trying to find efficiencies in the government.

However—

An Hon. Member: Ooh!

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Scott Pearman: —I will also do what others in this Chamber should have done, which is to recognise why we are here.

We are here, Mr. Acting Speaker, because we have been elected and the trust of the people has been placed in us. So we must carry ourselves to a higher standard. We are being paid already to be here as Members of Parliament. Those who are fortunate to be Junior Ministers, or Ministers in Parliament of the Government, are also being paid for those roles.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Scott Pearman: To be paid extra to do the job you are already being paid to do—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. Scott Pearman: —is not proper.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Your point of order, sir?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I know the Honourable Member just arrived on the shores—

The Acting Speaker: Your point of order is what?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: —but there are Members—

The Acting Speaker: Minister, your point of order is?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: [He is] misleading the House. Sorry.

There have been Members and Junior Ministers who have been paid for different committees for years. This is not new.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, Minister.
MP Pearman, you have the floor.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

If that had happened in the past, it is the past. What I am speaking to now is what should happen going forward.

And, if I may, it is incumbent upon all of us imbued with the public trust, to declare these things. It is unfortunate that the \$70,000 extra that was paid to and received by the current Minister was not declared. It has since been declared, showing that it should have been in the first place. And we have heard no apology for that oversight. And perhaps the oversight was innocent, but we have heard no apology for that, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Point of order. Point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Your point of order, Minister?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: The Honourable Member is certainly misleading the House. And someone that is in the legal profession, I have to say, is doing it deliberately.

The Acting Speaker: Ah, what—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Because the Honourable Member just stated that—

An Hon. Member: Just apologise.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: First of all, he said that the Minister should apologise for not declaring what the fees would be before he started. As I said earlier, Mr. Acting Speaker, many committees do not lay out what the costs are out front because they do not know what they are.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, Minister. You may take your seat.

The Member from [constituency] 22, you have the floor.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

I was not criticising the failure to declare *before*. And if it was not clear, there is an obligation to declare during and after. Anyway, be it as it is—

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker. The Honourable Member is misleading this House.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we declared the amount that was paid to Members in a Ministerial Statement, probably a couple of weeks ago. We declared it.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Member from [constituency] 22, you may resume.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Mr. Acting Speaker, it is unfortunate that we are still on this element of the debate because I was going to move on.

The Acting Speaker: Well, I hope that you do.

Mr. Scott Pearman: But as it has been pointed out, I am holding here the answers to parliamentary ques-

tions. And that is how this House found out that that Minister—

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker.

That Honourable Member, I keep on saying it, I know he just arrived here, but is so wrong. We declared in a Ministerial Statement . . . it was the questions that was asked afterwards. That is the point. We declared that Members received \$2,000 each, and myself, as chairman, received \$5,000 per month. We declared it.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Okay. Hold on.
And your point of order, Madam?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The Honourable Member is inadvertently misleading the House.

The Acting Speaker: How?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The Honourable Minister gave a Ministerial Statement in which he said the cost of . . . he tabled the report of the commission, he said the cost relating to the work of the commission was \$130,000.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: He said \$130,000.

Based on his Ministerial Statement, I asked questions. Because we did not get a fulsome response, I then asked parliamentary questions and we got the information that indicated that it was \$122,500, I believe, \$122,000, and the Minister further phoned me at home to let me know that the information that we thought was appropriate was not appropriate. He called me to tell me that the amount that was stated in the House of him getting \$60,000 was not correct because he had just finished getting the response and found that he had 14 months at \$5,000.

The Acting Speaker: Okay. So—

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: He phoned me to tell me.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognises the Member from constituency 6.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Let me clear this up.

For some reason the Honourable Members on that side . . . and I understand the politics of it. Clearly. This is one person who understands the politics of it.

When I mentioned in the Ministerial Statement there was approximately \$130,000 for the report, I said “approximately.” I said Members received \$2,000 and myself \$5[,000]. It was the Honourable Member from [constituency] 10 who stood up and said that it was \$60,000 that I received—not me. Your Member from constituency 10.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Certainly, Member, you are going to have . . . excuse me. Sit down, sir.

Member, from constituency 6, certainly you will have an opportunity to respond to this at the end of the debate.

The Chair recognises the Member from [constituency] 22, again.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.
I am not sure—

The Acting Speaker: I am informed that he will not have an opportunity to speak at the end. I am sorry.

Mr. Scott Pearman: I am not sure how many points of order that was, but let me try and be balanced about this. One of the other people on this committee was Mr. Ed Ball. And he sat on the committee on behalf of the BPSU [Bermuda Public Service Union].

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Scott Pearman: And he was quoted—

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Scott Pearman: —in the daily, by saying this, quote, if I may? ¹“I did not receive one cent, nor would I accept it.” That is Mr. Ed Ball. And I commend him for that, for sitting on this committee and giving his time.

Then we have Dame Jennifer Smith.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Who?

Mr. Scott Pearman: Who sat on the SAGE [Spending and Government Efficiency] Commission.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Who?

¹ [Royal Gazette](#), 4 June 2019

Mr. Scott Pearman: And was not paid for the hundreds of hours . . . Dame Jennifer Smith.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Oh.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Yes; who was in the House earlier today when you were not here.

[Laughter]

Mr. Scott Pearman: Who sat here, who spent hundreds of hours on behalf of the SAGE Commission, giving her time, without pay, Mr. Acting Speaker.

And at the risk of making this personal, you yourself, as I understand it, Mr. Acting Speaker, have spent many hours chairing another committee and I presume that that is without pay, and if so, I commend you for it. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker. I just got to say something.

The Honourable Member is misleading this House saying that Members are not paid for committees. I did say that the Member has just arrived on these shores. But you are aware that committees from . . . when they were even in Government, were remunerated for sitting on committees. So I understand . . . I understand he just arrived and he does not understand how it works. But for years committee members who were Members of Parliament . . . and still do, still do. And it goes as far back when his father sat in this House.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you, Minister Furbert.

Member, from [constituency] 22, you may have the floor.

Mr. Scott Pearman: I will just respond to that and then I will sit down.

It has been said several times by the Honourable Minister that I have just arrived on these shores, and it was always done this way, and it always been done this way and it is my fault for being new and naïve. Well, I make no apology for being new and naïve. And it is time to clean this thing up.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Acting Speaker: Member, are you relinquishing the floor? Have you finished with your . . . okay. Members.

[Gavel]

The Acting Speaker: Members. The Member has finished his presentation. Are there any other Members who wish to speak to this motion?

The Chair now recognises the Member from constituency 14. Minister Caines, you have the floor.

An Hon. Member: Clean it up? What are you talking about?

The Acting Speaker: Minister, Minister. Minister Caines has the floor.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

[Gavel]

The Acting Speaker: Minister Caines, you may proceed.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Oftentimes we become members and parts of organisations—

[Crosstalk]

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Acting Speaker, sometimes we become parts of organisations and we forget how these organisations start, and the genesis of MPs. Let's just look and not forget, Mr. Acting Speaker, how the MPs' salaries were set. The oligarchs in this country, that ran every aspect of this country, their salaries were so low, they worked in part-time jobs because *they* ran the country. And on Fridays, as an old-boys club, they came to this House and they just protected their financial interests. There might be progeny in this very room that are the beneficiaries of such behaviour.

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: Ah!

[Gavel]

Hon. Wayne Caines: We have the opportunity to laud a man and a team that have worked hard, that have put in over a year's worth of service, that have come back to the people of this country with over \$12 million in savings.

The debate was at a very high level. It was taken into the mire for the same political purpose as always is done by the Opposition. They will laud that they are here to bring justice and to bring truth and to speak on behalf of the people. In these circumstances they are not living up to that mantra.

The aim of this exercise, without fear, without favour, was to look under the hood and to find efficiencies on benefit of the people in Bermuda. The

Chairman has come back and he has brought his offering of praise to the people of Bermuda that is valued at \$12 million. I think we owe a debt of gratitude to the people on this committee, and thank them for the work. And sometimes we forget that as people have one simple mandate, the Opposition has one mandate, to take all the good work that has been done, to take all the hard work that has been done, and make a mockery of it.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Hon. Wayne Caines: The main mockery-maker.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The Honourable Member is—

[Inaudible interjections]

[Hon. Dennis P. Lister, Jr., Speaker, in the Chair]

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I have a point of order.

The Speaker: You have a point of order. We will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The Honourable Member is intentionally and flagrantly misleading the House.

It is not the Opposition's only *raison d'être* to be here, to make a "mockery," and to dismantle those things that were done by Government. We have a responsibility to critique. We have a responsibility to inform the public. We have a responsibility to examine. That is what we are here for. And, Mr. Speaker, when appropriate, we have the responsibility to support the Government when they are doing good work.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, there was a Member, in your absence, that spoke from the floor and he said that it was his responsibility to clean up the House. That it—

Mr. Scott Pearman: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Clean up the mess.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Make your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Mr. Scott Pearman: It was a general invitation . . . the Honourable Member is misleading the House. He is misquoting what I had said previously.

I said "we"—not me, we—need to clean it up. I stand by that and I hope the Honourable Member agrees.

An Hon. Member: What are you insinuating?

Hon. Wayne Caines: The mess . . . he has to be careful, Mr. Speaker, with the terminology "mess." The inference is that . . . are there upon. We all . . . and if this is the spirit in which he speaks, I take that . . . if that is the intent. That if there is any opportunity for us to make the better opportunity for governance, to live above the parapet, and to make sure that this country runs efficiently, well, we all stand . . . that is what we are here for.

The very nature of this exercise, Mr. Speaker, speaks to the fact that a committee looked at deficiencies in the Government and put together a plan to make it better. They highlighted some inconsistencies, some things that they found that were uncomfortable for all of us. Instead of focusing on the benefit that this would bring to the people of Bermuda, for political gain . . . it is called "political twerking," Mr. Speaker, when you in the House use the opportunity—

An Hon. Member: Twerking by who?

Hon. Wayne Caines: —to take—

The Speaker: Member. Member. Member.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Speak to the Chair. Speak to the Chair.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Political.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Just speak to the Chair. Minister. Minister. Direct yourself this way.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, the reason why it is called "political twerking" is that there is an opportunity for us to do things differently. And this Government, by the very nature of this, is showing that there is an opportunity for us to find efficiencies.

I am not going to go into the qualifications of a CPA, of how many years he has spent. I will never, ever resolve from the fact that the man that headed this committee is a CPA, that he has given his life for service in this country, that without fear or favour, every day, like everyone else, he puts on his boots, laces

them up, and works in behalf of this country. He declared his interest. It is publicly so. And he was compensated in accordance with the law, in accordance with the market value, for the work that he did.

I am in the midst of a consultancy. And this consultancy has gone out to industry. And for this consultancy that we are doing, this Government, at fair value, is paying over \$700,000 to this consultant company. When we all see the report, what will we say? That they were qualified people. This report was fit for purpose.

Mr. Speaker, this report was fit for purpose. And do not be upset because a black man, a CPA, made some money in accordance with the law—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne Caines: —that there is a problem.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne Caines: Hey! That is ultimately—

The Speaker: Keep it this way. Members! Members!

Hon. Wayne Caines: Whenever . . . whenever . . . whenever a black man makes money in this country there has to be some problems.

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: There has got to be corruption.

Another Hon. Member: Oh, my Lord!

An Hon. Member: There has got to be something.

Another Hon. Member: Oh, my Lord!

Hon. Wayne Caines: Uncomfortable? Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Just keep it here.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Uncomfortable conversation it is.

I will go back to the essence of what I am saying, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes, let's get back on track now.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I am mindful of your guidance.

Mr. Speaker, we had the opportunity to look at an efficiency report. I believe as I listened to . . . as I looked into the report, this is an opportunity for us to look at what we can do better, the opportunity to bring government's systems together, to look at the financial systems, to look at the IT systems, to look at ways

that we can work the government better, looking at ways at how we can be more efficient in government.

There are some real pearls within the report and we should be thanking the report. We should then hold this report up to the bright light of public scrutiny and challenge each element of it. And I accept that which is legitimate. That which is not legitimate and that is playing the report, majoring in a minor for a political gain, we should dismiss it as the errant nonsense that it is. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

No other Member?

Member from constituency 8, you are a little slow moving that time.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: I was looking to see if anybody else was—

The Speaker: Well, my gavel was close.

The Honourable Member from constituency 8, you have the floor.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Mr. Speaker, we have been through this exercise a few times before. In preparation for this debate, I can reveal, as you remember, we had the Civil Service Review report of 1999 that was sanctioned by the then Premier Jennifer Smith.

And, again, her mandate was to realise efficiencies within government, and to make sure that the people of this country got value for money for expenditure and invested by the government and for the people of this country.

Out of that review, they had, basically, a . . . they did the . . . an Office of Procurement, they separated the Cabinet Office . . . sorry, the Cabinet secretary and had set up the head of Civil Service. They set up the Central Policy Unit. They reviewed the General Orders and came up with a number of recommendations.

In 2010, November, they had a change in Premier, Premier Paula Cox. [She] then embarked upon the same initiative, and her mandate was to find savings of \$150 million. I do not think she was able to realise those savings because of various issues within government and because it was not politically acceptable to do so. Because, at the end of the day, if you are going to realise efficiencies of \$150 million, that means losing jobs within government. There is no other way around it. And no one had the appetite for it, Mr. Speaker.

Moving forward, in 2013 we had the SAGE Commission. Similar mandate, Mr. Speaker. There were economic rough times in this country. We had just come out of the 2007 economic crisis, and most countries were in the state of recovery.

An Hon. Member: [It was] 2008, Cole.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: But, Mr. Speaker, in 2013 we were still building ourselves up economically and we were in line with other advancing countries.

So, they had the SAGE review in an effort to come forward with more efficiencies. They came up with a number of recommendations that were mentioned in the report. Let me get to their recommendations, Mr. Speaker, because a number of those recommendations are in the report that we have today.

Mr. Speaker, to summarise, they were looking at best practices. Again, they reinforced the requirement to separate the head of civil service versus the Cabinet Secretary. The head of civil service was to basically be in charge of the whole civil service team. And the Cabinet Secretary was to, basically, help the Premier run the country and provide technical advice and guidance to the Premier.

In addition, they came up with recommendations on requiring each Ministry to have a strategic plan, and each Ministry to have strategies to deliver on the strategic plan. And to date the question becomes, where do we stand on the strategic plan? In addition, they suggested that the Financial Instructions be reviewed and made current. Again, where do we stand on the ongoing review of the Financial Instructions?

They also suggested [that] maybe it is time to review the size of the Legislature. They also recommended that we consider reducing the size of the ministries to about eight ministries. When it came to the Legislature, they recommended that we go from 36 to 30. Again, to realise efficiencies. They had recommendations in regard our pension plans, and that is where we see what we have today. The Minister and the Premier recommended that we extend the age of retirement to 67, or even 70, because, at the end of the day, that will put less stress on our pension plans, which is basically not funded.

In addition, they recommended that we consider privatising and they listed some of the areas that were to be privatised: airport operations; civil aviation; highway and management; maritime administration; public lands and buildings; [and] waste and sewage management. Again, these were issues that were raised. And if you heard the Minister earlier, he touched on, privatisation, because in some areas there may be more efficient to have those services provided by the private sector. But the question becomes what protocols do we have in place to ensure that transferring to privatisation is in the best interests of the community from a social point of view and economic point of view?

So, again, a lot of things that were mentioned in this report were also highlighted in previous reports. Mr. Speaker, then they talked about the Bermuda Contributory Pension Fund, the Members' pensions fund, and it was recommended that we go from a defined benefit to a defined contribution plan, given that most of these plans are underfunded. Again, these

are recommendations that were presented, Mr. Speaker, to demonstrate how the efficiencies can be realised on a sustainable basis.

Mr. Speaker, they also spoke about the changes in the GEHI [Government Employee Health Insurance]. And they spoke about, How do you handle preretirement leave? Do you get a lump sum, or would we move away from the lump sum? We worked with the unions on the collective bargaining agreements and come up with some sustainable solutions on how we can move forward.

Mr. Speaker, those are macro issues. As I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, I sat during the debate and when the Minister presented his paper . . . and I have to admit that he made some interesting comments. But I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we were in the weeds. I think the issues that were raised; i.e., the cheques, the stamp duty cheques, the Office of Social Insurance (the savings there). Mr. Speaker, if we had each Ministry, each department, having a strategic plan, and if they had a review of the Financial Instructions, and if we had up-to-date procedures, and the procedures were managed and monitored, then a lot of these issues that we find ourselves in, and the deficiencies that are reflected in this report, would have been identified years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say this, if we had procedures in place, in regard to financial risk, reputational risk of the department, and in just general procedures and ensuring that the Financial Instructions are adhered to, then we would not be where we are today. Mr. Speaker, I question what is happening with the internal audit of those departments, because I know that if I were a chairman of this commission, I would have first gone to the procedures manual. I would have looked at the Strategic Plan. I would have looked at the Financial Instructions. And I would say, Are they being followed? What have the auditors done?

Each department has the internal audit, where is that report? Did the report show any deficiencies? Did the report provide recommendations on how these deficiencies can be addressed?

So, yes, I acknowledge what the Minister said, that he realised potential savings of \$12 million. But to me, that represents a symptom of the problem, Mr. Speaker. That was a symptom of a failed procedure, Mr. Speaker. And I am of the opinion that those issues, those risks, could have been identified if proper audits were held and the heads of the departments were held accountable for clearing any recommendations and any deficiencies that may have been identified within the internal audit review, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in business, part of leadership is going through the internal audit and addressing any infractions that were in place because people did not follow procedures. People put the business at risk. People put the company's reputation at risk. People incurred and allowed financial risk to prevail.

Again, the same thing here—because the procedures were not adhered to. As someone said to me earlier today, what were the procedures in each of these ministries that were identified for receiving, cashing, [and] recording cheques? When a cheque comes in, what do you do? Do you record it against an invoice? Once it is recorded, do you go and deposit it in the bank? And if it is not deposit-able, do you log the cheque and have it in a safe for a period of time, and in the case of the Tax Commissioner's office, and even Social Insurance offices, some of these cheques were held in deposit because stamp duty was being adjudicated.

So the lawyers, individuals, would say, *Well, listen, there I have a piece of property, I have an estate, and I will give you an estimate and I am going to . . . and also I am selling a property and I have a contract and I might want to sell it on to someone else.* So I come up with an estimated stamp duty based on the estimated value of the property. Now, you get to the office of government, the Tax Commissioner, who looks at the sales agreement, and says, *Well, that value of their property may not be quite right. And so I don't know if I can agree with the stamp duty that is being charged.*

And so they go and do their own assessment, they do their own adjudication, and, again, the cheque is held in the drawer. So what procedures do we have in place to manage and control the cheques that come in and hold the cheques until the adjudication process is completed?

This can also apply for estates. When someone dies, you have to probate their estate and the Supreme Court may say, *Listen, this doesn't look right. The value of the estate doesn't look right. And so we are going to, basically, do our own adjudication and see what we think the stamp duty ought to be.*

Again, it takes time because sometimes we cannot agree. And as a consequence, you have delays. So what I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that for all these processes there are procedures that should have been in place, that should have been tight enough to ensure that these issues did not fall through the cracks. And someone should have been held accountable, accountable to ensure that the procedures and policies were adhered to and that they were also tested every now and then.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the report has its merit and that, yes, the country can benefit. But I do also believe, as I said when I began my comments that we are in the weeds. And more should have been done at the 30-foot level to ensure that the infrastructure is in place to support the strategic plan, the strategic objectives of each department and to ensure that the procedures are all in place that will manage these risks and also comply with the Financial Instructions.

Mr. Speaker, again, having revealed these weaknesses, the Financial Instructions could have also been reviewed to ensure that they are fit for pur-

pose at this point in time during our country's evolution. Again, the Financial Instructions, like procedures, should be reviewed on a regular basis—

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: —for efficiencies and effectiveness.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is where the leadership comes, that is where, I believe, the responsibility should lie with the Head of the Civil Service to ensure that the directors and the PSs basically ensure that the risks within their ministries are well managed and that the procedures are there to ensure efficiency and that best practices are adhered to.

As was said earlier by my honourable cousin, Mr. Burgess, we have to hold people accountable for poor performance, recognise good performance, and find tools to also support those underachievers who are not, maybe intentionally, doing their jobs the best that they can. And if they are wilfully not doing their jobs effectively, then corrective action needs to be taken, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I said, I applaud the work that is being done. There are recommendations in the report that were drawn from the SAGE Commission. And a lot of SAGE Commission issues still remain outstanding today. And that is another report that was produced . . . and, again, going back to the 1999 report that was sanctioned by Dame Jennifer Smith and followed through by the [former] Honourable Premier Paula Cox. A lot of those issues that were raised in those reports were not adhered to.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think if we are truly serious about these issues we need to study all three reports and address all the weaknesses in those reports to ensure that we are in a better place financially. And, yes, we also need to ensure that when we are talking about efficiencies, we have to bring the whole community on board and be honest. Because at the end of the day, some of these efficiencies, if you want to realise millions of dollars, hundreds of millions of dollars, it is going to involve the pruning of our civil service, which means a reduction in the size of the civil service.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: So, Mr. Speaker, those are my comments—

The Speaker: Members! Members!

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Those are my comments, Mr. Speaker. As I said, I think it is a step in the [right] direction, but a lot more needs to be done if we are serious about getting to the root of the problem and ensuring that these efficiencies are sustainable for the long run.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for allowing me this time to make my contribution.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

No other Member?

No other Member, well, that brings us to a close of that matter, which actually brings us to a close of the Orders of the Day.

[The House considered the Consolidated Overall Report of the Efficiency Committee, dated April 2019]

The Speaker: So, we will go on to the third reading for the Health . . . is the Minister available? Is someone going to do her third reading?

[Crosstalk]

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 21

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, I move that Standing Order 21 be suspended to enable me to move the Bill entitled Medical Practitioners Amendment Act 2019. I ask now that it be read for a third time by its title only.

The Speaker: Are there any objections to that?

No objections.
Minister.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 21 suspended.]

BILL

THIRD READING

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS AMENDMENT ACT 2019

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill now be read a third time by its title only and passed.

The Speaker: It has been moved for the third reading, and no objections, so it has now passed.

[Motion carried: The Medical Practitioners Amendment Act 2019 was read a third time and passed.]

The Speaker: That brings us to a close of the day.
Deputy Premier.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Mr. Speaker, I do move that we adjourn until next week, July the 12th, at 10:00 am.

The Speaker: At 10:00 am.

Does any Member wish to . . . ?

The Member is on his feet. Member Brown.

INDEPENDENCE FOR BERMUDA

Mr. Walton Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak on a topic that is oftentimes an emotional topic in Bermuda, but one that remains important.

The Speaker: Members! Members!

Mr. Walton Brown: It is important for all of us to discuss, Mr. Speaker, and that is the question of independence for Bermuda.

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Mr. Walton Brown: We have had a series of developments take place over the last couple of years that speak to the urgency of discussions of this issue. And for that I would like to raise the issue for us to contemplate.

Let me just provide, by way of background, Mr. Speaker, a bit of historical context. The first and only Green Paper on independence came about in 1977 under the leadership of Jack Sharpe. There was planned to be a discussion paper on the issues relating to independence and it led to an Island-wide series of discussions for two years.

In 1979, we had the first White Paper on independence under the leadership of Sir David Gibbons. And what was interesting is that this White Paper concluded that the population of Bermuda did not want independence at that time. It was concluded by both the PLP and the UBP that the population was not ready for independence. And this was expressed as a bit of a surprise in the White Paper, because they felt that Bermuda was more than ready for independence in 1979.

The Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Walton Brown: It is interesting to note that a UBP document articulated and made the case for independence as early as 1979.

Fast forward to 1982, we had [Sir] John Swan as Premier. As he contemplated running for Premiership, he was asked his position on independence and he stated, and I quote: "With the [Americans] to feed us and the British to defend us, who needs independence." That was a comment made by [Sir] John Swan at the time. In other words, articulating the official po-

sition of the UBP that there was no need to pursue independence.

But that public position was belied by John Swan's private actions. As early as 1983, Mr. Speaker, [Sir] John Swan was at the Kittitian Independence celebrations in St. Kitts. And when the British flag went down and the Kittitian flag went up [Sir] John Swan was standing next to a colleague of mine, Dr. Ken Jordan, who at the time was the UN Decolonization Committee political affairs officer. [Sir] John Swan said to Ken Jordan when the British flag went down and the Kittitian flag went up, *We'll be next*. In other words, Bermuda would be next in line for independence.

Some five years later, Mr. Speaker, I was at a conference in Amsterdam, and on the panel . . . it was chaired by a guy named Colin Clarke who was an Oxford University professor.

He said to me, *Oh, you are from Bermuda. I just had lunch with your Premier.*

I said, *Really? What did you guys talk about?*

He said, *He made an emphatic case for independence.*

So this was 1988, [Sir] John Swan was at Oxford University making the case for independence. He was not doing so in Bermuda, but was doing so in the international arena.

An Hon. Member: Mm-hmm.

Mr. Walton Brown: So, it was clearly an action of his intent to pursue independence at any cost.

And then we get to the 1990s, Mr. Speaker, when we had the infamous referendum of 1995. And the egregious decision, an egregious error of a decision made by my party to boycott that referendum will live on in infamy, in my opinion. But the 1995 referendum was a flawed document because it contained within it a minority veto. It had an approach which said that a minimum of 40 per cent plus one [of the] people had to vote yes in order for the independence result to be validated, which effectively meant that there was a minority veto. You could have had a 75 per cent turnout and the majority of people vote for independence but it still would fail. But that was the strategy of the 1995 referendum, Mr. Speaker.

That referendum, the PLP called for a boycott, which I recognise as an egregious mistake on the part of the PLP. The rationale of calling for a boycott over it was that they believed that to give [Sir] John Swan authority to pursue independence without details on the Constitution and the shape it would take would be a problem, and, therefore, they called for a boycott.

But their referendum was doomed from the very start. Once you had the Members of Parliament arguing the way they did argue along those lines, yet a majority of the MPs supported independence in Parliament in 1995. You had a majority of the PLP Members and a subset of UBP Members who supported

independence. But the call for a boycott had a lot of success, and during the actual result of the referendum, 43 per cent of voters did not come out to vote. So the boycott was a success and 75 per cent of those who voted, voted no to independence; 25 per cent voted yes. So it was a stirring defeat for those of us who supported independence.

I remember being at the rally on the last night before the independence vote and there was a massive rally on the Number One Shed. And I remember talking to my colleague, Wayne Furbert (he was not my colleague then, he was just a friend then). He was in the UBP back in those days.

Wayne said to me, *I think we've got it, Walter. I think we've got it. I think we've got the votes.*

I said, *Wayne, everyone who was going to vote yes to referendum tomorrow is in that hall tonight. And that is the extent of the people who are going to vote yes.*

It was a clear result that we were going to lose that vote. And we did. It was a very clear position to be taken.

But, Mr. Speaker, that result gave those who were against independence the ability to say to the public that the Bermuda public does not want independence. That is not true, Mr. Speaker. That is not true. It is a case that that result came out the way it did because of the call for a boycott. I argue that there is still a significant sentiment of support for independence, Mr. Speaker.

After the 1995 boycott, which, I should add, was delayed by two days because of the hurricane . . . the hurricane came and struck and it led Freddy Wade to say, *Even God doesn't want the referendum to take place.*

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: What was it that you just said? Repeat that.

Mr. Walton Brown: Well, the referendum was halted by a day or two because of a hurricane that struck Bermuda on the day of the referendum that was intended. And that led Freddy Wade to claim, *Even God didn't want the referendum to take place.*

[Laughter]

The Speaker: He concluded that.

[Laughter]

Mr. Walton Brown: That was his mantra for the boycott of the referendum.

But shortly after the referendum was defeated, then emerged the infamous White Paper on the Overseas Territories, the so-called Partnership [for] Progress [and Prosperity]. The 1999 document—

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. Walton Brown: —which talked about a way forward for the Overseas Territories, but really was an attempt to devolve power back to the United Kingdom.

And since 1999, we have seen a gradual process whereby the United Kingdom Government has been devolving power back to the central government in London. We have seen it on every instance. We have seen it with our social policies. We see it with our fiscal policies. The UK Government has eroded back our power. That needs to be resisted.

We then have the 2005 Independence Commission report, which is a very detailed document, outlining a variety of issues involving independence, which was a well-researched document. It only had one flaw in it. And the flaw was that it claimed that no country had pursued independence by way of a referendum. That was a critical flaw in the document, but otherwise it was a very fine document.

But since 1999, we have had the UK Government devolving power back to itself. And we have had a series of challenges in that regard. We now face pressure on us fiscally, financially, and in terms of our social policy. We have the UK Government putting pressure on us to do things in our social policy that we have resisted. We have had pressure in terms of financial disclosure that we are resisting, and we need to continue to resist.

We have to fight this onslaught of the UK Government as much as we can, Mr. Speaker. It is untoward; it is inappropriate; and is highly offensive. And we need to all come together to address this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I call for us to renew our discussion on the issue of independence. We need to have a dialogue. I know there is a lot of fear out there just to raise the topic itself. But we should have no fear of such an important issue. We should take the bull by the horns and address the issue forthright.

So, that, Mr. Speaker, is my submission today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 9. Honourable Member Moniz, you have the floor.

SANDYS 360 PATI REQUEST—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am not standing to take the bait proffered by the Honourable Member, Walton Brown. But I am sure we will come to that in due course.

What I stand on my feet to address this evening, Mr. Speaker, is my very serious concern with the Ministerial Statement given this morning by the Minister of Public Works, the Honourable David Burch. It seems to be a practice that he has of using Ministerial Statements to make scurrilous attacks on people. These Ministerial Statements, I would have thought, were meant to be factual statements. But they have really sunk pretty low.

A few weeks ago, he made one concerning the railway right-of-way down by Gibbet Island, and in that Statement was making all sorts of scurrilous attacks on the wrong people. He got it totally mixed up and backwards, and probably needs to come back and apologise to the House on that one. But that was a scurrilous attack.

And this today is another scurrilous attack. And today he is attacking a public officer. He is getting his law entirely mixed up. Of course, the Information Commissioner is a very important office, and it is a protected office by law in this country. And he is suggesting in there, *Well, Parliament is supreme. And we can ignore any other public office, so we can just ignore them.*

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Yes, he said Parliament was supreme. Yes, that is exactly what he said, which implies that it stands above these other people.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: We will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: The Honourable Member is misleading the House and taking the Member out of context. When he said Parliament is supreme, he is talking about parliamentary privilege, which we are able to raise any issue we deem necessary in Parliament without fear of reprisal.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: No. With due respect, Mr. Speaker, he was not addressing parliamentary privilege at all.

An Hon. Member: Nice try.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Nothing to do with parliamentary privilege.

Let us get to the body of it. We were talking about a PATI request to see a report that KPMG did on Sandys 360. That is what we were talking about.

Now, I do not know if it is a mistake in here. We talked about a 2016 financial report. Now, I am aware of, I believe there was one done in 2013. Now, whether there was a request at a later date to see that report . . . He also says in the report, in his Statement this morning, that the OBA had refused a request. Now, that request may have been in 2016. But the original report that I am aware of was in 2013, unless it was another report. And that was a KPMG report.

And if it is a report that I commissioned, I see no reason why it cannot be released. But the fact is that the law is clear on that. If the Information Commissioner rules that a document be released, it must be released. An order of the Information Commissioner or ruling of the Information Commissioner has the same weight as an order of the Supreme Court—the same weight. And Government is bound by that order.

In fact, you will recall that the Minister has nothing to do with those requests. Those requests come to the Information Officer in a Ministry. And if there is a concern about it, if it is raised at any level, it is raised at the Permanent Secretary level. So, it would be entirely wrong of the Minister to become involved. It is certainly very wrong of him to come to the House today and to attack the public office of the Information Commissioner. And it is entirely, it is a scurrilous attack.

And the idea that a Minister is coming to this place in a Ministerial Statement and saying publicly that he is instructing civil servants to break the law is disgraceful! It is disgraceful. And certainly, certainly seems to break a new record, a new low for this House, for a Minister to come here and say, *I'm instructing my civil servants to break the law*. It would seem a very strange thing.

And what is he afraid of? What is he hiding? I mean, I am familiar with the content of that report. And it is certainly embarrassing for the people who set up Sandys 360. But, you know, at this moment in time you might as well just take you—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

[Crosstalk]

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: —and obey the law.

The Speaker: We will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Accusatory statement]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I think the Honourable Member needs to withdraw that statement. He is saying, *What is the Minister hiding?* He is not here to defend himself. And I think that should be withdrawn.

The Speaker: Thank you.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as we are all aware that the former Attorney General is capable of understanding our Standing Orders, first of all, this speech of the Minister was read with the concurrence of yourself.

The Speaker: Continue.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: There is nothing in it that . . . there is nothing in it, as Mr. Moniz will know, that indicates that Minister Burch was inviting civil servants to break the law.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Yes!

Hon. Michael J. Scott: It is completely impugning the motives of the Minister. And he makes it clear in his Statement, Mr. Speaker, that it was exempt.

Now, we are aware, Mr. Speaker, as we all are, that PATI requests have exemptions. And the exemption categories are very clear. And that is the context in which the Minister of Public Works spoke.

But do not misconstrue the Statement.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Mr. Speaker, I think he is . . . I think the Member is making his speech there.

But the fact is that when the Information Commissioner has issued her ruling, it is a ruling. It is a ruling, and it must be obeyed. It is exactly the same as an order of the Supreme Court. It is as if the Chief Justice were issuing an order to the Government. They have to obey that order. It is not a matter of choice. And he is saying here that, *We will not release that*. The responsibility lies on the Information Officer within the Ministry of Public Works. If any other person is supposed to deal with it, they are supposed to be the PS, certainly not a political person such as the Minister, [who] should not be involved.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: We will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: The Honourable Member is misleading the House.

If the Information Commissioner rules that something should be released, and it is privileged information, it does not have to be released because it is considered privileged information. So, just because the Information Commissioner rules that something

should be released does not mean that it has to be released.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Point of order, Mr. Speaker, on that point of order, Mr. Speaker. That is entirely incorrect! That is entirely incorrect! The Information Commissioner issues a ruling; it is a ruling under the Act.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Mr. Speaker, we all know the saying, *You can run, but you cannot hide*. It is going to come out eventually. He might as well let it go.

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: He is not hiding anything!

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: He is explicitly saying he is hiding it! He is explicitly hiding it. That is what he is doing.

The Speaker: Members, Members! Members, Members.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Members, Members!

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Members, Members! Members.

To the Member who is speaking, my comments are going to be, keep it factual. And to say that the Member is hiding is your interpretation. It is your opinion. It is not a fact.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Well, he is specifically saying that he is not going to show it.

The Speaker: He did not say he was hiding it.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Well, to me, that is hiding it.

The Speaker: Not showing and hiding are two different . . . entirely two different interpretations.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: My opinion is he is hiding it. So, that is what I understand.

The Speaker: Well, I have asked you not to use your opinion.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: I am obliged.

The Speaker: Not use your opinion in that regard.

[Pause]

The Speaker: You can continue on.

[Crosstalk]

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: No, I think that what I have said is exceedingly clear, Mr. Speaker. I think the public will be aware. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: And just before I acknowledge the next person, there is a process for Statements that come to this House. And that process is that they are viewed by the Speaker. And there have been on many occasions Statements that have been turned back, sent back to Ministers to reword and make their Statements more appropriate to follow the guidelines.

And this was passed by the Speaker's desk, and it appeared as it was printed.

Who would like to speak next?

Mr. Commissiong. We recognise Mr. Commissiong.

INDEPENDENCE FOR BERMUDA

Mr. Rolfe Commissiong: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is very difficult here to follow my colleague, Walton Brown. I thought he gave an excellent historical overview around the issue of independence and the evolution of political and broader opinion with respect to the independence of Bermuda.

It leads me to, I think, have a perfect segue in one respect to what I wanted to talk about, which was provided by the recent celebration of the work of the Progressive Group that we saw over the last few days. The *Royal Gazette* had a great picture here that featured the Speaker, and the tribute that they gave to members of the Progressive Group, and it included one member in that photo and, actually, a couple of members in that photo of the Progressive Group.

But what was really, from my standpoint, from a personal basis, was to have the first-hand account from my mother, who was a member of the Progressive Group, and is still a member, I would assume, I would guess. It was so poignant. As revealed here, many of the children of the members of that group, such as myself, were young adults when we started to hear more or learn, in some cases, much at all about what our parents had done in that period of 1958 and 1959. I am just still finding out details even up until the last four or five years, a significant one from my father, which I will not go into here.

But, you know, getting back to MP Brown, my grandmother was at that independence celebration in St. Kitts. A group of friends of hers, persons who shared in part, St. Kittitian and Nevisian ancestry, had names like Henry, and others, left Bermuda as a group and ventured down to St. Kitts and were there for the independence celebrations. I was not aware that Sir John Swan, as the Honourable Member pointed out, was there as well.

I always felt that Bermuda's arrival on the international stage as an independent nation should have been in that historical cycle with some of the smaller islands in the late 1970s and 1980s, such as epitomised by what took place in St. Kitts. Certainly, that did not occur. We missed that opportunity. But like the Member, I am of the view that the issue is not dead and, in many ways, may be even more relevant now for due consideration than it has been in over one or two decades. Certainly, you have heard me speak on this floor, Mr. Speaker, about the geopolitical sands which are shifting, which are terribly impacting upon Bermuda.

And so, it may indeed be time for that topic to come back upon the national stage for a new generation to join us old folks in examining that issue. Certainly, I believe that Bermuda must take its place as an independent nation.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to share with the listeners there, and the Members here, some of the comments that were made by my mother and particularly by Mr. Looby. They were joined by Reverend Erskine Simmons, a fellow member of the Progressive Group, and were featured in the ²*Royal Gazette*. I thought one of the more poignant comments by my mother was as follows: She says—and I quote, with your permission, Mr. Speaker: "I went to school in the American South and I used to brag about Bermuda being so open minded in comparison." She was talking about the early-to-mid-1950s during that period. She went to school in Norfolk, Virginia.

And I hear Mr. Simons, who is a long-time family friend. His father was there, as well, with my mother.

My mother went on to become a schoolteacher at the old Elliott School. There she befriended and got to know Dame Lois Browne-Evans, as we know her now. (I called her Aunt Lois.) But anyway, just going on, she says, "I went to school in the American South and I used to brag about Bermuda being so open minded in comparison. But I didn't really know, because I was so young.' . . . Ms. Commissiong said, 'I came back to Bermuda, and black people had to sit downstairs.' She admitted" (that at the time of the Theatre Boycott,) she had felt 'sort of scared' as she put up posters with her husband to publicise the protest.

"Ms. Commissiong said: 'They would rip them down and we would put them back up. I saw something in the newspaper saying they would take you to court if they found you putting them up.'

"She added her family [even] had to get special permission [back then] for her son, Rolfe Commissioner, now a Progressive Labour Party MP, to attend the traditionally white Mount St. Agnes private school in Hamilton."

Many people heard my mother and called her over the last few days, because she had never spoken publicly about these issues. I am very proud of her.

Here is another one from Mr. Looby, which I think is instructive, because, you know, we always hear about how benign the racial situation in Bermuda was. There has always been that sort of sub-narrative, that very destructive, even racist narrative that we should be thankful that we were not living somewhere else during that time.

"Mr. Looby said he heard James Pearman, the head of the Bermuda General Theatre Company, dismiss the protests outside his businesses. He added: 'He said "all those black hooligans will soon be back." That was right before the final phase" of the boycott.

I had never heard that being attributed to James Pearman, who also sat in these Chambers.

You know that the noted author, historian, Ira Philip, had always talked about the other quote that is associated with him. I think it is "the storm in the teapot." But I had never heard this comment, which would not surprise me. I am pretty sure, behind the scenes, in light of the attitudes that existed there, particularly within so-called Western Civilization, infused as it was with notions of white supremacy for decades, that the sort of comments that would have been heard behind the scenes, when they were all in their own company, they were probably far worse than this term "black hooligans."

But that is the Bermuda that my mother grew up in, the Bermuda that was bequeathed to us. And, Mr. Speaker, just as a corollary to that, I had the opportunity, because while we are talking about the 60th anniversary of the Theatre Boycott and the work of the Progressive Group and activist leaders in the community, such as Kingsley Tweed, and it mentioned here our Comrade Lynch. And of course, it was Coe Sharpe, and there was Prez Ebbin, and there was Robert Smith. These were the men on the ground who made that protest so successful. We should never forget them.

But we also must not . . . I want to just share with your listeners a an excerpt from a book that celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Bermuda Constitution, which is also something that occurred within the last two years. And with respect to that Constitution, you have Professor Barker here, who made a major contribution. She is a British academic. And she said that, for example, "I will argue that the Constitution that has been adopted by Bermuda played a significant role in maintaining racial inequality in Bermuda following the civil rights era. While it ostensibly sought to end racial discrimination through its requirement that no laws shall make any provision which is discriminatory, either of itself or in effect on the basis of race, place or origin, political opinions, colour or creed, it did not require any measure to be taken to

² [Royal Gazette](#), 2 July 2019

overcome existing racial inequalities. Furthermore, it entrenched a significant inequality of voting rights through the perpetuation of unequal electoral constituencies that particularly devalued the voting power of black and working-class Bermudians,” as she said she will outline later in the chapter.

And you have got to understand that even the Constitution that was adopted was a by-product of the Members of that House of Assembly, this House, post 1963's election. That still had Members who were largely voted in based upon, in part, the property vote. And these would have been the men, primarily—I think they were all men—who would have made the decision, vis-à-vis, the Constitutional Conference, if I can call it that, that fashioned Bermuda's new constitutional construct and political framework that had its real beginnings in 1968.

And so, even in 1963, most of those men who made this Constitution, who had a hand in this political framework that we now still live under, were largely white and male. The House was overwhelmingly, over two-thirds white and male, with black representatives, but a small minority.

So, in many respects, Mr. Speaker, we still live in a House, I can say, that persons like Sir Henry Tucker built. And with that, a House that encoded white privilege, both at the political and other levels of Bermudian society, all through the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. And so, we have a unique historical opportunity now to move into a new House, to build a new House, to build a House that all of us can feel comfortable in, to create a new identity, a truly national identity. And that can only come through independence. To create real citizenship, not this faux citizenship that we all clamour for, particularly those who arrived on our shores only yesterday, something we call “status.” But a real citizenship, one that can allow us to hold our heads up high and take our place in the world around us.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER'S CLARIFICATION MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS VETTED BY THE SPEAKER

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Before we go too far down the road, I just want to clarify something.

Take your seat just for a minute.

I made a point just now in reference to the fact that Statements do get vetted by the Speaker before they come here. For that reason, I am going to make this comment.

Member, when you were on your feet, you made reference to the fact that you challenged the Minister for denying the information being released. Am I correct?

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: Well, it is a little bit more complicated.

The Speaker: But I am saying, basically, you challenged the fact that the Minister, in his Statement, was saying that the Government was not . . . he is encouraging information not to be released to the officer.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: What I exactly said was that if the Information Commissioner has issued a ruling, then it holds the force, the same force, as the order of the Supreme Court.

The Speaker: Well, basically, you challenged the fact that—

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: And he is saying he is not going to release it.

The Speaker: Basically, my interpretation was that you challenged the fact that the Minister was not releasing a report. You do realise that that is at the end of his Statement. You do realise his Statement began by indicating that the former Government also refused the same PATI request from the Information Commissioner. So, it was to . . .

Have your seat.

So, when I vetted it, it was an equal playing field for me when I vetted this. Both Governments have refused the Information Commissioner.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: No, but—

The Speaker: Not to start a debate. I am just making my point.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: No, no. But I just thought I would explain, there is something misleading there.

There may have been a *request* under the previous Government. But the Information Commissioner never issued a *ruling*.

So, initially what happens is an individual makes a request. If that request is declined, then the person has the right to appeal it for ruling through the Commissioner. Once the Commissioner has made a ruling, then it is binding like a Supreme Court order would be.

The Speaker: But the point that I was making was that both Governments saw fit not to release it—both Governments.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: But it is different, substantially different. It is not clear in the Statement. It is not clear on the Statement.

The Speaker: Ah, ah! Ah, ah! Both Governments, both Governments saw fit not to release it. That is the

point why I allowed it to go as it was. I am just clarifying that.

Hon. Trevor G. Moniz: But my point is that he is refusing the order or ruling of the Information Commissioner.

The Speaker: Ah! Ah! Mr. Moniz! Mr. Moniz! Take your seat. Take your seat.

I am clarifying the point why I was brought into the discussion, when the indication, reference was made that the Statements are vetted by the Speaker, which is correct. I saw a balance there that both Governments had taken a similar position. That is why it was allowed to go as it was printed. Okay?

Thank you.

I would advise you to watch your comments afterwards.

Continue, Minister.

Thank you.

[Inaudible interjections]

EXPLOITATION OF EMPLOYEES

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: I rise today on behalf of several of our Bermudians who have had occasion to come to my office, some quite young, and some in their early 60s. And it is out of a concern that they feel as though that, though they are able-bodied people who have the ability to work, they are being asked to work for what they consider as, I guess, if you will, in their words, “a modern-day form of slavery.”

Mr. Speaker, let me say this. In an independent Bermuda, I would hope that none of our Bermudians are subject to employment offers of \$5.50 an hour, \$6.50 an hour, \$8.00 an hour and \$10.00 an hour. Mr. Speaker, contracts were shown to me where persons were being offered these nominal values.

Mr. Speaker, there was evidence of people taking home in a 40-hour workweek less than \$200 an hour *[sic]*—

An Hon. Member: A week.

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: A week. Mr. Speaker, it seems to me, indeed, that it is unconscionable in so-called *modern-day Bermuda* that people are still being asked to work for that amount of money.

When you are going to ask a 62-year-old woman to accept \$6.50 an hour to try and maintain a household, buy groceries, et cetera, et cetera, it is no wonder that we have people who just throw their hands up in despair. In fact, that type of practice encourages people to just say, *Forget it all! I will be a Financial Assistance candidate*. Because under that programme, they are having their rent paid—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: That is right. They are having food being put in their bellies. They are having their utilities paid for and the like. Yet, these able-bodied persons, who do not want to be in a situation like that, are finding that they are being subjected to that.

And they all lamented that they think this is by design, because it is really offering them something that they cannot accept if they have any hope of maintaining a household. They cannot accept it, Mr. Speaker. And so, their cry and clamour is that these are the types of practices that are being utilised throughout Bermuda in different industries, that are being utilised to, instead of hiring Bermudians, hiring persons who perhaps can come here and afford to live on a salary that pays them that little because they get coverage for—what? Yes?

The Speaker: I am sorry. Point of order?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, just a point of order.

The Honourable Member is misleading the House.

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: How am I misleading the House?

[Crosstalk]

The Speaker: Now, Minister, Minister. Minister. Minister, take your seat.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The Honourable Member said that it is the offer of very low salaries that is unacceptable, that is causing people to come here and be able to work, come in.

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: That is not what I said.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: And what that really says is that the immigration system must be able to—

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: Mr. Speaker, that is not a point of order.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: That the immigration system must be able to offer resistance to people coming in to take those Bermudian jobs so that we are not finding ourselves, as Bermudians, in that situation.

The Speaker: Okay. Thank you.

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: Mr. Speaker, I said that the person speaking to me suggested that. I am not saying that. I am repeating what was said to me. That is

. . . I made that very clear. And they said that they believe that this is being done intentionally as a guise to bring in foreign workers, who will accept being paid at that low rate. That is what I said, Mr. Speaker. Right.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: That is what I said, Mr. Speaker!

The Speaker: Speak to the Chair. Continue on.

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: Right. Thank you.

Because we do know . . . Let me just respond to that indirectly. We do know that there are industries that, when they have posts to be filled, because of the salaries that they are offering, no Bermudian can accept that. So, they find themselves bereft of persons who will take that job and are only left to hire persons who will come from overseas and accept that low rate of employment—because they are offered other things on top of this \$5.00, \$6.00, \$10.00 salary.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: Right.

And so, I feel duty-bound to come here and be their voice because I have to say that, in modern-day Bermuda, businesses that claim that they want to hire Bermudians and that they believe, I guess (if you will) in the notion of putting Bermudians first, need to show that in their practices. Any business should be reflecting the society that they are operating in. And anyone knows who lives here in Bermuda that \$5.50 an hour, \$6.50 an hour, \$10.00 an hour will never allow anybody to be able to sustain themselves or sustain a household, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: And so, my appeal is to these businesses out there that if they are pro-Bermudian, do right by our people.

We all need to be able to live and operate with dignity in this society! And I spoke about a paper this morning that talked about decent work. No decent work offers a person \$5.50 an hour! In fact, I had a report come to me that spoke about a worker in Bermuda where their employer put in their pay receipt that they owe *them* money, because they offer some little salary that, after the deduction, it was a deficit! How can that be possible in today's Bermuda? But it is. And there was evidence put in front of me, showing that.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: Has nothing to do with Government! Right.

So, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of these persons, who deserve to live in dignity, who want to do their part in our society, they want to be productive (and I will call them citizens) citizens in Bermuda, they want to be able to take care of themselves, take care of their families and enjoy a little bit of life.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: So, yes, thank you. I was going to get there.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have to appeal to those industries that would still find it okay to be offering people an hourly wage that will (now, these are my words) keep them enslaved. And that is unconscionable in today's Bermuda. And so, my colleague mouthed the words *living wage*. This Government will look at a living wage and will ensure that persons—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: Oh, the legislation is coming! And will ensure that some—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Lovitta F. Foggo: That is right—that something will be done that puts them in a better stead.

And on that note, Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you.

Would any other Member wish to . . . The Member from constituency 22, you have the floor.

CHILDREN ACT 2018

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, last week the Court of Appeal for Bermuda, which is our highest court on this Island before appeals go to the Privy Council, handed down a rather shocking judgment. And before I am criticised for being unfair to the current Government, let me just make clear that this judgment was a condemnation of governments going all the way back to 1998. So, it included the current Government, the previous Government and the Government before that.

What the Court of Appeal found is that the current position in relation to how our court system treats Bermudian children is “unacceptable and amounts to a flagrant disregard for the human rights of children.”

Mr. Speaker, I do not raise this issue simply to decry an injustice in the world and then do nothing. I raise this issue because there is something that this House can do about it. The legislation that is in place should and can protect the rights of Bermudian children, and it needs to be followed.

Equally, Mr. Speaker, for seven months, an amendment to the Children Act has sat on this Order Paper since the 30th of November. There is a clause in this amending Bill that would water down further the rights of Bermudian children before our court system. I spoke out against it back then, and I hope that those in the House on both sides would join with me. It is within the power of this Government to remove the Children Amendment Act 2018 from the Order Paper and drop it forever, which is what should be done.

It is also in the power of this Government and future Governments to make sure that Bermudian children before our court system have the benefit of litigation guardians, as the Court of Appeal has rightly recognised is their human right. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Would any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 16. Honourable Member Weeks.

GAY PRIDE PARADE

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, there are topics that are brought to this Honourable House that are a reflection of what is being discussed and talked about on our streets. Mr. Speaker, these topics may be motive or make persons feel uncomfortable. Despite all of that, Mr. Speaker, we cannot shy away from these kinds of debates. And the answer, Mr. Speaker, is a resounding “no” to those who may try to shy away from these debates.

Why do I say that, Mr. Speaker? Because these are not our personal submissions. We represent those whom we serve, those who have elected us to be their voice. That is our commitment to our constituents and to Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda.

With that, Mr. Speaker, do we as individuals have an opinion? Of course, we do. That said, Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this matter of the gay pride march that will be taking place on the 31st of August of this year. Mr. Speaker, I have gotten people’s attention now.

Mr. Speaker, I have been approached by many, some of whom are my constituents.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: This is a very serious topic, Mr. Speaker. I am trying to stay on track.

Those constituents and others who have approached, Mr. Speaker, have made it clear to me that they are not in support of these kinds of events occurring on our Island. Some have also reminded me of the result of the referendum in 2016 and what that stood for, Mr. Speaker. So, over the last few years, there has been a hearty debate reference this issue of

same-sex marriage and same-sex civil unions, and whether it should be legalised in any form or any level in Bermuda.

It is the general sentiment that if you are against same-sex marriage or same-sex civil unions, then you are homophobic, hateful or somehow prejudiced. But let me be clear. Let me be clear, Mr. Speaker. That sentiment, for me, could not be further from the truth. People who know me know that I try to be a straight shooter, no pun intended. I am neither homophobic nor hateful, Mr. Speaker. Some of my good friends and family members, whom I love and respect dearly, are of the homosexual persuasion.

Notwithstanding, does that mean, Mr. Speaker, that I should not be a voice of those constituents who expect me to be their voice? Again, I say no, Mr. Speaker. And I will not be forced to remain quiet lest I be labelled “anti.” That is a scare tactic, Mr. Speaker, that I will not succumb to.

So, as you know, Mr. Speaker, when we became the Government in July of 2017, there were many, many issues facing this country—education, joblessness and homelessness, health care and same-sex marriage, just to name a few. And for those who would try to say, *Why focus on this particular issue?* I firmly believe that all of these issues have their place, Mr. Speaker, and are important to the future of this country and the direction that we, as a country, are headed.

So, I stand here tonight, this evening, Mr. Speaker, to be fully transparent and openly disclose the position of so many. A lot of people, Mr. Speaker, are not happy. Some people feel as though we have disregarded the message that they sent to the then Government in 2016, who, I believe out of either fair or an unwillingness at the time to confront the very sensitive issue, simply dropped the ball, Mr. Speaker, hoping that it would just roll away.

Many of my constituents, Mr. Speaker, are religious. And I am sure that others in this Honourable House can say the same thing about those whom they represent. Hence, Mr. Speaker, these persons come from a place of being loving persons and opposing the behaviour, but not the person. Others in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, are simply opposed to the idea of a gay pride parade and/or same-sex marriage.

You may recall, Mr. Speaker, that in February of 2016, the then OBA Government, after much, much public debate, announced plans to have a referendum on same-sex marriage and same-sex civil unions. This referendum was eventually held in June of 2016, Mr. Speaker. And there were two questions on the referendum. One of the questions was, *Are you in favour of same-sex marriage?* The second question, Mr. Speaker, *Are you in favour of same-sex civil unions?* And as I have heard one of my colleagues say, *It was non-binding, whatever that means, Mr. Speaker. And [it was] done to simply get a feel for the position and the appetite of our voting public.*

But both of these questions, Mr. Speaker, as you may well know, were voted against by 60 [per cent] to 70 per cent of those who did vote through the referendum. Though the referendum was legally invalid because less than 50 per cent of the eligible voters came out to vote, there was indeed a strong showing by the 46.89 per cent of those eligible voters who did, in fact, come out to vote, one way or another, Mr. Speaker.

Some may have you believe that, because fewer than 50 per cent came out to vote, the results should be considered unqualified and we should ignore the sentiment of our people. I am here, Mr. Speaker, to say that I am not one of that view. The people put us here, and we must listen to the voices of those people.

But in real terms, Mr. Speaker, that 46.89 per cent equated to 20,000-plus voters. And out of that 20,000-plus voters, 14,000-plus voters voted no to those questions, Mr. Speaker, *Are you in favour of same-sex marriage? Are you in favour of same-sex civil unions?* Sometimes, we forget that these numbers represent people.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Yes. So, again, as the young people say, *We will talk*. Fourteen-thousand-plus people voted no. What does that mean, Mr. Speaker? Well, those 14,000 were not just voting against the questions posed; but they were actually voting against all that this issue represents. And how do I know that? Because this is the conversation on the street, Mr. Speaker, on the doorstep, on the radio. This is what is being shared when people stop to talk, which is why this issue, Mr. Speaker, the gay pride parade, is such a contentious one.

And, yes, some will argue that we live in a democracy. And if people want to live their lives as such and march, then they have every right to do so and defend it. I venture to say, Mr. Speaker, there are some in here tonight who maintain that view.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Yes.

Guess what, Mr. Speaker? I understand. Why? Because that same principle of democracy, Mr. Speaker, those against have the same right to stand and oppose it without the threat of being bullied into silence or called *homophobic, hateful or biased*.

Mr. Speaker, going off on a little tangent now, I read in the paper recently that the Commissioner of Police was not speaking about coming out to maintain law and order on the day of the gay pride event, but to fully support this march, and has pledged his officers to come out and support also. Now, if I misread this article, then I am clear to hear from someone to clarify it.

But I believe there is something wrong with this picture, Mr. Speaker. I believe that there is something wrong with this picture. What message is this Commissioner of Police sending? Now, he himself, as a private citizen, can certainly support, but not as the Commissioner of Police.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: But as the Commissioner, Mr. Speaker, of the Bermuda Police Service, what message is he sending to the majority in our country, who oppose same-sex marriage, by throwing his full support to this event? Should it not be a neutral stance by the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Speaker, like the rest of the civil servants are asked to do on a daily basis? In his professional capacity and for his organisation, the Bermuda Police Service should be there to ensure law and order for all, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, I have a little angst of something else that I have experienced. When I wore a former hat as an executive of one of our sporting clubs, I recall vividly, Mr. Speaker, when threats were made to one of our football teams that was leaving for the Bermuda Police Service to escort our team out of Somerset because of threats being made to them. And I remember getting a response from the Bermuda police, and they stated that they do not do those kinds of things. This is not something that someone else told me. If I have to repeat it, I was on that executive.

So, we fast forward. There is a gay pride march. And the Commissioner of Police fully throws his support and that of the full service behind this event. I find that interesting, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I close out my remarks, I would be remiss if I did not reiterate that we as a country must not forget those who spoke via referendum in June of 2016. We must not forget that their voices were made relevant by checking of a box, that a majority of the 46.89 per cent spoke a resounding no to this issue of same-sex marriage and all that it encompasses. Let us not be naïve, Mr. Speaker, and think that the gay pride march is any different from the message that the referendum was intended to ascertain from our people.

So, Mr. Speaker, after I take my seat, I propose that before we begin to entertain any events such as the gay pride parade, or the march, and we as a country . . . we saw this issue, Mr. Speaker, of same-sex marriage and what this issue means to the future of our country. Because to not do that first, Mr. Speaker, is putting the proverbial cart before the horse.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member. I recognise the Deputy Speaker. Deputy Speaker, you have the floor.

GAY PRIDE PARADE

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Speaker, just briefly, I want to just touch on where the Member who just took his seat.

Mr. Speaker, I have said in this Parliament before, if I was traveling the streets of Bermuda and I saw somebody being abused, harassed because they were gay or lesbian, whatever you want to call it, I will be the first to defend them. No problem there.

Mr. Speaker, what I do resent are two things that I have seen here recently. Last week, this week on television news, primetime, seven o'clock, ZBM, they had this topic on, and they showed it repeatedly, two fellows who probably just got married, kissing. You know, some families watch TV, they watch TV as a family, children there. What message are we sending to our children?

Our job . . . my job, as a male, as a parent, as a grandparent, is to protect my children. Now, when they get of age, whatever choice they make is on them. This is not helping. They are just shoving it down people's throats here. *Here, this is what you've got to be.* And I resent that. I resent the Police Commissioner, who is here on contract. [He] should not be making the statements he made. You know, he is here for law and order. If he has got those persuasions, I do not have a problem with that there. But he should be neutral. The Police Commissioner has never made a statement, has never come out and said, *Well, I'm going to support the Labour Day march.* He has never supported the Heritage Day march. Right? But he can come out and make a statement about this march, right?

I would ask the Police Commissioner to do the job that we are paying you for, or you can leave and we will get someone else.

EXPLOITATION OF EMPLOYEES

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: Mr. Speaker, let me make a plea to employers: Stop exploiting workers, particularly foreign workers. And I am talking about, we have got workers coming here. They are paying them \$4 and \$5 an hour. And these workers have to work long hours to make a wage that maybe they can afford to live in Bermuda, Mr. Speaker. I mean, this is terrible. That is slavery in the highest form, and we should not be allowing it to happen in Bermuda. And people say, *Well, we cannot get Bermudians to do the job.* No Bermudian is going to work for that price! You heard the Minister, who has got evidence where people are offering the people \$5 and \$6 an hour. Nobody can live on those wages.

But, see, this is what they want to do in the interest of profits. And when you talk about us increasing the wage, first thing they say, *Oh, we cannot afford it. People are going to leave Bermuda.* Well, let them leave if you cannot pay people a decent wage!

And some people say, *We cannot afford it now.* So, what do you want? Mrs. Smith to labour on another four or five years before we give them a wage that they can live by, so that employer can make more profits?

You know, Mr. Speaker, let me put this out. I do not think all employers are like this here. But it is too far, too many employers that are exploiting the workers in this country, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we had our Commission of Inquiry. And our former legislator on this House said two black Bermudians made too much money. What they were actually saying was we have to regulate. Well, you are being regulated, of what black folks can make. That is a shameful statement. That a former legislator, John Barritt, would be a part of a statement, I am telling you, that is shameful; shameful for any Member of this House, Member now or former Member, that they would put that in writing, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, you know, when our folks are talking about, when this Government is talking about in circles, they refer to us as *monkeys and muf-fets*, and other adjectives. That is how they refer to us. And it is about time . . . And when you get a report like was in the papers this week about the retail prices and the businesses are not comfortable with us, it is only because this Government is based on the complexion of our skin. That is what it is all about. And only . . . I guess they figure only white-led Government can do business right, and we cannot.

And I tell you, Mr. Speaker, very shortly, we are going to start naming those people who use those adjectives about us. We will start to name them very shortly, because it has gone . . . it is out of hand. It is not right. And no one in this House should condone that. And, you know, I do not mean disapproval by being silent, because that what happens in this country. A lot of people remain silent. And if you are silent, it means you are condoning it. They need to speak up against it, right? They need to . . . We are silent on them exploiting workers, particularly foreign workers. Many Bermudians are not going to take that. Bermudian workers are being exploited, too, with the wage rate. But it is time that this must stop, and it must stop now, Mr. Speaker.

POLICE INVESTIGATION INTO DR. EWART BROWN

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: You know, we have got this police investigation ongoing. It can only happen to someone black. That is all it is about, Mr. Speaker. Millions and millions of dollars spent, while they have got people in this country who cannot afford medicine, cannot afford food, cannot afford rent. And we have got a Police Commissioner and Government House spending millions of dollars of taxpayers' money investigating a former Premier of this country, the longest investigation in the world! What did he name

that? The President of the United States was not even investigated that long.

[Laughter]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: But they are going to investigate Dr. Brown nine years and continuing. And you know what is dangerous about that? It has been that long, and what will happen, they will start to put things in place. *Well, he did this.* Now they will put files away, send it to some other doctor to say, *Well, you should not have given him Tylenol. You should have given him Phensic.*

[Laughter]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: You know, that is the only thing another doctor can say about what this doctor did.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr.: I tell you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am telling you, this system stinks! It stinks! When you can take a patient's file, no permission from the patient, sensitive information, and send it to two doctors overseas and say, *Well, oh, oh, you really should have given him two Phensic and a cup of tea, told him to go to sleep. Do not give him an X-ray.*

That is what those machines are made for, Mr. Speaker. I have known people to go to the hospital, and because of their MRI, [it] saved their lives. If they would have given them those Phensic and sent them home, they would have been dead. And now they are saying you gave too many X-rays or too many this or too many that. That is what those diagnostic machines are about.

And because a black fellow is using them and a black fellow owned them, it was wrong. You know, I am telling you, Mr. Speaker, the Government House, they are the fault of this here. Because this investigation started based on a statement from a convicted perjurer in the court, and they started investigations. Yet there was no investigation on fronting. Government House put no investigation on fronting. They put no investigation on the undervaluing of assets by law firms in Bermuda to fleece the Government out of \$16 million.

That is what Larry Dennis said, Larry DeSilva, Dennis, that is what he said, not me. It is written, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is [now the] time that the country needs to react to Government House in their actions against people of colour in this country.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

I recognise the Deputy Opposition Leader. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

EXPLOITATION OF EMPLOYEES

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I am actually not going to be long.

I would like to join in with the comments of my colleagues across the aisle in terms of employers exploiting people and not paying them proper wages. And, you know, Mr. Speaker, it goes not only from the pot washer, but it also goes up to the high-level jobs, the professional workers, who do not make as much as other people do. As a professional black woman, I know that I do not make the salary that professional white women make in my field.

[Inaudible interjections]

Ms. Leah K. Scott: At the end of the day, we should all get paid for the work that we do. And I guess the other thing that concerns me is that it is not so much . . . while there are businesses around town that are exploiting people and not paying them the wages that they should be paid, there are also a lot of people in private homes that are hiring people and they have got them cooking, cleaning, washing the baby, walking the dog, not allowing them to have vacations. And what I do not understand is when a person makes an application and then . . . please Minister, correct me if I am wrong.

When a person is making a application for a person to get a work permit, with that application should be included a statement of employment. And that statement of employment should set out what that person's duties are, what they are going to be paid, what their benefits are going to be, and things like that. And I am just wondering how many times that statement of employment that is presented to the Department of Immigration is actually the true thing that the employee experiences when they are working for that person.

You know, I was out the other day and there was a woman who was beside me and she is working for a woman in a very, . . . I do not want to call the name, but—

An Hon. Member: Is she a caregiver?

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Yes, she is a caregiver, in . . . what is the word?

The Speaker: An affluent area.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Yes, thank you, in a very affluent neighbourhood.

An Hon. Member: Posh, rich, posh, rich, posh.

[Inaudible interjections]

Ms. Leah K. Scott: A very affluent—okay, posh, rich, affluent, wealthy . . . somewhere that I will never live.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Ms. Leah K. Scott: You know, and it is amazing. She said that she had been at work and her bank statement had fallen out of her pocketbook. And her employer looked at her bank statement and questioned her about the amount of money that she had. *How come you have so much money?*

An Hon. Member: How dare she!

Ms. Leah K. Scott: How dare she!

But you know what? She is not the only one that has experienced that. And her employer is not the only person who thinks that. And I do not know how we shift the mind-set. I do not know how we change it, but it has been going on for an extremely long time.

But that is not what I wanted to talk about, but I do want to say that I agree with my colleagues across the aisle that it needs to be addressed, that as a sophisticated jurisdiction, we should not be allowing the exploitations of people who come to this country—and for Bermudians who live in this country. You know, there are people who get the benefit of living off the fat of the land and they do not extend that same thing to the people who are working for them.

BERMUDA BUSINESS CONFIDENCE INDEX 2019 SUMMARY REPORT

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Mr. Speaker, now on Tuesday I attended, or Wednesday, I think it might have been. Was it Wednesday? HSBC produced the Bermuda Business Confidence survey—results reveal. And the news that they revealed actually was not very good. But the report did say that it is not . . . it is more directional than it is statistical. But if you will just allow me to read from the report.

“³A shift in perceptions of the Island’s economy over the past couple of years can be seen throughout [the] results. Continuing the same trend as observed in 2018, business confidence has dropped notably and now sits at [its] lowest level.”

So, business confidence, I guess, is what businesses think about the health of our economy. And based on the report that was produced, there were 198 businesses surveyed and they provided their feedback and their input as to how they think the economy is going, what their plans are for the future in terms of their capital expenditures, increasing wages, hiring staff and actually keeping their businesses open. It is a document that everyone should read and if you do not have a copy, I can email you a copy. If not, Susan Jackson can email you a copy. But I think

it is something that everyone in Bermuda needs to read.

An Hon. Member: What is it?

Ms. Leah K. Scott: It is the Bermuda Business Confidence Index 2019 Summary report. I can send it to you, if you want.

An Hon. Member: I know what that is. Thank you—but send me one.

Ms. Leah K. Scott: Okay, I will send it to you.

So, basically, there is not any good news in the report, which is fine. I think that, you know, [for] the past couple of years we have not had a lot of good news with all of the things that have just been being imposed upon us.

But one of the things that I am going to say, and I did say it during the debate for the EU substance, is that we really have to think about what our value proposition is going to be as a jurisdiction. What is going to make us stand out? And we cannot be satisfied with just a lateral field setting. So, we cannot be happy with just being like Cayman or Turks and Caicos. As Minister Foggo alluded to today, saying that Bermuda always punches above her weight, and now we need to punch above our weight in the area of building up business confidence.

You know, within every adversity there is opportunity and we have got to look at how we can do some things differently. And we are going to have to move out of our comfort zone. There are going to be some things that we are not going to want to do, that we are not going to like to do, but in order for us to continue to remain a viable jurisdiction there are things that we are going to have to do.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have to be willing to undergo the changes which will continue to allow us to be a jurisdiction that is competitive and will attract people. It will attract foreign direct investment and allow us to continue to be the jewel in the Atlantic that we are.

GAY PRIDE PARADE

Ms. Leah K. Scott: In terms of the Gay Pride parade . . . that is a challenge for me. And, you know, one of the things that I have been made to understand about the parade . . . it is not so much that it is celebrating Gay Pride, as it is kind of advancing against what happened during the Stonewall events in New York 50 years ago. So, it is a celebration of how far they have [come] from that period 50 years ago.

I struggle with same-sex marriage. It is just not something that I believe in. However, I believe that, you know, people are entitled to do with their life what it is that they want to do. I am not sure that I condone a parade. I am not sure that I understand

³ [Bernews](#), 3 July 2019

what the need for a parade is or what the goal is in having one here. So, I do not know what else to say about that, Mr. Speaker, other than you cannot really say *live and let live*. We are a small community and we are all going to be affected by it.

In any event, that is all I have to say, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Minister, would you like to add a few remarks to this discussion this evening?

Hon. Wayne Caines: If it pleases you.

The Speaker: Go right ahead.

Hon. Wayne Caines: If it pleases you—

The Speaker: You have your 20 minutes.

BERMUDA BUSINESS CONFIDENCE INDEX 2019 SUMMARY REPORT

Hon. Wayne Caines: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, if it pleases you.

Mr. Speaker, I attended the meeting that the Learned Member of Parliament that sits opposite mentioned in her brief statement a few minutes ago. I, along with the Minister of Finance, sat through the Bermuda Business Confidence survey and I listened to the report. And I must confess, it was one of the most difficult sets of circumstances that I have ever had to sit through in my entire life.

It was as if you are a parent and you are at your child's school and they are reading the report and they start to tell you all the grades of your child in every category that they give you, and they suggest and they give you the reading of your child, and they are all failing. And you look around the room and you look at the tenor, the complexion, the type of business in the room and you see it for exactly what it is.

But, as a maturing man and a burgeoning politician, I have learned not to focus on that which I think which is important, but to stay focused on what we are doing. There will be a theme throughout my entire political career on what this party is doing and what our goals are.

But, Mr. Speaker, allow me to highlight some inconsistencies. Something that I have learned through this process [is that] if someone comes to this Government and to me and points out or highlights a weakness, a flaw, a problem in the Ministry and the Government . . . I do not protest that the Government is getting everything right. As a matter of fact, I find myself on a daily basis getting, taking, receiving, listening to people's concerns, their advice, things that we are doing wrong, things that we could do differently. And I find that I become a better listener, I become a better person, I become a better politician when I

listen to the advice, to the criticism of those around me. I can tell you that I sat in that room and I took everything that was said. I took away my ego, I took away everything, and I believe, with my hand on heart, that there is an opportunity for Bermuda to become a better place as a result of the Business Confidence survey.

The main issue thing, that I gathered from it, that there are businesses that are hurting in Bermuda. There are companies that are suffering in Bermuda, that there are people that want their businesses to do better.

Fact—cannot be denied.

Companies are suffering. Their profit lines are going down. There are companies that are not doing well and everybody wants to see their business doing better, and right now they do not have confidence in the trajectory that we are going.

Fact.

So, let us accept that this Government gets that. That every day when we go to bed we understand that we have to do better and we are going to put policies in place. So, if I . . . if this Government, if this party has to take our licks, then the antithesis of that is that the business community must also take some licks. In 2001 to 2006, along this period and in the early 2000s, this company [*sic*] saw what could only be described as a phenomenal boom.

An Hon. Member: Country.

Hon. Wayne Caines: This country, saw what could only be described as a phenomenal boom.

Who was the Government at this time? Did they run into the building and hold up their hands and thank the PLP for [giving] them the biggest bumper crop that they had ever seen?

An Hon. Member: No!

Another Hon. Member: No, they did not!

Hon. Wayne Caines: Did they come into this room and say thank you, [did they] lay platitudes and give us praise for that which they saw and that which they felt?

Another Hon. Member: No, they did not!

An Hon. Member: No!

Hon. Wayne Caines: It was left to the CEOs and the boardrooms and the directors for them being great for their success.

[*Inaudible interjections*]

Hon. Wayne Caines: But let me get this straight. When we are going through difficult times, the very

same people who are considered to be the most brilliant, they now highlight that all of their problems are sitting at the feet of this Government.

Well, guess what? I am not saying they are wrong, but I would like to challenge them on this point. I would like to challenge them on this point. So, I do not want anybody [within] the sound of my voice to say, number one, that I do not understand. There are black businesses. There are white businesses. There are middle class businesses. There are exempt companies that all have said that they are going through difficult times. I am not running away from that.

When we consider the role of the Government, I am simply asking for one thing, Mr. Speaker, for us to be fair. For us to look at the work, the role, of what we are doing in this country and give Jack his jacket. Where were they when they talked about Paradise Papers and the disgrace that Appleby brought on this country? Did they run around to their street and did they hold them accountable for the tomfoolery that they were doing in that building?

Some Hon. Members: No.

Hon. Wayne Caines: This Government had to put back and pads on, take our bet, and we had to go internationally and protect the reputation of this country because one of our biggest, most long-serving law firms had disgraced this country. And we are being held accountable?

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Let us talk about economic substance. Look at what they had placed on us. This Government under the leadership of the Premier and the Minister of Finance . . . they have traipsed all around Europe looking at how do we will work on economic substance, put together a plan, put together a way of keeping Bermuda and our businesses kept in the manner in which they have been accustomed to. They have met with this Minister of Finance. Have we sat on our hands? Have we rested on our laurels? Oh, no! [But] they will never give us credit for that.

An Hon. Member: No.

Hon. Wayne Caines: They will never give us credit for going all over Europe fighting for them.

An Hon. Member: No.

Hon. Wayne Caines: The beneficial registry of ownership—who has gone around leading with the Overseas Territories saying this is not fair, that this challenges our very civility, our way of making a living? It is this party that is going around the world fighting for businesses, for the very same people who now criticise us.

This is not being done for this Government; it is being done for the very same people down on Front Street.

When we talk about the EU blacklist, all we have been doing is fighting to make sure this country keeps her reputation. Every time we meet, have we had the opportunity to focus on our social programmes? Have we had the opportunity? No. All we have been doing—to the chagrin of our core base—is fighting to keep businesses coming to Bermuda, fighting for Front Street. And the very same people that we have almost abandoned our agenda for, now come and criticise us and say we are not doing enough. The audacity of them!

Let me tell you something. The number one complaint that we saw was immigration. And this is what I find so interesting. We have over 80 countries that are involved with Bermuda First. Bermuda First submitted this report and we have dissected the business community in several different parts, and they advised the Government, specifically the Premier and the Cabinet, on specific things. It is a symbiotic relationship where they sit and they tell us . . . not everything they tell us we are going to use, put in our pockets and take. They gave us their thoughts on immigration. We put it in place. We have a plan that is being executed.

But let me get this straight. The Government is not doing anything with reference to immigration. We put together a team and a policy that looks at getting a fast track. We go and we say, you know what? We are going to put together a test case and we are going to take Sompo and we are going to take Liberty Mutual and we are going to look at a system that actually puts together a fast track. Oh, no, this same body of people does not say that. They do not acknowledge that.

You then say we are going to go around with our cap in our hands and we are going to put together a plan for immigration and we are going to have industry helpers and try to support us through this. We have raised \$500,000. They put together the report from KPMG which outlines this Government's immigration plan. We go around every week, a bipartisan immigration reform group meets. But, more importantly, they go around to the alphabet soup—*this is where we are, this is what we are doing, these are the high points, these are the low points*. We are including them in everything that we do!

But they now, in a meeting, are going to hold up their hand and say they do not believe that we have a plan for immigration, that we are doomed for immigration. Let me tell you what the problem is. We are not doing what *they* want us to do with reference to immigration.

An Hon. Member: Exactly.

Hon. Wayne Caines: And let me tell you what the challenge is, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: We are going to do the right thing.

Hon. Wayne Caines: When we make decisions, it is not just for Front Street.

An Hon. Member: That is right.

Hon. Wayne Caines: When immigration matters come up . . . and I am not afraid to say it! When immigration matters come up, we are going to do it in a balanced approach. When people come to us, we have to make sure that the policies are fair. You heard my colleagues talk about how our people are being treated in this country. They do not have a passport to retreat back to Canada, retreat back to England.

An Hon. Member: Exactly.

Hon. Wayne Caines: I see salaries of basic insurance executives making \$500,000 and \$600,000 a year.

An Hon. Member: With expenses.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Do not talk to me like I am dopey.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne Caines: Do not talk to me like I am dopey.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne Caines: I am aware of the benefits that guest workers make when they [are brought] to Bermuda. We are aware of what they do to our economy.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Well, guess what? We will not sell our birth right because people are making a lot of money. We will not do it.

So, when it comes to immigration reform, let me tell you what it is going to look like. It is going to look like when an exempt company, an international business, comes to this country, they *must* have training and development for Bermudians.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Another Hon. Member: Because we are putting Bermudians first! That is right.

Hon. Wayne Caines: And we are not going to apologise for that. I know how that sounds to people. It

sounds like we do not get business and we do not want them here. Oh, we get business, and we want them here. But, unlike Cayman, who everybody keeps pointing to, there are hardly any Caymanians left back in Cayman.

An Hon. Member: That is right.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Let me tell you something else, Cayman does not have any unions. When you go to Cayman, look what that policy has done. We have the opportunity as a Government to look at this opportunity within immigration and with international business, and we know we can say to ourselves there is an opportunity to do some things differently. But guess what we are going to do? We are going to make sure that Bermudians feature prominently. Let me tell you something. There will be an English language requirement if you come from a non-speaking English country, why would we not have a requirement for you to speak English in this country?

An Hon. Member: That is right.

Hon. Wayne Caines: You really want us to let down all the fences and let everybody come into Bermuda and us not have any system?

I listen to people say . . . and this is another misnomer. Bermuda is open for business. This is the only country in the world that when somebody [lives] in Bermuda for three years, they feel that they have the right to live here eternally after they get a three-year contract.

An Hon. Member: That is right.

Another Hon. Member: Because we cannot do that in their countries.

Hon. Wayne Caines: I have friends that work in America. And when they are applying for their green card . . . I saw my friend who was working in the States, and he was applying for his green card and he was back in Bermuda, and I said *Why are you back?* He said I have to be back in Bermuda for three to six months while my paperwork is being worked on.

An Hon. Member: Exactly.

Hon. Wayne Caines: But in Bermuda, we have to let everyone in without any care, without any reason. I get it.

I get it. For international business, your profits are down. But guess what we have to work on doing . . . and tell our friends that they have to adjust their business strategy and their business plan.

An Hon. Member: That is right.

Hon. Wayne Caines: And let me tell you why. When you look at the face of hotels . . . and I am repeating this. The biggest hotel chain in the world is what? It is Airbnb, and they do not own any hotels. What is the biggest car company in the world? It is Uber, and they do not own any cars. What is the biggest retail [firm] in the world?

An Hon. Member: Amazon.

Hon. Wayne Caines: It is Alibaba, actually. And guess what? They do not own outlets where they sell things in a store. What does that mean? I have been in searching [about] retail stores in Bermuda [and found] that have not changed their frontage in their store for 20 years.

Where are the online stores? Where are the home delivery services? Let me get this straight. You have made money. You see where this world is going. You do not change your business model at all? You do not go to different vendors, and now you want to blame the Government for your lacklustre business plan?

An Hon. Member: That is right.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Let me tell you something. There comes a time when board people in boardrooms, you have to go in and you have to be creative.

You have to work. Look at the companies that are doing well and not complaining now. Of course, their numbers have gone down. You look at the telecommunications firms in Bermuda. They are laughing all the way to the bank. Why? Because they an industry that has to adapt to change every three to six months—3G, 4G, new technology, new phones. And what does that mean? That means the customer continuously gets what they want. That has to be the same model that permeates throughout all the businesses.

Come to Government; say that we need to make some changes. Show us things that we need to do. It is a partnership. It is not a dictator. I sat in that room, remember . . . and I will say it again so I am not misconstrued and misinterpreted. We will own when we need to change. We will stand and we will listen when it is, but you have to take your licks too, Business Bermuda. Change your business model.

An Hon. Member: Exactly.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Do business different. Do right by Bermuda. Give them an honest day's work for honest day's pay. And guess what? A high tide raises all boats. We are not going to watch everybody get rich [while] we sit around and struggle to make ends meet. And that is what fairness looks like to you?

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne Caines: For too long we have done it. If you want a fair Bermuda, let everybody be fair. Business Bermuda—we get it! But guess what? You have to stand up and you have to take yours as well. When you are sitting in your meetings collectively . . . and I sat on the Chamber of Commerce for five years. I sat on the board of the BDA. I was a CEO of Digicel. I sit on the board of ILS Capital. I sit on the board of Polaris [Holding Company]—before you think that I am not sound to give advice from this podium.

I work in international business! And every company, in order for them to survive, they have to adapt and to overcome. And Bermuda Business needs to do the same. We will work with them. But they must work with us. We will not watch everybody succeed while we get left behind. We will not apologise for immigration policies that [put] our people first. We will stand in this country. And if you do not like it, God bless you.

An Hon. Member: Exactly.

Another Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Does any other Member wish to speak? We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 10. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

BERMUDA BUSINESS CONFIDENCE INDEX 2019 SUMMARY REPORT

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I think the Honourable Minister for his impassioned speech here tonight. And, Mr. Speaker, through you, there were many things that the Minister said that I agree with. We should not back away from our strong immigration policy because that policy was set and crafted and changed over years to help protect Bermudians where they need to be, but also get the labour force in here that we need. And it has been successful, but that has to change.

But, Mr. Speaker, I heard the Minister say, a couple of times during the presentation (and I paraphrase a bit), that business needs to take their licks because in 2006, businesses were very successful. And now, as we have waned into another phase of a poor economy, businesses have to take their licks. Well, Mr. Speaker, there are two things that I want to say about that. First thing I want to say is that in 2006, many businesses were successful. But in 2006, we were also setting the seas for the anchor that hangs around our neck in the extremely large debt that we still have, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if businesses need to take their licks, we must also recognise clearly that when that happens, Bermudians struggle too, because they

will lose jobs. And that is why decision-making is not easy at all times, Mr. Speaker. It is not easy because while you might look at inequality and injustice, at the same time when you say, *Well, businesses can take their licks*, look at the thousands of Bermudians that could be impacted by that.

And, you know, I was at that presentation on Wednesday, Mr. Speaker. I had no intention of speaking about it tonight, because I am doing some more research into it. It was just sent out. But I do know that there were 198 businesses, I believe, that participated in the survey. More than that were asked to participate, but 198 participated in the survey. And what I did see in that, Mr. Speaker, was (in my view) there was a heavy entrenchment of Bermudian-focused businesses that participated and a lighter touch of non-Bermudian international businesses that participated.

And when I hear about confidence . . . and, look, I did not agree with everything that I heard. But those 198 businesses who participated, those were their views, Mr. Speaker. Just like in this House of Assembly.

We have our views, we debate them; we disagree with each other. Sometimes we get carried away in our disagreement, but we all have a right to express our opinion as elected Members of Parliament. Well, 198 businesses participated and expressed their views. And whether we like it or not, we have to listen to what they are saying.

And what we have seen over time . . . because I did not hear the PLP, when they were in the Opposition, criticise that business index survey. When it banged the OBA Government, I did not hear that criticism in 2015/16. But what that survey shows is [that] confidence is waning within the business community.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest tonight that confidence is waning in Bermuda. And the Government of the day should not take all of the criticism for that. There are a lot of things that go into that equation to make that up. But clearly, Mr. Speaker, confidence is waning in the business community and confidence is waning in the people of Bermuda. Just look at the number of people (if you follow what is happening in Bermuda) that are leaving this country.

The Honourable Member, the Government Whip, talked about emigration when he sat on this side, but he has been quiet since he has been on the Government benches. But emigration has not, in my view, slowed up in the last couple of years.

An Hon. Member: Has?

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Has not. And there are a couple of reasons behind that. And I am not going to get into much detail tonight, because I only have 30 minutes to speak.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: One of the reasons tonight—he is going to give me some extra time—one of the reasons is because we have the ability to go to places. But another reason is people believe that it is going to be better in those other places. So, they go to them. They might come back; they can go.

And that is because of confidence. People do not see what they want to see in Bermuda. People see the rising cost of living, people see the rising cost of health care, people see the rising cost of taxation. This is what we hear when we circulate in the streets. This is what people reach out to us on, Mr. Speaker. And if the Government wants to not take that with a full velocity of how it is coming, that is up to them. But that is what we are hearing, Mr. Speaker.

And so, yes, that business confidence index is something we should pay attention to and some of the suggestions that businesses put forward have some merit to them.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Minister did [speak] about the plan. And I heard, clearly, in the presentation that was there and in the information they sent out, that the majority of the people who replied suggested that there was no plan. Now, Minister, this is not a criticism of your plan. This is a criticism that the plan is not well enough known. And, so, you need to do a better job of selling the plan, getting people to understand the plan, and making sure that they can buy into it.

An Hon. Member: That is BS.

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Now, if there is—you know, I hear the Honourable Member who is sitting in the chair saying *that is BS*. This is my opinion. It might be BS to the Honourable Member who interpolated, but it is my opinion.

It was said clearly by a lot of people that there is no plan. Well, if they believe that, the Government now has to sell it and change that view. And they could easily have done this.

EXPLOITATION OF EMPLOYEES

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Now, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to get involved in some of the comments that were made earlier about exploitation of workers, other than to say I support the Minister in the comments which she said about the exploitation, and if there are people who are doing that, we need to deal with them in the appropriate way.

And I have confidence that the Minister will look at it. And I also have confidence when we discuss the legislation that is put down, there will be more of a debate, and we will hear more about that.

POLICE INVESTIGATION INTO DR. EWART BROWN

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Also, to the Honourable Member from constituency 5, when he talked about the ongoing police investigation, I would just like to remind the Honourable Member that it started under the PLP.

INDEPENDENCE FOR BERMUDA

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Now, Mr. Speaker, two other issues that were raised tonight—one was independence. Mr. Speaker, I do not favour independence at this time for Bermuda. And I do not have a lot of time to talk about it in the 20 minutes, but one thing that is very clear to me is that if independence is going to be a way that the PLP Government would like to push forward, it should be put on an election manifesto and held around a general election. That is very clear, Mr. Speaker.

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: The second thing is the issue of the same-sex marriage. Now, Mr. Speaker, this matter is before the courts. That matter will be decided in the highest court that we go to. So, Mr. Speaker, it is going to be decided in that vein and we are going to have to move forward.

And I think many people who know me know very well that I have been married for 38 years, I have two children.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: My values . . . it is your age, is it not? My values, my views, the way I live my life, are there for people to see. But what I have also learned, Mr. Speaker, is that everyone deserves their rights. Everyone deserves to live by the principles that they put in their life.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is why this issue of same-sex marriage is in front of the courts because we as a community and we as this Parliament cannot decide the best way forward. And it is going to be decided by the courts and we are going to continue to argue this issue over and over and over and over again. But at the end of the day, minorities must have rights. That is what has happened through the history of the world. And if minorities did not have the access to rights, where would we be? We would be backwards. We would still be backwards. We would not make progress.

So, Mr. Speaker, we need to continue to make progress and sometimes we have to listen to things that we do not necessarily agree with. And our views can change, and we can . . . as our views can

change, we can get in a better position as a community and move forward.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the issues of independence and same-sex marriage were raised on the floor tonight. In the meantime, we have so many very pressing issues, such as the economy, such as the poor performance of the Government that many people talk about, such as the lack of confidence that we have talked about, such as the rise in taxation, whether it is land tax, health care tax, sugar tax, the rising cost of living, or Bermudians leaving this country. And maybe those two issues were raised as a red herring to get away from these important issues that face us every day.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: But, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that all of these issues must be dealt with by a proactive Government because if these issues are [ignored], they will foster and fester, Mr. Speaker.

Bermudians are feeling very uncomfortable in their own country and the biggest issue of today is the confidence that Bermudians have in the home that they live in, and we need to bring some hope and confidence back to the people that we serve. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.
Does any other Member—

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Minister—

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: I guess they thought I was not coming back.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Did you leave, Minister?

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: I understand that I have been accused of hiding something, Mr. Speaker, and I am not going to spend a whole lot of time on this other than just to say that suggesting that I would hide from anybody or anything—

An Hon. Member: You ran off—

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: —or hide something, is like saying, I do not know . . . I do not know what it is.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask this question: What is the OBA hiding, then?

An Hon. Member: Uh-oh.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: What are they hiding? Because in 2016, they took the same action I took. They refused to provide the report . . . the same report.

An Hon. Member: The same one.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: And also said this morning, and perhaps it is because that Member has spent so little time in this House—

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: —he has to go on what other people say. I did not make this decision alone, Mr. Speaker. I got legal advice.

An Hon. Member: Come on.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND INTEGRITY

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: And that is what supported my decision. And, so, I will leave it there. But we are not hiding anything.

Mr. Speaker, what I want to talk about tonight is personal responsibility and integrity, and I want to know where it has gone. This is something that disturbs me greatly, Mr. Speaker, because many of us, many of the Members of this House today may not remember, but coming to this House has been a long-standing gift to those who cared about seeing and hearing their Government discuss the issues of the day.

They would come and sit in that Gallery so that they could hear first-hand and learn about what was happening politically in this country. They did not have to get their news from somewhere else. And certainly in this climate and in this day and time where you get often (I do not want to even use that term, but) news that is not correct.

They were on hand for the introduction of new legislation and speeches, Mr. Speaker. I do not recognise my people anymore. It may be as a result of the manner in which the former UBP and the former OBA Governments treated them—as people who could not work, who would not work and are now evolved into a self-centred, selfish and uncaring public who look to the Government to solve all of their personal issues up to and including changing their diapers.

An Hon. Member: OBA's fault.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Common sense—a rare quality these days—seems to have disappeared permanently. While the daily, blinded by the obsession to paint the Progressive Labour Party in the worst possible light, stirs the pot and aids those who want what they want, and want it right now; a sense of enti-

tlement that is foreign to our ancestors who worked hard, had integrity and whose word was their bond.

Not only do they want it now—right now, Mr. Speaker—they also think that it is Government's responsibility to simply give it to them. Yes, we were elected to change things. We know that. But handouts are not part of the equation. A hand-up is what this Government promised, and that is the path that we are on. Not swift enough for some, but that is where we are headed.

And I know we now hear regularly from those on the other side referring to looking after our people. And I ask the general public or even Members on this side to think back how often you heard such care and concern during the period 2012 to 2017. Their people then are not the same people as those they are purporting to represent now. They certainly were prior to 2012 and then they were promptly discarded following the general elections.

An Hon. Member: They were.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Some of our people are angry because the pot of gold has not been delivered. I do not know who promised it, but we certainly did not. Some are angry because we have not created a job for them. The we-want-what-we-want, and we-want-it-now, and the-Government-has-to-provide-it mentality.

We were elected, all of us, to represent the people. They expect us to use our grey matter to advise them of intelligent approaches to solving the problems we face and then set about solving them. For instance, Mr. Speaker, we have some BHC tenants who threatened that *no one else better move into their apartment before me*.

[Laughter]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Even though their family is adequately housed by the very same corporation. They identify properties they insist they must move into, only to learn upon investigation that those properties do not even belong to the Corporation. They are privately owned! Someone better tell them, Mr. Speaker, that that Burch bye does not react very well to threats.

[Laughter]

An Hon. Member: You just did.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: And neither does this Government.

An Hon. Member: It does not.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: We hear the choir from our community, who claims, erroneously in my opin-

ion, that we have not done anything since 2017. Some making that assertion do not support anything the PLP does; have never supported anything the PLP does. Will never support the PLP in anything it attempts to do. And my people are listening to them. They are perpetrating a fraud.

An Hon. Member: Absolutely.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: They actually know where we are headed, and they do not like it. So they are determined to undermine everything this Government does and discourage our people. We have taken away their privilege and so they are angry and are using the same playbook of 2012 to mislead [our people] again.

An Hon. Member: Yes, they are.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: I do not believe my people are going to fall for it again.

An Hon. Member: They will not.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: I would agree, Mr. Speaker, that we have not done enough.

Let me correct that and only speak for myself, even though it is collective responsibility. I have not done enough, and certainly not quick enough for my liking. But the reality is it is more difficult this time around. There are more people sitting on the sidelines, carping about what needs to be done, rather than pitching in and doing their part to help. What I can assure the people of this country is that we have not lost our way.

An Hon. Member: No, we have not.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: We have not forgotten from whence we came. We have not forgotten who we serve.

An Hon. Member: That is it!

Another Hon. Member: Yes. That's the point!

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: One example, Mr. Speaker, and I think that my reputation probably precedes me in this regard. People in this country will know, even if they do not know what is going on . . . a Premier used to famously say, *Just because you don't know what's going on, does not mean nothing ain't going on.* But my reputation, Mr. Speaker, in relation to doing things differently in housing, I think is well known.

And I can assure you and the people of this country that there are a number of other things going on. And I can look into the future and predict, because it is going to be very much déjà vu. Those real estate

agents in the private sector are going to be criticising . . . their confidence in the Government is going to plummet, too. You know why? Their profits are going to fall.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: But I can guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, we are going to provide housing for the people of this country. We are going to provide opportunities for them to own a piece of the rock and it is going to be in novel and creative ways that this country, in some respects, has never seen before.

An Hon. Member: Good. Thank you.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Speaker, some of our people actually do not understand the process, and do not understand the power that governments have. And many of them unrealistically have expected that, okay, the PLP is in power, so now everything is going to be fixed overnight. That is unrealistic, Mr. Speaker. And I would invite them to think back to that period of 2012 to 2017 when we were not in Government, because there were occasions where we would have heard all these same stories and we would have heard them from them. And why would we have done that, Mr. Speaker? Because we see them where they live. We live with them. We do not have to create an event or an occasion where you get to interact with your people. In everybody's case, I suspect, on this side, you get your hair cut in the same barber shop whether you are in Government or not. You shop at the same grocery store. You worship in the same church. You walk on the same paths. You meet people where they are.

Mr. Speaker, I like to equate the work we have been doing for almost two years as similar to building a house. Well, let me just digress for a minute and touch on something that Minister Caines talked about in terms of the confidence that the business community has in this Government.

Mr. Speaker, internally, I have been extremely frustrated and angry and shouted at my colleagues about the fact that we have spent two years having our legislative agenda and our social responsibility hijacked by the business community in this country. Not because we were offended, but because out of necessity. And we spent two years not doing any social programmes, trying to protect all that we have, for those people down on Front Street. And to have to listen today on the news and hear that they do not have the confidence in the Government, and it has plummeted . . . we are the lowest in our history. Well guess what, Mr. Speaker? I am not saying that we are not going to continue to help them. But trust and believe, we are going to focus on the people of this country who have been neglected!

And they have not been neglected deliberately. They were neglected because we had no choice.

An Hon. Member: That is right.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: But they are not going to be neglected anymore.

An Hon. Member: Exactly.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: I would like to equate the work that we have been doing nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, over the last two years as similar to building a house. We have been laying the foundation by building the tank. That means you do not see anything, and you suspect that there is not anything even going on.

An Hon. Member: Who could have guessed?

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: And I will use the example of St. Regis. They built the foundation. And every time I went down, I thought, *You know, it is going to be doubtful.* And then we saw the two towers go up for the stairwells and I thought, *This is taking forever. It is probably not going to last.* And about two weeks ago, the Minister of Tourism and I were in St. George's for something else and I said let us go drive by the hotel. We went by there, and all the steel is up. And he does not know it yet, but I have arranged for us to go next week to visit it again because they are progressing at pace. And so, for the first time in 30 years probably, we are going to get a new hotel in this country, and it is coming online and that means jobs for people, and that means a thriving municipality in St. George's.

An Hon. Member: Thank you, OBA.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: But, Mr. Speaker, to get back to where I was about the tank issue, soon—and very soon—the people of this country will start to see the walls going up. And unlike religion, Mr. Speaker, we will not stand to walk by faith. We will ask them to walk by sight.

[Desk thumping]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Because they will be able to see what this Government has been doing and what we have been doing on their behalf. You will see the work that has been done on their behalf.

I also believe in giving credit where credit is due, Mr. Speaker, and that includes—

[Inaudible interjections]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: You want to chirp some more?

An Hon. Member: Yes, just like you did. Just like you did.

The Speaker: Members, come to the Chair.

[Laughter]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: I am staying because that Member is irrelevant.

[Laughter]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: And the more he speaks—

An Hon. Member: It goes both ways.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: —the better it is for us, because they know.

[Inaudible interjections]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Speaker, I believe in giving credit where credit is due, and that includes many in the Ministry of Public Works.

Part of the protocol that guides the Ministry is to provide an orientation day for every new employee. The Permanent Secretary and I have taken advantage of that opportunity, and I am pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that we have seen an exponential growth—and the country is going to see shortly because I have planned to highlight them—of young, professionals in the Ministry of Public Works doing amazing work. And I asked them the same two questions, at every presentation. *Who got you this job? Who will help you keep this job?* And the answer to both is the same! They must do both of those.

And I encourage them to take advantage of every opportunity that is afforded to them. Keep thy head down. Do the job to the best of your ability. Always look for opportunities to improve yourself and, most of all, enjoy yourself. And we have seen a living example of that level of comradery up at Dockyard, Mr. Speaker.

The PLP's first Premier, now Dame Jennifer Smith, coined a phrase in 1998, *Change is a process; not an event.* And I want the people of this country to remember that this is the case. Change is a process; not an event. And I would hope that those who are true PLP supporters, those who are part of this change, do not just sit on the side lines watching. Join us in making that change happen.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you, the people up in constituency 27, my district, already know because I told them that before they went to the polls. Hold us accountable.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: I do not need those people over there to hold us accountable. Our people hold us accountable. I encourage and require them to hold us accountable.

An Hon. Member: That is right.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: And what I said to them, if you are not prepared to hold us accountable and come on this journey with us, vote for somebody else. I did that once on the campaign trail with the Deputy and he almost lost his mind! He said, *You are not supposed to tell them that!* I said, *Oh yes, up in [constituency] 27 we tell them the truth!*

An Hon. Member: That is right.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: If you are not prepared to hold me accountable for what I said I am going to do, then vote for somebody else. And now that you have voted for me, I expect that you will!

We are all a part of this change, and we all have a part to play. This Government, this PLP Government is unequivocal in its commitment to level the playing field in this country for our people—for all the people of this country.

An Hon. Member: That is right!

Another Hon. Member: Exactly.

[Desk thumping]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: We are unwavering in that commitment.

An Hon. Member: We will not relent.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: We will continue to work tirelessly every day—every day on behalf of the people of this country. There are Ministers on this side and backbenchers and what have you that go to work at 7:30 in the morning, that are putting in 16-, 17-hour days to make sure—

[Inaudible interjections]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: —that what we are doing comes to fruition.

An Hon. Member: That is right.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Every day, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: You are not special or different.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: And I know that is not special or different.

[Inaudible interjections]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: I am not suggesting that. But I can say this much for somebody who is a part-time Minister—

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: I do not know how you could say that, but what I am saying, Mr. Speaker—

[Inaudible interjections]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: What I am saying, Mr. Speaker—

[Inaudible interjections]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Yes, we can always count on you to carry their water.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Speak to the Chair. Address the Chair, address the Chair.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Speaker—

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

The Speaker: Do not get sidetracked. Do not get sidetracked. Just speak to me. Speak to me.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: I am not getting sidetracked.

The Speaker: Speak to me, speak to me.

POINT OF ORDER

[Imputing improper motives]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

I think the Honourable Member is imputing improper motive. The Honourable Member says that he can always count on me to carry their water. How insulting and offensive!

He might say what he chooses to say, and you might deem it to be appropriate, Mr. Speaker, but it is not appropriate, and I believe it ought to be withdrawn. Not that I expect that he will withdraw it, but it ought to be withdrawn. For the record, I want to put that on record.

The Speaker: Being that you take offence to it, I know the Minister is a huge gentleman. He will know how to clean it up and withdraw it, because he is a big person.

[Inaudible interjection and laughter]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Speaker, that is what I believe. Everybody is entitled to their opinion. Just as she said she did not think that I would withdraw it—she is absolutely correct.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I had no doubt.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Absolutely correct.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: No doubt.

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Well, look in the mirror.

[Inaudible interjections]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Look in the mirror.

[Inaudible interjections]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: I am going to just ask you to keep it above board.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: I am going to keep it above board.

The Speaker: Do not slip off. You have been on a good vein.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: I am going to keep it above board, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Do not get sidetracked.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: In spite of the egging from the other side.

The Speaker: Do not get sidetracked.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: In spite of the egging from the other side—

The Speaker: Do not fall off the vein you are on.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: —because that is the problem that she never knows when to stop.

The Speaker: Do not fall off there.

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: Mr. Speaker, I want the people of this country to know that not only can they come and approach us and ask us what is going on, but I implore them that they are better than listening to the rhetoric that is being repeated from 2012 about what this Government is not doing.

There are enough examples of young Bermudians who have had an opportunity under this Government, and will continue to do so. We heard this morning of the increase in students that are going to the Bermuda College. And that is true of the entire time we have diverted funds from other resources in order to be able to do that. The Minister of Education indicated that we are sending students to the University of the West Indies. Mr. Speaker, it is crystal clear. It is crystal clear—

[Timer beeps]

Lt. Col. Hon. David A. Burch: —that I have no more time left.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Thank you. Does any other Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Member from constituency 32. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Mr. Scott Simmons: Good evening, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Good evening.

Mr. Scott Simmons: Certainly, the hour is late.

The Speaker: I agree.

Mr. Scott Simmons: I recognise we have all been here—

An Hon. Member: It is early!

Mr. Scott Simmons: —for quite some time.

The Speaker: No, it is late.

[Inaudible interjections]

EXPLOITATION OF EMPLOYEES

Mr. Scott Simmons: Mr. Speaker, I have listened carefully. I would like to thank the Honourable Labour Minister for the remarks that she made as it relates to the salaries in this country. I have listened carefully to the Honourable Minister of National Security. I appreciate his words and I think what he has said has been most fitting.

Mr. Speaker, I have also listened to, as I say often, Members opposite. But we fail sometimes to

understand that all of us are in this absolutely together.

Mr. Speaker, the one element that has been touched on in this Honourable House this evening as it relates to labour in this country, as it relates to our relationship with our foreign workers and exempted companies, we have to come to terms with the fact that whether we like it or not, there will be foreign workers in this country.

Mr. Speaker, years ago . . . and I have heard the Honourable Deputy Speaker speak about it. I have heard the Honourable Tourism Minister speak on it, and I think in our households we have spoken on how there was a relationship and there is a relationship that goes back to the very beginning of Bermuda where our foreign workers were a part of our families. Foreign workers, especially the Portuguese workers, they were almost integrated into our society together. But, Mr. Speaker, in more recent times, the economy has separated us to a point where it almost seems that when a foreigner arrives on these shores, they become more valuable than the locals of colour in this country.

This is a difficult subject, Mr. Speaker, because there will be those in our communities that will say and make quite clear that we are merely making the foreign workers feel unwelcome, uncomfortable even. But tonight, I rise on my feet because I have worked with foreign workers almost all my life. I have had wonderful, wonderful relationships with foreign workers. We have worked together, we have enjoyed working together, and then there have been moments when we have absolutely butted heads. And I recognise that a lot of them really do not have any other ambition in this country other than to prosper and leave.

Mr. Speaker, earlier on in the commentary, as it relates to labour and as it relates to salaries and as it relates to the way we financially manage our country, we have listened to those who have said that the foreign worker has prospered in Bermuda. They have settled in and they have created a life in Bermuda that the average Bermudian does not enjoy.

Now, I would have thought . . . now, go back a bit to days when I worked shifts and when I did all those things in hospitality, and at the very bottom levels, worked [my] way up. And in that particular hotel, a foreign worker came there, and that worker developed a relationship with Bermudians. And that worker informed me . . . because I suddenly realised that they were not integrating, that they all of a sudden stopped. And in the hotel they were told [that foreign worker said,] *We were told when we first arrived that the one thing you do not do is mingle with Bermudians. You stay separate. You live separate and you do not integrate with Bermudians.*

Mr. Speaker, it is that kind of welcome that is most unwelcome. It does not advance Bermuda. The relationship that we see eroding in Bermuda, that has

eroded and continues to erode in Bermuda, has everything to do with—and I have spoken it before—the respect levels in Bermuda. There appears to be a feeling that as long as you are not a black Bermudian in this country, you are fine; you will prosper. In every occupation I have had in this country, I have identified the different classes of profession, of professional level, that exists in this country and it is nasty.

When it comes to Bermudian workers, the respect level for them—no matter how hard you work, no matter how many hours you put in, you still do not get a level of respect from the employer. And if it is a level of respect given to some, it is not widespread. That is the concern.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Scott Simmons: I recognise that there have been Bermudians and black Bermudians in this country who have prospered, who have done extremely well. But if we are honest about who we are in the world of profession, and in the world of where we are, you realise quite quickly your place.

We cannot expect Bermuda today to be comfortable with what they see, with everything else eroding no matter who is responsible for the erosion.

I decided to rise to my feet and to make it clear tonight that the foreign worker who has not integrated, who does not want to be a part of Bermuda—and the other argument is going to be that they do not have to because that is not what they are here for—but it has everything to do with the amount of money that individuals earn. It is the acceptance of the \$6.00 an hour, of \$5.00 an hour, of \$4.00 an hour after almost next to nothing . . . it is worrisome that in this country, there are those who would come and accept that because they . . . many live in a household together, they are able to put all their monies together, and do well and prosper and send money off to where they are from because where they come from, they do not necessarily make as much money. But it does not erase the fact that there are Bermudians who are affected by that, which is why the liveable wage is as important as it is in the country of Bermuda.

This is a tough, tough subject. I have touched on it just slightly, but it is deep. Bermudians feel as though they are second-class citizens in their country. There are Bermudians in this country, and I will repeat it, who have done extremely well. If we could make this statement that the [Bermudian] taxi driver has travelled many times more than his passengers [visiting] Bermuda, this says a lot about individuals' prosperity. But it also has to be said that there is a respect level that is missing, but also it seems to be missing in the Bermudian a feeling that they are worth anything. That what their efforts are bringing amounts to something.

Mr. Speaker, a rise from whatever station you are in life to become a politician and to become a

Member of Parliament is monumental. You are placed in a specific situation and a specific place in this country. I suspect that the rise of all of us on our side of our House appears to be slightly different from the rise of those who have come to rise to this high station before, because we do not feel as if there is some enormous and great (how shall we say?) bestowing of any honour to any of us. We are fighting to try to save Bermuda and to move Bermuda along. But none of us feel as though it is some great station in life.

What we have come to do is the job of the people. The point I want to make is that this level of respect—the Honourable Minister spoke about it earlier through international business. I deal with it every single day in tourism—the respect levels. But I am appealing to the foreign worker who is accepting the minimum wage, who is going to be affected by the . . . thankfully affected, and that will affect Bermuda by the liveable wage (and thank you to the Honourable Member Mr. Commissiong, for the efforts he has given) . . . but who will raise that to a level that it begins to level the playing field.

Because you cannot accept that a waiter, while making \$6.50 during the high season plus grats makes \$3,000 . . . \$2,200, \$2,300 a week, grats, but during the wintertime it amounts to only a pittance. During the wintertime, the foreigner has the luxury of being able to pack up, take the money they earned in the high season and go to where their relatives are elsewhere around the world, work for the other part of the season, return back to Bermuda after they have earned, earned, earned, earned and earned and the Bermudian has died, died, died and died—over that period that the Minister spoke about of running a deficit during the winter season. The liveable wage helps to fix that.

Mr. Speaker, this is a serious matter for the people of Bermuda as it relates to how we handle our young people coming from college, getting involved and everything. But the interesting point is that not everybody is not going to come back to Bermuda . . . or, I should say, not everyone is going to graduate, go on to university. There are those who are going to remain in Bermuda, and there is no reason why this Bermuda Progressive Labour Party cannot offer them some hope, some opportunity.

The foreign worker in this country—and I will return to it and finish on it. The foreign worker in this country has to begin that process of understanding why Bermudians are frustrated. I will use this term and I will say this loosely, just only from my own personal experience. There was a time when all the foreign workers, those guys that worked at the cycle shops and those who worked in hospitality, they all rode broken down bikes. Now, everybody has got a car.

An Hon. Member: Oh, yes.

Mr. Scott Simmons: Everybody has a car. Prosperity is good. Opportunities to move things along are good.

But look for one moment, though. I am not criticising them. I am saying they are prospering. They are wise. They are doing what it is they need to do. They are manipulating the Bermuda model to make sure that they prosper, that they obtain everything they have to obtain, and if they move out of Bermuda and they get cracking and they do what it is they have to do.

The problem is that Bermudians are stuck in this wheel, in this grind. This is a difficult one. We as a Government have to find solutions for that. But what makes it more difficult is I watch while the foreign worker shows a level of contempt. And I will say this . . . and, Mr. Speaker, I can only go by my experience. I cannot speak for everybody else. And I try not to. I speak for my constituents, believe it or not. But I try very hard not to assume what others are going through. I try to take it from my own experience and move forward.

In the hotel environment, I have watched . . . and I do not like the word, the British use it but it is those from the subcontinent, and I do not like it, but it is probably gives the best analogy I could give. But they arrive in Bermuda as waiters. They arrive in Bermuda as line workers. They soon learn that they are above Bermudians in the workplace. I have watched waiters who realised that they get facilities, they get to swim on the beach, they get into places where we cannot, and they realise that they have more opportunity than the average black Bermudian. And they manipulate that. And what it does, Mr. Speaker, is create a feeling in Bermudians, and then we wonder, why when it explodes, why it is the way that it is.

Mr. Speaker, the reason I bring this up is because many times we gloss over things that we are doing and just do not stop for a minute and take a post-shot of what is going on in our Bermuda, in our Bermudian psyche both from a (and I have to say it this way) white Bermudian point of view and a black Bermudian point of view, so that we all begin to understand the plight of others. That is what the average waiter has to see.

So, when he gets on his bike at the end of his shift, at 11:30, he rides home on his bike, the foreign worker walks down the path into his lovely apartment—air conditioning, electricity, TV cable. I mean, everything. He rides home to pay \$1,200, \$1,600—in the vicinity. I confess, I will disclose, when I was a policeman I did live in barracks. It was \$115 a month, electricity, three square meals a day and washing clothes tokens. That was some time ago, I am not saying I am a dinosaur, but it was some time ago and I do not think that those, I do not think those levels, Honourable Minister . . . and I apologise if I am misrepresenting the service. But I do believe that those numbers have changed somewhat.

But I will say this, the Bermudian worker has to go through that and create a life for a family and create opportunities for family and do all of those things. The Bermudian worker is struggling. This Government, our Government, the Bermuda Progressive Labour Party Government has worked hard and continues to work hard to try to bring some parity. It is not going to be easy. I am not talking about the high-flyers who are the actuaries and those ones that are at the level of the Honourable Deputy Opposition Leader, that are doing very well in the international industry, or in the industry for which she works, and I appreciate that. And I give everybody full marks.

But I am speaking to the fact that something has to change in Bermuda. That model has to change. I do not know how we get these communities together. I think that there is a distinct possibility that some of the festivities that we have in Bermuda may start to bring something together. I am wondering how we can start to marry up our different communities so that we exist better.

But at the moment, as some Bermudians are waiting for the bus, the Pakistani, with all due respect . . . I am not bringing down the Pakistanis. I have great friends. We laugh; we have great times. But what I am talking about is that the Pakistanis, the Sri Lankans, the Filipinos . . . while the Bermudian is at the bus stop, they watch that bike and the broken-down moped with the hanging licence plate that was holding on with a piece of string has suddenly turned into a Hyundai and is filled with all of them and they are all off to brunch. And he is off to serve lunch.

So, Mr. Speaker, all I am trying to do is just give a small snapshot of what the average Bermudian sees and what the average Bermudian comments on and what the average Bermudian experiences in this country. When is that model going to be adjusted to benefit them? When do we find that mark?

I am all for the preservation of international business. I am all for bringing in foreigners as it relates to making sure that Bermudians are in line first, that we continue to put Bermuda first. But we must create an environment in Bermuda where Bermudians can prosper at every level. And that every level is not just at the top level with the one, two, three houses, with the three or four cruises a year, with the kids who are finished university and that are flying all over the world and are doing all the things that they do—the boats, the cars and all the things. The average Bermudian who is struggling. We have to bring it down to assist.

Mr. Speaker, I heard earlier from the Honourable Minister as it relates to . . . there was a comment that was made that there was a distinct possibility that we, international business, tends to overlook a lot of these details, do not want to understand these details and are only looking at what they are doing. We have to find a way to make sure that they are true partners in Bermuda, are a physical and financial part of Ber-

muda, and that they contribute into the betterment of all Bermudians, and not just those who work for them at certain levels and just for them who they think they should assist. They should be active in those communities. We need to find a way to make that happen.

And I listen to the Honourable . . . and I will finish on that, I think that my time is almost running out, I am sure. But I listened to the former Premier, the Honourable MP Dunkley, and he said in statements a while back—a few more minutes?

[Timer beeps]

Mr. Scott Simmons: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Honourable Member from constituency 36, you have the floor.

BERMUDA BUSINESS CONFIDENCE INDEX 2019 SUMMARY REPORT

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity and I want to just contribute.

The Honourable Member who has just finished speaking makes a good point. But good points have been made in this last hour of debate.

You know very often, Mr. Speaker, you know, the House does afford to a debate a clear analysis of the Bermuda setting and where we are socially, economically, and we have had flashes and glimpses of a good analysis of where we are, just as a consequence of tonight's experience in your House, Mr. Speaker, tonight. I think that the Honourable Member, Mr. Simmons, from [constituency] 32, is right. The white entitlement that arrives on our shores in the form of guest workers, fed the narrative of who they are and what they can be expected to enjoy through what is called Bermuda white entitlement, do get pulled into having remarkable, outlandish expectations that end up on the desk of the Minister of Immigration, the Minister of National Security, facing their expectations that they are entitled.

After all, my friends, my white friends only, because I have been told to stay away from the black experience, we have . . . they quickly calculate that, as the Honourable Member Mr. Simmons has said, that they are entitled. This is bad. This is creating a skewed arrangement and system, and Mr. Simmons is quite right to highlight it. I adopt it. I adopt all of his submissions and say that these need to be reinforced.

I do not know whether we have reached another '77 Pittian analysis in this country, but Mr. Simmons is right. Black Bermudians are made to feel second-class, and we have been fighting this ridiculous experience in our history. I mean, we have had this discussion and we should be beyond it. But to have us slide back into this sort of Caymanite, irrele-

vant [Caymanian], which is what I believe has been happening . . . and, you know, we have had a great proponent of the white entitlement in a lawyer who has been running these cases under section 20B of the Immigration Act and embedding in black letter law these white entitlements. And he has had great success. Justices have laid it down in law that, you know, you have the right to residence, a right to status. So, it is a difficult thing and it is a dangerous thing.

So, because I began to manifest my decision to speak on the motion to adjourn driven by this *business confidence plummets* story, that is what got me going. And, you know, in my experience as a practitioner, looking at some of the criminal law practice in dealing with fraud, there is a concept called the “confidence trick.” Confidence tricksters, this was one of the concepts that we came across. We know what they are. You know, you set up a set of circumstances or facts and build up people’s confidences, or you lure people’s confidences.

But the confidence trick is a well-known ploy. It is dishonest, often, and today’s meeting that took place at HSBC, and I heard that the Honourable Member Ms. Jackson was involved in helping to set this up and host it, the new Chamber of Commerce president on his early days out on his bicycle of riding as president, and he distinguishes himself not necessarily appropriately from his predecessor, Mr. John Wight, where he has allowed himself to be sitting into the context of this confidence trick being promulgated in our country, because this is all that this is—a motley group of the BEDC directors, the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, and the chairman of the construction division.

Now, I accept, and I believe the former Premier, Mr. Dunkley, reminded me that this was a focus largely by Bermuda business making an analysis of the Bermuda setting. And he is right that this was the focus. But, you know, I recall a time when there was deep resentment between—

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: We will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Unparliamentary language]

Hon. Michael H. Dunkley: I do not think I reminded him of anything. I just thought his choice of words in clarifying that he thought that those individuals were “motley” characters was inappropriate language for this House. Whether he likes them or not, I think it should be used in a different way. If he disagrees with them or what they stand for say it, but do not them “motley,” especially when they cannot defend themselves.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: Mr. Speaker, this characterisation is put there deliberately by me because I am making an analysis that they are associating themselves with an untrue narrative in our country.

First, they line up the Premier and senior Ministers and begin to slag them off, that under our watch, confidence is as shown, and I will table it, has plummeted from where it was in 2016.

Why is it a confidence trick? In 2016, we will all remember that the America’s Cup [AC] infusion of my taxpayer dollars, of up to \$79 million, was put into, was injected into the patient called Bermuda. And then we have 2016 now compared with 2019 . . . how on earth does anybody think, other than through a confidence trick, that we are going to have anything resembling in 2019 the situation that obtained in 2016 after AC?

So, I do not withdraw that this inept association on the floors of the HSBC bank by this grouping of business leaders in Bermuda . . . and by the way, they are not necessarily the titans of industry here in this country. Maybe that is the reason why we do not see them there, because the statement is so disingenuous that they are seeking to make. And they should be ashamed that they are allowing themselves to be associated with this type of confidence trick. And I find it offensive. I find it highly offensive.

What ought to be considered by this grouping of local business leaders is some of the listing of issues that we are facing in this country. I dare say, and I would like to know whether the Bermudians that the Honourable Member, Mr. Simmons, who have to ride home on their bikes late at night, what is the confidence they have in the current situation that obtains in this country.

And did Mr. Fagundo or Ms. . . . or any of them who are shown in this photograph, did they take these into account as they sat PLP senior Ministers down, invited them and they sat down voluntarily, to listen to this banal confidence trick being put to them? What of the Paradise Paper analysis? How did that contribute to the confidence in this country where in Appleby’s . . . and I have read several articles on this. And as an attorney who has practiced corporate law, you are required, Mr. Speaker, to know your customer. Appleby’s, after this analysis, and through the analysis, even, of the BMA, had hundreds of its clients on its books on which they had no idea in God’s heaven who they were. And the Bermuda Monetary Authority has been onto them and onto them to clear this up because it is wrong.

And the Paradise Papers revealed a number of other infractions that would have, that as the Minister of National Security indicated, caused this country reputational damage and has had us . . . and this point needs to be reinforced just as I adopt Mr. Scott Simmons’ remarks. The first two years of our Government has been spent in coordinating and recovering and making ourselves compliant with demands

and assessments from the OECD and God knows whoever else to the detriment of pursuing the social agenda.

But money laundering in our country is regarded as the problem. Dr. Stubbs' son, Robert Stubbs, it is . . . Robert is the son of Dr. Stubbs I believe, yes?

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Hon. Michael J. Scott: I appreciate his analysis that he has made. And I add this to the list of what is the cause of plummeting confidence in our country.

He made the point that the disparity of white incomes and black incomes was some 13 per cent. I live by that article. It has not changed. It is the very kinds of metrics that were a part of the analysis being made as far back in our history as 1977 when Lord Pitt was examining the problems of our country then. We do not need to be going back over this territory.

The \$5.00 an hour propositions that the Minister of Sports and Community Affairs was referencing is a part of the local setting that is properly part of making the analysis of what the confidence in the local economy is all about. And it cannot be right if you can list these disparities of black and white incomes, the money laundering issues, that are very much present in our country . . . no wonder we are expending so much time and energy complying with it.

The analysis that Mr. Simmons is making so poignantly about white entitlement in our country and black insignificance or irrelevance in our country, do you think that this is going to inure or improve confidence in the worker, for example? In the black worker and white worker and foreign worker, when these kinds of arrangements, when these kinds of deficits are what people face on a daily basis?

And the answer is an emphatic no. It cannot possibly. No wonder we have a concern about confidence in our country. But I submit to you that the confidence trick promoted in this article needs to be balanced with the general lack of confidence that is going on in the lack of fairness and disparity in incomes, what happens in major law firms that drags down the reputation of our country, the fact that enterprises that are pursued in the courts to lift up the rights of guest residents here and give them better rights whilst black Bermudians watch and observe these differences in treatment.

These are as relevant, if not more so, to the assessment of confidence in our country. But I do not see that included in this emphasis on more immigrants into the country, reducing the barriers of entry into the country. Immigration policy that opens the doors is put as the silver bullet constantly in this country. But it is not the silver bullet. We should deal with the list that we have been hearing about in this House.

In addition to the Paradise Papers, I know that in this Bermuda environment there are other lurking

problems. I remember . . . does anyone recall the name of Jeffrey Bevan, jailed for \$1.7 million theft from the Bermuda Government? These are the things that are happening, and they do not contribute to the confidence of the economy.

An Hon. Member: Why?

Hon. Michael J. Scott: It just does not. And we do not find these listed amongst the causes in this business confidence assessment in the *Royal Gazette*. We just do not, and they form an important part of what happens and what is happening in the Bermuda setting on a daily basis in our country.

And so, I do not appreciate at all this confidence trick that is being promoted here in the context. In the small corner of the same newspaper, we have the retail sales indicating an improvement which is just the very opposite of what is being tried to be promoted in this article. And I think that after we see the numbers published for tourism, we are going to find that those numbers are positive.

I got the general feeling on Independence Day, July the 4th, when I read this article, that . . . I did not get the sense that confidence in the country was where this article would suggest that it is. And what I found, which was striking, was the unfair comparison of the 2016 position with that major injection of the America's Cup setting . . . we cannot possibly in 2019 . . . because this Finance Minister and this Government is not about to replicate an America's Cup injection of taxpayer dollars into the patient called the Bermuda economy.

[Inaudible interjections]

SANDYS 360 PATI REQUEST—MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Hon. Michael J. Scott: And so, the difference and the cause of the difference has got to be obvious.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to also briefly . . . within minutes of the Statement by my colleague, the gallant and Honourable Member Colonel Burch, making his Statement, we get the former Attorney General seeking to stoke up this question that, Mr. Speaker, even you had to deal with.

But it is right there. It is at the top of the paper, [it says] Minister Burch is hiding things from the country. And it is so wrong. But it is so . . . and the Statement which Minister Burch read in the House complained about the level of cosiness between the Commissioner for PATI and the paper. And I have noticed it myself. I have noticed it myself. And, and as the chairman of the Criminal Injuries Compensation board, or the deputy chairman, I received the most . . . I see they had another example of it from Sam Strangeways indicating her knowledge of a PATI request in connection with Criminal Injuries Compensation.

tion Board case management and compensation for members.

She conflated my director's fees from the Bermuda Shipping Authority, deliberately, with the Criminal Injuries Compensation fees knowing, knowing . . . because she had answers to all of her questions about compensation to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board members from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. And yet, using PATI gained information, she is putting these kinds of questions to me along with dozens of other questions.

And so this whole PATI/*Royal Gazette* dance that is going on is getting a bit sick, really. And I call on Sam Strangeways and anybody else over at the *Royal Gazette* to just stop it. To just stop it. I do not intend to answer you.

But, to vilify or try to . . . it is like being savaged by a dead sheep when the Honourable former Attorney General seeks to just gin up this clear statement and turn it into the press remarks that are being run about what is happening with Sandys 360. The Act is clear, the PATI Act. It is a sensible Act. It contains . . . there is obviously going to be tension between requests—

[Timer beeps]

The Speaker: Member, thank you.

Does any other Member wish to speak? We recognise the Opposition Leader.

Honourable Member, you have the floor.

BERMUDA BUSINESS CONFIDENCE INDEX 2019 SUMMARY REPORT

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think we have heard a lot this evening. I wanted to talk about sustainability but so many different subjects have come up this evening, I feel it is important I at least address some of these issues that have been brought up. I believe that there are certain sentiments that have been shared with this House by Members that ring very true. That, many of us, and most of us, if not all of us, would not deny. One of the realities, however, in Bermuda is that the main contributor to our GDP is international business. In fact, so much so, that it is over 80-something per cent.

An Hon. Member: Wow!

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: If in the event that this is jeopardised, and we have no other fail-safe to fall into—as a cruise ship would have a little boat that you could get into and maybe survive for a little while—we do not have anything to sustain our standard of living in Bermuda. And so, I share in the sentiments that there are inequalities that continue to plague this Island. However, I cannot go without saying that throughout the boom of the economy in Bermuda it was due to this 80-plus per cent contributor that al-

lowed us a standard of living that many other countries have looked at and admired. And the fact that now we are in a financial stressful situation, it behoves us to then start thinking about what it is that we need to do.

It is clear that relying on international business has become a challenge to many of us to maintain the standard of living that we have enjoyed. What we must now do as leaders of this country is decide on what the alternatives are to that so that as we transition there is somewhere else to go, something else to rely on. And for the Honourable Member who just sat down to talk about this confidence report as trickery, saying that this trick . . . I have a major issue with that. There were Bermudians who own small businesses that are a part of that report! Who said that they are not feeling the confidence in the economy for many different reasons? And then to get up in this House and then to say that it is trickery is not taking responsibility for the position that we are in. This Government has to govern and run this country for everyone and to be fair and equitable to everyone.

Now, if you do not like the way that things are, then I would suggest if you are going to start transitioning one out, then you [need to] transition something else in at the same time to take up the slack because what is going to happen is when you are running a country's expenses and economy, if you do not do that, the window of space is not just a few years, but it could be decades before you get back on your feet. So, what do we do in the meantime? And what I am hearing from out there in the community is that in the meantime, PLP Government, I hear you, but in the meantime, what are you doing about right now?

Now, let us have a little lesson in this economy. That fancy, pretty Bermuda dollar bill that we walk around in, \$2.00 bill, ain't worth the paper that it is printed on. Why? Because we trade in US dollars. We cannot take our money anywhere else and say it is worth something, buy anything or do anything with it. Cannot, just cannot. So, we have got to understand that in order for us to survive as a country, we need investment to come into the country. As the investment comes in, that money is disbursed.

Now, I understand that for some of us, we do not like the disbursement. I certainly do not like to look at Bermuda and see that women are getting paid less than men, then to see disparities in household incomes comparing blacks to whites. Certainly, none of us agree to that. But, as a Government we have to sit down and figure out how we are going to fix this situation. If there is no direct inward investment in this country, our economy will continue to decline and decline and decline. That is what we are seeing right now and everyone is holding their breath and saying, *Okay, I am holding on until something happens* but nothing is happening right now.

And we keep hearing about the fact that the PLP Government has a plan and they are implement-

ing the plan. Well, this is the only plan that I have heard so far and that is we are going to get a third part . . . [a third] pillar to the economy and it is FinTech.

Well, if we are going to be real and talk real here, then what we should be saying, listen, those guys who are in the FinTech world, do you know who they are? They are the international business guys' grandsons and granddaughters.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Many of them are.

The Speaker: We will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He said that the only plan that he has heard of is FinTech. We have also talked about diversifying tourism with the National Tourism Plan which means getting more airlines in from different destinations. We have also talked about reducing the cost of living through affordable health care. We have also looked—

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: There are certainly . . . he has heard about a lot of different plans. He cannot say that FinTech is the only plan that he has heard of.

The Speaker: Your point is taken.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So, for the Honourable Member's understanding, let us go back—80-plus per cent of our GDP, contributed to our GDP, is international business. Tourism does not even come close. That is why I said there is a window of space that we have here, that as we are transitioning out one, we have to transition in the other. Tourism is not going to keep up with the pace of the rhetoric that I heard here in this House towards international business if they decide to leave, if they are threatened. And we heard it and saw it before. An Honourable Member that sits in this House today got up and said if you do not like it leave. They left and we felt it.

Some Hon. Members: Mm-hmm.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: The Honourable Member got up and said, *Well, listen, you know. These international women that are here . . .* he called them all unflattering types of names—

An Hon. Member: What are you talking about?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I am talking about the Honourable Member Burch. He made those remarks.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: We will take your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Walter H. Roban: The Honourable Member is alleging a falsehood. The Honourable Mr. Burch certainly in his statements that he made just now has made no such suggestion. I am wondering if the Honourable Member is misleading the House and misleading the country as to the statement of the Minister.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

You know, we have been talking a lot of history, we have heard a lot of history from the Government tonight. Just do his history. He has Google. He has got his iPad, Apple pad there. He can google it and see.

An Hon. Member: What?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, he has got an Apple. That is probably part of the challenge. He needs a Samsung or an Android to perform.

What I am getting back at, Mr. Speaker, the challenge is that we understand that we need direct investment into this country. And whilst many of the grievances that we have heard tonight are real and we are feeling it, but do not for a moment feel that Members of the OBA do not feel this pain as well. As if it is exclusive to Members of the PLP.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, you can point of order all day.

The Speaker: Yes?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Walter H. Roban: The Honourable Opposition Leader likes to paint this sort of picture every time he gets on his feet.—

An Hon. Member: Point of order?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: What is your point of order?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: It is misleading that anybody in this House said that they do not feel what we feel. No one said that—

[Laughter]

Hon. Walter H. Roban: —on this side, tonight.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, yes, yes. He was not listening at all.

The Speaker: Continue on.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: A doom-and-gloomer.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. The Honourable Member—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: It is all right. Let conversation flow this way.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Certainly, a doom-and-gloomer. Well, if we are talking about doom and gloom, he needs to open up both his ears and listen to the rhetoric that came from the side of *that* House tonight talking about doom and gloom. And that is what we have heard. All I am speaking to is the realities of where we are—and agreeing to some of the issues that we do have. And they are sitting there talking about doom and gloom? The doom and gloom and Bermuda is facing right now, we can see it plastered, it is not hyperbole, it is fact! Consumer price index: things cost more this year than they did last year. So, what I want to know, what are we going to do about it? Because Bermuda is hurting.

An Hon. Member: We don't own the business.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: *We don't own the business.* No, but what we do is, we incentivise business to do business here. And I am talking about international and local business.

The policies that are put in place either drive people to feel secure about opening businesses in Bermuda—Bermudians getting involved—or they do not. They don't. And, so, you know, what I am saying is the realities are the numbers here and you cannot take away from a Bermudian saying they are not feeling confident. I am not talking about the international business sector. I am talking about the Bermudians.

An Hon. Member: Right, okay. I am there.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: They are concerned. And so all I am saying is if we are going to do something, let us hear exactly what it is, how we are going to get that investment into the country.

Again, we cannot do anything with this pretty \$2.00 bill that we have. The money has to come into the country, and we have got to find a way to do that. Right now, as of today, we got issues with trying to get money, projects that are being run by Bermudians whether they be in the thousands of dollars, hundreds of thousands of dollars, or millions of dollars as we are seeing, they cannot get the investment here. It is not coming.

And so we have to figure how do we get this done and the Opposition is willing to work with this Government on how do we do that. We are already seeing that the pillar of FinTech is not going to do it. Not right now. It is not doing anything for right now. We have got to figure out how to get more people spending, how to get people shopping more for all kinds of things, whether it is online, if they transitioned from not going to a shop to buy it, then if they buy it online do we figure out how we are going to tax it.

And one of the things that I have been aggrieved with . . . and the Honourable Member who was a CEO of Digicel is in this House today, their profits go abroad. We have got to tax that stuff! Not the Bermudians. We have got to tax them! So, if they profit, \$20 million, how dare they take all of that money and invest it in other areas.

An Hon. Member: Agreed.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Get some of that money back here! That is what we need to do and we need to go after HSBC and we need to go after these other companies who are making these profits and . . . listen, it is only a few of us Bermudians here, you know, it does not take a whole lot of money to maintain our standards. Sit down and negotiate a deal on how we do that.

An Hon. Member: I agree.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: That is what we need to be doing. That is how we are going to get this economy going again.

To repeat over and over and over what we have heard over and over and over in this House, the grievances that we do have is not changing anything. So, implement a plan that is going to bring about change for Bermudians. Castigating this as trickery is not going to do it. It is not doing anything! It has not done anything for that guy who is spending all night getting ready to open up his store tomorrow morning. Nothing.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: And I take it that . . . when I start hearing I am just as aggrieved as anybody else when I hear, *What you mean you are paying \$5.00 and \$6.00 an hour to somebody?* I cannot get away

with that in my business. No way. And I have heard all kinds of things in the hiring in the fuel business.

An Hon. Member: You would not do it.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: [I] just would not do it. Of course not. Of course not. But, yet, we do have these things going on.

And so it is fine to get up in here and we will complain about it and we will talk about it and we will cast it in all kinds of shadows whether it be racial, whether it just be greed, whatever the case may be, it does not fix it. So, if you come up here and you say something, I expect for you on Monday when you show up to work that you are going down to that business and you are going to sit down and talk to them and say, *Hey! Look here, bye. This here ain't happening.* And I also expect that with the international community.

And just like they are talking to them, we are talking to them, too. And it is the same words being regurgitated that is being said to them, that is being said to us. This is what we think should happen. What is happening uniquely right now is the Bermudian business owner is saying almost identically what the international business is saying on how to fix it. So, what do we do? Some decisions, some hard decisions, have to be made, along with the decisions of equity and equality for everyone in Bermuda.

So, make the decisions. I recognise . . . listen, I know what it is to be Government. It is not easy; it is tough! Every day somebody is on your doorstep complaining. The 10 people that come to see you, nine-and-a-half of them are complaining because the 10th one. He will not make up his mind whether he wants a beat you up or cry on your shoulders and say help me. That is where we are. That is our reality. So, beating up on Pookie, beating up on Suck Rock—

[Laughter]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: —and beating up on the international business guy has not done a thing, because the reality is they are trying to sit down and find a solution.

I am going to tell you, listen, in the international business world . . . I was excited about international . . . although I do not live in that world, my cousins, I am going to tell you right now, they are over there making some dollars! They are making some dollars. Only a few of us . . . I must say, there should be more of us in some of those top-tier positions, that has not happened.

In fact, we just had a meeting with (was it Tuesday, Leah, that we had that meeting?) with international business. And we told them, *Hey, this is not right.* Used to be a time when my wife was working for one of the international businesses, she used to say, *Oh, we got six black guys now in the company. We*

got six. They used to count every time a black guy was lost or gained, and you could count them on two hands. Just two. Because that is the few that was there. A lot of black women, okay, a lot of black women that worked there. Thank God, because they were holding up their families, financially.

So, we have gained some good from it. What we now need to do is figure out . . . and the Honourable Member was talking about it, we have to figure out if you are going to bleed the system. We have to figure out how to bleed it just a little more without killing it. Sit down and let us come up with a plan that is going to allow these things to happen.

So, we keep going on and on and on up in this House and it is not making any sense unless you put down concretely what the plan is. And it sounds as if they are not sure what the plan is—Bermudians and foreigners. What is the plan? So, that is not our problem. That is Government's problem, and they have to work on that to figure out how they get their solutions out there to Bermuda so that they feel more confident, so that they feel safer about what is happening to us right now.

Because God forbid, there are many of us here that work in some of those international businesses. And God forbid that if there is a downturn—and that is what concerns me. And I am going to segue into . . . I wanted to talk about sustainability.

I am concerned because Bermuda imports not only international business [which] contributes 80 per cent-plus to our GDP, but we import just about everything in order to sustain our lives. With the world events that are going on right now, we do not have control over our destiny like we should because we import just about everything. Technology has given us the opportunity to be more sustainable. And I am hoping . . . I have not heard any more about, when it comes to the farming—hydrofarming, aquafarming and all of these kinds of things that will help us to become more sustainable.

Obviously, it will not be without any natural resource of our own other than our people right now to sustain ourselves in a better way. But we can do more with the international issues that are going on with the Chinas and the Russias and the USs of the world. The minute that they have a trade war, Bermuda is affected by it. We cannot afford what we got now, and he increases the tax on iron. All our cars are going up, all our bike prices are going up. And we have no control over that. We just saw the other day where a boat was either torpedoed or one of those mines hit it, a sea mine, hit it or whatever, we do not know—

[Timer beeps]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: But it was hit out of just trying to make a point.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to . . . ?

We recognise the Member from constituency 2. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes, good evening, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Good night.

[Laughter]

ST. GEORGE'S GOLF COURSE RESTORATION

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: *Good night, Irene, good night.*

Mr. Speaker, I will start off by speaking to a parochial issue first. As you know, Mr. Speaker, I have been a golfer all of my life, from about the age of 11. I know the benefits that this sport has had on the Bermuda economy and on its social construct and on the advancement of our social construct. The sport has had a major impact.

I use that to say this, that within our community as was mentioned early, Mr. Deputy Speaker—

[Hon. Derrick V. Burgess, Sr., Deputy Speaker, in the Chair]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: —we have seen considerable work done towards the restoration of the St. George's Golf Course, and I am very pleased that this project is taking place.

And as was mentioned by another Member, I think the Honourable Minister had mentioned, Minister Burch, had mentioned with regard to the hotel development. But the fact that the development has also accelerated the restoration of the golf course bodes extremely well for those residents who have properties around it. You would know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that any community that is within proximity of a golf course, their property values increase.

An Hon. Member: That is true.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: And the fact is that it has a tremendous knock-on effect for persons because it encourages them to do likewise, because when their property values [increase], so do their options.

Tonight, I speak to appeal to my fellow Bermudians because . . . it is nothing new when a golf course is under construction it becomes a nice place to ride your bikes.

[Laughter]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: And I tried to . . . when it was shared with me by the developer some photos

showing some tracks made on the golf course, it took me back to before I was switched on to golf, when White Hill byes and Somerset byes and Southampton byes could make their way from Wreck Road all the way down to Hightime [Drive]. And, if anybody knows that community, you are talking about going from Somerset bridge almost all the way down past Frank's Bay, all on the back road because back in the day, that was where South Road was going to go, if anybody did not realise it. South Road was not going to connect up to where it is now at the junction of South Shore and Middle Road. It was going to continue on up past Hightime, up and back of Granaway Heights, and join up, up around the golf course. But I think the golf course development may have, in Southampton, may have thwarted that somewhat. And, I am grateful that the golf course came about.

I say that to say that back in the late 1960s, anybody that would have ridden their bikes across Port Royal Golf Course, the development, or been down Tucker's Point when they were upgrading, it is an age-old problem for persons in the industry. Even as a manager of a golf course, that is how I got to know many young fellows. They look at me today . . . they are in the 40s and they say, *Boy, Swan, we used to have fun causing you to chase after us, come out!*

But, I am appealing to residents that would know what their property values may have been when the course was closed and overgrown to now appreciate that their value is going up. And, you know, there is a saying, *If you see someone, tell someone*, or even convince someone that it is not benefitting us to ride—because people would know who those persons are. And all I am doing . . . you know, I am looking for the law enforcement to be the solver of this problem. I am here to tell my fellow Bermudians that this is a good thing for our community because anyone who has a property now would have some increased equity, and many Bermudians who are land rich but very much cash poor would appreciate what that equity would mean.

So, in conversations, just walking through the town this week, I bumped into the developer who was concerned about that. And I wanted to bring it to [our] attention that, you know, we very much empathise and understand. I understand it! Me and my ace boys were probably, 50 years ago, fit that . . . you know, if there are bikes, man, you know, if anybody gets a motorbike, you can go, you know. And nobody is using pedal bikes if they can help it these days. Back in the old days, you could, but that sand is a little bit tough to navigate.

BERMUDA BUSINESS CONFIDENCE INDEX 2019 SUMMARY REPORT

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Confidence in Bermuda. Well, I work in the tourism industry and I happen to see minibuses up and down the West End and East

End and today. And I just happen to know that in the first quarter of 2017, which the OBA Government was in, . . . the OBA Government was in Government the first quarter of 2017, and there was a lot of work going on. Total arrivals were at 30,984. Now, that was a significant increase when you look back in 2014, 2015 and there was much to be celebrated. Okay?

In the first quarter of 2019, Mr. Deputy Speaker, total arrivals of 35,188. But I do not hear people jumping up and down and celebrating that, but I, you know, I was trying to reconcile the fact that when I am out there teaching golf to locals and some tourists, I see the minibus driver is stopping, taking a little picture of Port Royal, you know. Tooting to me, *Hey Swannie, what is going on?* Some minibus drivers and taxi drivers will even stop and come down there and show their people that they can hit a ball. And I will send a little joke their way and hopefully that helps at the end of the day. None of them have come and given me a commission for the increased tip that they get.

[Laughter]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: But that is okay. Maybe they will buy me a drink.

The point I am making is that Bermuda is busy in the tourism. Yes, and I will give kudos to the work of the BTA in that regard. But, you know, sometimes the Opposition—who, you know, looking to, you know, highlight the business survey might want to wonder if some of those businesses who are doing well during this particular area were actually surveyed as well because from my point of view, many of them are doing very well. And, in fact, if the minibuses are busy, I am sure that they got to get gas somewhere. Yes.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Now, when we look at this visitor survey, and I am looking for that bump back in air vacation leisure arrivals, I notice that cruise visitors in the first quarter of 2017 were 9,282 and in the first quarter of 2019, it was 11,100. That is the minibus drivers and the taxi drivers who are keeping busy, and the challenge that the Minister of Transport would have. And, you know, it is easy to go back and look for old articles of what someone may have said and attribute all of the exodus of visitors to one Statement that one Minister might have made back in the day and negate the fact that the real reason that businesses were leaving was the global recession.

The real reason that companies were having to do what they had to do was because some of their stock went down to \$2. Some of them changed their name from AIG to Chartis, and only just reintroduced that. That is reality. And we talk about business, but we are selective. So, I said, well listen, something is

not adding up. I see a lot of my mates very busy, in tourism.

Now, let me just (I am looking at that clock) take a little, just a gentle stroll down memory lane, because we do not have much time anyway to really go down memory lane. But I remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in my lifetime even on the precipice of coming into the Legislature, when tourism and international business were a 50/50 split with tourism taking the lead. You remember those times, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You remember them because you were very much in the lion's share of that. And the shift took place and I have said it before. A shift started to take place when the bases left.

When the bases left St. George's and the West End, St. George's in particular, a lot of guaranteed rents went with it. A lot of them! And a lot of recalibration had to take place, and you cannot replace that because what happens is, that when we had persons who were guaranteed to be here but guaranteed to leave because they were controlled by an organisation that kept them moving every two or three or one year depending on their presence here, they were replaced by persons who may want to not fit that mould. And our economy shifted towards international business to the extent where it became over-reliant on it.

I remember former Minister of the Government, Mr. Arthur Hodgson, my good friend. Twenty years ago, you, he and I went to Trinidad together. And what fond memories we had . . . and I wore my Bermuda shorts in commemoration of that trip. And I even brought my hat to remind you that you had yours tipped up like that and we were in every paper in Trinidad.

[Laughter]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: I did that for you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I wish you well on your journey, though without me.

But he spoke of sustainable development. And he meant it; he understood it. He is a scholar! And a scholar could sometimes speak to things in that respect because to balance. So, as Bermuda's economy went to a point where the average Bermudian . . . I remember back in the day when those two or three jobs that we were working back in the 1970s and 1980s, even during some difficult times, allowed people to own homes without amortised mortgages. Remember eight-year loans with balloon payments? Persons building houses with two and three apartments before international business, and some of them had the apartments as tourist accommodations. Bermuda had Airbnb before Airbnb figured it out.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes. And we had the . . . and international business came. When international business came, people shifted. That model shifted a little bit. People moved away from the tourist accommodations that we had and they shifted to more fixed leases. And those were good, as well.

What has not changed in the dynamics of the challenge, the social challenge that we have in Bermuda when it comes to race and social economic justice is that the black man has been at the bottom of the totem pole throughout. That is the one constant that we have always had the hardest row to hoe, and that is a tragedy and it hurts.

I can go in Canada, I can go in the United States, particularly in the south and the wide grass area, and be celebrated and have to experience things in employment. England, to be in the 1 per cent of the 1 per cent of persons up there and in this country have to justify . . . and I know some of it is because I went into politics and I accept that. But it should not be so because you should be able to segment people on their merits.

A person's merit in their professional field, in their social contributions and then be judged on their . . . but Bermuda is different! The social construct of this country lends itself to that and it is unfortunate. And it needs . . . I have always said, you know, the only time money is committed to social analysis of this country is when you have major problems and catastrophes. And a lot of times the businesses, like the Bank of Butterfield or persons there will make it happen, and then use those very statistics to make business decisions. So, social problems really do not [get] addressed.

But I felt if necessary in the short time that I had this evening to speak to this situation with tourism because as you look at a sustainable development . . . it has always concerned me from the time I competed in Hong Kong in the Dunhill Cup in 1992.

When I went there, it was depressing to drive to Royal Hong Kong Golf Club, one of the most prestigious golf clubs in the entire world, where it probably cost you a million dollars to be a member. I had to tell someone looking to go there, I said, *You will not play no golf in Hong Kong. Go somewhere else if you want to play golf because you cannot afford it.* It is not for anybody otherwise than the top 1 per cent, the percentage of 1 per cent.

It was depressing seeing concrete, concrete, concrete, concrete—and Bermuda, since 1992, has become more concrete. And that concerns me. I love open space and the balance we need to look at, and the significance of tourism has the opportunity to employ more of our Bermudians.

You know, one of the most disappointing things in the tourism industry when I was coming up, and I am a product of the tourism industry, so I shout out to all my Belmont Manor Hotel alumni and my Castle Harbour alumni, people that taught me the in-

dustry of hotels, you know, is that if you were a maître d' in the 1960s and 1970s, you were management material, par excellence, and never became the assistant manager or the general manager. Only but a few Bermudians came there. And still today, only but a few Bermudians are enjoying that. I know it. Because I know trust house forty stories. I know those stories up and down the country.

And I see, you know, the Bermudian male, the black Bermudian male, who even today at 60 and 70 and 75, who have a lot of knowledge, who have no chance of being included in a boardroom scenario where they can help companies avoid the mistakes that they make socially . . . businesses globally are looking at their social conscience. If the Bermudian business experience wants to get a better appreciation of the social construct, it needs to incorporate some black Bermudian men in their boardrooms! Not just the academics.

People like Mr. Leroy Riley in the tourism industry, studied in France! Red Dowling studied in France—top of their class back in the 1960s! And they are . . . and I am just picking on them because I know them very, very well. Earl Bailey, a pioneer.

An Hon. Member: Arthur Mills.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Arthur Mills. Cleve Dillas, one of my mentors. And many others. Many others up and down in music, in sports, and the like.

And you could be a black man, a commissioner of police, and have difficulty getting to be elevated. But you could be a white man and a sergeant and retire and enjoy greater benefits. It is the truth. I have no disrespect. I am the product of a career constable. But fair is only fair, and it has not been that fair in Bermuda, the experience has not been—and it has been passed on to us now.

We are left with the opportunity to correct it. I am here to tell business boardroom owners that everybody that sits in this House could be a candidate to be in a boardroom. Why not? No matter where you sit, but you need to also look at this Government, this PLP Government when you are looking in that direction, in particular, because the PLP persons have been speaking up for social justice in greater—

[Timer beeps]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: —example.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you—

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: My word, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: —Honourable Member, the 20 minutes is gone.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: I end on that note.

The Deputy Speaker: Any further speakers?

There appear to be one—Ms. Honourable Member Ming, you have the floor.

COMMUNITY CENTRES

Mrs. Renee Ming: Good evening, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and listening audience.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wanted to use my time this evening to actually talk about communities because each and every one of us represent some part of a community here in Bermuda. For me, I happen to represent constituency 1, which actually has a community centre. If you are from St. George's, you actually call it the You Centre. "You" became the shorter version of "Youth" Centre. So, us that was growing up down there in St. George's we just say, *Oh, yeah, you going to the You Centre?* But there actually are three centres, three community centres, around our small Island. So, there is one in St. George's, there is one in Hamilton (the Centre) and you have the one in Sandys.

Now, arguably, I would think that my centre in St. George's is the best. Yes? But that is because, you know, truly, I believe everything in St. George's is the best. Even when we are at fault, we are still the best. But it is what it is. Tonight, what it is, I am actually advocating on behalf of the community centres, period, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I happened to spend a good bit of time at my centre. My children have all grown up and come through the centre from being children that go to camp, to then becoming counsellors and then just being involved with the community centre on a whole. And, so, over the years you see the centre evolve and become various things.

I know that even when I sat in the Senate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I advocated hard every year in terms of budget for community centres, and I am pleased to say that under the Progressive Labour Party Government there has been additional funds year over year allocated to community centres. Now, albeit small, and maybe we have some work to do and there could be some more money being used down there. You know, we understand the financial times that we are living in. But we have managed to give an increased budget year over year for our centres. And so, what that does is, it allows the programmes within the centre to thrive and be successful.

When you think of a community centre, you probably think in terms of our children and although the children are predominately users of the centre, the centre, I know for St. George's probably goes from the ages of zero to 100-plus, because our seniors are using it as well. And so, it is rewarding at times to go to the centre and use it and just see the community honest and truly at work.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know you spend a lot of time in St. George's, as you are registered in St. George's, so, and I know that the St. George's Community Centre is very familiar to you as well. I happened to be there this year. And, like I said, I am always popping by there, but they had like their kite thing, and I saw their flier and so I picked it up and I have had it for a while and I made sure to text some of the information that is actually in the flier.

Like I said to you, it is one of those things that evolved. But, the centre . . . actually the brochure actually says that the St. George's Community Centre is the most fully equipped community centre in Bermuda. And so when you break that down and you think about it, it says some of its key features include: gymnasium, games room, basketball court, kitchen, community garden, mini-golf course, computer room, four classrooms, indoor and outdoor movie screens, stunt park.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say all of that to say that the need for community centres—I am pointing out the resources that are available to the community centre, but the need for community centres in our community. Our community centre, I know for sure, is one of those that we rely on the people who work at our centre. We know each and every one of them. They are people who we interact with on a day-to-day basis. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the need for community centres, for me, does not go over my head and I guess my theme tonight would be to stress to even my parliamentary colleagues to visit one of their neighbouring community centres and just sort of see what happens and what goes on there and how you could even play a part in being actively involved in your community centre.

In St. George's, this is their 2018/19 programme, Mondays you have Prison Yoga, Tiny Tots, First Kick—and these are, again, diverse programmes. Tuesdays, you got Girls Club/Boys Club, and Dancerettes. Wednesdays you have Seniors Art Club, Dancerettes. Thursdays, Seniors Gardening, Community Service, Cyber Kids, Open Run Basketball. Fridays you have Circle of Friends (which is for seniors), I am sorry, Dancerettes and Family Movie Nights.

This is a centre that is up and open every day from 10 to 10, just not open on Sundays. It is engaged. It is interactive and it is active. And when I say evolving, like for instance, now you see Cyber Kids on there and that is one of those programmes where the children are learning things on their tablets because you take your tablet . . . I know my daughter, she could take her tablet and they go and they learn various things. So, I wanted to use my time this day to make sure to speak about, not just my community centre, but community centres on a whole and why we need them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we live in a country, in a world, that has so many things going on in it and just

the time that the community centre takes to nurture our children and our adults and our seniors is worth applauding. My community workers, in St. George's I have Tiffany Paynter, she is actually the supervisor at the centre; I have Carla Watson, who has probably been there for 25 years-plus. We have Caprial Dill; we have CJ Marshall, III; we have Gavin Smith. I do not know how Gavin got a job down there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because he is from Somerset. Pushkin Douglas; Malia Smith; Jenara Johnson and Greg Smith.

And this is a team of people who, no matter what it is we are doing at the centre, whether we are there for our kids, hosting a meeting there or whatever, they make sure that we have everything that we need and then, even though we have suggestions and things that we want to put forth to them on something that could be done either better or improved at the centre, they take it forward, they let you know.

So, am I advocating tonight on behalf of community centres? Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They have their summer day camp running at this time. For St. George's Camp, I kid you not . . . and my colleagues know that I advocate very strongly on behalf of the summer day camps and I did this year and I thank the Minister for listening and putting a sign up down there at St. George's for the St. George's Camp. But at 5:30 when the camp opened, at 5:33, St. George's Camp was full. So that even in itself is a testimony . . . because you are not going to take your children somewhere where you do not think that they are safe. You send them there because we know it is a good environment, it is a safe environment, and these guys who have been, who work there, they actually care.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my comments tonight with regard to the St. George's Community Centre . . . I encourage my colleagues to visit a neighbourhood centre near you. You are quite welcome to come to St. George's, you know, I do not turn anybody away and sort of see how it is that we do it.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Mrs. Renee Ming: And continue to support your centre and advocate for them because sometimes the advocating that you do not just on this floor, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it could be in other places, to the relevant persons that can make the change.

BERMUDA POLICE SERVICE—STRANGER DANGER PROGRAMME

Mrs. Renee Ming: And I want to use my other few minutes to talk about a collaborative effort that I had last week with the Bermuda Police Service [BPS]. There are times when things happen in our various constituencies and you see that there is a need for something else. There were some things that hap-

pened, I know, in my area and there was a need to have a conversation on "Stranger Danger."

And I want to just say to you that, earlier this year we started doing monthly meetings with the Bermuda Police Service. Because I wanted to know what goes on in St. George's. I get the stats in terms of the crime, so that we can be proactive and sort of know what crimes are happening, anything that should be . . . any awareness on it, and generally just sort of keeping your pulse on what is happening in constituencies—and it is for constituencies 1, 2, 3 and 4.

So, we already have our monthly meetings with them, but we went out to the Police Service at one of our meetings and said, *Well, we have a little concern with regard to schools are about to come out. We have had this incident at the bus terminal that is very disturbing to us, and we think that we should have a conversation with our children.* Immediately, the Bermuda Police Service came and said we have something that we do call "Stranger Danger." And so, we got a date, the Corporation of St. George's partnered with us as well. They provided a venue and we hosted a session called "Stranger Danger."

For anybody that knows, you know that I have a passion when it comes to our kids and the education and awareness around certain topics. But I do want to say to you this first is that what I saw on that evening for the 20 persons that came out, because families came out, so I had mom, dads and their children, parents with their children, because that is how we advertised it. We said bring your kids and come and let us have this conversation. And part of it, like I said to you that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is summer is here, the kids are out of school and they are all around and we want them to know what protections they have, what options they have and how they can react to certain situations.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had, like I said to you, we had 20 people and we actually talked about the things that make us feel uncomfortable because at some point we have to get to that space of talking about what makes us feel uncomfortable. So, it is actually almost like taking the uncomfortable and making it a comfortable conversation, and we did that on that evening.

And I do want to just applaud the police officers that came down there. They gave not just information on Stranger Danger, they gave us information relating to SCARS [Saving Children And Revealing Secrets], they gave us (as parents) information on the cybersecurity. And I can tell you this here, as a parent who, I think I am sort of tech savvy, there were so many sites that I was unaware of that our children could be going on and, you know, they encouraged us as parents to look at the history on your children's devices, whether they be phones or tablets, see who they are communicating with because sometimes they are playing a game with somebody who is all over the world and then you may have a situation where that

person may ask a question that could be deemed to be inappropriate.

So, that was the cyber side of it. But we had four members from the Bermuda Police Service who were extremely knowledgeable. It was Haynes; it was Bridgeman; it was Gilbert (who was actually from Somerset); and there was our Parish Constable, which is Simon Joseph. And I just want to thank each and every . . . thank them for coming on with the level of expertise that they have and actually being as engaging and interacting as they were so that children were able to sort of talk to them and give them some of their thoughts because when I think about communities, these are some of the things that I believe should be happening in our communities and as representatives should be identifying and where we can facilitate and put things in place, that is what we should be doing.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also would like to take a moment to thank Mr. Laws, Ms. Minors and definitely Superintendent Astwood because it was her push that made sure that we were able to have this and get it over the top.

So, I think, again, as it boils down to the whole community aspect because you had the BPS, we had the Corporation of St. George's, and you just had your area representatives who actually were able to come together, work collaboratively and make sure that we created, we facilitated, an event that created education and awareness for our kids and for our parents. And I think that as we move forward, I think it is things like this that we . . . it does not take much on our side to get it done and [this is what] we should be doing.

So, my theme for my motion to adjourn tonight, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is about communities. I gave you a little bit of information about my community in hopes that you can take some things away to your communities and then we can see some positive results coming out of them, and I do stand by my word and the document says it as well, that the St. George's Community Centre is by far the best centre.

An Hon. Member: It is!

The Deputy Speaker: It is the best.

Another Hon. Member: Wow!

Mrs. Renee Ming: Mr. Deputy Speaker—

An Hon. Member: Yes, it is.

Mrs. Renee Ming: —I thank you for allowing me this time.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Any further speakers? The Chair recognises for a brief moment, Pat Gordon-Pamplin.

[Laughter]

LACK OF DECORUM IN THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And interestingly, I intended only to be brief because I actually had no intention of speaking tonight.

But as I sat here, I really have tried to maintain my calm and my cool because for the 20 years that I have sat in this honourable place, I have put my very best efforts into the job that I have been elected to do and that I am required to do.

One of the things that I was not banking on when I came to this Honourable House was the degree of insults that I have to continuously tolerate from Members opposite.

Now, I do not have a problem in the cut and thrust of debate and the toing and froing. I have no issue with that. I have very broad shoulders. I can agree that there are always going to be issues that we will not see eye to eye on, and there will be differences of opinion. But the constant personal jabbing . . . while I expect it, there comes a time when one has to start to think that in this House we should be dealing with issues. You know, I heard comments tonight, *Oh, you were nothing but a part-time Minister*. Yes, part-time Minister who had to work 16 to 18 hours a day to get the job done, to be able to work after five o'clock in the evening in order to make sure that my job that was paying me for my 9:00 to 5:00 was done, and working until one o'clock in the morning—I did that. And I did it willingly and lovingly because that was my contribution to the country and my responsibility to the people who had confidence in me to vote for me to bring me to this Honourable House and through whose confidence allowed me to sit in a ministerial position.

So, there is no such thing as a part-time Minister. There are full-time Ministers who may get part-time pay, that is just the reality of it. And I do not apologise for the position that I was in. If I could be efficient enough that I can do twice as much in half the time, that is not my fault.

I cannot help it if I am bright. That was just the reality of being able to get done the work that was required to be done within the Ministry. So, when I hear these constant jibes and insults and stuff being thrown out—and especially from a ministerial level—I think it has reached the stage where something needs to be said.

I do not like it. I do not appreciate it and I have no doubt that I give as good as I get, so it might very well be that when jibes are being thrown out at me, I will respond in kind. But all it does is to debase the decorum of the House and it brings us to a place where we ought not to be. And I think it was important to make mention of that.

EXPLOITATION OF EMPLOYEES

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: The other comment that I wanted to make was with respect to the Minister's from constituency 3 [comment] on exploitation of employees. And what I was saying while she was speaking, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was not to take exception to what she was saying, which seemed to be what the Ministers were interpolating, but rather to say that if somebody comes to me and complains that an employee who is being seriously exploited is saying that they believe that an employer is doing so only to be able to bring somebody—a foreigner—in through Immigration in order to be able to have that position, so to dissuade the local from making that application. What I am saying is that we are working together in tandem and as a result of that, the Immigration Department needs to be able to be robust.

I am certain that if somebody believes that a company is exploiting them by way of the advertisements that they are putting out and not wanting to hire them, so that they could bring in a foreigner, this is where the Minister and the Immigration Minister have to work hand in hand.

The Minister needs to be able to say to her complainant that, you know, we have a policy in place and our Minister has a level of excellence in terms of how he discharges his responsibility, that the Department of Immigration when they look at the application forms, we have to be able to trust them to say that if an application looks as though it has either been tailor-made or it is inappropriate or somebody is being exploited, that the Immigration Department will step up and do its job. And I believe that they do.

I have served as a Minister in that place and I know the scrutiny that goes on with the applications. I have made mention of it once before in this Honourable House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there was an instance where we had an application, there were 50, 60-something Bermudian [applicants], but that employer wanted the person that they wanted. And because we denied it, he came back with this appeal and he said, *The Minister does not know what she is doing, the PS does not know what she is doing, and the Chief Immigration Office does not know what she is doing.*

And I said, *You know what, you are probably perfectly right. I cannot contradict what you believe. But I can tell you one thing, the three of us may not know what we are doing, but the one thing we do know is that you are not getting that person that you think you are going to get. Because of the 60-something applicants that you had, you are not going to tell me that one of them was not going to be the diamond in the rough who is going to be sufficiently good enough for you to be able to take plates off the table in your restaurant to take them to the kitchen, or to pick up a plate at the kitchen and serve it to somebody in your restaurant. You are not going to tell me*

that you have to have somebody who is foreign to do that.

I say that only because it is important for us, Minister, to work in tandem, so that when people start to have those negative feelings, it can only descend to a place where it ought not be and I believe that people need to be put right in terms of what the facts are as to how the Immigration Department helps to protect them so that we do not, you know, we do not encourage a pity party that could be arrested at the appropriate time. Let us work together, the ministries, working together, and certainly we, as Opposition, we get complaints all the time that people see the . . . and I will always let people know what the facts are irrespective of who the Government is, because I do not want people to operate under misconceptions as to what we do here.

Because what happens, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that when things go wrong, they do not blame the PLP Government. They do not blame the former OBA Government. They blame us as politicians here in this House. So, if something is not working well in the community, we all are tarred with the same brush and that is not fair to the system and it is not fair to some of the harder working civil servants who are out there doing their best with what they have to work with. And I just implore us to be able to make sure that when we get complaints, we take them up to the extent that they are appropriate. But we stop them in their tracks to the point that it is somebody moaning and complaining when the facts do not support the information that they are giving.

I am concerned when it comes to exploitation of employees, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have seen, we have heard the comments tonight about the preferential treatment, and it does not just happen in menial tasks, it happens right across the gambit. And when the Minister earlier indicated that he sees some of the applications with some people making \$500,000 and \$600,000 a year, all I can say is that for a Chief Executive in a company, if he is making \$500,000 or \$600,000 a year, he is underpaid, because I have seen them coming through with application forms that are far, far higher than that with perks that go along with it that would bring it up to a seven-figure mark.

So, these are the realities, that we do not have the opportunities necessarily as Bermudians to be able to, . . . there may perhaps be a handful of Bermudians who have been able to scale that pinnacle, to reach that level of excellence within companies or that level of hierarchy within a company whereby their salaries would be anything even reasonably close to what we have seen and that we have described in some instances perhaps to be over the top. And many of those people who hold those positions are no smarter than we are. No smarter. But they have the position because that is what it is, and our laws and our rules and our regulations do not permit

us to be able to ensure that those companies do the things that they are supposed to.

I have spoken about it before. There are certain basic things that companies can do such as ensuring that your seniors, once they retire, are kept on your corporate group plan so that they have the benefit of group rates as opposed to having to go out into the community and finding insurance plans at, you know, 70 per cent or 80 per cent higher than what you are paying as a group. These are things that are easy to identify, they are easy to rectify, and they are easy to legislate, and I think the conversations need to be had so that companies can buy into how we can make it all work. When companies are seen to be assisting our people within our community, then the negative impressions that we have and that the Government has with them because they have had a negative confidence review of the Government, then there would be a better communication. And once there is better communication, it bodes well for everybody.

REVIEW OF PENSION LEGISLATION TO ENSURE EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: A final point that I wanted to make, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was I had the opportunity last week, probably 10 days or so ago, in chatting with a young Bermudian mother who actually works in the education system. And her comment was that she has a son who actually has finished his first year at New England Institute of Technology, NEIT. And in order for her son to go abroad she was only able to afford the school fees by drawing down on her pension that allowed her the hardship, the education hardship, that she is entitled to do based on the legislation. But it is apparently something, according to her, that was only allowed once every five years. I did not go back and double-check the legislation, but I believe that she is correct. So, once every five years.

So, her child has now finished the first year of college, he has come back home and he cannot go back in September because she does not have the money to send him back in September. This is a child who had a 3.4 GPA and I suggested to her the routes that she could conceivably take, but these are the kinds of things that we have to start to look out for.

I believe that there is good reason to be able to start to look at our pension legislation to see if there is some relief that can be gotten for people in this situation. Because now here we have a one-year college student who has completed the one year with a reasonably good GPA who now does not have the opportunity to go back in September because mom does not have the money. And I just think that when we are encumbered by a lack of resources, a lack of funding in order to ensure that our children have the best opportunities that exist, then that child will become frustrated as time goes on and then we will end up with a talent that is lost to the community.

So, I would like to admonish us to have a look at how we can address these kinds of situations just to try to ensure that our young people are not stymied in their educational exploits in order so that they can not just continue their education, they should be able to come back to Bermuda completed with their years.

Some of us have a lot more in our pension funds than others do, just based on occupational pensions being at 5 per cent or 10 per cent of the gross salary that people are earning. So, therefore, it is understandable that, you know, it may create definite hardships. Some of us may be able to afford to make sure that our children are able to go to college and there are no such things as having to draw down on pensions or student loans or the like for our children.

But then there are others who are in the same situation as this lady who actually works for the Government, works in our education system, in one of our schools and finds herself in this very difficult situation in being able to educate her child.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I bring that up because I promised her that I would. I let her know that I have tremendous concerns when it comes to education. I have tremendous concerns when it comes to opportunities for our young people and I want to make sure that we have whatever support systems in place so that we do not have to find another young Bermudian man falling through the cracks. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Any further speakers? The Chair recognises the [Deputy] Premier, the Honourable Water Roban—briefly.

REVIEW OF PENSION LEGISLATION TO ENSURE EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I have a few things to say tonight, but I want to start by just addressing a matter just raised by the Honourable Member who sits for constituency 23, because I do believe that there are certain things that we in this House do agree on and that is ensuring educational opportunities for our young people. That is the tool of opportunity, how they manifest that will be a choice that they make.

So, I was concerned about the story that the Honourable Member just relayed, and I know she raised it so that it can be addressed. So, I am suggesting that the Honourable Member speak to the Minister for Labour, because Workforce Development can potentially assist because no parent should find themselves financially in a position where they cannot at least help their child fulfil that educational opportunity.

So, I am going to ask that either the Honourable Member or perhaps she direct the person con-

cerned to contact the office of Workforce Development or the Minister herself so that there can be some prescription of assistance for that young person's aspirations.

An Hon. Member: Exactly.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: I think that is something that we all in this House support. So, I just wanted to say that and thank the Member for bringing that to our attention.

[Hon. Dennis P. Lister, Jr., Speaker, in the Chair]

COMMUNITY CENTRES

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Mr. Speaker, a lot has been said tonight about a number of things. But one story that I heard tonight that I was particularly fulfilled by is the presentation by the Honourable Member who sits for constituency 1 and her talk about the activities around the community centres. And primarily because it was a positive story, it talked about the community working together, using an institution to positively enhance the lives of a variety of their citizens irrespective of where they come from or what they do or who they are.

That was in contrast to some of the other things that we heard tonight, so I thank the Honourable Member for talking about that, about what is happening in St. George's around their community centre and making the plea for all community centres for providing the same support they do in the community. So, thank you for that.

BERMUDA BUSINESS CONFIDENCE INDEX 2019 SUMMARY REPORT

Hon. Walter H. Roban: But we did talk about a number of things tonight, and I know that the Business Confidence Survey was in the background and in the theme of much of what many people said tonight, and the current Business Confidence Survey done through HSBC has certainly painted a picture of where the perceptions of those surveyed believe Bermuda is at.

Now, we heard the Opposition's kind of, I would say, response to some of the discussion that certainly came from some Members of this side. But I would suggest something about that, and for one, the reaction to that survey reflects, I believe the diversity of how the community sees many things, including that survey. So, all the responses should not be dismissed.

Minister Caines summed up the approach this Government will take to that information because as was articulated, just as the previous Government did and as does the Opposition, we are dealing with the business community all the time. Minister Caines outlined the work that his Ministry is doing with the busi-

ness community. Over 80 members of the business community are participating with the work that they are doing in Immigration. And as we know, when it comes to the finance area, there are numerous committees and groups that are from within the private sector but also in the public sector that dialogue on the development of legislation, development of policy that affects the international business sector.

So, those interactions are there. They are part of the system. So, there should not be any illusion as to the engagement that this Government—and Government in general—has with those sectors of our community.

So, yes, the business survey has given a snapshot of the perceptions of those who were surveyed. But I would suggest, because another Member of the Opposition tonight did make a suggestion that when the OBA was in power that we, because often this is how dialogue goes, there is an effort to paint a picture, we get spanked for what we were doing as Opposition, or when they were Government, and then there is an effort to say well, we want to work together and then sometimes the criticism or the dialogue can go all over the place.

But the reality is this, Mr. Speaker, I have looked at those surveys going back to when they started in 2014. Most of them under that period were optimistic. They started being negative around 2018. And anyone can go back and look at the history of them. And that may have been for different reasons. Certainly, during that period of time, the business community was more optimistic about what was happening in Bermuda. But suddenly, in 2018 and this year, that has changed. Perhaps that is for a reason, but that is some of the reason and rationale for why you hear the mixed reaction to the survey. Because suddenly things have changed.

Now, if you look at the Premier's response from last year, he states certain facts about the economic state of the country which would suggest that there should have been a better feeling from the business community. But there was still a negative perception from the survey.

So, yes, some may say that is a reflex to some of the traditional sentiments that our country still holds, that is a part of the experience. Now, I will just saddle from there, to what I thought was a—

[Timer beeps]

The Speaker: That is not for you.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: I know that is not for me.

The Speaker: No.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Mr. Speaker—

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: He just used up the rest of my time.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: There was some very passionate presentations by Members on this side around certain issues. And, yes, Minister Burch has his own way of communicating. But certainly, his sentiments . . . and that is some of the response that often gets certain Members a certain response. People hear the interpolation that sometimes shapes how people respond to all of us and each other in this House. So, I will just say that.

But, Mr. Speaker, Minister Burch did say some things that were true. Much of this Government's agenda to build a fair and better Bermuda has been hijacked for the past two years. Hijacked by CFATF; has been hijacked by economic substance. Has been hijacked by, yes, the Paradise Papers—of which the Government that has to use some of its own political capital and efforts to clean up a private sector mess. And there has been a history of us having to clean up private sector mess in the past, as we well know.

And often Governments have to do that. Governments in general have to do that, but certainly I am speaking for what I know is the history of the Government that I am a part of. We have had in the past had to clean up private sector mess. And we can go back as far as when a number of the reinsurance companies that we are so happy to protect because they are a part of that 80 per cent of the economy, were being chased by New York and US regulators for their questionable practises.

I do not see anybody talking about the reputational risk that brought to Bermuda that much anymore, because some people can clean up their images real quick. And as was said earlier, when that stock went down to \$2, these are things that we have to deal . . . we as a country have had to face and we have had to build up and expend money as a Government to deal with and regulate and oversee.

So, yes, international business and business of that calibre brings a lot to Bermuda and always has. But there has been a by-product of it, too, which has required us as Bermudians to put a lot of time and energy into creating an environment that on the international scene shows that we are doing what is necessary to be a legitimate player in the international marketplace.

So, international business brings benefits, but it also brings costs to our country, and sometimes risks that we have to manage. And then when we see many of our people losing jobs . . . and as the Honourable Minister for Labour spoke about, there is often a situation where people are not coming to the table with clean hands. And that is another reason why this survey often gets a mixed response from persons in certain quarters of the community because at the same time they are expressing their concern about

the Bermuda economy, we hear stories like what the Honourable Minister said about the injustice against Bermudian workers. We hear stories about the professionals who do not feel they are getting a fair shake for opportunity to move up the ladder. We hear stories about how our Bermudians are struggling just to be the mangers of some of these companies. Not trying to be the C-suite people who are making the \$500,000-plus benefits. They are just trying to be the managers who can live successfully and happily in their own country and aspire to develop a quality of life that can ensure their future sustainably and their families. Those are the stories we hear as well.

So, business confidence surveys are okay, but clean hands are even better. So, when we hear these stories, yes, and I always cringe . . . oh, I should not say cringe, but I believe that it can be patronising to repeat always the importance that international business has to the economy. And I want the House to understand something about myself. I am a child of the international business era. All of my parents' working life was in international business. So, that saw my development from a young person right up to when I went off to school. I lived in the international business sector as a child. I grew up around it. I understand it, and I understood the significance it played to my life and my development. So, I do not have any illusions about its importance to the Bermuda economy. I lived it.

But there is also that side that many of our people are bringing to our attention. It is not all roses, and part of what the Minister for Immigration spoke about tonight, passionately, is that to build a better and fairer Bermuda, there has to be change. International business comes with what it thinks needs to be done. And I am sure it was articulated in that particular session that they attended. But like was said, they also have to take their licks just as the economy and others in this country are taking their licks, just as the Government is managing its own licks, with managing having to decrease debt, becoming more efficient, controlling spending, sometimes decreasing services.

That is some of the licks the Government is taking. Well, business has to take it, too, because their role in this economy and this society is important in that our people deserve to be treated fairly, to have access to opportunity and develop lives that are important. And, yes, this Government feels that some of our agenda over the past couple of years has been hijacked to benefit them, to save them (in some cases) from themselves because we have to protect them from international regulators and protect the Bermuda reputation from international regulators.

And there have been a number of blacklists over the years. There is not just the one that we just saw. We have seen them appear over the past 20 years again and again. Greylists, blacklists, uncooperative jurisdictions, having to move the goalposts, and the Government over the decades having to re-

spond to that, PLP, UBP, OBA. That is the role we have had to play. That is the burden the country carries.

So, when we are firm with business, and when we make firm statements about the role of business and what we feel is the responsibility of business, it is because of those factors. Because we are out there, defending their position, sometimes at the sacrifice of delivering to our own people. And for the past two years, with all that legislation that we have had to bring to this House, we have had one of the longest sessions in history of this House when we first started in 2017. That was because we had the legislation and we had to get it done.

It started early and ended late. We all know. We all were tired, irritated and upset by that. But that was so that we could get legislation done that was integral to the stability and economic stability of this country. This Government does not shy away from that. But as Colonel Burch said, we are going to be focusing on more on the people's agenda—building the fairer, better Bermuda, working on immigration reform, working on banking reform to deal with some of the lending practises and policies of the Government which is hurting people. Raising interest rates month on month, decreasing their spending power which affects retail sales and other types of sales, might even affect gasoline sales. But those are the realities of our working people.

I heard a story today from someone (no, not today, a couple of days ago) about a 75-year-old woman looking for work, looking for housing, and desperate. Why in this Bermuda should a 75-year-old person be looking for a job? Why can they not have suitable options for housing? Why should somebody over the age of 65 or 70-plus need to work in a Bermuda as prosperous as we are? Why should our seniors and our working people be saddled with high health care costs when we have the capacity to change the model of how we finance health care in this country and bring about better outcomes? Why has the system stayed the way that it has for so long? Why do insurance companies fight against the changes?

Those are questions we should be asking in this House and answering. And, yes, the Government is drawing up and has outlined plans to deal with many of these things—banking reform, health reform, education reform. But at the same time, finding ways to give more young people the opportunity to further education at UWI [University of the West Indies] and even at our own Bermuda College. Many Governments have to chew gum, run, and shoot basketball at the same time, and we are doing our best to do it the best we can. As I am sure the OBA believed it was doing the best it could when it was in this chair. But we are here, and as the Opposition Leader intimated or perhaps said, as he says often every week, that he is prepared to work with us on this. So, we hope we

see that action and what the Opposition says and the Opposition Leader says they are prepared to do, to see the country move forward as he said.

PLP GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

Hon. Walter H. Roban: He said that people were hurting. That is what people are saying. Well, work with us to deal with their pain, deal with their suffering. Because we have plans in all the areas of concern. Many of them have been outlined. We have a revised National Tourism Plan which is there. We have banking reform. We even have a bank now that is in the FinTech space which is working with the Bermuda Commercial Bank that may be bringing not only new forms of banking, but services to that industry here to Bermuda. So, things are happening that we hope will help to move the country forward.

Yes, we are looking to do different things in energy, potentially more renewables. Certainly, the Finger project is a symbol of that and we hope that there will be actions happening to do more in the country to transform Bermuda.

We as legislators must see ourselves to be transformative, Mr. Speaker, and so, I would suggest, that tonight many of our Members and our Ministers who have spoken, have sought to make that clear, that one, the Business Confidence Survey says what it says, but this Government will never shy away from the critique. It will always embrace the opportunity to work with business and it will always, always seek to make sure that we are putting our Bermudians first.

As we seek the cooperation, as we seek to change the country, as we seek to move things forward, putting Bermudians first is crucial in that dynamic. There are some who would argue that before now that has not been the case. Other Governments would perhaps suggest that they have been working at that, too. But understand something, Mr. Speaker. The agenda is about putting Bermudians first, it is about creating jobs, it is about creating opportunity, it is about diversifying the economy so that Bermuda has a sustainable growth not only now, but as the years go on that we all will benefit from together.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Deputy.

We now stand adjourned until Friday next at 10:00 am.

But just a little bit of housekeeping before we go, the report that was tabled this morning by the [Joint Select Committee to Investigate, Report and Make Recommendations on the events Of 2 December 2016] is a very large document, so it was not emailed, but it is on everyone's tablet. So, you can pull it up on your tablet. It was too large to email out to you, so it is on your tablets.

Okay? Good.

Enjoy your weekend. See you on Friday.

[Gavel]

*[At 11:00 pm, the House stood adjourned until
10:00 am, Friday, 12 July 2019.]*