



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

18 March 2019

*Sitting number 17 of the 2018/19 Session
(pages 1289–1368)*

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

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BERMUDA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT****18 MARCH 2019****10:06 AM***Sitting Number 17 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 11 March 2019]***The Speaker:** Good morning, Members.

The Minutes of the sitting from the 11th of March, are there any omissions or corrections needed?

There are none.

They will be confirmed as printed.

*[Minutes of 11 March 2019 confirmed]***The Speaker:** The Minutes from the 13th and the 15th of March have been deferred.**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER
OR MEMBER PRESIDING****APOLOGY****The Speaker:** First, I would [like to] announce that the Honourable Member, Ms. Furbert, has indicated that she will be absent today.**PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS—FOLLOWING
THROUGH ON UNDERTAKINGS****The Speaker:** And I would just like to remind Members, particularly Ministers, when you are on your feet responding to questions, and you indicate that you will provide information that is not at hand and that you will provide the information to the House at a later date, then you should follow through with that.

So, for Members who have made those indications during this session, just please follow through.

MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE**The Speaker:** There are none.**PAPERS AND OTHER
COMMUNICATIONS TO THE HOUSE****The Speaker:** There are two papers down for communication this morning. The first is in the name of the Minister of Finance.

Minister.

**SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (NO. 3)
FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2017/18****Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the powers conferred by Schedule 2, paragraph 96 of the Constitution, I would be honoured to attach and submit for the consideration of the Honourable House of Assembly Supplementary Estimates (No. 3) for Financial Year 2017/18.

The Speaker: Thank you.

And the second is in the name of the Minister of Health. Minister Wilson.

**2018 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BERMUDA DRUG
INFORMATION NETWORK (BerDIN)****Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This morning I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly the 2018 Annual Report of the Bermuda Drug Information Network (BerDIN).

The Speaker: Thank you.**PETITIONS****The Speaker:** There are none.**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS
AND JUNIOR MINISTERS****The Speaker:** Members, I ask your indulgence. Even though the Order Paper did not have it, with the quick

turnover during the budget period, you know, you try to print everything as early as possible. But the Premier and the Minister of Finance will do Statements this morning, as well. So, I seek your indulgence on that.

Premier.

And copies are being circulated now.

Sergeant?

Yes, the Sergeant will circulate them now. And before you start, Minister of Finance, do you want to circulate [yours] as well?

Do you have them?

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: I have them.

The Speaker: Okay. They will be circulated before you get up, Minister. Okay.

MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE SALARIES REVIEW BOARD— UPDATE

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members will recall that in the course of the consideration of the 2018/19 Budget, I confirmed to this Honourable House that after some time, a [Ministers and Members of the Legislature Salaries Review Board](#) had been appointed to discharge its functions, as by law.

Mr. Speaker, that board has not completed its work and, as such, the resolution that I will table in this Honourable House later today does not in any way alter the salaries of Ministers and Members of the Legislature.

To allow for the board to finish its work and to make recommendations to this Honourable House, as required by the Act [Ministers and Members of the Legislature (Salaries and Pensions) Act 1975], today's resolution is proposed to have effect for a further three months.

I wish to remind Honourable Members that the deliberations of the board are set out in Schedule 1 of the Act, and they dictate that, "In the performance of its functions, the Board may inform itself in such manner as it thinks fit, but shall have regard to: (a) the level of remuneration for legislators in other jurisdictions; (b) the rates of remuneration for senior civil servants; (c) economic considerations; and (d) any other factors which the Board considers appropriate."

Mr. Speaker, I am advised that this period will be sufficient for the completion of the task at hand, and I expect that, as per the Act, this Honourable House will be in receipt of the board's report and recommendations in due course. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister of Finance.

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (NO. 3) FINANCIAL YEAR 2017/18

Hon. Curtis L. Dickinson: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to provide Honourable Members with background information on [Supplementary Estimates \(No. 3\) for 2017/18](#), which was tabled in this Honourable House earlier this morning.

Initially, I would like to state for the record that the tabling of this supplementary does not alter the actual performance for fiscal year 2017/18 that has already been reported in the Pre-Budget Report and other government documents. For the record, I would like to remind Honourable Members that total capital and current account cash expenditure for 2017/18 was \$1.129 billion, which was \$47.5 million, or 4.1 per cent, lower than the original budget estimate of \$1.177 billion.

This Government came into office in July 2017 and skilfully managed Bermuda's finances and exceeded all of the 2017/18 budget targets, despite offering public officers a 2.5 per cent pay award back-dated to April 2017. The need for tabling this supplementary is purely for procedural purposes. Mr. Speaker, in order for Honourable Members to have a better understanding for the reason why this supplementary has to be presented, it might be useful for me to highlight the procedures in the Ministry of Finance for ministries to seek supplementary estimates.

The Ministry of Finance procedures in place require all ministries to seek supplementary estimates before the actual overspend. This is typically done towards the end of the fiscal year via Supplementary Estimate (No. 1). At this time, ministries should have a reasonable indication of what their spending level for the fiscal year will be, although it should be noted that in some instances ministries may not be able to estimate accurately the potential overspend.

Once the Financial Statements have been completed and audited, ministries will know what their final spend is, and if this amount is above the original estimate, plus any approved supplementary estimate, then an additional and final supplementary estimate is required. This is exactly why this supplementary is being tabled now. The Financial Statements of the Consolidated Fund are now audited, and all ministries are aware of their final expenditure appropriations. In accordance with the Ministry's established procedures, these final supplementaries are tabled during the budget session.

Mr. Speaker, considering that these items will be debated in detail, including input from the relevant and accountable ministries and Minister at a later date, it would be inappropriate for me to comment now on the specific supplementaries.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

PETITIONS

The Speaker: There are none.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: Any questions for the Statements?
There are none.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

The Speaker: We recognise the Honourable Member Simons. Honourable Member Simons, you have the floor.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to send congratulatory remarks to Ms. Penny Saltus. This weekend, she hosted an Early Childhood Symposium. About 150 people attended. And, Mr. Speaker, I thought it was a first-class conference. It was very, very successful. The theme was *The Future of Early Childhood Education: Collaboration, Connection and Transformation*. She had a guest speaker, Dr. Terrylynn Tyrell, and I went to a breakout session on "Positive Behavioural Support in Day Care."

Mr. Speaker, if anybody is a parent or grandparent, they missed a world-class event, a very educational event. I have never learned so much about education and cognitive development of the brain, and how we influence our young people. And the challenges that our young people have eventually translate into the problems that we have today with our young people in society. So, I would encourage everyone to attend the next event which is hosted by this group because they have a lot to give and we have a lot to learn.

So, to the team that supported Ms. Penny Saltus and the Early Childhood Symposium, on behalf of the House, I wish them all the very best. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Does any other Member wish to speak to congratulations or condolences?

Minister De Silva.

Hon. Zane. J. S. De Silva: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like the House to send a note of congratulations to Ms. Judy Scott. Judy works up at Port Royal Golf Course, and she celebrated 36 years—36 years of steady employment up at Port Royal, yesterday, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Neville Tyrrell, the Chairman of the Board, would like to also associate

himself with the remarks, as well as the Whip, Mr. Lawrence Scott.

So, Mr. Speaker, I do not know if you know Judy or not, but not only has she been working at Port Royal for 36 years, but I do not know too many people who are as dedicated as she is, Mr. Speaker. She makes early hours and works late days. If you call up to Port Royal at any time during the week, any time after 6:30–6:35, you will find that she answers the phone. So, I certainly congratulate her and her dedication to her job and to Port Royal Golf Course.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Does any other Member wish to—

I recognise the Honourable Member Tyrrell. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning, all.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask if condolences could be sent to the family of the late Lawrence Meredith Davis, affectionately known as "Larry," of Turnstile Lane, Pembroke. He leaves to mourn a wife, Madeleine, daughter Lisa and son Craig. Larry was very popular in the community because I believe that he was one of the founders of the Bermuda Island Pipe Band. And he was very active in the Masonic Fraternity, as well. And I think he will be sorely missed by all his friends and family.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

No other Honourable Member?

We recognise Mr. Famous. Mr. Famous, you have the floor.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am just going to step slightly out of the comfort zone.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Easy, Cousin Rufus.

The Speaker: That is good.

Mr. Christopher Famous: I just want to take a moment to thank my predecessor, MP Bob Richards, Finance Minister, for a very well-balanced op-ed in today's paper, outlining exactly what the EU is doing, not only to Bermuda, but to all offshore jurisdictions.

I hope this does not get me kicked out of the PLP, but I have to speak truth to power. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Now everyone is going to race and read the story.

An Hon. Member: That is right!

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

Mr. Burch? No, okay.

No other Member?

Well, we will move on from the condolences and congratulations.

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

The Speaker: [There are none.]

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

The Speaker: For the listening audience, today . . .

[Pause]

The Speaker: Members, we are going to seek your indulgence for a moment. There was a motion that should have been attached to the Statement that the Premier gave. And he just wants to table that.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Yes. Yes. We seek your indulgence.

MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE (SALARIES AND PENSIONS) ACT 1975

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the Ministers and Members of the Legislature (Salaries and Pensions) Act 1975, I give notice that at the next day of meeting, I will move to propose the following motion:

BE IT RESOLVED that the previous resolutions in this House made pursuant to section 2 of the Ministers and Members of the Legislature (Salaries and Pensions) Act 1975 be revoked, and that there be a motion laid that the salaries that were for Ministers and Members be unchanged until the 30th of June 2019.

The Speaker: All right.

No objections to that, right?

Okay.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Speaker: Now we are on to the Orders of the Day. And for the listening public, today is actually the conclusion of the annual Budget Debate. This morning, we will start with the Ministry of National Security. And they have three hours this morning for debate on that. And then we will move on into the Cabinet Office and other ministries later.

But, for the clarification for those listening, and in the Chamber, the non-ministries items will not be debated today, even though they are on the Order Paper. They will not be included in the discussion on that. And all sides were in agreement to that conversation. Correct?

Okay. So, I just want to put that out there before we got there, so it was out there.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Now, the Member who is taking the Chair, before you get up, I am looking for the Minister.

Who is going to move us?

Minister of Finance.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Mr. Speaker, I will move on behalf of the Minister of Finance.

[Pause]

[Crosstalk]

The Speaker: Members, thank you for your indulgence.

Which head is that? Head 63 will still be done under those discussions. There was a clarification that was just required. So, I appreciate your indulgence.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Are we good? Is there any further clarification on that? Let me know now.

The original discussion was that Heads 98, 2 and 5 were the heads that would not be done.

An Hon. Member: Okay.

The Speaker: Okay. Good.

The Deputy Premier, are you going to move us into Committee?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I will move on behalf of the Ministry of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now resume in Committee of Supply to consider the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 2019/20.

The Speaker: The Chair? I recognise the Honourable Minister Commissioning to take the Chair. Thank you.

House in Committee at 10:27 am

[Mr. Rolfe Commissioning, Chairman]

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

ESTIMATES OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR 2019/20

[Continuation thereof]

The Chairman: Good morning, Members.

We are now in Committee of Supply for further consideration of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year. The following heads are to be debated: And those heads are . . . we are addressing only one head at this point, and that is Head 27. (Thanks for the clarification.)

The Chair will now recognise the Honourable and Learned Minister, Mr. Wayne Caines.

You have the floor, sir.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If it pleases you, Mr. Chairman, I move Head 27, Immigration, now be taken under consideration.

Mr. Chairman, it gives me great pleasure . . . (I crave your indulgence, Mr. Chairman. I am just going to have to move a bit of my papers around. I crave your indulgence.)

The Chairman: Take your time, Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Yes, sir.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If it pleases you, Mr. Chairman.

MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY

HEAD 27—DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Chairman, it gives me great pleasure to present the budget for Head 27, the Department of Immigration, found on pages B-289 through B-294 of the Budget Book. The mission of the

Bermuda Department of Immigration is *to serve, conserve and protect Bermuda for the benefit of its people—residents and visitors.*

Mr. Chairman, the expenditure overview is as follows: As noted on page B-289, the Department of Immigration has been allocated a budget of \$4,754,000 for the fiscal year 2019/20. This budget number remains the same as 2018/19, thus reflecting a 0.0 per cent increase for 2019/20.

The Chairman: Excuse me, Minister.

Members, I know you have to confer. But just bring it down a little bit.

You may proceed, Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Chairman, the material changes in the estimated budget for the Subjective Analysis of the Current Account Estimates, as compared with the 2018/19 revised (column 5), are found on page B-290, as follows:

- a minor increase of \$108,000, or a 3 per cent increase, in Salaries, which is listed on line item 1. This slight increase is mainly due to salaries for temporary relief staff and the recently negotiated pay increase of 2 per cent;
- a decrease of \$4,000, which represents a 57 per cent decrease in advertising and promotion, listed on line item 8;
- a decrease of \$54,000, which represents a 25 per cent decrease in professional services, listed on line item 9;
- a decrease of \$68,000, which represents a 74 per cent decrease in rental services, listed on line item 10;
- an increase of \$52,000, which represents a 13 per cent increase in repair and maintenance, listed on line item 11; and
- a decrease of \$24,000, which represents a 25 per cent decrease in materials and supplies, listed on line item 13.

Revenue Summary

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Chairman, the revenue summary is outlined on page B-290. The total revenue estimate for 2019/20, as compared with the 2018/19 revised (column 5), is \$21,835,000, an increase of \$3,13[9],000, or 17 per cent. The most material changes are as follows:

The land acquisition fees for 2019/20 have increased significantly [by] \$3,086,000, which represents a [128] per cent increase over the revenue for 2018/19, which is listed on line item 8. The land acquisition fees have increased from \$2,414,000 to \$5,500,000.

Entry clearance fees for 2019/20 decreased by \$58,000, which represents a 60 per cent decrease variance to 2018/19, which is listed on line item 1.

The residence fees, listed on line item 9, for 2019/20 have decreased by \$45,000, which represents a 47 per cent decrease over the revenue for 2018/19.

Listed on line item 11, the nationality fees for 2019/20 have decreased by \$50,000, which represents a 43 per cent decrease over the revenue for 2018/19.

The Status and Naturalisation fees, listed on line item 12, for 2019/20 have increased by \$139,000, which represents a 27 per cent increase over the revenue for 2018/19.

There is a decreased estimate for penalties issued, listed on line item 13, by \$44,000, which represents a 56 per cent decrease over the revenue for 2018/19.

Capital Expenditure

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Chairman, funds budgeted for Capital Acquisitions for 2019/20 amount to \$1,927,000, which can be found on page C-14. The amounts allocated include—the total amount of \$1,927,000 will be allocated for the purchase a new border management system to replace the ageing border management system. We estimate that total cost of implementing the new system will exceed this amount.

Manpower

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Chairman, the manpower estimates for the department, as outlined on page B-291, are 50 full-time posts. Within the department, there are four vacant posts, consisting of one Customer Service Representative, one Assistant Chief Immigration Officer, one Manager of Finance and Administration and one Business Systems Officer. Approval has already been granted to fill these positions; it is expected that all posts will be filled during this quarter of fiscal 2019/20. Note that the Assistant Chief Immigration Officer and Manager of Finance and Administration positions became vacant due to the retirement of each of two people, Mr. Steven Lambert and Ms. Dawnette Bean, in May and September, respectively.

Output Measures

Hon. Wayne Caines: The department's performance measures are outlined on pages B-292 through B-294. During fiscal 2018/19, staff of the Department of Immigration have worked diligently, courteously and impartially to accomplish our mandate.

Major Policy Changes

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Chairman, since my appointment as Minister responsible for Immigration (on

the 1st of November 2018), I have spent time getting acclimated with the immigration law and the immigration policies. I have met with key stakeholders and placed emphasis on comprehensive immigration reform. To date, there have been no major policy changes.

Plans for the Upcoming Year

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Chairman, the department's plans for the upcoming year include a focus on comprehensive immigration reform and the development and implementation of a new border management system (BMS).

Mr. Chairman, comprehensive immigration reform. The roadmap toward the realisation of comprehensive immigration reform comprises four phases. The first phase was completed in early December 2018 and related to work permit processing. The remaining phases are as follows: process improvement; immigration reform; and operations, systems and execution [implementation]. All three phases will have as a first step the securing of a project team and resources.

The process improvement phase is due to start in April 2019. It will entail the review of immigration workflows, and will address the bottlenecks—applications processes. The immigration reform phase is at the centre of the overarching reform and will emphasise policy development, public consultation and the drafting of legislation. The Ministry aims to bring legislation to the House by July 2019. The operations, systems, and execution phase will be the output of the work done in the first two phases. The time frame for this final phase is yet to be determined and will entail the procurement process, the revision of vendor contracts and forms, change management and staff training.

New Border Management System

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Chairman, in the past two years' budget brief, the department highlighted its plans to replace its current border management system [BMS]. As a reminder, the border management system is one of Bermuda's frontline defences used to screen arriving passengers who arrive at the L. F. Wade International Airport. The system processes passenger information against a variety of local and international alerts, such as the stop list, the watch list and the terror list, upon a person's arrival to Bermuda, and it alerts officers to critical information in real time. It also allows for the detection of overstays and provides a detailed travel history record that is used for investigation purposes.

The 3M-Innovative Properties Company (3M) developed the BMS in mid-2000. Significant steps have been taken to advance the plans to replace the current BMS. A request for proposal (RFP) was post-

ed in mid-summer of [2017]. Four vendors provided quotes for the process. The new vendor has been selected, and the department will shortly enter into the contract and implementation phases of this project. Without question, the new Border Management System will be aligned with industry standard, and both locals and visitors will be pleased with the processing process upon arrival in Bermuda. The implementation of the new Border Management System will be completed prior to the opening of the new L. F. Wade International Airport in 2020.

Mr. Chairman, another key component will be a pilot programme that the department is hoping to roll out with key partners. We have taken the opportunity to talk with the international stakeholders, ABIR, ABIC, the Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders. And they have shared with the Ministry staff that there is a significant waiting period which is causing deep concern with reference to processing work permit applications. Mr. Chairman, we are looking at a pilot programme with two companies, Sompo International and Liberty Mutual. This will be a programme that allows for us to put together a plan that allows us to look at key performance matrices in each company to determine whether or not they can have a fast-tracked work permit policy process. That is in its genesis. We are looking to do a trial run with the two companies.

What does that look like? Well, we will look at the training and development programme for Bermudians. What does their commitment to Bermuda look like? How much revenue on a yearly basis do they bring to our shores? What is the Bermuda expat ratio? What does the internship programme look like?

Mr. Chairman, it is almost akin to the American . . . if I had to draw an analogy, it is almost akin to the global entry process when you are traveling to other parts of the world. It is not void of an immigration process. But from an initial vetting process, when work permit applications come, they will not necessarily go through the rigour as do all the rest of the applications that come through. It will be a vetted process, but they will have already gone through a vetting process over a period of time. We believe that this is an excellent opportunity for us to fast track, if you please, a number of the applications.

But when we say "fast track," it should not be misconstrued for not going through the necessary rigour of the process. We believe that this is a necessary step. We are starting with a pilot programme with two companies, Liberty Mutual and Sompo International. We have a company that we are looking at to go through the process, the management plan. And then, hopefully, we will be able to formally announce this in the not-too-distant future.

In closing, I would like to thank the dedicated members of staff at the Department of Immigration. I would like to thank the immigration team, under the leadership of Dr. Danette Ming, the Chief Immigration

Officer; together with Mr. Philip Perinchief and Ms. Lauren Sadler-Best of the Attorney General's Chambers; MP, Mrs. Renee Ming, Chairman Immigration Board; and the Immigration Appeal Tribunal, headed by Mr. Charles Richardson; for their work and dedication in 2018/19.

Also, I would also like to thank Ms. Marita Grimes, Mrs. Michelle White, and Mr. Ron-Michel Davis, and their respective teams, as well as the Collector of Customs, Mrs. Lucinda Pearman and her airport team for administering the airport border control on behalf of the Department of Immigration. We would also like to thank the Information and Digital Technology Office for their timely assistance in ensuring that our systems were operable, particularly at the L. F. Wade International Airport. They have all been very cooperative and innovative in their respective disciplines, and their roles have played a significant part in achieving immigration goals and objectives. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

Are there any other Members who wish to address this respective head?

[Pause]

The Chairman: The Chair now recognises the Shadow Minister of National Security, who will address or respond on Head 27. That is Mr. Sylvan Richards.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I will start off by making some brief remarks. As we all know, immigration is a very important part of Bermuda. It is a very important part of ensuring that our business community thrives. It is a very important part of ensuring that Bermudians and others who live and reside and work in Bermuda are able to travel efficiently and effectively. So, in my view, next to the Ministry of Finance, the Department of Immigration counts a very close second.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: I beg to differ. I beg to differ, Honourable Member.

[Laughter]

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: So, it is very interesting to me that we are debating immigration, Head 27, found on pages B-289 through B-294 of the Budget Book, and also on page C-14.

Members will be aware that, in addition to being a Member of this Honourable House, I also work at Allied World Insurance Company, an exempt company in Bermuda, and that the topic of immigration is

always a current and a hot topic, especially when it comes to the processing of work permits.

I was very pleased to take note when Minister Caines was appointed as the Minister of Home Affairs [*sic*], because at that time, there was an ongoing backlog of work permits that had accumulated over a period of time. I was very concerned about it, as were others in international business. And, to the Minister's credit, he came and in short order, cleared up that backlog. And at the time, I did have concerns that in his laser-like focus to clear up that backlog, Bermudians were being disadvantaged. But I trust the Minister. He came in, and I think a large portion of it has to do with the fact that he came from the private sector. He understands how things work. He understands what needs to be done.

And there is a fine balance to [tread] whenever we talk about immigration. It is very emotive for some folks. And for others, who take a very pragmatic approach, they realise that there are things that we need to ensure are working efficiently. And immigration is one of those. So, with those comments, I will dive into the Budget Book.

And I will make one more comment before I do that. And it kind of ties in to the comments that the Minister of Public Works made during his debate on Friday about how the numbers in the Budget Book are actually shown. Now, for those listening at home, I will try and break it down so that it is clear. When we are looking at the Budget Book, there are some heads that compare the original numbers from 2018/19 to the estimated numbers for 2019/20. Then, there are departments such as Immigration that compare the revised 2018/19 numbers, which are actual numbers, which are more accurate than comparing to the original, because the originals were estimates. The revised are actuals.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Okay. The revised are revised. But they are more accurate numbers than comparing to the originals.

So, my point is that in the Budget Book, when you look at the numbers, it is not apples to apples in a lot of cases. So, I would encourage the Finance Minister, or whoever makes these—the “wise heads” who make these decisions to at least be consistent so that Ministers and Shadow Ministers, when they get to their feet, are not having to adjust the numbers in the Budget Book to reflect a more accurate comparison.

So, to this Minister's credit, for Head 27, we are comparing 2018/19 revised numbers to 2019/20 estimated numbers, which in my view is the way it should be done.

So, we are starting on page B-289, expenditures per business unit. I have noted that programme number 2702 and business unit 37010, Corporate Services, are up 2 per cent. I have also made note

that programme number 2703, business unit number 37040, Finance and Administration, is up 35 per cent. I would like the Minister to give us a little bit more information on what is driving that 35 per cent increase.

On page B-290, expenditures by object code, I have noted that Salaries, overall salaries are up 3 per cent, or \$108,000. The Minister probably touched on it in his brief. I believe it is because of the 2 per cent increase that we are giving to civil servants. But if he can just confirm that. Also, I noted that the number of employees is projected to remain flat, at 50, although the Minister did mention that there are, I believe, four vacancies to be filled. If he could go over that again.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: They were included in the 50, okay.

So, what accounts for the increase in the salary figure of 3 per cent? But if he could just go over those additional, those vacant posts that are being filled, that would be helpful. I did not get it all down.

Also, on page B-290, Professional Services are projected to increase 210 per cent when comparing 2019/20 numbers to 2018/19. I would like to get information on what are Government's plans to increase the number of consultants? Usually, when you see professional services, I am assuming that they are consultants. So, if the Minister could give information on that, it would be very helpful.

And I have noted that overall expenditures are projected to increase 11 per cent in 2019/20.

Moving along to the Revenue Summary on page B-289, cost centre line 1, [programme] 8275, Entry Clearance. This revenue is projected to decrease 60 per cent, or \$58,000. I would like to know what the reason is for this projected decrease in revenues from entry clearance.

On [programme] 8285, Work Permits, that is on line 3 of the Budget Book . . . excuse me. I am sorry. That is wrong. That is line (1, 2, 3, 4,) 5, Work Permits, work and reside, in the Budget Book. Revenues are projected to decrease 11 per cent when comparing 2018/19 to 2019/20. However, in 2017/18, this category had actual revenues of \$1,249,000. In 2018/19, actual revenues dropped to \$850,000. And in 2019/20, estimated revenues are projected to be \$759,000, which amounts to a 39 per cent decrease in revenue over three years. This is a warning trend. And I would like for the Minister to give information on what are Government's plans, if they have any, to reverse this trend, because there are some who say that Bermuda needs to increase our basic resident population. So, I would like to get a little more information around that.

Programme 8291, Land Acquisition Fees, revenues are projected to increase 128 per cent, from \$2.4 million in 2018/19 to \$5.5 million in 2019/20. I

would like the Minister to provide information on what is driving this huge increase in revenues. Is Government anticipating more non-Bermudians acquiring property in 2019/20? Or is there another reason for the projected 128 per cent increase? So, I would like the Minister to give more information based off of that.

Looking at [programme] 8293, Residence Fees, revenues are projected to decrease 47 per cent. I would like to get additional information on the 47 per cent projected decrease in revenue.

At [programme] 8299, Nationality, revenues are projected to decrease 43 per cent. I would like for the Minister to give an explanation for this decrease.

And in [programme] 8301, Status and Naturalisation—Other, revenues are projected to increase 27 per cent. I would like to get an explanation from the Minister [as to] what is the driver of this increase.

And to sum up Revenues for 2019/20, projected revenues, these revenues are projected to increase 17 per cent in 2019/20 overall.

Moving to page B-291, the Budget Book, employee numbers. As I have touched on earlier, the number of employees is projected to remain flat at 50, yet salaries are projected to increase by \$108,000, or 3 per cent in 2019/20.

Moving to page B-292 of the Budget Book, Performance Measures. And we are looking at business unit 37010, and under the column, line number 3, Number of Work Permits Processed. In 2018/19, the number of work permits processed was 4,614. And in 2019/20, it is projected to be 5,075, which is an increase of 461 work permits. I would like for the Minister to give an explanation of what accounts for this projected 10 per cent increase.

An Hon. Member: Hard work.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: On business unit 37010, Civil Penalties, in 2018/19, the original forecast was 15, which was revised in 2018/19 to 148. In 2019/20, the forecasted number is 163. I would like for the Minister to put some colour around the jump in revised numbers, forecasted numbers in 2018/19 from 15 to 148.

And under business unit 37020, Personal Services, there was a line item, Permission to Acquire Land. In 2018/19, the number of permissions was forecast at 70. And in 2019/20, the number of permissions is forecast at 77, which is a difference of 7 permits. However, when you look at the revenue from land acquisition fees, as shown in [programme] 8291, on page B-290, it is projected to increase by just over \$3 million, actually, \$3.086 million, which is an average of \$442,857 per permit. I am curious whether I am looking at this correctly. If the Minister can add some colour around that.

Then, moving to page C-14, Capital Acquisitions, the Minister went into great detail in his remarks about the border control system. In 2019/20, the

budget is just over \$1.9 million. And, of course, zero was spent in 2018/19. So, the Minister went into pretty great detail about that. I will touch base on that aspect after the Minister answers the questions that I have just posed to him.

Thank you.

The Chairman: Thank you, Shadow Minister.

Are there any other Members who wish to address this head?

The Chair now recognises the Honourable Member from constituency 23. You have the floor.

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

Mr. Chairman, in looking at Head 27, Immigration, I understand the sentiment that is being expressed in terms of the comparison of which number is appropriate year-on-year. And while it may be the nice thing to do because it appears to be more updated to look at revised numbers, it is important to note, Mr. Chairman, that the House approves the original budgets. And that is what we should be looking at year-on-year, on a consistent basis, Ministry to Ministry.

So, I think we have to take away the subjectivity and decide what the personal preferences are and look at the exercise itself. When we approve budgets, we approve the original budget for the year. So, therefore, we should be looking at, on a comparative basis, what do we have originally from last year, which the House approved? The House has not approved the revised budget. The revised budgets are informational and perhaps more accurate. And I am not saying that we disagree. But at no point have we come in with supplementaries to change the originals to the revised so that the House agrees to it. And that is the reason why it is difficult to accept the premise that it is appropriate to look at 2019/20 estimates as against the revised, because the House has not approved the revised.

So, with that said, when I looked at my comments, Mr. Chairman—I want to go to page B-290. And we had initially, under [programme] 8291 on the Revenues source, the House had projected \$7 million in land acquisition fees. The projected going forward for 2019/20 is \$5,500,000. So, instead of seeing an increase of \$3,086,000, we actually have a decrease of \$1.5 million. And so, the question that begs is, Why did we have such a cataclysmic drop of \$1.5 million on land acquisition fees from the original of last year, and the new number for this year?

And I am just pointing out that particular one because it is such a large number. But the premise remains the same in terms of how we should be looking at these numbers, based on what the House approved and what we are now looking at.

The Minister indicated about the work permit policy that has been tested on two particular compa-

nies, and it will be useful to understand why those two particular companies. Could the Minister give us some indication as to what the staffing levels are in respect of the two companies that they chose? In looking at the relationship between locals and foreign employees that would give those companies preferential treatment—well, not preferential treatment, but to allow them to pilot the programme that will allow them to, effectively, fast track à la global entry, as he mentioned, I would just be curious about that.

The other thing that I wondered about is whether it was being examined at all, the relationship between the provision of work permit applications for foreign workers performing the exact same duties as local workers, but being treated in a tremendously preferential manner. Is that something that is being looked at, either in terms of human rights as relates to immigration, or is there any justification that a position that pays \$100,000 a year to one person, that somebody else can come in [and take] that very same position and make \$150,000 because that person is foreign? And there are benefits such as housing allowance, things that locals do not get. But the presumption has to be that remuneration is for doing the job and not based on the origin of the person doing the job. I am just curious how or if this can be addressed, because it is a vexatious issue.

The other thing that I would like for the Minister to explain, if he could, is to give us some indication as to where we are in respect of the output measures on page B-292 with respect to passports. We know that we have had a challenge, which arose at the end of 2015, I believe it was, with respect to the change of the production of passports from the Bermuda—or the printing of passports from the Bermuda Immigration Office to the UK Immigration Office, HMPO, Her Majesty's Passport Office. And the production of those passports under HMPO has changed the nomenclature for the place of dispatch from BMU, which is Bermuda, to GBD or GBR, depending on what iteration one has of that passport.

And it creates challenges in terms of border and free access coming into the United States from points foreign. And it causes a challenge for Bermudians. So, the question is, we had [previously] looked at whether there was a possibility of being able to change the nomenclature, to change the code back to BMU by some possibility. And one of the solutions that was recommended by the then permanent secretary was, in fact, the fact that they could, under HMPO, effectively utilise a plate in their system so that, even though they are processing [the passports] in the UK, they are processing [them] on behalf of the Bermuda Government.

And the reason that this difference is important, Mr. Chairman, is because there are special arrangements between Bermuda and the United States which the UK does not have. So, while it may not be a problem to them to say, *We're issuing this in*

Great Britain; therefore, that's the code that you get, it causes inconvenience for Bermudian travellers when we do not have every border customs and border patrol system in the United States recognising this preferential treatment. And I think that, to the extent that we can get this resolved, I believe it is vital for us as a country, it is vital to make sure that we get something done.

Now, I do know that, certainly, I can declare an interest in that I held the position that the Honourable Minister has now in respect of being responsible for the Immigration Department. And the challenge arose back then, and that is when we started, once we were made aware of it, we started looking at solutions. We have spoken, when our Public Accounts Committee had the privilege of going over to the UK, we spoke to people from the UK overseas team to say, *What can we do?* And they promised that they would take it up. We spoke to the previous Minister. This is not something new. We have debated this before. But somehow, there seems to be a reluctance on the part of HMPO to give us some resolution to this matter which makes sense. And somehow, I believe that we have to, at least we would like to, get an update as to where we stand in resolving this particular issue.

I am also looking now at some of the process times on performance measures under Personal Services.

And, sorry. Before I go to that . . .

The number of work permits processed, we had originally forecast 5,324 for the 2018/19, which has gone down on revision to 4,614. And it is expected to go to 5,075. So, we are looking, effectively, notwithstanding that the revised forecast went down and therefore the new targeted outcome has gone up, we technically are looking at a 250 decrease from the original forecast from last year to the targeted forecast for this year. So, the question begs, What are we doing, as my colleague asked the question, as to where we stand in terms of how whatever immigration reform that is undertaken is likely to impact the numbers that we have? Because the more people that we have working and paying into the system, the less pressure the Finance Minister has to find additional revenue, which is now landing on the shoulders of Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda.

The Minister has now returned. I will just take my seat and allow him to answer those questions. And I certainly do have more.

The Chairman: Minister, are you prepared to respond at this time?

Hon. Wayne Caines: Actually, I am not, Mr. Chairman. I ask your indulgence to have them ask all of the questions. And at the end, with your leave, Mr. Chairman, we will go through all of the questions at the end. So, with your leave, Mr. Chairman, all we would

like to do is to have all of the questions asked now, and then, with your leave, of course. I know this is a matter for you. If you can—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Chairman: Members, let me finish listening to the Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Chairman, I could have it wrong, and I crave your indulgence. If it is at all possible, I would like to seek your leave, Mr. Chairman, to have my colleagues opposite ask all of their questions now, and then we will proffer all of the answers at the end. And then they can just ask one, two, three, four of them. If they can go through all of the questions now, then we can answer the questions in the end. It is a matter for you, Mr. Chairman.

[Pause and crosstalk]

The Chairman: Well, Minister, in all due respect, we have to acknowledge that this is the Opposition's debate. And I will have to take my lead from them on this question.

Members, are you, the Opposition, prepared to indulge the National Security Minister in his request, or not?

The Chair recognises the Shadow Minister.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As you stated, this is the Opposition's debate. And during the debate, oftentimes, our questions are generated by responses that the Minister gives. So, if we wait until we give him all of the questions and then we cannot ask any more questions, we will probably miss out on something. That is why we have this ebb and flow, so to speak.

If the Minister needs additional time to answer the questions, then his technical officers are here, and I am sure he is getting information from his technical people. He can take [his time]. We will be patient. But a lot of times, additional questions are generated from the answers that the Minister gives. So, with that being said, we would like to get answers to the questions that have been asked. And then we can continue from there. Thank you.

The Chairman: The Chair is inclined to go with the standard format, Minister. So . . .

Hon. Wayne Caines: I am guided. I simply have over 50 questions that were asked. Obviously, the technical team here is making every endeavour to get the responses to the lion's share of those questions.

I want to just go to a couple of the questions that were asked, not necessarily in any specific order. There was a question that was asked by Members

opposite, How did we choose the companies for the pilot? We have been meeting with a number of the exempted, and businesses [in] Bermuda. And so, when they come, they have a number of . . . Well, let me digress.

We have been looking at the procedures in immigration and looking at the challenges that we have been seeing in the immigration process. We have put together a plan to look at immigration line by line and everything surrounding that. So, the first phase is, how do we make the immigration, the actual work permit process, more robust? How do we get rid of some of the impediments? We have recently secured and will be able to announce it in the next couple of days one of the five accounting firms that are going to be acting as a management firm to go into Immigration and actually look—have them open the kimono and look at what all of the challenges are with in the department.

The lion's share of it will be funded by private industry. Private industry, we have been meeting with them over the last few months, and they have gotten together. And they say, *Listen, these are some of the challenges that we are having. And this is how we believe we want to see Bermuda work better. We want to see if there are opportunities in Bermuda for us to look at doing things differently.* And so, we have been going on a proverbial roadshow, sharing with our industry partners how we believe we can make this process better.

Over the last three months, we have been meeting with each and every one of the companies that said, *Listen. These are some of the benefits of the department. These are some of the challenges that we are having in the department.* So, we went on a roadshow, if you please. And one of the challenges that we saw was that a number of businesses were lamenting that they were having a problem with directing their businesses in a certain manner because it was so difficult for them to go through and work through the work permit process. And they shared with us, and we shared with them what our long-term plans are.

We believe that the programme should be robust. Number one, the ultimate aim for the Department of Immigration is to make sure that Bermudians are given opportunity, that the processes are fair, that there are no roadblocks and there is a level of accountability in each of these departments. And so, when you have the Board of Immigration, they are simply doing that. They are making sure that in each process, that qualified Bermudians are given the opportunity, whether it is through the advertising, advertisements in the newspaper, whether it is through the job being on the job board, the necessary how-many-days it has to be advertised in the newspaper.

So, in meeting with a number of the companies . . . and, remember, Mr. Chairman, this is a pilot

programme. This is not something that is etched in stone. This is a pilot programme.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne Caines: I know. I am getting there.

And so, when we start meeting with different companies, we met with Liberty Mutual. When we met with Liberty Mutual, we realised that they had a firm and deep commitment to Bermuda. We looked at their track record for hiring and moving Bermudians through that particular company. We met with the leadership team. They showed great commitment to being in Bermuda and understanding the tapestry of Bermuda. And when we talked to them, we shared with them, as we did with every one of the companies, the vision that we had for immigration reform. And we chose that company based on what we believe is a commitment to Bermuda, the history of training and developing Bermudians, their senior management team and their commitment to Bermuda, their philanthropic efforts and commitment to Bermuda through philanthropy and investment in the social tapestry of Bermuda.

The exact same thing with Sompso. We met with the senior staff. We looked at their commitment to Bermuda, what their plans have been in Bermuda for the last few years, what the development looks like. And we said, if we are indeed going to balance what this new process looks like, we have to be brave. We have to balance what is best for making sure that Bermudians get opportunities, but look at two companies that we believe are leading luminaries in this particular avenue and work through a pilot programme.

Mr. Chairman, it is a pilot programme in that we are not going to be getting rid of the checks, the balances, the ability for them to be held accountable for everyone who is within the organisation. It is simply a pilot programme, looking at how we can make the programme less cumbersome. And [looking to see] if a [company] is a good corporate citizen, if they do have training and development for Bermudians, if they do have a number of internship programmes both locally and abroad which give Bermudians the opportunity to train and develop in Bermuda.

But we have two lines—my words. We have two lines, a line where you go in and you have to have the advertisement in the newspaper, you have to go on the Job Board, you have to show specific things on each and every occasion. Then you have a line which is almost (my words again) like the global entry line, where beforehand you have met with the HR director of the company.

They have shown you the company's overarching plan for the HR development of the company. They have shown you the plan for developing Bermudians within the organisation. They show you, historically, what their trajectory is for the company. They show you the Bermudians who are in the corporation.

They show you the opportunities that Bermudians have for internships locally and abroad. They show you what they are doing with reference to investing in the company. They show you what they are doing philanthropically with the social elements of Bermuda.

And you put all of those elements together, and you say, this is a particular company that—this is the reason why we chose Sompso and Liberty Mutual as the pilot programme for the jobs programme.

The Chairman: The Chair recognises the Member from constituency 23.

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

Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister could maybe just give us some indication as to the size of these companies. How many employees are there in Sompso, and how many in Liberty Mutual, just as an idea?

Hon. Wayne Caines: I can get both of those numbers. Both of those companies have a significant presence. I do not actually have the number of people in each firm. I can endeavour to do so and get that before the end of this discussion.

The Chairman: You may proceed, Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Consultants. There is an increase in the consultative budget. A number of part of the consultants—as you know, Mr. Chairman, we will be undertaking a review and a reboot of that particular department. And a part of that is having a consulting firm come in and look under the hood, find out what the strengths are, what the weaknesses are, what they are doing to develop that department. And that will come from the use of a consultancy firm. And the lion's share of it will be underwritten by industry.

[Pause]

Hon. Wayne Caines: There was a question, What are the plans to increase residents to the Island, the overall plan? When we are looking at what we believe a healthy economy requires, it requires a bit of balance, Mr. Chairman. We are looking at the department specifically from a number of different aspects.

We believe that the Immigration Department, through the Immigration Board, has always had a robust plan to have companies coming to Bermuda. We believe that there are certain developments that are taking place. There are certain developments that are taking place, one in the East [End] and one in the West [End]. And we believe that there is an opportunity to allow people to come to Bermuda, whether it is through the hotels—we are going into the hotel season. And so, we see a number of companies starting

to ramp up their summer employment through hiring people.

There are a number of exempt companies—excuse me, reinsurance companies, that are looking to come and to set up in Bermuda, whether it is FinTech companies. We believe now that we have to have an immigration process that is robust, have a department that continues to be available, and have a process that is transparent.

The Immigration Act was written in 1956. And over those number of years [since then], there are a number of nuances and parts of the Immigration Act that actually make it very cumbersome. We believe that, through looking at the structure of the work permit policy, the plan is to look at the work permit policy, to understand specifically, where are the bottlenecks in the work permit policy? How is this preventing companies from coming to Bermuda? Or how is this limiting opportunities from coming to Bermuda?

And so, when we look at it from the enforcement side, Mr. Chairman, this year there has been . . . the Member opposite asked, What are we doing to highlight Bermudians who are not being given fair opportunities and who are not being given the opportunity to develop in those firms? How are we balancing that?

A number of times, we have the specific hotlines. This year there was an email address. There was a confidential hotline that was established by the department where people can come in, where they can say, *Listen. I applied for this job. I know there is a qualified Bermudian. I know that somebody is working outside of their work permit at this particular location.* That information is given out to the enforcement team. The enforcement team actually takes their prodding from the online and from the anonymous calls that are made in. And they then go and make their concerns known.

The Chairman: The Chair now recognises the Shadow Minister.

Mr. Richards.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am just trying to follow on with what the Minister is saying. So, the question that I had asked that he is answering was [on programme] 8285, Work Permits, work and reside, where the revenues are down 39 per cent over three years. And as I stated, this was a warning trend.

So, would the Minister agree that it is important to reverse this trend, as Bermuda needs to increase our resident population? I am trying to figure out exactly what he is trying to say here.

The Chairman: Thank you, Shadow Minister.

The Chair now recognises the Minister of National Security, Mr. Wayne Caines.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Chairman, I am waiting, working right now with our technical team. Our technical team are getting specific answers with reference to the . . . so we have the specific numbers to that.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

Are there any other Members who wish to address this respective head?

The Chair now recognises the Member from constituency 31.

MP Ben Smith.

Mr. Ben Smith: Good morning, Mr. Chairman.

Looking on page B-290, under 8301, Status and Naturalisation, I was wondering if the Minister can give us some information regarding the belonger situation in Bermuda. Obviously, this is something, being involved with sport, which has been in the news and highlighted. I know that a lot of the national sport organisations are interested to know what the overall position is going to be in regards to belongers and belongers' representation for Bermuda as Bermudian citizens.

So, if the Minister can give some details on what the Ministry's position is on this, and whether there have been any upcoming details that we can hear that will allow people to have an understanding of representation from a national level when it comes to belongers and when it comes to citizens of Bermuda. Thank you.

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.

The Chair now recognises the Minister of National Security.

Hon. Wayne Caines: The issue of the belongers status is . . . it is quite emotive. I have had the opportunity to talk informally with the Shadow Minister of National Security. And he and I do understand that this is a very sensitive issue in Bermuda for a number of reasons.

We have a paper that is due to go to Cabinet any day now with reference to the plan around the belonger status. We will have the opportunity to discuss that within the next week at Cabinet. And we will be able to have a decision made on that quite soon.

And, listen. At the end of the day, everyone understands the delicate balance that we have with a number of issues. Mr. Chairman, we are looking to have the issue of mixed-status families in Parliament [raised] and debated and going through the parliamentary process before Parliament is prorogued in July. And so, what we have understood is . . . if you can allow me to digress for a minute.

The immigration challenge that we have found ourselves in is not something that we will get through easily. We are in the position where we have to, number one, make sure that the rights of Bermudians are protected, as per the Immigration and Protection Act.

We have to make sure that the rights of Bermudians, that they are given the proper opportunity. There is a delicate balance when understanding that we need international business coming to Bermuda. But at the same time, within that matrix, Bermudians have to be given opportunities.

The issues of dealing with status and PRCs, this is something that the Bipartisan Immigration Reform Group are grappling with. This is something that, every time we have a discussion, we have to go back to our requisite teams and share those issues. And everyone, when you see people on the street, or when you look and you say, *Listen. Where are we with this?* Well, this is not something that is going to happen overnight.

So, let us go back to the Member opposite and talk about the systematic way that we plan on achieving this. The first part is looking at the processes and procedures around work permit applications, understanding, in the Immigration Department, what is creating all the backlogs? The digitisation process, looking at how do we make this more robust? That is the phase that we believe—we are in the phase of getting a consulting company coming in, looking at and understanding the numbers.

The numbers are a challenge. We understand what has happened in the past with other iterations of this. It has torn this country asunder. With the parliamentary subcommittee, we are looking at these things. We have made significant progress with the mixed-status families. That will come to Parliament before Parliament is prorogued in July.

There are some significant issues that have raised their head. And the belongsers issue is one of them. We want to dispassionately be able to look at the belongsers issues, understand the court's judgment and just how it affects Bermuda. There has been a recommendation. Minister Walton Brown has written a paper around the belongsers issue, and this will go to Cabinet in the next week, and we will be able to have a position on that, going forward.

The question on page B-290, line [item] 8291, Land Acquisition Fees. Why is the 2019/20 estimate 1.5 less than 2018/19 forecast? The answer is the department has adjusted its revenue targets in line with the softness in the market conditions. There is not a formal forecasting model being employed. We will need to revert back with the details regarding the drivers in the softness in demand. However, these will be aligned with the same trends seen in the real estate industry.

Mr. Chairman, the technical officer has left the room. We have a number of the answers. He literally is printing those out so I can answer those questions. I received a number of the answers. I am not able to read the majority of them off of my phone. So, I literally just asked the technical officer to print out the answers so I can go through these.

The Chairman: So, Members, we have an opportunity now for other Members to pose questions on Head 27.

The Chair now recognises the Member from constituency 31.

Mr. Ben Smith: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just following on from the question, thank you to the Minister for starting to give us some clarity around what we are trying to do. But, specifically to the belongsers issue when it comes to sport, understanding that while this process is happening, the challenge is that teams have to be selected. So, in that process, what happens is that if a sport is specifically trying to do what you referred to, which is protect Bermudians and Bermudian selection, when you now have this category that has been dealt with in the courts and that category does not have paperwork to support what has happened in the courts, it puts the sport in a difficult situation where, potentially, they are going to end up back in the courts.

Is there anything that you can speak to that is going to lead to potential paperwork to support what has happened in the courts, or at least something that the sport can do in order for them to prevent further legal action while they are trying to manoeuvre the situation?

The Chairman: The Chair now recognises the Minister of National Security.

Hon. Wayne Caines: I think that at every aspect there is a catalyst to prod us, that can potentially prod us, into making decisions without considering the full spectrum of what is to happen. So, when we think of how many PRCs there are in Bermuda, people in mixed-status families who are in untenable positions . . . on a daily basis, I am meeting with families who are in absolutely untenable positions around mixed-status families, not being able to get passports, not being able to travel.

We simply cannot look at comprehensive immigration reform based on the fires that we have to put out. We have to look at this in a systematic way. The systematic approach that we have to do this, over the last six months since I have been in the department, is very clear. The first part of it is to understand each of the significant drivers which are causing disquiet in our country. When we made overt movements, knee-jerk reactions, it tore the country asunder. We are looking at this specifically, as there are the issues of PRCs. There is the issue of status, generally. There is the issue of mixed-status families. And there is the issue of belongsers. These things must be dealt with systematically.

There is a plan of the Bermuda Government to deal systematically and overtly with the belongsers issue. We understand that there are a number of matters that are predicated on a decision being made. A

paper will be discussed in Cabinet within the next week, and we will be able to go through that, line by line, looking at the PRCs issue. If that is not dealt with, that is looming largely. That can potentially be a matter that can be dealt with in the court. But what we have to do is we are taking an Act that was written in 1956. We are taking a country that is polarised on a number of fronts. We are talking about international businesses that are trying to look for a pathway to get jobs, to get people into Bermuda and to make that happen.

We believe that there are opportunities through the Job Makers Act to get the right people in Bermuda and have them be in a position. We believe that there are opportunities for us to look at the belongers, at mixed-status families. We have said on a committee that [deals with] the mixed-status family that this has to be regularised as a priority. And that is something that we have committed, in this House, in the Throne Speech, that we will look at resolving before Parliament is prorogued this year.

Mr. Chairman, page B-[289], business unit 2703 is up 35 per cent. Why is that? The figure has decreased by 1 per cent. Where are you getting the 35 per cent as an increase?

Page B-290. Why are salaries up? Due to incremental changes, due to increment changes.

Page B-290, professional services. What plan does the department have? Professional services relates to the passport processes and payments to WorldReach, Her Majesty's Passport Office, and the courier fees.

The entry clearance, why is there a decrease of 58 per cent? This relates to fees collected at the import. The figures are decreased because, more frequently than not, more people are arriving with the requisite documents (i.e., work permits) and other permissions, such as visas, et cetera.

On page B-285, work permits, work and reside, what plans does the Government have to reverse the 90 per cent decline? The emphasis should be on work to reside and not just work permits. Persons apply for permission to work and reside, particularly if they are changing jobs. Job changes can result in redundancies and employee relationships, et cetera. The decline should not be taken negatively. It means that work permit holders may not be changing jobs as they did in the past.

On page B-291, why is the head count the same but the salaries are up? Pay scales, increment changes, i. e., the pay scale for the Assistant Chief Immigration Officer, the post was increased.

On page B-292, on performance indicators, what accounts for the 10 per cent projected increase in work permits? Actually, that one is not answered. We are still waiting for an answer for that one.

Number 9, for civil penalties, why is there a jump from 15 to 148? There has been an increased

pace at which the civil penalty cases are being identified and being handled.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

Members, the Chair now recognises the Opposition Leader.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and good morning to everyone in Bermuda.

Just curious. On page B-290, as I look down under the revenue summary, I was hoping to get a bit of a clearer understanding of exactly the entrance clearance so that the public is aware of exactly what that is and they understand it. The reason I am asking these few questions is that immigration is, of course, one of those very emotive areas. And the more detail people have, the better and more comfortable and confident people are going to feel as the Minister maps out his duty, going forward.

It is very clear here that there was a precedent set in the original amount, under entrance clearance, of 2018/19, original \$78,000, the revised being \$96,000. So, obviously, we have spent more than what we were thinking in the beginning of last year. So, this is a great thing that we have received more [revenue]. What exactly was that, and why are we forecasting that it is actually going to be so much less, a third less, actually, in this estimate coming forward on 2019/20, of \$38,000? This is telling a story, and I am just trying to get a feeling for exactly what that story is.

Also, if you move down, and this was mentioned a few times, 8291, Land Acquisition Fees. I am assuming what that is, but it would be nice if the Minister could give the public a detail of exactly what that is and why, as he mentioned, there was a softness concerning this here. Certainly, last year when we started out, there was a belief that we would be pulling in \$7 million. This is a drastic difference that we actually are at a third of that, at \$2.4 million. And again, this is telling us a story line here. So, we are trying to understand what was their thinking in the beginning of last year as to why we were at the \$7 million? And now that we are actually coming in . . . something has happened; I do not know. Machine broke down? I do not know. But it would be nice to get the details of that.

And if there is a softness in the market, if we are going to take that as the answer to why it was revised, then why is it then going back up to double? What makes them believe that the market is going to be less soft, and then hardened in 2019/20, that we can say, *Oh, well, it's going to be double that amount?* It will be actually double that amount of \$5.5 million.

So, I would appreciate that. I would like to get some details on that. I will concur with the Minister. Certainly, immigration is a very, very challenging area. Many are excited about the fact that he has taken on

this role. And I would just like to say that the issue with the belongers, as he mentioned in what he was saying, and mixed status, [is that] it is vital that we clear this up. Just Friday when we left here, I ran into several folk of the mixed status. And, yes, we just cannot have it. And these are young people. All they know is Bermuda. I mean, you talk to them, they are Bermudian through and through. And so, I am looking forward to him clearing this up and giving us that update.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Again, with the mixed-status family, that is something that we together will tackle before Parliament is prorogued during the summer.

Mr. Speaker, in the next two days there will be a consultancy that will go out to all of Bermuda around restricted and closed categories. This is to a question that was asked by PGP [Honourable Member Patricia Gordon-Pamplin] on the other side, the Honourable Member. She asked a question about what we are doing to protect Bermudians and jobs, and Bermudians not being given opportunities. We are going to be doing a consultancy that will be opened up to all of Bermuda with reference to closed categories. And we are going to open up to the public to say, these are the categories that are now restricted. These are the categories now that are open. What categories would you like to see are closed or opened, and why? What categories would you like to see restricted, and why?

We have a document that is being crafted by the Chief Immigration Officer. And the Chief Immigration Officer will then send the document out to industry, and they will look at this thing in depth to say, *You know what? The tennis pros, there are a number of tennis pros in the Island who are saying, We cannot find work in our own country. Should this be a closed category, and why [or why not]?* There are people in golf, and there are people who are [talking about] a number of the categories they believe should be closed or restricted. This is going to be opened up for people to give the reasons why. This will be an open consultancy period where people can share the rationale behind their wanting a category to remain open or to be closed or to be restricted.

That is a process that will start within the next two weeks, that will be opened up online on the government portal, where they can go and they can look at it and make their representations.

On page B-290 and [programme] 8291, the Land Acquisition Fee, why in 2019/20 the estimate for 1.5 is less than the 2018/19 forecast? (Wait a minute. This is the same thing.) Again, we have already answered that. Number four . . . a couple of these questions have been [answered] already.

Passports being processed in the United Kingdom, receiving the wrong code. This is being handled at the Cabinet Office by Minister Walton Brown. He is working closely with HMPO. The Minister will be traveling to the UK in the not-too-distant future

to have discussions with the relevant people on the passport codes.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. Wayne Caines: I heard you. I heard you.

With reference to the question . . . I actually did not get the questions. If I can have some clarity around the questions regarding processing times and performance measures?

Just before we go, I just want to say something generally. Part of immigration reform will include improvements to the work permit process. Bermuda needs to shift to a more risk-based approach which is streamlined. And if you are a good corporate citizen who maintains a high assurance and all the proper controls in place, through the retrospective audit process . . . So, PGP [Patricia Gordon-Pamplin], the Honourable Member opposite, asked a specific question around how we are choosing the two companies, and what the process looks like. I just want to highlight that with the answer.

We believe that the process, the work permit process has to move to a more risk-based approach that is streamlined, where good corporate citizens who maintain high standards of assurance and have proper controls in place through a retrospective audit process, that they give opportunities to Bermudians, they contribute significantly to our community, that they have a training and development programme that gives Bermudians the opportunity to matriculate to the highest echelons of their businesses, and that is evidenced. We believe that there is an opportunity for us to create a global entry line, if you please, a more streamlined process, where they do not necessarily have to go through all of the vetting procedures, overt vetting procedures, having the form gazetted, going on the job board. They, through a clear, outlined process that is evidenced in their internal mechanisms, allow them to receive what we believe is a different [work permit process].

Step one is the vetting phase. The pilot will include up-front due diligence on the companies that participate. The Government will review detailed submissions from these firms, describing their corporate profile, the number and the composition of staffing, the training and development programmes, their philanthropic efforts, their wider corporate and social responsibility efforts. The Government will engage these companies to fully understand their particular circumstances and will use this process to pre-certify the firms.

The second step is the processing stage. In this phase, the selected companies in the pilot programme will receive expedited work permit processing within certain parameters in line with their business needs. It is envisioned that this will be an electronic process by means of a web-based portal that will be efficient and have a minimal turnaround time.

So, can we stop there for a second? A big part of the [current] process is that it is a manual process. This process allows people to come in, and just by the very nature of its being a manual process, it allows for, number one, significant time frames and for human error and for the process to be cumbersome. We are saying, get corporate partners that are saying, number one, *This is our company profile. This is how many Bermudians we hire.* And we are saying, *You are not going to come in and just be able to get the glut of work permits.* We are going to create a streamlined online process that is based on a significant risk matrix that is managed. And it is an electronic, or e-application. This now will be something that we believe will be significant to the business community.

But to the Bermuda community, Mr. Chairman, it cannot be that we are opening up the floodgates to allow companies to just do whatever they please in Bermuda. The genesis of this and the key part of this is that they will have to show and evidence that they have training programmes, that they are committed to Bermuda, being here, that Bermudians are matriculating well, that they have training and development programmes, Mr. Chairman. I think that is something that we want to stress through this pilot programme. That will commence with Liberty Mutual and Somp.

Step three, the monitoring and assessment phase. This phase, the Government will assess the impact of this programme, this pilot programme. We will consult with the industry stakeholders. And if it is successful, we will determine how this will be implemented widely through the work permit process.

It is recognised that this is ambitious. And it implies that the policies, processes and technology will need to be quickly addressed. The Government intends to collaborate with industry to make sure that this is a reality. It is the vision of the pilot programme that Bermuda's work permit processing can come in line with other jurisdictions to enable Bermuda to be more competitive and to allow firms to quickly secure the intellectual capital required for them to execute their business plans globally. This plan is critical for Bermudian firms to maintain their relevance and for new companies to grow to scale.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

The Chair now recognises the Member from constituency 23.

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

Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to have a quick look at a couple of the performance measures, page B-294, under Compliance, 37030. Initially, we had forecast that there would be four foreign nationals being invited to pack up and leave. The original forecast, which actually ended up being 22 on the revised forecast and 24 being the targeted outcome.

I wonder if the Minister could give us some idea in terms of what—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: This is 37030, Compliance, page B-294.

I am just trying to understand where we are going so radically wrong in terms of people being put in this position. I am wondering whether these are based on criminal activities or just overstaying? Or what are we capturing in that particular area?

And with respect to the Finance and Administration, under 37040, we have an original forecast of \$4.8 million and a targeted outcome of \$4.8 million for the budgeted expenditure by department. And I am just trying to understand, when we are looking at the changes that have been made, we had \$4.8 million of expenditure or \$4.754, which is close enough to \$4.8, in the 2018/19 original. But we have got \$5.254 million in the current year. But the budgeted expenditure by department is showing here at \$4.8 million being a targeted outcome. So, already the outcome does not tie in with the amount that we have estimated to be expenditure for that period of time.

And, similarly, the budgeted revenue under the performance measures has indicated that there was initially \$21 million, a revision of \$23.5 million, which we see under, as an original for 2018/19 rather than a revised. But in any case, the \$21 million does not seem to be accurate. But the \$23.5 million is a revision. And we are showing a targeted outcome of \$23.5 million, whereas the actual number that we have put on the 2019/20 budget is \$21.8 million. So, I am just wondering why our performance measure outputs do not tie in with what we are showing now in the Budget Book.

The Budget Book, as I said, for the revenue generated by department, is saying that the targeted outcome is \$23.5 million. But the book is telling us that we are going to get \$23.835 million. So, I am just curious as to why we have that significant differential, \$2-plus million. And I am just wondering . . . no, it is not \$2 million. It is \$1.8 million, \$1.7 million. But I am just curious as to why these numbers do not tie, because that does not make . . . you know, just trying to link the performance measures, as stated in the book, to the numbers as stated in the book. There should be a proper correlation, and there is not.

I can leave that question.

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.

The Chair now recognises the Shadow Minister. Mr. Richards.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

During my original comments, I had referenced, on page B-290, Revenue Summary, 8293,

Residence Fees. I was looking to get an explanation for those figures. And also, 8299, Nationality, I was looking for an explanation for those numbers. Yes. So, I am still waiting for those answers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Wayne Caines: One more time, please? One more time, please?

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: On page B-290, under Revenue, 8293, Residence Fees, which is nine lines down. And 8299, Nationality, 11 lines down. I was looking to get an explanation for those numbers.

The Chairman: Thank you.

The Chair now recognises the Member from constituency 23.

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

Mr. Chairman, the Minister mentioned in one of his responses the Job Makers Act. And I wonder if the Minister could just give us some indication as to how many new applications have been made and how many have been processed and approved for Job Makers, in terms of the qualifying criteria? If he could let us know that, and also whether—

Hon. Wayne Caines: How many have been approved?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: How many have been approved on Job Makers?

And also, whether we have any intent of looking at Job Makers in respect of key individuals in local companies where the individual may qualify under the criteria for Job Makers if the company were foreign, but not being considered because the company, the overarching company is local? I am just wondering whether anything is being looked at in that regard.

The Chairman: The Chair recognises the Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Chairman, the Job Makers Act actually comes under the Cabinet Office and the Premier. And so, he will be able, in his brief . . . that actually comes under the Job Makers Act. It does not actually fall under the Department of Immigration. That particular Act and everything that flows from that actually comes under the Cabinet Office under the Premier.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister, for that clarification.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, just a clarification. Because the actual permits themselves get issued through the department. Has that changed?

Hon. Wayne Caines: Yes.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Okay.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Having said that, the Minister signs off on it. The actual approval is done by the Premier.

Having said that, this is an opportunity for us to have a holistic debate around immigration. Because when a person comes here, they are not going to say, *Well, Minister Brown is looking at belongs. The Premier is looking at incentives for job makers.* So, what we will do is, we get the information. I think it allows us to have the full context of this. So, what I will do is I will get it, and I will present it. Because it is very important that we have a complete picture of where we are going in the immigration reform.

But I will say this before we get the number because several people reached out to me when they received the order, the Order of Business. Several people reached out with real big concerns about where we are as a country, where we are going with reference to immigration reform. And I think the questions from the Members opposite are that we all understand that this is something that is key and that it is important for us to get right. And when we are talking about the Incentives for Job Makers, we are at a time as a country at which we realise that sometimes we do not understand it. But we actually need people to come to Bermuda's shores to have the opportunity to work, have the opportunity to bring other employment.

The Incentives for Job Makers Act, the whole ethos around this particular Act is to get people in Bermuda who actually can create jobs in the country and to get our economy kickstarted.

The second part, Mr. Chairman, and we just spoke about it just now, is understanding where we are with reference to actually [having] Bermudians being [involved] in this process.

And there was a question asked with reference to performance measures, four versus twenty-two persons being shipped off the Island. These items are different from the forecast. They were dependent on incarcerated persons being released, persons being arrested on warrants with immigration breaches and a number of other factors. And so, what happens is, the notion is that people are being kicked off of our shores and that we are just [wantonly] going into homes and kicking expats off of the Island is a bit of—it is not what is transpiring. There were a number of people who were incarcerated; [then] after their period of incarceration, they were asked to leave the Island, and people who were being arrested on warrants. So, if [there is a] police stop, whether it is roadside sobriety or whether it is a warrant on a Saturday night, if you are stopped by the police and it is seen or found that you have overstayed your immigration status, that has an immediate benefit.

And so, without going into the science, over the last six months, we have increased the number of road sobriety checks. The roadside sobriety checks, obviously, for obvious reasons have led to some of what we would only describe as “other unintended consequences.”

Page B-290, line 8299, the question on Nationality, why are these numbers down? The answer: These decreases are based on actuals collected over the last two years, of \$75,000 and \$69,000. In other words, we have revised our forecast based on the trend over the medium term.

The Budget Book says \$2.35 million outcome versus \$21.8 million outcome. Why does the book not align with the forecast? The answer: The department will need to liaise with the budget office to determine why the numbers do not tie together.

Mr. Chairman, we are now reaching out to the department, the Cabinet Office, to get specific information around how many Job Makers applications that we have and how many of those were approved.

The Chairman: Members, are there any other Members who would care to address Head 27?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. I am still waiting for an answer to line item on page B-290, the philosophy, or trying to get an understanding of . . .

Hon. Wayne Caines: Why the market was soft.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Soft, yes. And now we are anticipating it to go back harder (or whatever you want to call it), strengthened. I just want to get an idea as to why they believe it is going to be that way. That is a drastic change.

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.

The Chairman: The Chair will recognise the Member from constituency 23.

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

Mr. Chairman, just as a matter of curiosity, does the Minister have any indication as to how many items are outstanding by category through the department? I know, certainly, as Minister, I used to get a weekly count on the number of, let us say, work permit applications that had been presented. How many had been processed, how many new ones have come in, how many have been processed and how many are left. We had those on the 20 B2B applications. We had those. So, on a weekly basis, I used to be able to get a job count.

And the reason for that is to be able to appropriately determine whether we had the appropriate number of staff deployed to be able to process some of the vexatious things that were coming through—

vexatious to the applicant because of the time delays. And I am just wondering whether we still have that kind of process to see where we are.

Hon. Wayne Caines: The process is there. But if you can allow me, just for two seconds—and I hope that it does not seem as if I am obfuscating. I just want to share with you what we believe the new direction that we are going to go in is. We believe, Mr. Chairman, that in the next few months, we have to have a plan for immigration that totally evolves. And so, what the plan now is, if you heard from the beginning part, we have to look at what all of the impediments are. When you are going to a system that is not digitised and the system is manual, as you know, you literally have to go to each box to try to find out where everything is. There is no way to collate all of the information. There is no way for the systems to talk to each other.

And so, the plan in the near term is to . . . and those numbers are available. But I think that does not answer your question. So, just allow me to tarry here for two seconds.

Th plan, going forward, is for us to have a system that is digitised, that allows us to get these numbers readily available. So, what I want to do here is to answer that question, but to share what the vision is going for the next year. We have said . . . Listen. The Department of Immigration, they do a yeoman's service with what they have. However, when a person comes to the Immigration Department, they should have a digitised application so that when they go online, they are able to see where it is, they are able to understand where they are in the process.

Our goal right now is to revamp the work permit process. Our goal is to set a new path. Now, remember, we have gone out to industry. They have given us a significant amount of money to help us through this process. The consultants' contracts will be signed in the next week. The consultants will be embedded into the Department of Immigration. They will be doing the change management progress that will allow us to have a robust system.

Where is the money coming from? Do we have it in the budget? As you can see, there was no increase. The majority, if not the lion's share, of the cost will be underwritten by the private sector. And that will allow us to . . . the Honourable Member has highlighted, where are we with those numbers? We can get those numbers. The difficulty of it is that we should not have to search for these data. These data should be readily available. And those are some of the challenges that, we believe, Immigration Ministers well before my time have lamented, that this process is too cumbersome. And that is where the emphasis right now is on immigration reform.

So, give me two seconds, Mr. Chairman. Immigration reform, we get the part that we are going to have to look at belongers, that we are going to have to look at PRCs, and that we are going to have to look at

status. That is in train. We believe that for a small to medium enterprise, we believe that for a big reinsurance company, we believe that for an upholstery store that has to bring people in, we have to change the work permit process in the department. That is our immediate priority, and that is what we are working towards now.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: You are welcome, Minister.

The Chair now recognises the Member from constituency 12 [*sic*].

Mr. Christopher Famous: I would never have been voted in in constituency 12.

[*Laughter*]

The Chairman: You did pretty well on the last go-round. No one thought you were going to win there either. You delivered. But I am sorry. Constituency 11, right next door to 12.

The Member from constituency 11, Mr. Christopher Famous, you have the floor, sir.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Yes. Good morning, Mr. Chairman.

I just want to speak in support of the Minister and to the concerns of the Member from constituency 3. Being on the Bipartisan—key word—Bipartisan Comprehensive Immigration Reform Committee has afforded me and fellow MPs, such as MPs Ben Smith, Leah Scott and Renee Ming, the ability to see the complex nature of our present immigration policies. Some mirror each other. Some overlap. It is really a most tangled . . . I will not say “tangled web.” But it is very entangled.

Over the last year and a half, we have had near-weekly meetings in order to arrive at some sort of consensus, firstly informed consensus. We have had to have [substantial] amounts of data coming in. We have had persons from the Statistics Department come in, to give us a comprehensive (excuse the pun) idea of the challenges that we have in order to streamline this process. And as the Minister has spoken, one part of this process, one crucial part of this process is what is happening in the back office. There is no way in the year 2020, when I can WhatsApp somebody in Japan, that we who have a progressive government should be having files here, there and everywhere, without our being able to have access to them.

So, this is a crucial part of that process. And as the Minister has outlined, this is not being addressed from our international budget, but by, for lack of a better term, corporate citizens who wish to help that department.

I will speak more [on that] later on. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Member, can you just clarify? Which committee were you referring to, the committee that you are a member of?

Mr. Christopher Famous: The Bi-par-ti-san (key word)—that means people from both sides—Comprehensive Immigration Reform Committee.

The Chairman: Okay. And if you return to the subject later, let us see if we can drill down a little more on the respective head and the attendant data that are before us. Thank you, sir.

Any other Members who wish to address Head 27?

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Chairman, I am waiting on answers to two questions.

The Chairman: While we wait on the pending answers from the Minister.

[*Pause*]

The Chairman: The Chair now recognises the Member from constituency 23.

An Hon. Member: What is the meaning of life?

[*Laughter*]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I do not think you have figured that out yet, Minister.

The question that I have is, when it comes to clearing through border control here, coming into Bermuda, the system . . . I know the Minister has indicated that there is going to be investment in a new system. But my question is, Have we seen any improvement more recently with the interim fixes in terms of the processing time for individuals coming through customs and immigration at the airport?

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.

The Chair now recognises the Minister of National Security.

Hon. Wayne Caines: The immigration system. We have people from customs who are processing the airport. And they do a yeoman’s service. They are limited with the processing speed, based on the system that they are using, 3M, the system that is being used, but it is antiquated. It has to then talk to about four different systems. It is indeed at end of life, and a lot of that system cannot be supported. We have looked at, and we have sourced, a new border management system. The management system, I think it started under the Member’s, under your tenure, when they started in mid-2017 looking at a border management system. They have gone around the world getting the best system for Bermuda. That is going to be

in place. They believe that it will be robust and it will be fit for purpose.

We are recently in the process of implementing this. We believe that when the new airport opens in 2020, the new border management system will be implemented. It will be fit for purpose. It will then have a lot more processing. It will actually make the airport entrance quite seamless and efficient. I believe that when you are considering Bermuda on global standards, when you go to the airport, there is a bit of a wait. And it is predicated on the old systems that we have, [with] IDT [Information and Digital Technologies] in use at the Immigration Department. And one of the reasons why we have the budget that is included is because we are getting a whole new system. And it is a system that is totally robust. It will be relevant.

It does not include the e-gate, which is something that will be needed, and that is different [and will be] in a supplementary budget. But we believe that we will see a lot more efficient IT-based system.

If I can be allowed to digress again, Mr. Chairman, the entire department is moving towards, in the not-too-distant future, an electronic or digitised process. Right now, the majority of the processes that we see are actually manual. In other words, you fill out forms. We believe that a pathway going forward through this process is to make the immigration processes more efficient. And a lot of this you do not need legislation to do. A lot of this is policy. A lot of this is going in there and looking at what the efficiencies are.

What we did not want is for civil servants, who have 50 people on the staff, to have a specific budget, who have daily administration to do to try to get them to then leave their daily responsibilities and go and put together a programme and a plan, and effect it to make it more efficient. That is why we are using the outside entities to help us to make this system more efficient, by taking an IT-based system that is okay, that is fit for purpose. But we believe that with the new system, it will be much more robust.

The Chairman: Thank you for that clarification, Minister.

The Chair now recognises once again the Member from constituency 23.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Okay. Yes, and I have one more question. And this is with respect to (let me see where it would come) work permits.

And that is, we had moved away from capturing on exit forms for our young people and people who are leaving—we had moved away from capturing what students are studying. Therefore, we used to be able to have something that tracked, which said that they are studying animal husbandry and they will be finished in three years. Therefore, if a work permit is coming up in that particular area, then we could marry

the fact that there is a Bermudian abroad studying XYZ who would be eligible to fill that position.

And I am just wondering whether we are making any progress with that. It was a tedious process. At some point in time, I do understand that—and this goes way back before my time, certainly. But it was a tedious process whereby the information was not being effectively captured. However, with new systems now being implemented, is this something that the Minister is looking at with respect to the new software for the systems that he is going to be implementing that this information could be captured?

And I ask that particularly because, if we know what our young people are abroad studying, we know when we are processing work permit applications, we would have an indication as to whether we will be able to fulfil the requirements or whether, in fact, we still have to allow work permit applications to be successful. So, I am just curious to know where we stand in terms of expecting some kind of synergy and correlation between the information that we can gather from our students and their ultimate expectation for being able to find employment when they return.

The Chairman: Minister, you have the floor.

Hon. Wayne Caines: The former Minister actually, obviously, has her finger on the pulse and knows the majority of this far better than I. There is a desire to get the information. But the data mining is actually a difficult enterprise because a portion of it has to be done manually. And so, when you have civil servants in a department, we end up fighting the fires where the blaze is the brightest. And so, with where we are now with work permits, the emphasis is on making sure that the work permits are processed, to make sure that the passports are being processed, to make sure that we have the relevant information. Because we know the shortcomings of the database and the data-catching system.

I think, to your point exactly, when we have the conversation, the reason why it is important to have this conversation and talk about incoming technology is because we need to highlight the fact that, whilst we have the very good intentions to segment the data, to understand how many people are in the work permits, when they are expiring, we have a system that does not allow for that because it is simply an old system.

What we have to do now, through this process, is get a system, put pieces in there that allow us to say what is fit for purpose. Again, Mr. Chairman, we have an internal process. The team of consultants will be embedded in the not-too-distant future coming from the private sector with one of the top five, and they are going to look at this thing from soup to nuts. The recommendation is going to be made. It is going to be implemented with the digital strategy. The digital strategy is focused around fixing the work permit pro-

cess to make it more robust, to make it more e-friendly, to make sure that it is able to capture, measure and synthesise all the data so we can get the key pieces of information.

We have a system that was really good 10 years ago. Now we are—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne Caines: Twenty years ago. We have now found, as an aggregate, that it is no longer fit for purpose. And we are in the process of modernising that process. Again, we have the consultants who have been identified, contractors who will start in the not-too-distant future. They will be embedded in the office within weeks.

The Chairman: The Chair now recognises the Shadow Minister.

Mr. Richards.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: While we are still waiting for the Minister to get answers, and it looks like he is being handed some now, I wanted to ask the Minister, Is the department capturing the numbers of Bermudians who are emigrating from Bermuda, that is, leaving Bermuda to live elsewhere? I know that in the past, these numbers have not been captured. Is there a desire or anything in place to capture that? Because, you know, that is information that is not just very informative, but critical to our current situation, where we have declining birth rates as people are having smaller families. So, I was curious if those numbers are being captured or if there are plans to capture data on Bermudians who are emigrating from Bermuda.

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.

Hon. Wayne Caines: We will endeavour to get those specific answers.

The question was, Does the exit form capture students leaving the Island, capturing what studies they are undertaking? Will the new system capture this? The answer is, we are approaching that stage in the immigration reform process. It is not in the first phase. The implementation phase involves documenting the requirements for systems. When we move into the procurement process, then we will look at integrating that into potential solutions.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

Members, we are in consideration of Head 27, Immigration. Are there any other Members who wish to pose any questions to the Minister?

Hon. Wayne Caines: Mr. Chairman, we are awaiting two answers. I am waiting on two answers. One is with reference to the numbers [requested by] Honourable Member Cannonier. And then, we have some

questions around the last question, which is, how many Incentives for Job Makers applications were made and how many people actually received the Incentives for Job Makers application permission? And, how many employees . . . that is going to be a little more difficult because that involves going to the companies and getting those numbers.

The Chairman: So, perhaps if they cannot be obtained today, maybe at a later date they can be conveyed to the Opposition Member?

Hon. Wayne Caines: That is correct.

The Chairman: Again, would anyone else care to pose a question with respect to Head 27, on Immigration? We are still here in consideration of that head.

The Chair now recognises the Member from constituency 31.

Mr. Ben Smith: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I was wondering if the Minister can give us some information regarding the belongsers. Overall, how many applications have been processed recently and how many are in process at the moment for belongser status?

Hon. Wayne Caines: I do not have those numbers. Those numbers could be obtained. Again, the belongsers issues, I would have to get those numbers.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

The Chair now recognises the Shadow Minister, Mr. Richards.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

While we are waiting, so there is not dead air for the people listening, on page B-292, I do not think I received an answer to my question that I asked in the earlier part of the debate. Page B-292, business unit 37020, Permission to Acquire Land. I had stated that in the year 2018/19, the forecast was at 70. And at 2019/20, the forecast was at 77. That is a difference of seven permits. And I tied it into the revenue from land acquisition fees, shown at 8291, on page B-290, which is projected to increase by just over \$3 million, which was an average of \$442,857 per permit. And I was asking, am I looking at this correctly? Is this a correct figure? So, I am still waiting for the answers to that question. And I will leave it at that for now.

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.

Is there any other Member who would wish to perform yeoman's service here?

Thank you. The Member from constituency 31 *[sic]*.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, trying to help out here while the Honourable Member is waiting for any other answers that are coming.

The Chairman: I am sorry, the Member from [constituency] 23, and not 31.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes. Thank you. They say we all look alike.

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: That is what they say.

I just wondered if the Minister could, just for edification from the question that I have received from outside, if the Minister could just give us an outline of the process and the requirements for letters of permission. If somebody wants to bring somebody in to perform a particular task that is short-term in nature, they are required to have a letter of permission from the department. If the Minister can just maybe briefly outline what the criteria are? And then that would be the end of my questions.

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.

Is there any other Member who wishes to address Head 27, Immigration?

[Pause]

The Chairman: Are there any Members who wish to pose any questions at this time?

The Chair now recognises the Shadow Minister.

Mr. Sylvan D. Richards, Jr.: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to make a suggestion. We are probably about seven minutes away from lunch. If we can go to lunch early, that would allow time for the Minister and his technical people to get our questions answered. And then we can reconvene.

The Chairman: Minister, are you of like mind?

Hon. Wayne Caines: I am so minded and guided. Thank you. Thank you, too.

The Chairman: Thank you for that suggestion, Shadow Minister.

There is a motion for the House to adjourn. I will recognise the Deputy Leader.

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I do move that we adjourn for lunch until 2:00 pm.

The Chairman: The motion is carried, and we will resume, Members, as per norm, at 2:00 pm.

Thank you.

[Gavel]

Proceedings suspended at 12:25 pm

Proceedings resumed at 2:04 pm

[Ms. Leah K. Scott, Chairman]

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

ESTIMATES OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR 2019/20

MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY

HEAD 27—DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION

[Continuation thereof]

The Chairman: Good afternoon, Members.

We will now resume Committee of Supply for further consideration of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 2019/20.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

The Chairman: Minister, would you like to proceed?

Hon. Wayne Caines: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman, we have had the opportunity over the lunch break to pull together our teams and we have a list of answers to the questions. With your leave I would like to commence.

The Chairman: Yes, please.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Question: Please provide the rationale for the estimated revenue for 2019/20 at \$5.5 million for revenue code 8291, the Land Acquisition Fees on page B-290.

The answer is as follows: This number is calculated based on the recent historical averages of revenues received over several fiscal years and a degree of judgment. In 2016/17, the Department of Immigration collected approximately \$5 million. In 2017/18, the revenue collected was approximately \$6 million. This estimate provided for fiscal 2019/20 is \$5.5 million, which is within the range of a reasonable estimate.

The Land Licence Acquisition Fees are comprised as follows: The application licence fees of \$1,625 which is paid up front at submission; and the landholding charges which is paid at the back end after the licence is approved by the Minister. The

amount payable varies in accordance with who the applicant is and the type of property, i.e., is it a restricted person or a PRC holder or a freehold, a condo, or a tourist accommodation? There are tables attached.

I have checked the two charges above and they could be split across two fiscal periods due to the processing timelines. For example, if an application licence fee is paid today the licence may not be issued until April 19th and at such time the landholding charge would be due.

Question: Can you please provide the numbers of Incentive for Job Maker applications approved?

There were 250 applications for exemption work permits approved to date.

Three: What is the number of employees at Somo and Liberty Mutual?

Answer: Somo International comprises of Endurance Specialty Limited, which was acquired by Somo International Holdings in 2018. Specialty originally started in Bermuda in 2001. Somo has a total of 117 employees in Bermuda, 86 employees (or 74 per cent) of the 117 are Bermudians, which consists of Bermudians and spouses of Bermudians, PRC holders, and exemption holders; 31 employees (or 26 [per cent]) are non-Bermudians on work permits.

Liberty Mutual's operations are a combination of Ironshore Bermuda and its affiliated companies of Liberty Mutual. There are approximately 65 employees that work for Liberty Mutual's combined Bermuda operations. There are 54 with the Legacy Ironshore companies which are now Liberty Specialty Markets Bermuda. Out of the 54, 33 are Bermudians, 4 are spouses of Bermudians, 3 are PRC holders, [and] 14 are work permit holders. There are currently 10. Of the 10, one is a PRC [holder], two are Bermudians, one is a spouse of a Bermudian, and there are six on straight work permits.

With reference to Somo's background in Bermuda, they have a letter of permission for a non-profit organisation, they have letters of charities for religious institutions. A letter of permission may be granted for a non-profit organisation, a registered charity, a religious institution such a coach, teacher, sports, clergy or a speaker, musician or entertainer, whether they be remunerated or not. Such a person is given permission to stay for 30 days at the time of extension.

The question was: The letter of permission for a non-profit organisation and registered charities.

The answer is: A letter of permission may be granted for a non-profit organisation or a registered charity, a religious institution, or a coach, a teacher of sports, a clergy speaker, a musician, or an entertainer whether they be remunerated or not. Such a person is given permission to stay in Bermuda for 30 days at the time the application is made. After landing, an extension using the visitor's extension application may

be granted upon the application and the payment of the appropriate fee, provided the stay does not exceed 60 days. Should a longer than 60-day stay be required, a work permit must be applied for. In the cases where a group has landed for the same purpose—an orchestra, choir or a sports team—the letter of permission fee is payable for each member. However, this fee is capped at five persons, and that is also included in the recommendations.

Please provide the recommendation for \$5.5 million revenue. The number estimated is a historical average of the revenues . . . actually, that is complete.

Madam Chairman, I think we have answered the questions that were asked. If there are any further questions, I would love the opportunity to answer those questions.

With reference to the Job Makers Act, Madam Chairman, the question was asked, and the Job Makers Act actually falls under the Cabinet Office in that the Premier has . . . I have signed . . . the Minister of Immigration has signed off, but the final say is from . . . is by the Premier.

The question was asked: How many Job Makers applications have gone to date? There are 250. The reason why we wanted to make sure that we gave the information today about Somo and about Liberty Mutual and giving the numbers for Incentives for Job Makers is to give a clear understanding and a picture that we realise that there has to be a delicate balance with attracting businesses to Bermuda, making the policies relevant, making them streamlined, but at the same time, through other processes and procedures, making sure that Bermudians are given the place of prominence in Bermuda.

If you look at Somo and if you look Liberty International, a couple of things stand out with both of these companies. Both of these companies have shown by their numbers (the evidence is in the numbers) that they have a commitment to hiring Bermudians; that they have a commitment to the fabric and the interweaving of being in Bermuda. We are saying that we are in the process of creating two streams, a stream where if you are a company and you have to go through the regular process, but if you are a company that has the proper documentation, you do the proper posts and audits of your company, you can show a significant commitment to Bermuda, you can show training and development for Bermudians, you can show where there are opportunities for employment both locally and abroad for staff, that you are investing in the charitable status of Bermuda.

We believe that there is an opportunity for us to create another lane, an accelerated plan through the immigration process. We are piloting that programme and we have two companies that will be leading the pilot in that programme, one is Somo International, and the other is Liberty Mutual.

Prior to the break we were asked to quantify the numbers of people that we are sending there. In

other words, why did you choose these two companies?

And what we wanted to highlight is that we believe the two companies chosen represent a good starting point in understanding the relationship and doing what we deem to be a trial process for an alternative lane.

And Madam Chairman, I want to be clear that the alternative lane is not *carte blanche* to come into Bermuda, just giving away work permits. We have a clear plan for ensuring that these companies are training and developing Bermudians, that there is an immigration process; however, there will be some exemptions, things that they will not have . . . like they will not be required to go to put it on the Job Board. They will not be required to go to the Immigration Board. Why? Because we want to make sure that Bermudians are being trained and developed, but [these companies] will already have evidenced that through highlighting their HR plan, showing us what their plan is philanthropically for the year, what [their] plan for training and developing Bermudians.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

The Chairman: Thank you for the explanation, Minister.

Would anybody else like to . . . ?

I recognise the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, thank you, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman, I listened intently to the answer to the question that I posed on page B-290 in reference to Land Acquisition Fees. And I just . . . in listening to that answer it has just drawn me to some other conclusions here. He also mentioned that the prior year, which would have 2016/17, was \$5 million in revenue, and the actual that we see for 2017/18 is \$6 million and then, of course—

The Chairman: Excuse me, can you tell me what line item?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Page B-290. [Programme] 8291.

The Chairman: Thank you.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: So I was curious as to exactly what was the makeup of Land Acquisition Fees. What is that? I had somewhat of an idea, and now that I understand that it is due to expats or anyone not from Bermuda seeking to . . . condos or houses or whatever the case may be. These are the fees, and it is a healthy amount of fees that Government gains from this here.

So I go back to the fact that this is suggesting then that for the original amount of 2018/19, we believed that there was going to be a continuance of this

land owning or condo-type owning by foreigners that they would purchase. And to see that drop off, that drastic drop off to a third, I would just say it would be good for the Minister to take a closer look at that as to why. Because I am beginning to question . . . well, maybe we got behind . . . I do not know why that is what it is. Because there is confidence that we are going to be doing, as I said, more than double for the current estimate of 2019/20. This speaks to either confidence or lack of confidence, I should say, and then confidence. So if it is not a confidence issue, then it is something else? It is something else? And I am not sure what that “else” is, so I am making the recommendation to the Minister that he needs to understand what is going on because I am now worried about this here.

We have heard a lot of talk about the fact that people feel like they are not confident in Bermuda, whatever the case may be, and we are talking about *we need more boots on the ground*, this speaks directly to the fact that we went from \$7 million down to \$2.5 million. So we need to figure that out. I am not hearing, you know, and you can come back, I am not looking for the answer now. But if you can take it upon yourself just to maybe pull me aside and say you looked at it a little closer. The answer that is being given is not getting to where I am going here and was asking the question originally.

Something else is wrong here because it suggests that you had a strategy in mind. You knew what was going on. The history speaks for itself, as the Minister even went back to a prior book than this. To then be in this position, quite frankly, for 2018/19 should be concerning. I mean, a third of \$7 million? Even if they came in at half of that, \$3.5 million, that is a million more than what they have already got now that they would have had in their coffers for revenue. So somebody needs to be paying close attention to this here to ensure that we got that money in.

And this is not a case of where people are holding off and not paying their fees. They pay them; they pay their fees. So, that is where I am suggesting, maybe find out a little more here because it is a bit startling now that I begin to start running these numbers and backtracking it. There is a story behind it. So I will leave it at that.

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.
Minister?

Hon. Wayne Caines: Just so you can be clear, I am actually lost. So you are saying . . . can you be explicit when you are saying . . . what are you saying . . . we are not paying attention to which part? Because I read through a lot of stuff and I just want to be clear I understand.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, thank you, I appreciate that, Minister.

The Chairman: Member?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, I guess what I am suggesting is that, you know, the reference to it being soft for whatever reason. Why is it soft for 2018/19? Why is it bullish for 2019/20?

The trend has been growing right up until 2018/19, I mean, actual figures. Unfortunately, by the time we get to the end of 2018/19 we are only at a third of the estimate—the original amount of \$7 million. I do not believe that it is . . . so, when you qualified it by saying “soft” and then you gave a few other titbits on what you are looking at here, but it still did not get down to why this is so drastically low.

Because when it comes to revenue, I mean, there is not much guessing work here, okay? You have got 2,000 people. They come to Bermuda. They have got 2,000 families, let us say, foreign families. They have got 2,000 homes whether they are condos or whatever they may be. They are paying the fees and they are still here. Now, all of a sudden, in 2018/19 it . . . it . . . the bottom of the barrel just drops.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Got it, got it, got it.

The Chairman: Minister?

Hon. Wayne Caines: I actually get it now, I apologise.

So, when we are looking at the applications that are made and the processes that they have to go through, whether it is for licence and principal and a number of things, what I was seeing in the department is that the process was set to be between 60 . . . I think it was 60 days for the process to go through. And a lot of times, going to the Land Valuation Department, it was actually simply getting caught in the Government red tape.

And I know specifically . . . I know specifically (to the Member opposite). In the last few months, I have had to literally embed myself in the process to look at what is keeping the bottleneck, whether it is a Land Valuation Department, whether it is the Registrar General's Department, looking at specific things in each one of those departments, we were seeing that this was . . . there was a backlog.

I meet with the immigration team on a weekly basis to understand where we are with licence and principal with condos and with . . . and sometimes it is simply a backlog. We are dealing with systems that are not digitised, systems that have not been prioritised, there is a significant . . . and to the point by the Member opposite. He has highlighted a point that we all get. There are specific ways to bring money—*boots on the ground*—to bring people to Bermuda and that has to be our priority.

Now this is where the balancing act takes place, right? Because when you start to say in this country that we are focusing on getting people in Bermuda and making sure they use work permits,

there is a delicate balance, and it looks like we are [opening] the floodgates. That is actually not the case.

To the point: We have processes and procedures with getting the licences and getting the applications processed, and we simply are now ensuring that that remains a priority. And that means, when the files come through, people realise that it is critical to the survival of our country to get the people in Bermuda.

There is a change in mind set. It is a change in how we process. It is no longer resting on our laurels. It is encouraging people to be a little more diligent, it is encouraging the Land Valuation Department to say, *Listen, we need to get these things approved. We need to have these licences approved in a significant manner.*

Again, and to the Member opposite, I think it is very easy for us to almost abdicate our responsibility and say that this is an administrative error and this is . . . the lethargy is based on the lack of people and processes. It is. It is. When you look at the same people in the department, of course, they are segmented into specific areas. As the Member opposite, the former Minister, can tell you, the department has needed an overhaul with processes and procedures.

Now there has to be a clear emphasis, and the emphasis is clear. We are looking at specific things within Immigration, looking at the work permit policies, looking at specific things that allow us to focus with laser-like precision on making the department digitised, in making sure that we understand what the bottlenecks are, prodding the staff. And they are hard-working staff. When you go to Land Valuation and you have to get those numbers, you have to go to the Registrar General to get specific information; we have to correlate getting the information with getting boots on the ground, with getting people into Bermuda.

And oftentimes we do not make the connecting rod between getting these things done and getting people in Bermuda. And I think that is a part of the conversation that we are having as a department, having a team that is understanding, *You are doing yeoman's service.* What we have to do now is put the mechanisms in place so that the department is run more efficiently. That is a part of comprehensive Immigration reform that is significant.

We, Madam Chairman . . . and I said this in the beginning. When we look at each head, everyone focuses on comprehensive immigration reform based on what is most significant to them, what their need is. And so in this parliamentary session we have said we are going to focus on making sure that the processes and procedures in Immigration are regularised, putting together a plan that allows (in the next phase) to get the proper digitisation process in place.

In the meantime, in getting a work permit process, we have people who are coming to Bermuda. We want to make sure that we have a pilot programme that we can actually get people fast-tracked through. On the Bermudianisation part, hold on for a

second, you are not just going to get in the fast lane. You have to have a plan in place that shows what your plan is for Bermuda. Old Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda are saying, *Hold up a second, Minister, you're allowing a lot of non-Bermudians in. What do we have in place to protect Bermudians to give them opportunities?* We have shared that we have a document that will be going out in the next two days which talks about looking at restricted and closed categories.

The department is going to say with a letter going out to industry, *You've had the opportunity to look at specific categories. We just don't want to focus on barbers and hairdressers, we want to look at compliance officers, we want to look at police officers, we want to look at doctors, GPs. We want to look at all of these elements where we are not going to stifle the economy.* But tell me why, Miss HR at an exempt company, or Miss HR at a local company (I hate saying Mr. and Mrs. Bermuda, right, but, the person that understands our economy), how do we protect our infrastructure for Bermudians who need opportunities and give them opportunities [and] allow the Immigration Board to have a clear documented process? It is very easy . . . very difficult, well, or not difficult, but it is more cumbersome to change the law, but it is a lot easier to change the policy.

I think, Madam Chairman, what we are hearing today . . . so if we were to talk about what is the difference with this particular immigration, the next fiscal [year], we understand that as a country we are at the crossroads and we have to put some things in place that make sure that Bermudians are given a place of primacy in their own country—training and development opportunities for Bermudians. But, more importantly, we have to now start to accelerate some plans to get businesses to come into Bermuda, show them that we get that they are good corporate citizens that are in Bermuda and have been making an impact for a number of years, and this is the pilot programme that we have to evidence what our commitment is.

How is this thing going to be financed? people are saying. *Oh, Mr. Caines, how are we going to do this, we did not see any large increases?* As a matter of fact, it is the exact same budget as last year. We have met with the private sector—ABIC, ABIR, the Chamber of Commerce—a number of what we call the “alphabet soup.” They have committed a large sum of money to assisting us with this process.

To the Opposition Leader's point, he rightfully highlighted that there is an estimate, and that number is woefully behind. The Ministry has been looking at the specific applications that are coming in, they will be prioritised, we will be able to . . . we have said some of the processes for getting licences were 60 days. I met with the team last week and, as a policy, do you think that we can legitimately . . . okay, what are the steps? It has to go through the Land Valuation Department.

What takes place at the Land Valuation Department? They look at the size of the property; they look at the ARV of the property. Do you think that we can do all the work that is necessary? Do you think we can take that from 60 days to 30 working days? *It will be a stretch, Minister.* Can we look at this thing again? This is my brain from having the benefit of being in the private sector, having the benefit of being in the public sector, my brain is saying, *Listen, do you think that we can take these times, legitimately so, and cut these times in half, making sure that we get what we need to do to get the necessary permissions, to make the necessary checks?* And the answer was yes.

And so, as we go through this procedure for the last . . . since November 1st, the PS and I have been meeting with everyone. We have been looking at processes and looking at procedures. It has not been easy. And I know my Opposition colleagues have been very patient with me saying this for the third time, again, today . . . and I have been repeating myself with reference to the direction that we are going in. We believe that we have to pivot. We have to understand that the country, we have protect the rights of Bermudians, but we also have to ensure that we give a little jolt where the jolt is necessary.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

Would any other Member like to speak?

I recognise the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Cannonier.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Yes, I just want to say that this is what the debate should be like. We are now getting into some more detail so that the public understands where their money is going or where it is not going, or whether they are getting or not getting it. So I appreciate the expounding on some of these issues.

So as he was speaking, it was interesting because it then . . . I do not want it to go . . . I said he could come back with answers. But does the Minister now believe that with the employee numbers which have . . . it is pretty static; there are no real changes here. Understanding the backlogs and the likes, whether or not . . . and I believe that under Finance Administration is where we would be looking at this particular line item of Acquisition of Fees on page B-290. But page B-291, the full-time employees, and with the assistance of ABCs of the world in helping out, I think that that may be going to somewhere else . . . does he believe that he can get by with getting this revenue back in?

I certainly want him to be successful here going from that \$2.4 million to the \$5.5 million. And I am hoping that as a track record of him getting on top of things this will happen, that we will realise this money. That is a huge windfall, quite frankly, double the

amount of this year . . . a huge, huge, windfall. Can that be done by just the Finance and Administration [being staffed by] nine people? And the reason I ask that question is because those of us on this side who have been Ministers before, the budget may say well, you know, nine employees, but you may have had to make . . . what is the word I want to use . . .

An Hon. Member: Secondments?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: No, not secondments. But you may have had to make some sacrifices in one just to have it the other type of thing.

So I am encouraging him, you know, if he comes back and says, *Look, I need to . . .* I will say this right off the top of the head, there is an election next year. And if we come back to the budget again and he has had to add one more person, I will not get on his case for that because I will just say *I told you so and I think you need some more people there to get this money back*. Because to go from 30 to 60 to 90 days when we know that this money is available and we know that this is the character, the type of people who pay their fees and bills. I would say, *No problem, mate*. We recognise the problem. But I just wanted to get on top of it, and does he believe that realistically that number will work?

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.

Is there any other Member that would like to speak?

Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Just a response to that point. Again, and I say this respectfully, it is almost cart/horse, right? Where we are now is . . . what we want to do is be in . . . and we are about to sign the contract with the consultancy firm that will be looking for the inefficiencies. They will be looking at where the opportunities are.

Once we look at inefficiencies, a big part of where we are is we have had to admit that we were bringing in an outside resource. The next question is, how are we going to pay for it? The alphabet soup [is] going to pay for it. But I believe that, as a result of the efficiencies, as a result of the digitisation process, we are going to see, in the not-too-distant future, where we are going to be able to have resources that can be moved in different directions.

And so, once you have a process that is exceedingly labour intensive, as you start to move towards a more digitised process, we believe that a net result of this is that you are going to see the opportunity for us to have, what we call in this business model, concentration of forces. And the concentration of forces will be predicated on where the need is.

And so what we need to look at and what the plan is to look at [is this: We say, okay, where are the opportunities fiscally to actually: 1. Get boots to the

ground in Bermuda; and 2. To make revenue for the department.

If we streamline the processes that are taking up the most time—work permit application vetting, making sure that you are looking at police vetting systems, calling employers, making sure the forms are filled out properly, going through—so the process when you see the immigration process, it is exceedingly labour intensive on the administrators. A file comes in, a file is not filled out correctly, they have got to send the file back. They then have to sign the forms, they have to fill out the forms, they have to vet the forms, they have to take the forms to the board.

We believe that once the form is digitised and the form is online, it is almost like when you get the ESTA form in America. You are not able to go to the next form of the application if the first part of the form was filled out incorrectly. There are a number of things that we believe in the process will be so streamlined, if you can allow me to just cast a vision of what it will look like in the end. For all of the applications, if they are indeed online, you are actually cutting down time. If you are working with company A, you are able to go on a portal and you are able to see the stage where your application is, and then you are able to say, *Well, listen, estimated date of completion*.

And so we believe when you are keeping in line with the work permit and that process, we believe that process will be streamlined. As a result of streamlining the work permit process, a part where it is going to take a lot more of the energy will be with the licences as with different forms of administration. We might be able to . . . it is our plan, we believe, through the process (and we are not clairvoyant) we believe that there will be an opportunity for us to move people around.

I can say, when I was looking at this from simply a business and a number of perspectives . . . and you can [ask] where are the Government fees coming from? I said to my PS, we have to move our people around to where the opportunities are with getting people to Bermuda and the numbers. And that is something that you cannot justify as a Minister. You cannot go in there and just start moving around . . . the civil service just does not work like that. Management services . . . you have to come in with specific recommendations.

We believe a key part in going forward is having the consultative contract going forward, for them to identify what the key impediments are. We have the support of the business [of] Bermuda. They are coming; they are being a part of the process. I think a show of goodwill to us is for us to take two companies and show what we are going to do in that process. I know that I have looked at a number—and I will not name the company—I know that there is a significant entity in Bermuda that has a number of applications that are in front of us now. We have reached out to a specific government department and said, *Listen, this*

is what these 20 applications being approved means to Bermuda. And I remember having the conversation with the staff because arbitrarily you are the arbiter of . . . you have the sceptre in your hand . . . you have the conn, as they say. When you say to them, *When you make this decision, this is what it means to Bermuda Incorporated*, people actually see the vision of the direction that we are going in and we seem to have buy-in.

Again, I do not . . . I am not clairvoyant, I would love to give an update at the appropriate time about where we are in the process. We have not started the consultative process. One would have thought we would have been further along the road. We believe that we can make some significant movements, but it remains a work in progress.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

Was there any other Member that would like to speak?

I recognise the Member from constituency 23. Pat Gordon-Pamplin, you have the floor.

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

Madam Chairman, I thank the Minister for his explanation. The only concern that I have in respect of what he said is that we have had a consistent two- to four-month turnaround time for the grant of land licences with no Bermudian connection. And that—

The Chairman: Excuse me, that is on what page?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: This is on page B-293, Output Measures, business unit 37020, Personnel Services, and it is about the fifth—sixth—line up from the bottom, where the average process time has been two to four months—the actual for 2017/18, forecast for 2018/19, revised for 2018/19 and also projected for 2019/20.

The question then would be that if there have been bottlenecks, then are we looking at realistic output measures for the . . . that have been previously stated, if with all of the efficiencies that we are anticipating we are still in this two- to four-month frame? Or are we likely to see that this two to four-month time frame might effectively change a little bit downward because of efficiencies and because of IT and the like?

The other question that I have is—just two more questions—one of which is, the Minister has said a couple of times in his presentation that there is no difference in the budget last year on this—

Hon. Wayne Caines: Overall, I meant overall.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Overall, but there actually is an overall \$500,000 increase in the budget last year to this year. We had \$4,754,000 in the Sub-

jective Analysis on page B-290 and now we have got \$5,254,000 this year, or this coming year going forward. So there is a \$500,000 increase, the majority of which actually has been expended in Professional Services. But I just wanted to point that out for . . . just to make sure that the record is correct.

And the third and final question that I have is—we asked it at the outset and did not really get an answer—was there any reason why, in this Ministry, we were looking at the revised 2018/19 estimates as against the 2019/20, when significant numbers of ministries have looked at 2018/19 original, which are the numbers that have been approved by this House in last year's budget that should be compared against the 2019/20 estimates?

We should be looking at original to original if we are looking at apples to apples.

And it just . . . I just . . . by way of, perhaps, a little bit of embellishment here in terms of what has happened. Some of the ministries have compared original 2018/19 to original 2019/20 or, you know, to the new 2019/20, and others have compared the revised. The question was, is there any reason why we have compared the revised numbers of 2018/19 as opposed to the original numbers? In this Book we are going revised to new.

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.

Is there any other Member that wishes to speak?

I recognise the Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: I will have to get the answer to the “revised” question from my technical team.

With reference to the budget being \$500,000 more than it was last year, this actually was corrected. The budget is not \$500,000 more. The budget . . . that \$500,000, there was \$500,000 and that was actually in the wrong entity. That should have gone to the Headquarters budget and should have come under . . . that \$500,000 is on the wrong line and it should have gone under Gang Initiatives. So the \$500,000 that we spoke of Gangs, should have come away from the Immigration and should have gone to Gangs. That was . . . we cleared that up in our first debate on the other heads when we debated the other part of our ministries.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

Is there any other Member that would like to speak?

You have the floor, Member.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Just a clarification, yes, because I do not have that number.

Was there an errata printed for this page?

Hon. Wayne Caines: I do not have it at hand. There was an errata that was printed and was distributed on the last occasion, yes, ma'am. Yes, ma'am.

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

The Chairman: Thank you.

Is there any other Member that would like to speak?

Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Madam Chairman, I just wanted to . . . can I just say something before I move?

The Chairman: Yes, please.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Thank you.

We are at a unique position in where we are as a country. As the Minister, you often hear that Bermudians are having difficulty finding employment. There are many Bermudians who feel that the country is geared toward the opportunities for expats and they, [Bermudians], are limited in finding opportunities in Bermuda. We have heard . . . I have met with a number of people and we have heard a number of people who have said listen, we need to get the belonging issue fixed, the PRC issue has to be regularised, what are we going to do with status, with status generally, the mixed status family issues? There are so many things that we believe our country is facing with reference to the immigration matters—it is very evocative.

In the not too distant past, issues with reference to Immigration tore this country asunder. With the Minister with responsibility for Immigration and with the colleagues that work on the Parliamentary Subcommittee for Immigration Reform, we have taken a very practical approach to what we believe is the proper way to solve the problems here.

I believe that in this parliamentary session we have to understand a few of the problems. So we cannot say that we will have a couple of the issues that I mentioned solved by June. I believe that it is going to take us some time. The Act was written in 1956. We did not just fall into the problem overnight. However, we take the people who are having these challenges . . . to quote an urban poet, Robert Nesta Marley, he said *he [or she] that feels it, knows it*, and we understand that as a country we are going to have to grapple with these issues. We have taken a significant measured approach.

The first approach is by looking at the work permit policy. In looking at that work permit policy we believe that it is fraught with pitfalls and needs to be modernised. The processes and procedures in the department, when we have excellent people, hard-working people, like Dr. Danette Ming, that we need processing procedures that allow that to be dealt with

and tackled as a priority. Again, we have gone out to the private sector and they will help fund that.

There is another thing that we are looking at, How do we manage and give Bermudians the opportunity with this new Immigration reform [when] they see people who are working outside of their work permit, working when they do not have permission by the Chief Immigration Officer? Well, we have put together a plan within the department that allows people to have a hotline, have an address that they can [contact]. We have seen an increase of our compliance officers in the amount of people who have been asked to leave Bermuda in the last six months based on the things that we are doing as a country to make sure that people who belong in Bermuda and do not have the right immigration status . . . that they are asked to leave.

I think something that this Government is doing differently in highlighting that is that we have to be clear that when we are meeting with people, whether they are a store or whether they are a reinsurance organisation, we want to see their training and development plans for Bermudians. We are meeting with the HR Directors; we are asking to see an overall plan of development for Bermuda. So what normally happens is a young Bermudian says, *I'm not able to get a job. This country's unfair*. And they shake their fist in the sky because they are not being given an opportunity. What we are able to do now when we are meeting with executives from reinsurance companies, we are able to say to them, *Bermudians want to work, they are being qualified, they need opportunities*.

And so the conversation now is a robust conversation when they come to meet with us—show us your training and development programmes for Bermudians, show us where the scholarships are, show us what you are doing for the country philanthropically. And so the conversation is now more holistic with people who are doing business in Bermuda. It has to be said to international business and people who are setting up companies in Bermuda, *We get it. We understand that we have to have you in Bermuda, but we also believe it is an opportunity for you, too, to invest in our country*.

And what does investing in Bermuda look like? It looks like getting trained Bermudians that have the ability, that have the skills to get the opportunity going in Bermuda, and that is a part of the narrative. We looked in Immigration and are excited about the programme that we have now that is a pilot with two companies—Sompo International and Liberty Mutual—where we are saying to what we believe are good corporate citizens, invest in education, invest in training and development programmes. But we can create another stream. We have a stream that everyone can go in where you have to advertise and where you have to put it on the Job Board, where you have to go in front of the Immigration Board, to another lane where we have good corporate citizens, people who

are invested in Bermuda, people who have a significant number of Bermudians hired in their company—that show and articulate a training and development programme locally, abroad, internships for Bermudians, show us what you are doing philanthropically in Bermuda, monies that you are giving to charity—and we are saying that there is going to be another line which allows for you to get an advanced opportunity to get your work permits approved.

When you bring this enforced with our goal to have mixed status families to be considered by this July, before Parliament is prorogued for the summer, tackling that head-on, understanding that this has to be regularised. The issue of belongers is something that has caused disquiet in this country. We have a document that has been written by the Honourable Minister Walton Brown, it will be discussed in the next week at Parliament—excuse me, in Cabinet—and we will be able to have the conversation. We believe when the drafting instructions are given in the next two weeks with reference to the mixed families issue, we believe a number of families will have their immigration status regularised. This was in our Throne Speech, this was something that we have committed to, and this is something that we believe we will have the opportunity to do and regularise.

And I am grateful to the Opposition for the cut and thrust of this debate. We were able to look at issues. I was asked by Members about questions. I was asked by Members specifically about people in the department, two companies that I mentioned. How many people do they have in that company? How many Bermudians do we have in those companies? I was asked questions about the Job Makers Act. How many people from the Job Makers . . . how many of those people have we agreed to since they have been in Bermuda? I was able to say that there are 200 applications that have been considered and have been granted under the Incentives for Job Makers Act.

I believe that the debate has . . . and I hope that the Government has shown that we believe that comprehensive immigration reform is not going to be easy. It is not going to be something that we all agree on. I hope that going forward when we start having the consultations on closed categories, restricted categories, that when we put [information] out for the general public, Mr. and Mrs. Smith . . . we are not just talking about reinsurance companies and HR directors from the big companies in Bermuda, we want to get people's feelings on the categories and understanding how do we restrict categories, how do we close categories, and why, and help us to consider this robustly and as a country.

When I was talking to a gentleman by the name of Robert Pires, he was talking about immigration reform—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne Caines: Pires. He was sharing with me how antagonist and how openly hostile the debate was on the last occasion when we did this nationally as a country. I am actually of the opinion that we will be having these debates in the not-too-distant future. As the Minister, I hope by setting the tone today, that it is a tone that we can keep as a country. And people will not like this part in certain segments.

1. We need to have people in this country. We need to have people coming into Bermuda. We need to have boots on the ground in order to make this economy run. Bermudians are brilliant people, we are talented people, but we will rely on other people from outside being in this country.
2. We have to have Bermudians having the opportunity to get employment in Bermuda. There have to be mechanisms in place that allow Bermudians to get the opportunity through training and development.

We understand how this moves and it articulates through education, but I think the disquiet in our communities, with the arguments of us being polarised, is that a number of Bermudians feel that they cannot participate in the economy. We have gotten that.

We realise that when we have the discussion about belongers, you will see a paper where we discuss that. These are conversations that are going to be uncomfortable. I believe we can have these discussions. I believe that we can discuss it openly.

The Ministry of National Security, with its specific emphasis on Immigration, wanted to set . . . and I thank you . . . and I know we did not . . . we have almost . . . it almost seems as if its pie in the sky, but I wanted to—we wanted to—set a clear objective of where we are going to set realistic timelines. We are not going to solve all the problems by July. We believe in this July we will have the mixed status families. We believe we will get drafting instructions. We believe we will have that done and dusted. As it pertains to other elements of it, it remains a work in progress.

I believe that we are going in the right direction, Madam Chairman. I believe that we have a budget that will require for us to be aggressive with those dates when we are talking about the time to license in principal and when we are doing specific revenue generating entities. The Government is going to have to be fleet of foot. We are going to have to move our resources around to give us the opportunity but never compromise on selling our country away, giving everything away; make sure that our planning laws are respected; make sure that the right people are being given opportunities to reside and work in Bermuda. And I think that is a big part of the holistic approach that I hope that our country can see, that this relationship is going to have to be one of give [and] it is going to have to be one of take.

Should Bermudians have a place of primacy in the country? We will not resile from that. We believe that. But we believe that this is an opportunity for us to do things a bit differently, making sure that Bermudians have the opportunities to lead, to be trained and to find significant opportunities in their community. Having said that . . . Madam Chairman.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

Is there any other Member that would like to speak?

I recognise—

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, just for clarity before the Minister moves the heads. We have not received errata in respect of the Immigration Department to which the Minister indicated that it had been issued. We do not have it. So if the Minister can ensure that this errata has been distributed so that we have a corrected page in the Budget Book, it would be appreciated.

Thank you.

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.

Is there any other Member that wishes to speak?

Hon. Wayne Caines: I am informed that the errata was given in the other department; one was not given with reference to Immigration.

My recollection of when . . . that when we led the head, when we went through the Ministry, that we gave an errata and we discussed that. That was the first thing that we did on the first day that we went through the budget. I think—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne Caines: Okay. But I can give an undertaking to make sure that we go through it.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

Would you like to—

Hon. Wayne Caines: Madam Chairman, I move that Head 27 be approved as printed.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

I recognise the Member from constituency 23, Pat Gordon-Pamplin.

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

The Honourable Member indicated “as printed” but it is the errata . . . has not been distributed, we do not have that. So it would have to be as amended by the errata.

Hon. Wayne Caines: Madam Chairman—

The Chairman: Minister.

Hon. Wayne Caines: I move that Head 27 be approved as amended by the errata.

The Chairman: Okay. Thank you, Minister.

[Motion carried: The Ministry of National Security, Head 27, was approved as amended, and stands part of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 2019/20.]

The Chairman: Members, we will now move on to the next head, which is Head 63, Non-Ministries, Parliamentary Registrar.

Minister Brown, you have the floor.

NON-MINISTRIES

HEAD 63—PARLIAMENTARY REGISTRAR

Hon. Walton Brown: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman, I move the following head: Head 63, Parliamentary Registrar; and Head 98, Information Commissioners Office be now taken under consideration.

HEAD 98—INFORMATION COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

Hon. Walton Brown: Madam Chairman, I refer to Head 98, Information Commissioner's Office because we expected to debate this head. Unfortunately, and regrettably, the Information Commissioner's Office has decided not to provide us with a brief on this. We find it highly outrageous that there is no brief forthcoming. It is ironic that a department whose mandate is designed to disseminate information through information requests is actually prohibiting us from having a thorough debate on this section, on this department.

So we just wish to express our profound disappointment in this regard that the Information Commissioner's Office has decided not to cooperate and provide a brief for the Information Commissioner's Office.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

HEAD 63—PARLIAMENTARY REGISTRAR

Hon. Walton Brown: Madam Chairman, I would like to present the brief for the Parliamentary Registrar, Head 63, found on pages B-20 through B-23 of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure.

The Mandate of the Parliamentary Registrar is *to serve the electorate of Bermuda, irrespective of race, creed, colour or political affiliation, with respect and unbiased attention to their needs, whilst pursuing the full objectives of the democratic process.*

Madam Chairman, the Parliamentary Registrar is appointed by the Governor under the provisions of the Parliamentary Election Act [1978], and as such, is required to discharge the duties conferred or imposed under the Act. The Parliamentary Registrar is subject to the general direction of the Governor, and in the exercise of his statutory duties, is assisted by such number of public officers as may from time to time be authorised to be employed.

The Parliamentary Election Act [1978] (as amended) and the Bermuda Constitution Order 1968 are the instruments by which the activities of the Parliamentary Registry are governed. On occasion the House of the Legislature may pass other Acts such as the Capital Punishment Referendum Act 1989; the Independence Referendum Act 1995; the Referendum Act 2012; and the Municipalities (Election) Order 2011 that have a direct effect on the office's activities.

The staff of the Parliamentary Registry consists of five full-time positions under the direction of the Parliamentary Registrar, Miss Tenia Woolridge. It is intended that the department will have two additional workers to assist with election preparations for the Bermuda Municipal Elections scheduled to take place in May 2019. And as I say, "scheduled" to take place, but highly unlikely that they will take place.

Madam Chairman, the Parliamentary Registry continues to make strides in improving our processes and procedures for registration of voters and general maintenance of the Parliamentary Register. We continue to look at the quality of our service delivery and have committed to allowing staff to take the necessary training in order to ensure continued quality of service. As always, we are committed to maintaining the Parliamentary Register to ensure it is accurate in accordance with the Parliamentary Election Act 1978.

In this current fiscal period, the department conducted bye-elections for constituencies 22, Paget East, and 25, Warwick North East, on the 7th of June, 2018. These bye-elections saw a turnout of 52 per cent and 54 per cent, respectively. Both elections were conducted and managed with great efficiency and integrity, and there were no reported incidences of electoral fraud.

The Parliamentary Registry is committed to continued dialogue with all stakeholders of the democratic process with a view to ensuring the integrity of the process and identifying areas for improvement. In the next fiscal period, we intend to push forward with initiatives to improve the electoral process for all voters, including those with visual impairments who can benefit from tactile voting devices which will allow them to vote independently in the future.

This year during Voter Awareness Month in April, the Parliamentary Registry will hold a series of presentations throughout the senior schools, with a focus on educating new voters on the electoral process in Bermuda and the voter registration process, giving voters the opportunity to ensure they are regis-

tered to vote correctly; apply to register to vote for the first time; ensure they know what constituency they live in; and if that constituency has proposed boundary changes that will take effect in the next General Election.

Furthermore, the department will be pushing forward to integrate all the apostille receipting and invoicing within Accountant General Enterprise Resource Planning known as the E1 system thereby shifting away from the uses of several spreadsheets for reconciliation. In addition, it will manage and operate its own bank account to meet the demand and preference by international and major private sector clients for the domestic and wire transfer mode of payment rather than cheque. Overall, this initiative will align with the Internal Auditor recommendations for improvement in the audit trail and efficiency of the revenue stream.

Madam Chairman, I now turn my attention to the specific estimates of expenditure and revenue in the five cost centres of the Parliamentary Registrar's Office.

The total budget allocation for the Parliamentary Registrar's Office in respect of fiscal year 2019/20 as shown on page B-20 of the Budget Book is \$1,571,000, which remains relatively unchanged to the original budget for 2018/2019.

Administration—73000

Hon. Walton Brown: The proposed budget for the Administration of the Parliamentary Registry for 2019/20 is \$944,000, an increase of \$79,000, or 9 per cent over the original budget for 2018/19. This increase is mainly due to the alignment of bona fide administrative expenditure to Administration, 73000.

The funds in this cost centre enable us to carry out the daily functions of the Parliamentary Registry to include:

- supplies and Issuing of voter identification cards;
- supplies and issuing of apostille certificates;
- overtime costs associated with Voter Awareness Month initiatives;
- general office supplies and cleaning;
- printing of all registration forms and parliamentary registers;
- content management of the website; and
- maintenance of the PRO+ electronic register and database.

Boundaries Commission—73005

Hon. Walton Brown: The proposed budget for the Boundaries Commission for 2019/20 is \$38,000 which represents a decrease of \$5,000 from the original budget in 2018/19.

General and Bye-Elections—73010

Hon. Walton Brown: The proposed budget for the General and Bye-Elections for 2019/20 is \$250,000 which represents a decrease of \$61,000 from the original budget in 2018/19. This decrease is mainly due to the allocation of bona fide administrative expenditure to 73000. The proposed budget will serve to cover the costs of any bye-elections that may occur over the next fiscal period.

Municipality Elections—73015

Hon. Walton Brown: Madam Chairman, a proposed budget allocation for [the] Municipality Elections [for] \$76,000 has been allocated to this cost centre for municipal elections. This will cover the next Ordinary Municipal election scheduled for May 2019, which I say, Madam Chairman, is highly unlikely, but it is scheduled for May 2019, which will see elections for the Corporation of St. George's and the Corporation of Hamilton.

Electoral Reform Research—73017

Hon. Walton Brown: Madam Chairman, a proposed budget allocation of \$263,000 has been allocated to this cost centre for electoral reform research and development. The current global trend of mature democracies stands on some form of political finance regulations and regulated environments. It is necessary to ensure the effective management of money in politics and is important to maintaining the integrity of the democratic process. The Parliamentary Registry will continue to press forward with research and deliberation with the government on this topic. The funds will be used for legal advice, research, and any overseas training required.

Subjective Analysis of Current Account Estimates

Hon. Walton Brown: Madam Chairman, I would like to turn your attention to page B-21, [the] subjective analysis of current account estimates.

Salaries increased by \$8,000. The salaries account estimate for 2019/20 is \$515,000 which represent an increase of \$8,000, or a 2 per cent increase over 2018/19.

Advertising and Promotion decreased by \$33,000. The advertising and promotion budget is \$280,000 in 2019/20, which represents a decrease of \$33,000, or an 11 per cent decrease over 2018/19. The aim of advertising and promotion requires the use of a variety of media outlets and out-of-home advertising vehicles to ensure coverage of all demographics of the electorate.

Professional Services decreased by \$7,000. The professional services budget is \$261,000 in 2019/20, which represents a decrease of \$7,000, or a

3 per cent decrease over 2018/19. These services include independent legal advice, field registration officers, and internal software maintenance of the electronic registration system known as the PRO+. Additionally, the office is working on improving the online registration process in an effort to make it more efficient and secure.

Materials and Supplies decreased by \$3,000. The Materials and Supplies budget is \$126,000 in 2019/20, which represent a decrease of \$3,000, or a 2 per cent decrease over 2018/19. This line item consists of expenses associated with office and election supplies including all stationary items, repair and replacement of any broken polling booths or ballot boxes, uniforms and badges for election officers and agents, et cetera.

Other Expenses decreased by \$1,000. The Other Expenses budget is \$20,000 in 2019/20, which represents a decrease of \$1,000, or a 5 per cent decrease over 2018/19. This line item consists of expenses associated with training and development of staff, team building, and other administrative expenses that arise from the day-to-day operations of the Parliamentary Registry.

Revenue

Hon. Walton Brown: Madam Chairman, Revenue is generated from the issuing of Apostilles. Total revenues for the 2019/20 fiscal year are estimated at \$350,000, an increase of \$75,000, or 27 per cent over the approved budget 2018/19. The Parliamentary Registrar's Office continues to provide prompt and timely issuance of Apostille Certificates to our international and private sector clients.

In closing, I would like to thank the staff of the Parliamentary Registrar's Office for their commitment to undertaking the work of Registrar General's Office. I would like to thank Miss Tenia Woolridge, in particular, for her dedicated hard work in this undertaking and I wish them all very well.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

HOUSE VISITOR

The Chairman: While I have the opportunity, I would like to welcome Youth Parliament Page. Ms. McKenzie-Kohl Tuckett.

Welcome.

[Desk thumping]

[Committee of Supply, continuing]

The Chairman: And for the general public I would like to advise that the debate for this head will be two hours and we started at 2:51 this afternoon.

Is there any other Member who would like to speak?

I recognise the Leader of the Opposition, Craig Cannonier.

You have the floor.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Certainly, the allocation was assumed that we would be doing some of the other heads. I must say that it is unfortunate that we are not or do not have the opportunity to discuss the Information Commissioner's Office section. I was quite surprised after two weeks of time that it was on the books and then, all of a sudden, it is off the books. So, I have spoken to the Speaker. The Premier and I have also spoken to the challenge here and so we will continue on. And I am sure that the Speaker will handle it in due time as to what is the right outcome.

I will say with the Non-Ministries it has gone back and forth as to whether or not we should be debating these areas, and I am looking for a policy going forward on how we address this as opposed to every budget year we get into a debate over whether or not we should be including the Non-Ministries. Certainly, the suggestion . . . taxation without representation is certainly wrong and if the Government is giving grants and fees to an institution, then we would expect at least some form of representation, maybe not as robust, but some form of representation.

So with that in mind I will move now to Head 63, Parliamentary Registrar. I appreciate the Honourable Member for his brief. For some reason I could not make out some of the words that he was saying so, hopefully, if I repeat something that you have already said, then you can certainly let me know.

This is another particular area that has come under quite a bit of scrutiny in the last couple of years and it certainly has had to wade through the impressions and interpolations from us in the House as to how it metes out its job and the information that should be meted out. But I take the note that under . . . that on page B-20, the department's objectives were to *Maintain and ensure*—and I am just giving you an overview on this page here as to what I have seen—*Maintain and ensure that the continuous registration process is ongoing, open, compliant and transparent*.

And as I have already said, some of that has come under scrutiny. And so I know that the team . . . you and I, Madam Chairman, met with them. I feel very confident with the team that is there that they will get their job done, after having spoken to them about our concerns. So I am looking forward to this upcoming year. As to whether or not we have any bye-elections, we will see. But I do know that . . . yes, I

hear a little chuckle there. But we do know that they might be very busy this year, actually.

So what I am going to do is I am going to put on my fancy glasses, Madam Chairman, they are purple today, I found them from a friend of mine. And so I guess what I want to know is . . . there is a real challenge with the objectives here in maintaining and ensuring that the continuous registration process is ongoing, open, compliant and transparent.

I am curious, Minister, as to what would they consider to be some of their greatest challenges as they go forward in maintaining this here? Certainly around the world, you know, parliaments and the likes, governments . . . this particular area in the Westminster system continues to come under a bit of scrutiny. And so I am curious as to some of the things that they are looking at, the research that they are looking at, how other systems larger than us are meeting out this very, very, very important job.

And one of the biggest challenges that it has in Bermuda, in such a small place, is it talks about, under its department objectives, maintaining a complete and accurate and up-to-date register of voters. In this day and age with the financial situation the way that it is, people are moving on a regular basis, [so] keeping that register up-to-date has become even more challenging. For us that go out, when we are going out canvassing, one minute . . . you know, Mr. Doe (to use a fictitious name) is there and the next month he is not there, someone else has moved in. Whether or not they have followed up on re-registering, these are some of the things that I was hoping that we would hear [about] in the brief that would suggest some of the challenges that they are having and how they are dealing with those challenges, because that is a massive challenge there.

And one of the other big one that all of us in here knows is that members of Bermuda who are deceased, some of them are still on this. And there seems to be a reluctance to move them off. And I am not sure of all of the details, but we need to find out what is happening there so that there is an accurate record of eligible voters within a particular constituency.

If you move down to the very bottom objective there, *To provide prompt, and timely issuing of Apostille Certificates in an efficient manner*. I know that many of us in the House know what that is talking about. But can the Minister give some clarification? This is about educating the general public on these fees, these certificates. And when we get over to the revenues, we will see it again. What is that and how do they approve revenues from that on page B-21?

The Chairman: It is an apostille.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, sorry?

The Chairman: Apostille.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Apostille, yes, yes, my apologies, yes. Thank you for that correction, so that they will understand exactly what is happening there.

For the most part this particular area is somewhat static in . . . on [page] B-20, at the very bottom where you see the totals there, you see in the revised amount \$1.4 million, and you see an estimate of \$1.5 million. That is \$166,000 more that is anticipated in spending. What we want to find out is exactly what that is going to. And as we go through the subjective analysis, we will get to some of those details. But considering that the employee numbers are static as well, what exactly are we spending an extra million dollars on . . . \$1.1—

Hon. Walton Brown: Million?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, you are going from your total amount of \$1.4 million in the revised amount, which you actually spent, to \$1.5 million in the estimate.

Yes, I am sorry. In the original amount you said that you would be spending \$1.5 million, but you did not. You wound up spending less. So the revised amount is \$1.4 million. So I am just trying to understand the philosophy behind some of the issues that you might have had within the Ministry as to the forecast in 2018/19 to be \$1.5 million, but in actual fact you spent \$100,000 less. And there are reasons for that. We know that it is fine to put something . . . a theory is a theory. But when you go to put it in practice, stuff happens. And so it would be nice to understand exactly . . . \$100,000. It would be interesting to find out a little more about why that is the way that it is.

If we move down to the breakdown on page B-20, under 6301, [and cost centre] 73000, Administration, and I took it when the Honourable Member mentioned that it was due to overtime, preparing voters cards and supplies, and the likes under Administration. And, again, I highlight the fact that the original amount and the revised amount are pretty static, they are just about . . . pretty close to similar amounts, maybe. What is that, a \$20,000 difference? No, not quite that, not quite that. It is a \$15,000 difference. So the estimate this year of \$944,000 would suggest that we are spending more there. That would suggest that you believe something is coming up, I do not know where it is coming up, but the Administration is expecting to spend about \$100,000 more there. And maybe it is a bye-election that you know about [but] I do not know about. I do not know. But certainly, the Administration is looking to spend that extra money and it might be nice to have some more detail to that.

Now the Boundaries Commission is quite interesting (the next line down, 73005). I cannot remember, we have not . . . I know we have seen it. Did we get the report? I am trying to remember. And so, again, here we are. We have for 2018/19 . . . we only

spent \$10,000 there for the year on the Boundaries Commission. And I know a lot of work was going on—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Maybe that is the case, then. It would be nice to let the public know that a large part of the work was done.

So if a large part of the work was done in 2018/19, for the estimate of 2019/20 it goes back up to \$38,000. So from \$10,000 to \$38,000. Again, I go back to what is the expectation? We are expecting already from the previous line that it is going to be \$100,000 more in Administration. Now we are saying that for the Boundaries Commission . . . I do not know what that work is. Maybe they have to go out and do something else. What is that work that they need to now do that is going to allow them to spend more money in that area to that tune?

If you go down now to 73010, General Elections, again, we begin to see a similar situation here whereby you have for the original amount \$311,000 was expected to be spent. We certainly know why in the actual amount of 2017/18 it was \$760,000 [because] there was an election during that year. So we understand that. And we also understand in 2018/19 we had two bye-elections as well. So I could understand them coming up with that figure. But interestingly enough, they have honed in and sharpened their pencil. They did not have to spend as much as they anticipated. So a lesson learned there because the revised amount is \$217,000.

What is interesting, though, is for 2019/20, considering that we had two bye-elections in 2018/19 and we spent \$217,000. If you take a look at the estimate amount for 2019/20, we are pushing that \$217,000 up to \$250,000. So I do not know if this is telling a story that somebody knows something that I do not know.

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: So it would be good if the Minister could explain to us what the mind-set is behind . . . what are they thinking? It could be anything. It may be some administrative-type thing, I do not know. But certainly under Bye-Elections and General Elections . . . I mean, it says General and Bye-Elections. Why are we now jumping from \$217,000 up to \$250,000 for this 2019/20?

I hear a bit of interpolation over in the background. I will just say be careful what you pray for. Politics is a really interesting thing; it swings and swings and swings—it is a wonderful ride.

Now one of the most controversial and, certainly in the House we have had debate here, concerning 73015, Municipalities Elections. And, quite frankly, we just . . . we will run it a wash. We recognise that that is highly unlikely to happen based on legisla-

tion that has already gone through the House. So more power to the Parliamentary Registrar. I do not know how the Minister is going to handle that, but they have certainly got \$76,000 allocated to this particular area, so it is in the kitty there.

And I would say for many of these areas, after having . . . when we had that meeting, they are understaffed, they are under-resourced, take that and use it, because although we have a saturation of I believe it is about 80 per cent of eligible voters in Bermuda, 80 per cent of them are signed up to vote. So, of all the Bermudians that can vote, I think it is that number, you can correct me if it is wrong, it is around 78 per cent or something. That is massive! Most countries wish they had those kinds of numbers. You go to the States and places like that, it is not even half that that are actually registered as voters.

So I would encourage this Head 63, certainly, they could use those monies to help educate Bermudians. It is tough educating us on the process. I mean, we know our politics, we talk it every day. We have got high numbers of those who are registered to vote as well. But the actual process itself leaves a lot to be desired. And I know that it is tough. It is really tough for this head to get people to understand. You know, when election time comes you wind up going over the same information that you just told them last year or the year before or whatever the case. So it is a constant repeating, repeating, repeating. And I do feel for the head because they sometimes probably feel like they are banging their heads up against a wall in trying to get us to understand the process. And I say that with a bit of jest, but take those dollars and I am sure that you will use them wisely.

Now [the] Election Reform on page B-20 (we are still on page B-20) item 73017, Election Reform Research. I am really interested in hearing a little more about what we are doing there. Certainly, I would suggest maybe . . . for their travel because you can see under their travel, that is pretty stagnant. They might need to do a little more travelling around to some of the other Westminster systems and the like, use that \$76,000 from Municipalities to take another trip to gain a little more information in reform and research. Certainly, we are always looking for opportunities to better our system here in Bermuda as we look at our system.

Quite frankly, I do not think that we give enough credit to the people who work within these areas, because if you go to some of the other countries, they just do not have a clue. And sometimes we get upset because people do not understand the process. But you try going to jurisdictions like the United States and the like, Madam Chairman. Their constituents do not have a clue about how the process works at all. So we have a lot to brag about in this particular area. So I would like to brag about the department, the head, and those that work within there. Keep up the good work!

And I just want to know, though, have they identified any new reforms that we could take on? Because if you take a look at it, in 2017/18 it was only . . . my goodness, it was only \$85,000. And we have gone from \$85,000 right on up to \$273,000 being spent in this area. And, again, as I said, the numbers are static over the last two years. So it would be interesting to hear a little more about what Election Reform and Research exactly is. Is that just locally for what is going on locally? Or does it have to do with researching other jurisdictions and the like and what is happening there? It would be nice to get a little more detail so that the public understands what is going on.

I will take a drink of water and then move on over to [page] B-21, Madam Chairman. And I think I will move it over here because sometimes I move my hand. Give me just a second; I am going to put my fancy purple glasses back on.

So on [page] B21, Madam Chairman, under Subjective Analysis, I see under Salaries . . . and that may go back to the Administration where I said that there was this \$100,000 or so. So under Salaries, if you look at the revised amount of \$405,000, we originally said that we anticipated spending \$507,000. I am just curious as to why we did not reach that mark. Was it difficult trying to find an extra employee or something? What was the difficulty? Or was that due to . . . certainly not a salary increase, that is for sure, as to why it has gone down as the revised amount.

But we do anticipate in 2019/20, [that there would be] \$100,000 more than the revised amount. We are pretty much close to what we were thinking to do in the original in 2018/19. And, again, it is rather interesting, because these numbers tell a story. And if you spend a little time you can sometimes pick out what is going on here. And I say that in reference to the employee numbers as they are going down for this upcoming . . . well, according to the book here it says down, but it is pretty static because the revised amount is six and the estimate is six. But what does that have to do, that difference there, between the revised amount and the estimate amount? And why did we not reach the mark in 2018/19 of \$507,000 coming in at \$405,000, [which is] \$100,000 less?

Pretty much static, the wages. You are static, again, as far as Travel is concerned. I recognise that since 2018/19 more travel is being devoted here. I am one that I believe that if the education is there, go and get it. It is vital that we have our people updated, even though stuff is online, it is nothing like actually being in the mix and being next to people as you are training and viewing other systems and the likes. So I do not have a challenge there at all. I believe that, again, they should do more and take that \$76,000 from over in Municipalities and get your people well trained or bring the training here, whatever it is. I do not know.

Now if I look at Communications, again, it is rather static. But I was very curious about the Advertising and Promotion. And I remember . . . I recall the

Minister saying that it had to do with . . . well, Advertising and Promotion, kind of smooth over it very quickly. What kind of advertising do we do? And what kind of promotions do we have?

Maybe this is a great opportunity for the Minister to advertise, to do an advert while we are doing the Budget Debate, some of the Advertising and Promotions to speak to what those Advertising and Promotions are (and maybe not all of them, but maybe some of them). It would be a great opportunity for him to exercise that. But, again, those numbers are pretty much static. So what I can . . . what I am reading from these numbers, Madam Chairman, is that this particular head and the . . . and I am trying to recall the name of the head of Parliamentary Registrar—

Hon. Walton Brown: Parliamentary Registrar?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes.

Hon. Walton Brown: Tenia Woolridge.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Ms. Woolridge. Certainly, you can see here, if you are looking at the numbers, they know what they are talking about. And when you look at these numbers and you go back through the history, they are learning from those previous amounts as to what they should and should not do, whether it is working or not working. You can see that based on these numbers.

And so, gain, I tip my hat to them as they are pretty consistent, increasing a little more here where they believe . . . and you can tell where the emphasis is as they increase a little more. Maybe last year they spent \$400,000, this year they are spending \$420,000. So something is working. And it is nice to see numbers like that because it does suggest that management is getting on with the job and they are managing well.

Now, I think, the one thing that kind of jumped out to me was the Materials and Supplies. It is such a menial thing when you talk about Materials and Supplies with that title. But we only spent \$90,000 in revised amount on [page] B-21, Madam Chairman, under Materials and Supplies. The original was \$129,000. And, you know what Materials and Supplies . . . that . . . we know that we have bye-elections, but that was the original amount and we spent less. To now we are going to back up to \$126,000. Maybe it is just paper, I do not know. Maybe paper is costing more or something, who knows. I am not sure about that.

So, again, I just wanted to say under Subjective Analysis (as a guide to the public), when we are looking at us as MPs and scrutinising and debating back and forth, when we look at the Subjective Analysis the numbers are saying a whole lot more than just numbers—additions and subtractions. The whole idea is to get around the core of this here to start adding

some leaves to it and make it live and three-dimensional so that people understand exactly what people are doing and they can appreciate it.

You know I have said several times in the debates over the budget that if we do not give answers, then people come to their own conclusions. And you know what happens then. It goes all over the place. And rather than it being green, it is red, [that] type of thing. So, you know? Or they come together and work well together and it is Christmastime.

But I will move on down, Madam Chairman, to the Revenue source, 8440. I have already asked the question to that particular area. Under the revised amount we can certainly see that we spent . . . there is a zero there. I am just curious as to why that is. And then we go up to \$350,000. Again, I mentioned some of that already. If the Minister could then give us an understanding of what is happening there and a descriptive detail of what that is.

I will move down to the Employee Numbers at the very bottom of [page] B-21, Madam Chairman. And, again, as I said, if we compare the original seven employees to the revised amount, which is six employees, it appears as if the Ministry is content with six because they are saying that for 2019/20 that they are going to maintain themselves under General and Bye-Elections at six.

So, obviously, not much to squabble with there. But if I was trying to understand the budget in its totality over on [page] B-20 of a million dollars more, \$1.1 million, and understanding the subjective analysis, I am not sure how that plays into the . . . employee numbers would suggest that they are happy. They have just got to perform in other areas better . . . and will.

I will go over to [page] B-22. And over on [page] B-22 are the Performance Measures. And, again, I need to put on those colourful purple glasses, the writing is very small on this page. And so if we start at the very top there we see where it says “Number of new voter registration forms processed: Form 1 (New Registration); Form 2 (Change Registration).” And I was bringing up the fact before that people are moving more and more. On an Island as small as this, you would not think, but people are moving on a regular basis. And I can understand that for the 2017/18, when we had the election, why that number is as large as it is.

For 2018/19, we forecasted 200. We are coming in at 200. And the outcome of this year is 50,000 more towards the change in registrations, which now I begin to understand they are putting some emphasis here in attempting to get to that issue that I brought up about people moving and the like. So that would suggest (the target outcome) that they recognise and, again, these numbers go back to really explaining what they are doing. It suggests then that they know that there is a challenge there and they are trying to

get on top of it and are putting more resources there. So if he could confirm that.

If we go down further on [page] B-22 under Performance Measures you will see “Parliamentary Registry will employ nine Field Registration officers” and it goes on to say that this is 75 per cent of this total number of households. If you go across there to the revised and the targeted amounts, it says, “Hire two officers as needed to investigate specific events, hire two officers as needed to investigate specific events” and I am assuming that this is a fail-safe, they do not know what is coming up because, at the end of the day, they do not know if a bye-election is coming or not or whatever the case may be.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: What was that? I missed it, say it again.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Cut and paste, eh?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: So what . . . yes, put my purple glasses on.

So, maybe just give us a little more information on that. I think I know what it pertains to.

Continuing down under 73005, Boundaries Commission. As I said, we spoke a little more about that, and so I believe the new boundaries will be in effect with any new bye-elections that take place. They certainly were not in effect during the 2017/18 election. But now that that is through we know that there will be new boundaries. And by the way, I am just curious as to this Boundaries Commission, if I . . . it just came to me, sorry. If you will give me just a minute . . .

Yes, with Advertising and Promotion being pretty static, I was quite surprised then, considering the boundaries have changed, that there probably was not a slight increase in the advertising amount because that is vital to all of the constituencies knowing the new boundary changes. And that is going to take some time to get people to understand what those new boundaries are. And this is the second one that I have been through in . . . I guess, I have been in this for eight years now. Time has gone by quite fast. So I would be curious as to how they are getting the information out there now with the new boundary changes.

Bear with me just a minute. Okay, I asked that question already. And over on [page] B-23, again, we are talking under Head 63, Parliamentary Registrar, the 73015, Municipalities Elections. I know that we have allocated those monies. I also recognise that it is up in the air right now. We do not know where that is

going to go, especially now that we understand that the corporations are taking legal action. So that money might still be used, I do not know. Who knows what is going to happen?

But I do take to heart . . . I am now curious then, what role, as we move forward . . . and hopefully that has already been discussed with you, Minister. So what role will you now play as the Minister of this particular area? What role will this Parliamentary Registrar play in the new formation of what happens to the Corporations, both St. George’s and Hamilton? Will this continue to be a head under this particular area? Will it be called something else? I mean, if the changes are to take place by May, then that is literally right around the corner. We are only talking about a month and a week or two, two weeks from now.

How are they going to be involved in this whole process? Have any discussions been had as to what (if it happens or does not happen) is expected of them? And I think it would only be fair to this particular area and the management team there to know what is going on with only a month and two weeks possibly to where they need to know whether they are allocating monies for this particular area.

And so this is not a large head, as I mentioned, a section area here. The people have done well, Madam Chairman. I like the team that they have and look forward to hearing the answers from the Minister.

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.

Is there any other Member that wishes to speak?

I recognise the Member from constituency number . . .

Mr. Scott Pearman: Twenty-two.

The Chairman: [Constituency] 22.

Mr. Scott Pearman, you have the floor.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I just have two questions dovetailing on the points that the Leader of the Opposition made. Both of them are under Head 63.

The first is in relation to line item 73015. And if I understood the Minister, what he was saying is that the allocation, the estimated allocation for the next fiscal year of \$76,000, is just a provisional allocation. They have allocated money for an election that they thought might happen. We now learn from the Bill passed on Wednesday night, which may or may not pass through the Senate, that it may not be necessary, but the money is there. I think that is what the Minister said in his brief, and I just wanted to confirm that the money is there. And that is my first of two questions.

And Madam Chairman, the second of my two questions [concerns] line item 73005 in respect of the

Boundaries Commission. And this was a point, again, touched on by the Leader of the Opposition, but if I could just drill on this just a little bit further just to see if we can find common ground.

As I understand it the Boundaries Commissioners are only empanelled every seven years. We have just completed a successful Boundaries Commission, which was tabled before this House in the last calendar year, namely 2018. Therefore, the next Boundaries Commission, absent something unexpected, will not be until 2025. And I think those are all common ground, those facts. And if those are factually common ground, what possible need could there be to spend \$38,000 in respect of the Boundaries Commission in the next year?

One could anticipate that there might be some advertising. As the Leader of the Opposition noted, there will be a boundary change which takes effect at the next general election—not the bye-election, the general election. But even so \$38,000 for a non-existent Boundaries Commission does sound a little bit high. Perhaps that could be explained.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.

Is there any other Member that wishes to speak?

Minister Walton Brown, you have the floor.

Hon. Walton Brown: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

The first point is that the \$76,000 is money that has been allocated for the Municipal Election, but it may not be used, as we all know, if the legislation is passed. And so that is very clear. It is put aside and will just go back into the pool for other use.

The issue about deceased voters being on the register. The Parliamentary Registrar's office works very hard and carefully to extract names from the register for people who are deceased. So they do that on a routine basis, they do that on a regular basis.

The issue of people who move. There are people who move all the time and there is an effort made by the people who go around checking on houses. Every year, every so often, the Parliamentary Registrar sends people out to different houses to check on voter registration and to marry-up the people who are living there with the actual voter registration. That is an ongoing process that is undertaken.

Electoral Reform, that money is spent on research primarily to look at a number of different issues. One issue is the question of the visually impaired being allowed to vote and so the research has been undertaken in that regard to afford a measure of success in ensuring the visually impaired are able to vote. Also, the sick and shut-in, [research to] create a methodology for them to be able to vote as well.

As I said earlier, it is hard work to get people to change their address. Part of the money that is expended on PR and Communications is the voter regis-

tration process to let people know they should be registered, they should change the voting address once they move. That is all part of the educational process.

I believe those are the main questions that were asked. The Boundaries Commission work is ongoing, and that money is allocated for that work.

The Apostille generates additional revenue for the Government. That is ongoing work that is generating revenue.

This issue of the Salaries at \$507,000 versus \$400,000, that was an unfilled post so that is why the amount was lower. And there is no anticipated need to hire an additional person this coming year.

Okay, I think that is it for now.

The Chairman: Is there any other Member that would like to speak?

I recognise the Member from constituency 23, Pat Gordon-Pamplin.

You have the floor.

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

Madam Chairman, in the Minister's response just now he indicated about the voter's requirement to change their address within, I think, it is 30 days or 90 days of their moving. And my question is: What is the follow-up if somebody refuses to do so? And I say that by way of explanation. I have had people say to me, *I'm not changing my address from where I lived in Paget to where I have moved to elsewhere because my vote is worth more.* That is one instance.

I also have a situation in which I have sent notification to the office of the Parliamentary Registrar for an individual who has *never* lived in the house where they are registered in my constituency. The place has been rented out to expats for the entire time that I have been responsible for that constituency—not the whole 20 years, but since I gained that area. And the owner of the house is registered in that house, it does not . . . I would not know the person if they stood in front of me. So I am just curious as to how we could follow those kinds of things up so that we know that the register is appropriately reflective.

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.

Is there any other Member that wishes to speak?

I recognise the Member from constituency . . .

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Six.

The Chairman: [Constituency] six, the Bible Belt?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes. That is the right one.

The Chairman: MP Furbert, you have the floor.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: That is four, five, and six by the way.

[Laughter]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Madam Chairman, I believe the Honourable Member . . . somebody asked about the . . . I think the general elections and bye-elections. I believe one of the Members asked about that.

I mean, the numbers are here. I mean, the director, of course, put the funding in here. You never know what is going to happen. It is not that anyone knows it is going to take place, but you have to always be prepared. And at the Ministry of Finance, we will monitor these things quite closely.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: And if it is not used then, of course, there are certain times (like, let us say, from January to March) we know we are free if certain things do not take place. So we expect . . . and like I said, if it does not take place, then you will probably see that \$250,000 down to . . . for the revised, probably [down to] zero next year unless something came up.

I think the Boundaries Commission is appointed, you had mentioned, again, this is something that they are prepared in case . . . as you know, all of us are asking for the boundary changes that are taking place and want copies of maps and a whole bunch of other things that we may be asking for. And I am sure the director is preparing just in case any one of us—36 Members . . . I am not saying a map will cost a thousand dollars, but there are things that they have to prepare for.

And yes, there are from time to time . . . I noticed an Honourable Member talked about people not living in certain areas. That is a big challenge, I accept that. I do my best to try to get people as much as possible, I think, there may be something in the Act that allows the director to deal with it, but I am not sure whether the Minister has a response to that one, but I know that . . . I know of times when I have taken names up there that they have taken people off the list, unless they can prove otherwise that they live in a certain house. But I just wanted to answer particularly those number parts.

Thank you.

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.

Is there any other Member that wishes to speak?

I recognise the Member from constituency 19, Jeanne Atherden.

You have the floor.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

A couple of questions and I do apologise if I missed hearing this, but with respect to Electoral Reform Research, et cetera. I wonder if the Minister could indicate whether part of the electoral reform research is going to look into the concept of absentee voting.

And the second question relates to the Electoral Reform Research as well as the Boundaries Commission. And the reason I am putting these two together is I know that there has been some concern about . . . and this ties into what my colleague said, this concern about where people actually live. And I know at one stage . . . and I sat on the Boundaries Commission (not this one, but the one before) when people were trying to figure out . . . if you knew how many voters were on the Island and then you try to figure out what the average size of a constituency should be. That is a number that the Boundaries Commission would start working towards. And then when they are setting the boundaries they would be looking to make sure, if they had to move a boundary, that they would move it to make sure that you would not have, as in one constituency where there were 1,400 voters versus another which was 1,100 which means that you do not actually get the concept of one man, one vote or one woman, one vote.

And so I just wondered has there been any consideration to try and marry up the Boundaries Commission with the next census? And is there going to be any sort of suggestion that we do start to try and make sure that where people live, they vote? Because, as my colleague said, if you do not know that you need to speak to Helen because Helen is going to vote in your constituency but she lives somewhere else, then you do not have the opportunity for her to be able to get the appreciation of who is going to represent her and ask the questions.

Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.

Is there any other Member that wishes to speak?

I recognise the Member from constituency 22, MP Scott Pearman.

You have the floor.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

You will recall that I posed two questions, one of which related to the Boundaries Commission and queried the figure of \$38,000, which is line item 73005, under Head 63.

The response from the Minister was that the Boundaries Commission is ongoing and there are costs. The response from the Junior Minister across the way, I think, was that that \$38,000 might be the cost of producing some maps, et cetera, et cetera.

Let me just first of all clarify. My understanding is that the Boundaries Commission of 2018—

The Chairman: Excuse me, Member, is you microphone on?

Mr. Scott Pearman: No, I am sorry.

Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

My understanding is that the Boundaries Commission reported in 2018. The report was tabled in the House, and it is no longer empanelled and it will not—

Mr. Christopher Famous: [In] 2017.

Mr. Scott Pearman: [It is] 2017, I am grateful for the MP from constituency 11 correcting me—2017—later tabled in the House.

So I think it is correct, unless someone wants to correct me and my understanding, that we will not see another Boundaries Commission empanelled until 2025, seven years later. In respect to the answer about maps, I would be grateful to know. I am able to go on www.elections.gov.bm and press a button and print a map for free, so I perhaps could have greater clarity on this \$38,000, maps.

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.

Is there any other Member that wishes to speak?

Minister?

Hon. Walton Brown: The \$38,000 represents ancillary costs that are involved in carrying out the work of the Boundaries Commission. So it is just ancillary work. It is an estimate of the amount of money that is going to be expended. It is not hard and fast.

In regard to MP Atherden's comments, the work of the Boundaries Commission is always designed to ensure that there is equality of voting in all constituencies. So it looks at the census figures, it obviously looks at census figures, as a guide to predicting how many people should be in each constituency. They used it as a base for determining the size of each constituency. So last time it was about 1,200 per constituency and that is the rule of thumb that they adopted and it was adopted across the board. So all constituencies are meant to have the same amount of voters in them and that is the issue.

With regard to absentee voters, people who no longer live in a constituency, yet are registered in a constituency—that is an ongoing battle. And I take the point. The Parliamentary Registrar's office tries very hard to get people to change their addresses in 28 days. And I know that in some cases they have actually moved some people, but it is a difficult thing to take someone off the voters' registration list. You cannot just take someone off. You cannot physically remove someone from the voters' registration list. And that is one of the challenges that they face.

They have scrutineers that help the parties in each of the constituencies, so that is ongoing work as well.

And the deceased list is provided by the Registrar General. Persons who die . . . or are registered here are taken off the list.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

Is there any other Member that wishes to speak?

I recognise the Member from constituency 19, MP Jeanne Atherden.

You have the floor.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Minister, I do not think you responded to my question about absentee balloting, whether that was under consideration. That's the first thing.

And the second thing is that I just . . . I guess, I need to clarify something. And this is in respect to the Parliamentary Registrar and people not living in a constituency. Because the only time that I am aware of this sort of . . . people saying, *Well, you don't live here and therefore, you're going to be moved*, is at the time of an election or bye-election when someone challenges someone and then they make the person either swear they are not . . . now, to me, that seems counterproductive.

That seems counterproductive. If somebody should have been moved, then why are you waiting until such time as an election to challenge them? Surely if people are able to say *Helen lives here* and there is someone that could say, *She is my tenant*, or whatever else, or, although Helen lives here, George is already living in the place where she says she lives, surely that has got to be enough. And I think it just concerns me that we are not able to get people in the places where they live because that, to me, says that we are now not starting to look at this whole thing of one man, one vote, and then you are starting to have the Bermuda equivalent of gerrymandering.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Hon. Walton Brown: Well, I would not go so far—

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.

Is there any other Member that wishes to speak?

Minister?

Hon. Walton Brown: I would not go so far as to call it gerrymandering. But it is an issue that requires it being addressed. I take the point—the requesting address.

The second point about the absentee vote, that is a valid issue. That is something that we did not have currently under consideration, but it is something that we will consider in due course.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

Is there any other Member that wishes to speak?

I recognise the Leader of the Opposition, Craig Cannonier.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

[Page] B-20, I was asking under 73017, Election Reform Research, considering the amount there in relation to the history, we still have not gotten an explanation as to what that is. I gave some examples of what I thought it might be, but exactly what is that?

Hon. Walton Brown: What?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: In 73017, Election Reform Research—

Hon. Walton Brown: Yes.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: —and I gave samples of whether away, locally, but—

Hon. Walton Brown: I told you what it was.

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.
Minister?

Hon. Walton Brown: I answered the question. I said that it involves researching various components of electoral reform, including the sick and shut-in, getting them to be able to vote; the visually impaired, getting them to be able to vote and so forth. That is part of the research that is required.

Let me just add another point about the ability to move people. If the parties provide scrutineers, as is required under the legislation, then the scrutineers can assist in getting people moved from one constituency to another. So that is a fact that is already in existence.

Just some other issues that involve part of the reform process, including the campaign finance regulations, part of the reform process, travel, courses, information sessions, legal advice, conferences and training. Those are all different components involved in the electoral reform process.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

Is there any other Member that wishes to speak?

I recognise the Leader of the Opposition, Craig Cannonier.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, thank you, Madam Chairman.

And I appreciate the fact that the Minister did give an answer to—

The Chairman: Turn your microphone on, please.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: —[page] B-20, Electoral Reform Research, 73017. And having been through a couple of elections I know that the process . . . there was a process already in place for the visually impaired. And we already have amounts that we can see of \$85,000 that went towards stuff like that there. But we are talking about not just double and triple that amount for this particular area. So it cannot just be for, you know, visually impaired, when we have a process in place for that. If we do not have a process, then I would like to hear it, but I know that we have had a process because we had to get them to the polls to vote.

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.
Minister?

Hon. Walton Brown: Actually, we started a process, but the process was never completed, so it was not applied in the last election.

As I said, the other items involving the electoral reform process involves campaign finance regulations—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Regulations?

Hon. Walton Brown: Yes. [There will be] a number of courses, information sessions that are going to be public sessions for parliamentary reform, legal advice, conferences and training. These are all included in the process of electoral reform.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

Is there any other Member that wishes to speak?

I recognise the Member from constituency 19, MP Atherden.

You have the floor.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Minister, you made the comment with respect to scrutineers and that by having scrutineers this should solve the issue of people moving, et cetera. But I think unless you recognise that scrutineers have to be on the basis of each group which wants to come and work on the problem [saying] these people are in the wrong place, but each group is happy to have someone [vote] in the wrong place [if] the vote is beneficial to them. So I do believe that perhaps we should try and come up with something else that does not require people having to sort of be committed to the process.

The other question that I just wanted to ask the Minister: There has been a concern about the amount of information that political parties get and, thus, their MPs get in order to go out and canvass

individuals, and I wondered whether as part of the electoral reform research whether the department would look at the fact that if they get telephone numbers, cell phone numbers, whether they would reach out to the electorate to say that unless someone says they do not want that information to be circulated, that that information will be given to everybody so that they can make the contact with them. Because I do believe that we want . . . I think most constituents want somebody to come and talk to them, talk about what their platform [is] and allow them to be able to have that contact. So, perhaps, the Registrar could consider reaching out to the electorate to say that if we have your number, unless you say not to, we can disseminate that to the parliamentarians.

Thank you, Madam Chairman and the Minister.

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.

Is there any other Member that wishes to speak?

MP Furbert, constituency 6, you have the floor.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Let me . . . look, we will never have 100 per cent where . . . when you are canvassing and everyone is in order . . . in place. There are thousands of people that move about in Bermuda regularly. So scrutineers play one role, but we ourselves . . . if we canvass and we know our people, then anybody that comes to that poll that I know votes against me, stands a chance of taking a risk. You can challenge that person on the day. And so, we cannot expect the department to do everything. We have a role to play and, like I said, if anyone is coming to vote (I use the word vote) against me, takes a risk.

[Laughter]

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.

Is there any other Member who wishes to speak?

I recognise the Member from . . .

Mr. Scott Pearman: Twenty-two.

The Chairman: Constituency 22.

MP Scott Pearman, you have the floor.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I am going to take one last stab at this Boundaries Commission. I am grateful to the Honourable Member from constituency 11, behind me, who has reminded me how the constitutional process works. And that is, there is a Boundaries Commission, and they do not sit for at least three years and they must sit before seven years. And so there is a consti-

tutional appointment by which a Commission is empanelled, it spends money, it does its job, it tables its report, and it ceases to be empanelled.

And so, again, and finally (I will not ask it again, but let me try it this last time), if there is no Boundaries Commission appointed at the moment, if there is no Boundaries Commission empanelled at the moment, who is the "they" that is spending the money?

Or am I wrong and has a Boundaries Commission been appointed in anticipation of the period 2021 to 2025 and we simply do not know that?

Thank you.

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.
Minister?

Hon. Walton Brown: No, there is no Boundaries Commission appointed and no Boundaries Commission is in operation today. The work and the expenditure comes under the Parliamentary Registrar's office, but it comes under the head of the Boundaries Commission because that is the work that is being requested, if anyone is seeking a map or any other such matter.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

Is there any other Member who wishes to speak?

MP Furbert.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Let me try to explain a little more for the Honourable and Learned Member from constituency . . .

Mr. Scott Pearman: Twenty-two.

The Chairman: Twenty-two.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: If you look under Head 63 under Parliamentary [Registrar], the Current Account Analysis, I am sure that the \$38,000 is somewhere in Advertising and Promotion. But I think when she does the summary, and I could be wrong, she is saying that the \$38,000 is for . . . it is to do with the Boundaries Commission. All right? So it is in Advertising and Promotion, but it is because this has to do with the Boundaries Commission. That is the way I see it anyway.

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.

I recognise the Member from constituency 11.
MP Famous, you have the floor.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I just want to address the concern of the Member from constituency 19. If you have two parties, both obviously want to win their seat, but if they are

both heavily canvassing every house, they will come up with . . . both will come up with whatever is inaccurate. And from my experience, whenever I have taken something to the Parliamentary Registrar to say *this person has moved, this person has died, this one does not like their momma, so they live in Somerset*, they have acted on that. And I give a lot of credit to them because they then follow up. They do not just take our word for it, they follow up.

An Hon. Member: You had better believe it.

Mr. Christopher Famous: Thank you.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Christopher Famous: Yes, as I said, if both . . . if both . . . I implore you, both parties do heavily canvass. That way you will get a 90 per cent accuracy of that voter list.

Thank you.

The Chairman: Thank you, Member.

Are there any other Members who wish to speak?

Minister, you have the floor.

Hon. Walton Brown: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Just to reiterate the point about the scrutineers. The scrutineers cannot go to every single house. They go to as many as they can. But the parties must play a role in addressing the issue of scrutineers, and that is just the reality of it.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

Would you like to move the head?

Hon. Walton Brown: Sure.

Madam Chairman, I move that Head 63 be approved as printed.

The Chairman: Are there any objections?

An Hon. Member: No.

The Chairman: Thank you.

[Motion carried: The Non-Ministry Head 63, Parliamentary Registrar, was approved and stands part of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 2019/20.]

The Chairman: For the listening audience, we are just transitioning from Ministers, so the next head we will be doing is Cabinet.

For the listening audience, we are just about to begin the Cabinet debate, Heads 43 and 67. There are three hours allocated for this debate.

[Pause]

Hon. E. David Burt: Madam Chairman.

The Chairman: Thank you, Premier.

CABINET

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman, I move the following heads: Head 43, Department of Information and Digital Technologies; and Head 67, Department of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy and Innovation be now taken under consideration.

May I proceed?

The Chairman: You may proceed. Thank you.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman, I do not want to be presumptuous. I think I am the last head for the budget debate. All right, I will say *save the best for last*.

An Hon. Member: We saved the best for last.

Hon. E. David Burt: It is IT, and you know how much I love IT.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. E. David Burt: Oh, boy, here we go. You already sold me an airport, do not sell me a bridge back.

The Chairman: Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: I had to keep it a little bit fun.

HEAD 43—DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

Hon. E. David Burt: Madam Chairman, it gives me great pleasure to present the budget for Head 43—the Department of Information and Digital Technologies, found on pages B-62 through B-65 of the Budget Book.

Madam Chairman, the department's mission is to *empower ministries, departments and civil servants to improve productivity and services by providing IT consulting services and core IT infrastructure at a reasonable cost*.

The department seeks to fulfil its mandate by empowering ministries, departments and civil servants to improve productivity and services by providing IT consulting services and core IT infrastructure at a reasonable cost. Furthermore, working with departments and ministries to identify and progress opportunities for the creation and deployment of online content, transactions, systems and services that meet the

needs of government, citizens, businesses and the volunteer sector.

Expenditure Overview

Hon. E. David Burt: Madam Chairman, the total current expenditure of the Department of Information and Digital Technologies found on page B-62 is estimated to be \$6,627,000 for 2019/20 which is a decrease of \$63,000 from the 2018/19 fiscal year.

Madam Chairman, the Subjective Analysis of Current Account Estimates of the Department of Information and Digital Technologies is found on page B-63. The focus will be on the four line items with the greatest absolute change. Rentals, line item 9, decreased by \$163,000, or 16 per cent. The lease for our building was renegotiated for a \$72,000 decrease and our Server Rental Facilities was decreased by \$91,000.

Madam Chairman, the budget for Repair and Maintenance, line item 10, increased by \$126,000, or 35 per cent. This increase is mainly attributed to increased costs for software maintenance to support new systems.

Madam Chairman, the budget for Communications, line item 6, increased by \$111,000, or 9 per cent. The Data Lines increased by \$95,000 and the Overseas Networks/Internet increased by \$16,000.

Madam Chairman, the budget for Salaries, line item 1, decreased by \$72,000, or 2 per cent due primarily to a vacant post being unfunded due to the requirement to fund the salary uplift and adhere to the department's budget ceiling.

Capital Expenditure

Hon. E. David Burt: Madam Chairman, the Capital Acquisition for the Department of Information and Digital Services found on page C-9, makes provision for new capital expenditure in the amount of \$2,175,000, an increase of \$375,000. Funding will be used to upgrade to newer software licences, enhance IT security systems, implement a new telephone system, develop new digitised business systems, enhance server farm and increase server capacity to accommodate growth.

Manpower

Hon. E. David Burt: Madam Chairman, the Manpower for the Department of Digital and Information Technologies, on page B-63 decreased from 40 full-time equivalents in 2018/19 to 39. Presently, there are three funded vacant positions.

Recruitment is currently underway and the department aims to fill these positions within the budget year.

Output Measures

Hon. E. David Burt: Madam Chairman, the Department of Information and Digital Technologies [IDT] Output Measures, are found on pages B-64 and B-65 of the Budget Book. Selected indicators under each business unit are outlined as follows:

Business unit 53030—Device Support.

Indicator: To resolve and repair service tickets within Service Level Targets. Target for 2018/19: 85 per cent were forecast to be completed within Service Level Target. Actual outcome 2018/19: 80 per cent was achieved within Service Level Target due primarily to decrease in manpower in this section. IDT has since recruited in this section and now fully staffed. The target for 2019/20 is 85 per cent due in part to the implementation of modernised device management systems. Which if there are any questions on [it], I will be happy to speak to later, as I have tested it out myself.

Business unit 53035—Network Support.

Indicator: Network monitoring, resolve repair and service tickets within Service Level Targets. Target for 2018/19: 85 per cent was forecasted. The actual outcome for 2018/19: Achieved 70 per cent due primarily to increase in service tickets related to telephone incidents. The target for 2019/20 is 85 per cent.

Business unit 53040—Service Support.

Indicator: Manage tickets and resolve account administration within Service Level Targets. Target was 80 per cent that was forecasted. The actual outcome achieved was 95 per cent due in part to fully manned service desk. The target for 2019/20 is 98 per cent completion within Service Level Target due in part to the now introduction of self-service tools for public sector employees.

Business unit 53050—Digital Services.

Indicator: Consulting and advising, and public satisfaction with availability use and selection of Government online services. Target 2018/19: 60 per cent was forecasted. Actual outcome: Achieved 60 per cent due in part to only one full-time equivalent working in this unit. The target for 2019/20 is 70 per cent due in part to the addition of two business process analysts.

Business unit 53060—Business Systems Support.

Indicator: Conduct routine monthly Service Level Review meetings with key departments, annual review of service level targets with departments and manage application support tickets. Target for 2018/19 was 85 per cent and the actual target achieved, Madam Chairman, was 80 per cent due in part to a reduction in full-time equivalents in this unit. The target for 2019/20 is 90 per cent due in part to the introduction of a new IT governance model, which I will get to a little bit later in my brief.

Business unit 53090—Security.

Indicator: Disaster Recovery exercises planned and executed, servers [checked] on a monthly basis. Target: 100 per cent was forecasted. Actual outcome: Not Achieved. This was due in part to the Accountant General Department's focus on developing and implementing a new E1 system. The target for 2019/20 is now 100 per cent as it is anticipated that the E1 upgrades will be completed by April 2019 at which time a full Disaster Recovery exercise will be coordinated and executed.

Plans for the Upcoming Year

Hon. E. David Burt: I will now move on, Madam Chairman to plans for the upcoming year.

The Department of Information and Digital Technologies will continue with the development of its core services in the upcoming year by focusing on eight key strategic areas.

The first, infrastructure stability and secure network. Work in this area will progress by enhancing the Government department's network in building communications performance by doubling bandwidth requirements. This will impact more than 140 locations throughout the Island. Further, IDT will continue to roll out cell service systems, such as account password management, and improve the overall network security with state-of-the-art artificial intelligence, security monitoring and management systems.

The department will introduce a new state-of-the-art phone system to replace the current and aged and now unstable phone system and reduce the need for traditional phone sets with the introduction of a voice app that will be accessible on any device from anywhere that can access the Internet. And I am sure Members will be aware of the numerous different phone systems that exist within Government. Well, the plan is to eliminate those and have one.

IDT will focus on leveraging the use of local cloud services to facilitate the delivery of specific applications with far less technical complexity and reduce the need to rely upon strained IDT engineering resources, thereby allowing IDT to focus more on business value and less on complex IT engineering builds.

The second item is the budget efficiency initiative. Work has commenced on streamlining specific core IT services to achieve greater economy of scale through negotiating vendor service contracts across Government. This process will ultimately serve to reduce IT costs of operation when compared to the alternative monthly service agreements. An example of this is the recent renegotiation of the bandwidth service agreement wherein a \$70,000 annual savings will be realised.

In addition, IDT is investigating generic personal computing devices (PCs) that will essentially perform the same tasks as more expensive name-brand models, but at half the cost. Upon conclusion of

the generic PC analysis it is anticipated that IDT may reduce its annual spend on PC upgrades and replacements by as much as 50 per cent.

Third item. IT Governance. It is expected that implementation of an IT Governance policy will result in IDT overseeing all IT projects and acquisitions to ensure that IT purchases and the business needs are properly aligned, thereby creating greater efficiencies within Government and strengthening Government's return on investment and the fit between technology and business operations. An additional point in this is to ensure that our IT systems that are procured actually talk to one another as opposed to operating in isolation.

As a result of a recent system-wide IT project review, 31 separate IT projects in progress have now been deferred. These projects will be considered in accordance with the IT Governance policy, and it is expected that they will be assessed and based on alignment and value for money.

And just to speak very briefly on that, Madam Chairman, if I may, there are a number of various IT projects in various IT departments which could be accomplished by a single system serving multiple departments as opposed to individual systems for individual departments. So that entire list has been put on hold while we assess what is actually needed at this point in time and focus on the priority services to be achieved, and also things that can deliver digital services very quickly to the citizens of Bermuda.

Regarding e-payment, in moving towards a future form of Government for the people of Bermuda IDT will continue to work towards digitising the delivery of services and payment processes. The focus will be on targeting specific manual processes that create unnecessary frustration with archaic business delivery models that have failed to evolve over decades. And this is my favourite story, Madam Chairman, that I will share, and I am sure that the Member for constituency 1, who is not here today, will be happy to know that we are trying to resolve this issue.

By way of example, a resident who was seeking to book a room at a community centre for an event in the town of St. George is currently required to—*after* reserving that space in St. George's—is required to travel to the Accountant General's Cashiers Office in Hamilton to facilitate the payment for the use of the facility and then to return back to St. George's—or for schools—or to return back to that particular place and then show the receipt in order to confirm the booking for that particular place.

And now, Madam Chairman, this is 2019, we are holding ourselves out as a technology-friendly jurisdiction, but we still have these manual processes. So we are focusing on e-payments to make sure that all these particular individual instances of payments can be handled online through a particular app and that will make things a lot more efficient.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. E. David Burt: I cannot hear the interpolations for the Member who is not in her seat, but I will continue, Madam Chairman.

Of course, this represents a needless commute and time wasted for residents, and such processes will be the subject of streamlining and delivery of online automated booking and payment systems.

The next project will be eID. In addition to e-payments IDT will focus on the delivery of a unique identifier across all Government systems. A unique identifier is essentially a single-user identification to be used by a citizen of Bermuda that is linked to Government business systems across numerous data bases.

The Chairman: Excuse me, Member. Sorry, eID?

Hon. E. David Burt: Yes.

The Chairman: Okay, I did not—

Hon. E. David Burt: Like “electronic identity.” That is what it stands for, I am sorry.

The Chairman: Thank you. I did not hear—

Hon. E. David Burt: And I am told to read slower, so I will read slower.

The Chairman: Sorry, I just did not hear you clearly. Thank you.

Hon. E. David Burt: No problem. I will start again, if I may.

[The next project will be] eID. In addition to e-payments, IDT will focus on the delivery of a unique identifier or electronic identity. An electronic identity is essentially a single-user identification to be used by the citizens of Bermuda that is linked to various government business systems across numerous data bases. eID will make the process of registering and applying for specific government services easier in the future with the introduction of online, one stop friendly, interfaces that will be accessible across various government affiliated agencies.

IDT will focus on delivering two key initiatives with revised regulatory structure to attract new businesses to the Island and a proof of concept for “know your customer” and anti-money laundering to replicate current KYC and AML processes performed by local banks that will be enabled by way of blockchain technology to avoid needless replication of tedious manual processes.

By way of example, I can give one example for this and this is eID on a broader sense, but on a smaller sense if we talk about basically the ability of

government systems to talk to one another and the ability for us to gather information.

Some questions that have been asked and posed in this House, for instance, are: How can we, for instance, know how many persons in the Department of Workforce Development have actually been able to get jobs, specifically? And this reporting is not yet done, if someone is placed in a job they may not inform Workforce Development, but, if for instance, at Workforce Development, there was a single identifier and that single identifier, you could then see if this person is then added to the social insurance roles, then you can say that they have now received a position.

Those are things that can be done completely automated [and] do not require a government employee to check separate systems. But if that identifier is not there that is shared across systems, then it would be difficult to get that information. So those are things which we are looking to do at the outset. And, as I said, there were 31 IT projects and we are now simplifying it to eight specific things that the IDT is focused on so that we can achieve these quick wins and make sure we can make progress.

Item number six is training. IDT has committed to enhancing their staff’s skill set to better serve the Government IT user base.

[Crosstalk]

Hon. E. David Burt: Sorry.

IDT has committed to enhancing their staff’s skill set to better serve the Government IT user base, and a specific focus has been placed on project management professional training and certification. The project management professional certification will ensure IDT staff, who will be responsible for project management, are adept at managing IT governance and will lead the IT project implementation by reducing the need for external IT project management consultants and directly assist departments with key IT project management initiatives.

Item number seven—document collaboration. IDT has identified existing desktop office tools and potential new desktop office application solutions that will modernise desktop applications with document and file collaboration tools or systems to set up to help multiple people work together on a single document and file to achieve a single final version. This will result in reducing superfluous time spent and user frustration tracking and modifying disparate government edits by allowing users to contribute and collaborate in real time on one master document.

Item number eight—telecom cost savings. IDT has embarked on a rigorous audit of disparate phone services throughout Government and the associated funding. IDT has identified over seven figures in fragmented telecom budget that after rationalisation of those funds can be repurposed and consolidated for

specific IT projects managed by IDT where it simply makes sense and will achieve greater value for money. As IDT moves forward with plans to introduce a new phone service, it is anticipated that some of the identified fragmented budget can be used to fund this project and, in doing so, will reduce the Government's overall telecom operational budget requirements.

Madam Chairman, Information Technology is essential to the everyday operation of the Government as many of the services offered simply would not be available without it. In order for the Department of Information and Digital Technologies to advance its services, support and communications it is anticipated that the Department of IDT will undergo a comprehensive review by the Management and Consultant Section of the Cabinet Office to ensure proper alignment of resources and structure to meet the ever-growing IT demands by the Government to deliver as we seek to maximise efficiency in terms of the use of technology, staffing and service delivery.

At this time, Madam Chairman, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the acting CIO, Mr. Shawn Lightbourne and the entire Information and Digital Technologies staff who came to see me at the Cabinet Office about two weeks ago, for the excellent service that they continue to provide for Government. These have been challenging times for them. They have worked without a formalised structure. They have worked without a full-time CIO for quite some time as there was a temporary . . . a CIO that was hired, but did leave, but yet they are continuing to provide service. It has been my pleasure to be working with this department for the past four months and I think that we have put some policies in place that are going to smooth the transition and focus so that we can actually make sure that we deliver for the people of Bermuda.

So with that, Madam Chairman, I thank you and that concludes my budget presentation for Head 43.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Premier.

Just if I could ask a question for the edification of the listening audience, IDT used to be ITO, correct? So the name was changed.

Hon. E. David Burt: Yes.

The Chairman: Okay. Thank you.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Madam Chairman. It used to be the Information Technology Office [ITO]. I think there was a merger with e-Government and so when there was consolidation, some of the e-Government went to one place—Communications—another part went to ITO and it was renamed to Information Digital Technologies [IDT].

The Chairman: Thank you.

HEAD 67—DEPARTMENT OF ICT POLICY AND INNOVATION

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman, I will now move to Head 67, which is the Department of ICT Policy and Innovation.

Madam Chairman, on behalf of the Cabinet Office, I present the budget for Head 67, the Department of ICT Policy and Innovation, found on pages B-72 and B-74 of the Budget Book.

Mission

Hon. E. David Burt: Madam Chairman, "Innovation is the calling card of the future." This was a quote made by Anna Eshoo, the U.S. Representative from California's 18th congressional district which includes Silicon Valley, during an interview. Indeed, innovation is what distinguishes us from the rest of the world.

The mission of the Department of ICT Policy and Innovation (IPI) is *to develop sound policies and regulatory frameworks that promote innovative, cyber-safe and cyber-secure ICT-enabled industries and to facilitate a secure and advanced digital economy.*

Objectives

Hon. E. David Burt: Madam Chairman, the department has set the following objectives to support its mission in the coming fiscal year 2019/20:

- To protect the public interest;
- To promote Bermuda as an innovative, sophisticated, and security-conscious technology and business jurisdiction;
- To ensure the appropriate policies and legislation are in place to support Bermuda's digital economy including but is not limited to cyber-security, cyber-safety, e-business, ICT, and the protection of personal information;
- To facilitate opportunities for technology education, mentoring and training and to encourage e-entrepreneurship;
- To lead the change in the jurisdiction for the safe use, adaptation and evolution of technology across all sectors.

Madam Chairman, Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) are today's great enablers of progress, and Bermuda is employing them to advance innovation and pursue opportunities that will benefit the jurisdiction and its residents.

The Department of ICT Policy and Innovation provides valuable outcomes for the Government of Bermuda through policy, legislative and programme development, skills and initiative delivery, and awareness building. IPI also plays a critical advocacy role, ensuring that Bermuda is recognised as well-versed in today's technologies and that it is a safe and secure jurisdiction that protects personal information, facili-

tates e-entrepreneurship, and prepares the next generation of professionals in the information technologies.

William Blake wrote, "What is now proved was once only imagined." The department strives to ensure that Bermuda and her residents seize the opportunities that technology brings, keep their skills current, and maintain the ability to navigate this ever-changing landscape skilfully and safely. It is vital that we use technology in ways which allow us to benefit from innovations as they are developed and adopted, while ensuring that technology-related risks are kept at bay.

Expenditure Overview

Hon. E. David Burt: Madam Chairman, the estimate for 2018/19 and 2019/20 are the same at \$1,475,000.

While the overall budget for the Department of ICT Policy and Innovation has remained the same, internal efficiencies and partnerships with other departments and ministries have been achieved in order to assist IPI in achieving its objectives in 2019/20.

Cost centre 77000, Administration. The estimate for 2019/20 is \$919,000 up \$13,000, or 1.43 per cent from the previous year.

Madam Chairman, the Administration section cost centre includes all operational functions of the department, including the support of the E-Commerce Advisory Board (ECAB), operational requirements in accordance with the Electronic Transactions Act 1999, and administrative support to ad hoc committees such as the Cybersecurity Governance Board.

Madam Chairman, I would like to highlight the valuable work done by the E-Commerce Advisory Board in 2018, headed by its then-Chairman, Mr. Malcolm Furbert. The purpose of ECAB is to provide strategic advice to the Minister responsible for the Department of ICT Policy and Innovation. ECAB made a number of valuable suggestions in its year-end report, which include proposals that are aimed at boosting business development in Bermuda, providing input into technology education, and enhancing the Bermuda business model.

The E-Commerce Advisory Board continues to work with other Government and non-Government entities in order to maximise synergies so that the department's resources continue to be used in an efficient and effective way. I will also say that the ECAB . . . I have had a chance to meet with the ECAB, the new E-Commerce Advisory Board, and we have agreed a set of objectives which will be going forward for the upcoming fiscal year.

At the time of the budget preparation, Madam Chairman, three full-time employees were in the department's employ. Expenses under this cost centre include the salaries of one director, one administrative assistant, two senior analysts and one junior analyst. Other expenses in this cost centre include equipment

and utilities, software maintenance, office supplies, training, and office operations.

Cost centre 77003, Policy and Legislative Development, found on page B-72. The estimate for 2019/20 is \$161,000 which represents no change from the previous year.

Madam Chairman, the Policy and Legislation cost centre consists of activities relating to the oversight role that the Department of ICT Policy and Innovation plays with respect to Internet and e-business policy and legislation. This is accomplished by ensuring that the correct legislative and policy framework is in place to facilitate the creation, growth and attractiveness of business in Bermuda, particularly through integrating and leveraging technology. Legislation under the Department of ICT Policy and Innovation include the Electronic Transaction Act 1999 and the Personal Information Protection Act 2016.

Madam Chairman, I will now move on to cost centre 77015, which is Cybersecurity. The estimate for 2019/20 is \$194,000 which is no change from the previous year.

Madam Chairman, the November 2018 Speech from the Throne included a statement about Cybersecurity and I hope that you will let me quote it, Madam Chairman. It says:

"Bermuda's economic fortunes and potential for growth must be safeguarded by a secure infrastructure and a strong cybersecurity platform. We must have the necessary resilience and capacity to respond to both current and emerging cyber-threats. Consequently, the Government will introduce Bermuda's first national Cybersecurity Strategy to promote the maintenance of a secure electronic infrastructure in both the public and private sector."

Madam Chairman, the Department of ICT Policy and Innovation will continue to work in collaboration with the Ministry of National Security to support the Bermuda Cybersecurity Strategy. Now, this is one of those areas where there is an overlap between ministries as cybersecurity, ostensibly, was with the Department of ICT Policy and Innovation, however, as it is an emerging trend throughout the world, cybersecurity is now being moved into National Security as it is something that is viewed not just from an IT perspective but manages lots of different structures around the country and it is not specifically just for the Government. So that is being moved to National Security.

So there have been department resources which have been transferred from one Ministry to another, but the Department of ICT Policy and Innovation still has its funding and is working in conjunction with the Ministry of National Security on the National Cybersecurity Strategy.

On Cybersafety, Madam Chairman, in addition to the Cybersecurity Strategy, the Department of ICT Policy and Innovation will continue to champion and collaborate to encourage a strong culture of cy-

bersafety in Bermuda. Cybersafety, the safe use of the Internet and Internet-supported tools, continues to be a priority for Bermuda. Through the Cybertips initiative, the department partners with many entities from the profit and non-profit sectors, public and private, including the Bermuda Police Service and other committed community representatives. Cybertips is a proactive awareness programme that imparts technology users with information and tools to be safe and smart in the online environment, whether they are 5 years old or 105. If our citizens know the dangers, then they can work to avoid them.

And Madam Chairman, at this point in time I will recognise that the department has done a lot of work in this particular area, but it is still challenging that some of our citizens are still vulnerable to, I would say, online fraud.

One of the particular, very sad stories, for me personally, was an individual who was constantly going to the money shop, or Western Union, and sending money away to me because he had received notes from social media that if he sent money to me I would be in turn for a grant. And it was many times.

These are the typical types of scams which you will see, and the Department of ICT Policy and Innovation has formulated a public campaign to remind persons. And it was not until I guess the people at MoneyGram actually tried to stop this person from sending money and sent him down to the Cabinet Office that this unfortunate fraud was exposed. And, of course, this individual sent quite a bit of money because when you send the money, then those persons will realise that you have actually sent the money and they will contact you again and ask you for more and more money.

There is also a very active programme that when fake accounts are seen they are instantly reported and we get them removed as quickly as possible. And the services, whether it be the Department of Communications or others, are working better in that regard. But it is important for members that are listening to know that no member of the Government will ever ask you over social media to send them money via Western Union. I believe that is anyone. If I am going to ask for money, I will tell you to come to the Cabinet Office and give it to me in my hand. But I will not do that.

[Laughter]

Hon. E. David Burt: A little bit of light humour, I guess.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. E. David Burt: I just said, that is what I will do, but I would not do it online.

But it is incredibly sad because a lot of these persons that are being preyed on are senior citizens

and they do not know different. I mean there was a particular instance where something had actually happened where people get information . . . and it was one of my relatives, actually, overseas who fell subject to the same type of online scam where someone had said, *Oh, your nephew has been caught and you have to give them this money or else he will . . .* and, you know, she sent away a significant amount of money out of care. So these are the things which we are dealing with, but we are trying to make sure we address and to raise public awareness. And that is what the Department of ICT Policy and Innovation does.

Madam Chairman, moving on to cost centre 77004, Technology Marketing, Promotion and Outreach, found on page B-72, the estimate for 2019/20 is \$70,000 and there is no change from the previous year.

Madam Chairman, the Marketing, Promotion and Outreach cost centre enables the Department of ICT Policy and Innovation to represent Bermuda as a desirable jurisdiction to do business in both the local and overseas markets through marketing, advertising, promotional and market research activities. The sophistication of the Bermuda ICT landscape and workforce is important to the international businesses that make the decision to locate and operate in this jurisdiction. Through publications that boast international readership, such as *The European*, we are able to showcase our infrastructure and capabilities directly to global decision-makers and opinion leaders.

Expenses under this cost centre include activities relating to marketing, advertising, training, and editorial content in local and international publications, in addition to benchmarking and research.

Madam Chairman, I will now move on to cost centre 77005, E-Business Awareness and Development. The estimate for 2019/20 is \$131,000, down \$13,000, or 9.03 per cent from the previous year.

Madam Chairman, George Bernard Shaw wrote, "You see things; you say 'Why?'" But I dream things that never were; and I say "Why not?"

The e-Business Awareness and Development cost centre helps to make dreams a reality. Activities in this area include promoting the importance and adoption of technology skills for personal and professional empowerment, support of e-entrepreneurship, programmes to train and mentor youth in ICT careers, the stimulation and recognition of innovation, while imparting the importance of securing the flow of data. And I think one of the important items in this certainly would be the thing that is done every year through the Technology Leadership Forum which is sponsored by the Department of ICT Policy and Innovation, which sees a number of our young people go through a rigorous eight-week course in conjunction with the private sector.

Madam Chairman, moving on to Manpower, the Department of ICT Policy and Innovation is allocated six full-time equivalents for its work.

The total current Salaries amount allocated to the Department of ICT Policy and Innovation is \$684,000 for 2019/20, which accommodates the current year's salary cost-of-living uplift as per the BPSU Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Before I close, Madam Chairman, I would like to thank the members of the Department of ICT Policy and Innovation for their flexibility. It has been a pleasure working with them for the five months which I have been responsible personally for this department. And as we look to move to transitions and a management consulting review that is currently being done with that department to look at synergies with other small government departments, we are looking for it to continue to make an impact on promoting Bermuda as a friendly jurisdiction for e-business as we move forward.

So, with that, that concludes my remarks on the Department of ICT Policy and Innovation and the briefing on the heads that the Opposition has selected for debate. Thank you.

The Chairman: Thank you, Premier.

Is there any other Member that would like to speak to Heads 43 and/or 67?

I recognise the Leader of the Opposition, Craig Cannonier. You have the floor.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, thank you very much, Madam Chairman, and for the brief, Premier.

This is probably one of the most vital areas that requires, quite frankly, robust discussion and understanding of what it is that we are doing with Head 43, Information and Digital Technologies, but certainly also when it comes to Information and Communication, Head 67.

Listening to the Premier, there seems to be, and we have heard him speak many times before, of how, you know, the Premier believes there is a need for an overhaul (I am going to Head 43 on page B-62) when it comes to Information Digital Technologies that there should be synergies. He spoke also of the fact that there were economies of scale, and we have heard this before.

He also spoke about the fact that there are some challenges out there when we look at government and how it operates and how we should be, at the end of the day, seeking out opportunities that will create a more efficient operation when it comes to Information and Digital Technologies.

Interestingly enough, the Premier was going quite fast at first and eventually, by the time he got to the second head, he did slow down and we were able to get some of those details. And I am probably going to ask him to go back over some of the examples that he gave, which were brilliant examples, but I think that as quickly as he was moving through it, some may have missed some exciting things that we heard going on. So I would like to hear a little more about those,

maybe at 20 miles an hour as opposed to 50 miles an hour. I am just teasing him now.

And when we talk about Head 43 and the Digital Technologies and how the Premier has been speaking to the fact that he believes that there is need for upgrading, there is need, certainly, for looking at how we do things in the IT service area. I am curious about Immigration. We heard already today during that particular debate about the new processes involved there, software and the likes. So it would be interesting to hear a little bit more about what is happening down at the airport and how they are getting along with that particular process there.

One of the things that we do know is that change, many times, especially when it comes to IT stuff . . . if you recall back in 1999, when 2000 was going to roll around, everybody was scared and thought that everything . . . the computers were going to crash and cars that had chips in them were going to drive into the trees or into a hole or something like that. There was this fear out there. And there was a fear because it was an unknown. *Okay, what are we exactly getting involved with in here?* And I would venture to say that as this particular head moves on into different types of software and synergies that we are going to meet up with some resistance.

I can recall with the E1 system how difficult it was to get folks off of using a spreadsheet to calculate things and using a spreadsheet to order supplies and the likes, just completely reluctant to take on the change. But once a few of them did take on that change, the light bulb, per se, went off and people realised, *Oh, this is pretty easy. All I need to do is ensure that I am putting in the correct information.*

So when you look down at the Department Objectives on page B-62, where the Premier read, *Support IT projects underway throughout the Government*, I will ask him to come back and to speak again to some of those, because this particular area he went through really, really, really fast. And because this is his area, this is something that he enjoys, I know it rolls off of his tongue very easily, but the public would like to understand a little more about some of these fantastic things that are going on.

But it also mentions *deliver and manage IT services used by the departments*. And one of the areas that I wanted to ask about was the next one, under *development of disaster and recovery systems for selected departments*. And I guess I was kind of curious as to the disaster recovery systems for selected departments. What were those selected departments and why are they selected? Knowing that disasters can come in many shapes and forms, you know, it could be a complete black-out of power, it could be a hurricane, it could be through just an electrical storm or the likes. Why have we just selected some as opposed to others when it comes to disaster recovery?

And I will declare my interest. I spend a lot of time in disaster recovery with the private business of

mine in the fuel stations, and participating in working with this particular department and what is being done on a larger scale in private corporations. I would like to know whether or not they are still meeting with other organisations when it comes to disaster recovery and best practice so that we, as a Government, certainly, are operating at the highest of levels. We have seen in the past where there have been disasters overseas, and we have been asked to go and help. But it would be nice to know a little more about how we are keeping up with the latest technologies when it comes to disaster recovery systems and how this department is moving with that.

Also, down below, the very last is *assist departments with defining and developing e-technology solutions*. And the Premier did go through some of those areas. I would like for him to go back to some of that because this was actually . . . again, some of the area he was going through quite quickly. I am pretty good at taking notes, but I think that some of the listening public, and even folks sitting with me here, were missing some of those particular points as he went through the eight . . . sorry, that was in the other one . . . no, the eight different areas that he was highlighting.

If we go on down now to the numbers, Madam Chairman, we will see that this is pretty stagnant. If you look at the totals there on [page] B-62 under Head 43, Original amount, \$6,690,000, the revised is the same. And then we see this reduction here under 2019/20. And basically, as I have been saying with all of the other debates that I have been involved in throughout the day today and over the last two weeks, it is important for us to look at these numbers [because] they tell us something and they tell a story.

And, you know, with our emphasis now and the fact that we have just heard under Head 67 as well, how we are looking to use technology more and more and more, I would have thought that maybe more emphasis in the total amounts would have reflected here. And I do not see that, but I do recognise also that there were Acquisitions also on page C-9 in the estimate this year to the tune of \$2.175 million. So what I was going to say is that I see here that . . . that is Acquisitions, but I see that we are not really . . . we have reduced the amount that we are putting in this area here.

And all of us who have worked in Government before know that it is sometimes difficult, these guys have got a massive amount of people that they are supporting, including the public as well. But to keep up with 5,000 employees, and just about all of them . . . not all of them, but many of them, are using computers or a radio or some form of communication device, getting support for these things and the likes, I would have thought we might have seen maybe a little more money in this area, understanding that the Premier has taken it upon himself, at times it would seem almost singlehandedly, that we need to be moving the

civil service and getting more support and looking at different software packages and systems that would create some synergies throughout different departments and the likes.

So, with that kind of general approach to this here, I will move down to the general summary, as I spoke, and the Premier was attempting to give some answers here.

If you take a look under Business Systems Support, 53060, and you take a look here at the revised amount, and the revised amount is \$621,000, if you look at the estimate . . . and that is actually what we did. It may vary a few thousand dollars because we are not at the end of March, but that is pretty accurate when we say \$621,000. If you look at the estimate of \$495,000, that is a drastic difference there. I was hoping that the Premier would go back over this Business Systems report as to the reductions and why we believe that this reduction is there.

And then if you follow up with that under System Support, 53070, we then see an increase here, which makes sense. And based on the focus that the Premier has, this makes sense that we would see this kind of increase.

If you take a look at the Training . . . now one of the things I was trying to understand is under Training. Is that training for the employees? Or is that training that is going for . . . when I say "employees" those within this particular head, Head 43?

Hon. E. David Burt: Yes.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: It is. Okay. Good, that answers my question then.

Now, again, in support of this particular head, I am very bullish about this particular head. I believe that it probably will require even more training as they are moving now into some unchartered waters and some territories and new areas that they are seeking to bring to government. There will probably be a need for more training in this particular area. Maybe the Premier can tell us of some of the training that is going on at present for these employees to keep them up to par, up to date. This particular area of expertise, quite frankly, is changing all the time. And certainly because this is one of those pet areas of the Premier where he loves—

[Inaudible interjection and laughter]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Well, this is your expertise here; you love this area here. And maybe "pet" is not a good word for it, but you certainly are paying it a lot of attention.

If he can give us an idea of some of the training that is required for these guys, knowing that technology is changing ever so quickly. By the time you turn around the technology that we are going to get to talking about where he mentioned about a new phone

system and the likes . . . that might be outdated within another year. So—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, I would be happy to hear some more about that.

If we move on over to page B-63 . . . and if you bear with me just for a minute here. I mentioned about the training here. And if you look here, again, the Subjective Analysis is basically saying okay, well, we revised our amount of 2018/19, we spent about \$29,000. The estimate this upcoming year is \$24,000 and it is less than what we anticipated from the original 2018/19. What changed? Was there a different focus that changed this from moving from the \$37,000 which we originally said in 2018/19 as opposed to the revised amount?

And then going down even further, to this 2019/20, [there is] \$24,000. It would be nice to hear exactly . . . there is a trend there of training going down, costing less. Maybe that is because someone has moved out and moved to another area, whatever the case may be. I do not know, but it would be good to know that.

Also under Communications in the Subjective Analysis, as you will see, again, if you look at the original amount for 2018/19 and you compare the estimate, certainly there is an extra \$100,000 there. When you look at what we actually did spend in the revised amount of the \$1,407,000, I am curious as to what it is that caused that change.

Obviously, I have said it, and I will keep saying it, you know, once you have something in place or a theory . . . but when you go to actually do it, stuff happens. In the middle of the year you get doing this, you get delayed, or whatever the case may be. It would be nice to know and understand a little more as to the thought process . . . certainly it was close to \$1.3 million, which was close to the actual amount spent in 2017/18. We then wound up spending more than both the actual of 2017/18 and the original amount in 2018/19. So it would be nice to understand that.

He spoke to the rentals; we got answers there.

And under Professional Services, it would be nice to understand more specifically what that Professional Services are as to . . . and quite frankly, it does make sense based on what we have been hearing from the Premier in public. But it goes from an original thought amount of \$77,000 to . . . Oh . . . Oh. Hold on a second, we made a drastic mistake here. We are spending \$207,000 . . . what was . . . was it a single-handed Professional Service that was added? Were there several different Professional Services that were added to reflect that revised amount of \$207,000 for 2018/19?

And then we see almost the opposite where we go back now to 2019/20 of \$67,000. So something happened there. It would be nice to understand a little more as to exactly what was going on there with Professional Services as to why 2018/19 needed in excess of almost three times the amount as the original amount, and now we are going back to saying we believe . . . well, the original amount of 2018/19 might have been closer. I do not know what that is, but I am sure the Premier can apprise us of that.

Uniforms. And then he mentioned about Materials and Supplies, so I will not bother there.

If we go down to . . . oh, yes.

[Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan, Chairman]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Oh, yes, yes. If you go down to [page] B-63, Mr. Chairman (I see a change in the Chair).

On page B-63, if we look at item 53060, Business Systems Support, under the employee numbers. I was trying to . . . I was actually . . . I am asking him to repeat what he had mentioned to us, only because I was writing down some of the other exciting things he was talking about and I missed the analysis on this. So I would like to understand the analysis under the employee numbers. Where is there a change, less one person, there under the Business Systems Support? I missed it, unfortunately. Sorry about that. I apologise. I was writing a lot of notes down as you were going. If the Premier would give us the reasoning behind that.

I will move on over to page B-64, under Performance Measures. The Premier went through and highlighted several areas here. And I want to go to *resolve service tickets within service level targets*. And here he mentioned “modernised processing.” It would be nice to know what is that modernised process. You said that you might come back to explain a little more about what that was within this particular area here. So I will take you up on that, I will take that on and look for you to tell us a little more about that modernised process.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I am on Performance Measures, resolve service tickets—

An Hon. Member: The phone system?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, yes.

We certainly know, Mr. Chairman, the phone system is quite frustrating, extremely frustrating. You have also heard from another Minister how rather than call he would walk around. Well, I was doing the exact same thing when I was Minister of Public Works. It was extremely frustrating. I just walked everywhere rather than trying to call. I could not figure it out. You

know, two minutes and I could have been next door to where the expertise was. So rather than call, I would walk there.

So, it would be interesting to really hear about this IT-based system that is going to integrate all sections. We cannot have a government that, you know, you have to dial four numbers to get to one particular department within a Ministry and then you got to dial seven numbers for another area. And I know that has been vexatious for many. So, it would be interesting to see how this is going to work out. And then also details about when they believe it will be implemented, certainly there is going to need to be a training process in place to accommodate something like this here. I do not know if it is very simple to put in place—

[Gavel]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Oh, sorry.

The Chairman: Members, in the Gallery, please keep your voices down.

Continue on.

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

So, it would be interesting to hear a little bit more about the timelines for this particular implementation. And I am sure that people will be excited about that as well.

Maybe just a typo, I was not quite sure, but if you move on down further on the Performance Measures on page B-64, *Public satisfaction with availability and use and selection of government online services*. I was just curious as to how you come to . . . how do you measure that? How is that being measured? *Public satisfaction with availability and use of the selection of government online services*. And, maybe they just reply online. I do not know, but is there a survey that they do or something to that effect which allows them to come to that conclusion?

The next item down says, *No of new . . .* I guess it means “number.” I am assuming it means number of new e-payments [eID] and supporting new process implemented via the new portal, their core application or a bank bill pay service. That would be interesting to hear a little more about that.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Ah! Okay, that is what it was. All right. I wrote that down, but I was not sure what it referred to. Got it. Okay. Great.

So, I will move over on the other side to page B-65. And we talked about disaster recovery already, so I find that interesting. And on the bottom there, un-

der 53090, Security, where it says disaster recovery exercises planned and executed, unfortunately they were not able to come to the measure for 2018/19, but the target outcome is 50 per cent. And I believe the Premier said it was due to the new E1 system and training. And that goes back to some of what I was saying before. It has been pretty tough trying to get folks trained in the E1 area and some of it is just pure fear, something new. So, hopefully, the training will continue.

And I think that because that performance target is at 50 per cent in this area it is probably low in other areas, although it is not a performance task on paper here. More training is going to be needed—more reassurance, more support, and then more training because these new systems can sometimes be scary when you just look at them. But I am encouraging the Premier and, again, this is an area that he enjoys, to continue to work with this head to help them achieve their goals. And so, with that in mind and I know some of my other colleagues will want to ask some questions, because these are two small heads, I am just going to go right through to the other one as well.

Under Head 67, Information and Communication Technology. Quite frankly, by this time I was enjoying what the Premier had to say in this particular area. He mentioned the likes of Silicon Valley and some of these key words. But if you look under the mission statement he mentioned about being cyber . . . to develop sound policies and basically to be cyber-safe and cyber-secure and to develop and facilitate adoption of growth in the digital economy.

He also went on to talk about examples of how he knew of people who had been taken advantage of in the electronic world, and this has become an increasingly challenging problem for seniors—just private individuals and their bank accounts. I certainly know business-wise we have already heard from the police and the likes where software people have been basically hacking into business systems. And we had one particular situation in the IB world, or the ABIC world, where we had a massive compromise of information. And so we know that there are people out there and they have targeted Bermuda.

Bermuda is on the map now. You did not used to hear about this too much before. But when a business in the particular example that I am talking about called and said this to me, *Listen, man. They are actually bribing me here* and said, *basically they are saying if you want your information back, then you are going to have to pay some money*. And this was a friend of mine who has extremely sensitive information in the business that they do of—

Hon. E. David Burt: It could also be a scam.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Sorry?

Hon. E. David Burt: It could also be a scam.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, yes. So, you know, we need to, we need to be getting . . . I was pleased by the fact that the Premier is saying that they are looking to get information out there to the public. I would like to see more in this area. We will go through it as we go through some of this subjective analysis and the performance measures about that—

The Chairman: And just for clarity, we are now on Head 67, Opposition Leader?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: That is correct. Yes.

The Chairman: Page B-72?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Page B-72—

The Chairman: Yes.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, Head 67, and just referring to the general remarks that the Premier was making.

And I will give even a personal story when you are talking about cybersecurity. Everyone knows that unfortunately one of my service stations, I will declare my interest, was robbed at gunpoint. And, you know, we have got wonderful safes and the like, and we were looking to purchase some new ones. And lo and behold, three weeks later a company abroad calls us and says, *We understand that you need new safes and we are sending them to you.* It was all a scam. A complete . . . I could not believe it! A scam! I am calling technical officers abroad because, of course, you know, we work with Sol [Petroleum] as a franchise company and they knew nothing of it.

And so, what they were after was our safe numbers so that they could programme them into the new safes that they supposedly were going to be sending to us from Sol. So someone was involved locally with this cyber scam as well, so that once it was programmed, they would just come to the shop and go right into the safe. I could not believe it! And this is how sophisticated things have gotten. How scary it has gotten that even a little *bye* from St. David's, like me, is having to deal with these kinds of issues. It is rather scary.

So, I can imagine what we are going through as a Government. And I would encourage the Premier to do as much as possible to secure us. I know that he understands and probably is aware of where some of those vulnerabilities are and that we are strengthening ourselves in that particular area. So, I appreciate that.

Now, if I move on down, Mr. Chairman, to Head 67, page B-72, to the expenditure business unit, again, you can see this allocation—

The Chairman: Sorry?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Page B-72.

The Chairman: Page B-72.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: At the very bottom, their total of \$1,475,000 under the revised . . . under the original the same amount. And of course, under 2019/20 estimate \$1,475,000.

Now, based on some of the things that I did hear that the Premier was looking at in this particular head, again, I would say that this is probably one of the areas that I would have thought to see the expenditure of more money. However, he did also say that they recognised some economies of scale. Certainly, those economies of scale are not in place as yet, as we start looking at some of the software programmes that will work together with other areas to save money. But that has not been realised yet. So, the amounts are stagnant there.

I will move on down to the . . . there was quite a bit of time spent on administration. So, we have got that, e-Commerce and committees, et cetera, where these monies are being spent. But under 77003, Policy and Legislation, I guess I thought we would be spending more there because the Premier mentioned that much of this had to do with putting in the legal framework that is needed and the like, knowing that we are seeking to be a hub for FinTech and a place where people will consider to come when it comes to new technologies, that we would be spending more money in this area to ensure that we are up to par with our legislation—and forward thinking with that as well, as we move forward. Now, usually under policy and legislation, a lot of that work is being done maybe some in-house, some outhouse. How much of this policy and legislation is being done in-house and how much of that is outside of Bermuda expertise?

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Outhouse—

[Laughter]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, yes—
If you look underneath there—

An Hon. Member: You are too young to remember outhouses!

[Laughter]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. I do not think there are too many still left on the Island, actually. I know there is still one down in St. David's on show.

But, anyhow, if I move down to 77004, technology, market, promo, outreach, the Premier mentioned about promoting Bermuda, which was . . . if he could speak again to some of that as well, it would be

nice for the public to know how we are getting out there to the rest of the world and looking to be leaders in this particular area and to give an idea of some of the promotions that we are doing.

I think he mentioned some publications. It would be nice to know some of the publications, maybe some of the commercials that we are doing. Bermudians can look out for these things knowing that many of us do travel. We can let our friends know to be looking at some of these publications that are being put out. Maybe the publications are just in Bermuda, but I do not believe so if it is promoting Bermuda, it would be abroad.

[Microphone interference]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Where those areas . . . yes, my light keeps coming on. I do not know what is going on here.

But what areas are we concentrating in? Is it the Silicon Valley-type areas that we are concentrating on where we find many of the tech-type people? So, it would be interesting to hear a little more about that.

And then under Telecommunications, Mr. Chairman, 6703 on page B-72, Cybersecurity, 77015, Cybersecurity. And this word has been around for a while now. When you say “cybersecurity,” you know, it immediately puts you on guard. I need to protect myself here, do I need a robot or . . . what exactly do I need here?

[Laughter]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: But under cybersecurity, if you look at the allocated amounts, the original is \$194,000, the revised is \$194,000, and the estimate is, of course, \$194,000.

The Premier mentioned first strategies. And I was curious [and wanted to know] a little more about what that first strategy is as we move into this area here. When will this first strategy be implemented? When he was talking it sounded as if it was a process in the making. I just wanted to make sure that I understood exactly what he is saying when he said “first strategy,” and when we can expect that first part of that strategy to be implemented.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, yes, yes—cybersecurity, you mentioned.

And then also in that same breath, the Premier mentioned about Cybertips. Maybe I have not been paying attention as much lately, but I am not sure where locally we are doing that, or how we are doing it through Lunch and Learns, whether or not we are going out to businesses and speaking to them. But when you think about how we are now moving more to-

wards communicating electronically with, like e-payments [eID] as you mentioned, with the public, this information once it gets out there certainly needs to be secured. This is personal information, not only on behalf of the individuals that are doing business and businesses that are doing business with Government, but certainly Government’s business as well, and its details need to be protected.

So, I want to just go to the subjective analysis. The Premier highlighted particular areas there as he moved through which was very, very helpful in understanding exactly what it is that we are doing. I will again emphasise that for this particular area, the subjective analysis, I just feel personally that if we are making this a concentration then more monies do need to be spent in this area here. Now, that is not to say that I am telling the Premier to go pull it from somewhere else overnight, but this seems to be very, very important.

And I recognise it as a very important factor and fabric of our moving forward, of this country forward, this Island forward to being not just leaders in the reinsurance world, but in the data world, tech world. [I recognise] that we need to spend quite a bit of time in advertising, getting out there to the public to attract the right types of people here, but at the same time people understanding that, just like with reinsurance, it is secure, it is well-thought-out and people do not have a problem working with us electronically.

So, if we go down to the . . . I mentioned about the advertising and promotion already. We can see that we are spending a healthy amount there, which is important. So, again, as I mentioned, it would be nice to hear a little more about where we are putting all of these publications, what kinds of ads we are doing, commercials we are doing, not just locally, but abroad as well.

Professional Services is pretty constant there. You will see under the original amount there is \$200,000, revised amount \$200,000 and, of course, the estimate for 2019/20, again, is \$200,000. If the Premier can give us a breakdown of those professional services and what those professional services consist of. He also talked about . . . I was curious about this rental, if you look at rental there. It is only \$4,000, maybe we had to rent a machine or something like that. It is not a biggie.

[Laughter]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: So, I will move on over to performance measures, page B-74, not much was said about the performance measures for Head 67. If you look under 77000, certainly those target outcomes have been eliminated there. I do not see a star next to them, so I guess it is just discontinued. But it does not say discontinued. So maybe we can hear a little more about that.

If you come down further under business unit 77003, policy and legislation, initiate the adoption of the identified cybersecurity framework for Bermuda—both the private and public sector. These performance measures will be discontinued, I recognise (if you look there, you will see a star by it). Would the Premier tell us a little more about that?

On page B-75, at the very bottom, business unit 77015, cybersecurity, again, strategy: initiate the development of a National Cybersecurity Strategy and I already asked the Premier if he can give us an idea of the implementation time and the likes, what this strategy going forward is. Number two is assess security and privacy plans related to the Government of Bermuda Information Systems, if he can explain that as well.

But, again, with that in mind . . . sorry, I wanted to go right over . . . sorry, my apologies. On page C-9, capital acquisitions. We are actually spending more than the revised amount. But if you take a look at the original amount of \$2,380,000 we wound up spending almost \$500,000 less for this 2018/19. So, what we were thinking in the original estimate? What was our approach to these capital acquisitions here? What were we thinking, and what happened as to why we were not able to—

An Hon. Member: What page are you on?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: [Page] C-9.

An Hon. Member: What department? IT or—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Information and digital technologies, flipping over to . . . yes, it was just the one . . . I was finished with Head 67. I forgot about this one particular area. And then, again, we go back up to \$2,175,000. So something happened within the year, I do not know what that was. I know that we were concentrating very much so in this area, but we wound up spending less than we thought. What was happening there, and give us a bit of a subjective analysis on the take there.

And with that in mind, Mr. Chairman, I am looking forward to hearing the Premier expound.

[Microphone interference]

The Chairman: Thank you. Yes, that might be where that little bit of static was coming from.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Chairman: You just knocked it off. There you go.

We are considering Heads 43 and 67, and the Chair recognises the Honourable Member from constituency 23.

Honourable Member, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Chairman, I just have a couple of questions on this.

I am going to start with Head 43 and I am going to go over to the subjective analysis . . . sorry, to the performance measures on page B-64. And the one thing that I noticed is that under business unit 53030, which is device support, 53035, which is network support, and 53040, which is service support, there is a reference to resolving tickets within service level targets. And we have a percentage. We have percentages there that the idea is that we are going to resolve 100 per cent of some things and we are going to resolve repair tickets within service level targets. We have got a targeted outcome of 85 per cent. But we do not have any indication as to how many.

What kind of volume are we dealing with? It is easy to say we have got 100 per cent, but are we talking about 100 items? Are we talking about 1,000 items? Are we talking about 5,000? Just an idea as to what the volume of tickets that would be normal to be expected and serviced and that would give us a better indication in terms of what these output measures really mean. If you have got 5 or 10, you can get 100 per cent of 10. You can get 100 per cent of 100 of them, but can you get 100 per cent of 1,000 or 5,000? That would give us a better idea if we had some indication as to how many actual tickets, you know, would be normal.

I also wanted to go back to page B-72 in respect of information and communication technology, under cybersecurity. And that is under programme 6703, business unit 77015. Now, my Leader indicated that he had a few questions, and his questions basically tied with the questions that I have. But what the Premier did say in his presentation was that cybersecurity had effectively been moved over, or parts of it had been moved into National Security. So, by having that transition I kind of flipped over to the budget for National Security, and I am just wondering if the Premier would be able to give us some idea as to where in national security that addition might be hidden—

Hon. E. David Burt: In headquarters.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: In headquarters, okay, because there was \$94,000 worth of increase in headquarters. So, presumably \$194,000 being spent and retained under the business centre of the Cabinet Office for cybersecurity. It gives me a little bit of cause for pause from the perspective that cybersecurity is a very real and present danger to our systems. And it would seem to me that we would be focusing a little bit heavier on cybersecurity and perhaps putting a little bit more—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Well, I can tell you that there are some things—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: —it is about—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: It is about what is important—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: It is about focusing—

[Laughter]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I do not want to answer that interpolation.

[Laughter]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: It is about focusing, Mr. Chairman, and it also—

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: And it is about being robust, because if we go back to page B-75 and look at the output measures in respect of business unit 77015, page B-75 cybersecurity, the Premier spoke to initiating the development on a national cybersecurity strategy, but I believe that it is important to note that cybersecurity is something that we must be robust with. It is ongoing. The challenges that occurred yesterday are outdated. They are completely defunct. So, we have a new challenge to deal with tomorrow, and I note here that the targeted outcome for 2019/20 in terms of the development of a strategy has been discontinued. So, I am just wondering how we are going to stay on top of an effective cybersecurity regime if we are not putting the resources towards ensuring that it is seen to.

So, those are my concerns. And I can just point out that very recently, you will recall, Mr. Chairman, that we had a clerk attachment here from the UK. And I received an email from John Rankin. Now, we know John Rankin to be the Governor. And I was responding to that email and effectively he said . . . I let him know that the information concerning the appointment that this gentleman would have with Government House was going to be a certain date, and it was understood.

And then I got a response back which effectively said, *Can you let me know when I will get information concerning the actual appointment?*

And I just went back, and I said, *If the clerk did not send it . . . if the assistant clerk to the House, to the Legislature, did not send it over the weekend, you should receive it later on today.*

And then he came back and asked about a particular programme, asking whether we had taken advantage of this particular programme, to which I responded, *I am not familiar with the programme, but I will forward the query to the spokesperson for the Environment.* And this conversation was going . . . and then there was something that came back in the reply which made me just question it, and I thought, *I am not even going to answer this anymore*, because the Governor knows me well enough to pick up the phone and call me if he is not responding—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Cybersecurity. So, with that, I was just concerned because as innocuous as a correspondence might be, there are methodologies by which people can actually get to you and get you to respond and communicate. Fortunately, there was no money involved or anything like that, but then as you go back to the correspondence, the subsequent messages that I refused to answer had ultimately been deleted because they had been identified as either being abusive or marked as spam. And I find that things like this happen so frequently in which you can get a duplicate of something, of an account that might appear to be coming from you, Mr. Chairman, when it might be coming from me because somebody has duplicated or stolen identities and the like.

So, with that threat in mind, that very real threat, I am just concerned that the development of the national cybersecurity strategy is not showing a targeted outcome, that these output measures have been discontinued. And I just wonder if the Premier could speak to explaining how this particular function has been absorbed in the Ministry of National Security so that we can be confident that there has been a robust determination in terms of where we are in respect of cybersecurity. Those are my questions.

Thank you, sir.

The Chairman: Thank you, Honourable Member.

The Chair recognises the Opposition Leader.

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

I just want to reflect back on page B-72 when we were talking under administration, policy and legislation and also awareness, tech awareness. The Premier mentioned about taking advantages of economies of scale and that rather than buying name brand type of computers or the likes we were looking at different . . . well, looking at generic computers. Have we started that process already?

And I am curious as to whether or not the warranties and the policies and the likes behind it would

be similar to what [currently exists], as well, because certainly if there is economy of scale to be had there, this is a good thing. The Premier also mentioned as we transitioned on the same area, about 31 policies [*sic*] that were on hold when we were going through performance measures and the likes. And I was just curious as to, with those policies [*sic*] on hold—

Hon. E. David Burt: Projects.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Oh, projects . . . projects. With those projects on hold . . . sorry, with those projects on hold, will it in any kind of way affect performance at this particular time going forward? Because these projects are on hold, will it affect performance in any kind of way? I will suspect, obviously not, but it would be nice to get that assurance from the Premier.

The Chairman: Does any other Member care to speak to Heads 43 and 67?
Premier?

[Pause]

The Chairman: This debate started at 4:07. It is now at the top of the hour at six o'clock.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Oh, boy.

[Laughter]

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: It is 5:33; it's not at the top of the hour.

The Chairman: So, it is now—

Hon. E. David Burt: I see where you are.

The Chairman: Thank you.

[Laughter]

Hon. E. David Burt: I see where you are!

[Laughter]

The Chairman: I need to go down and get my glasses down in the corner.

Hon. E. David Burt: No problem, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I will answer the number of questions which have been asked.

The first question was what is happening with airport systems, and I can say that IDT is assisting the Department of Immigration with the implementation of the new border security system, which I think may have been talked about this morning.

A question from the Opposition Leader, I think it was under disaster recovery systems for selected departments, which departments and why just some, not all. The answer is that the E1 system in the Accountant General's Chambers . . . sorry, Account General, not Chambers, but Accountant General, is the primary focus for disaster recovery. The Dame Lois Browne-Evans building is the disaster recovery site for all other IT systems including email and file shares. And just so we are clear, we do not just have disaster recovery for the Accountant General. We have disaster recovery for most government systems that exist because there are now virtualised servers as opposed to individual servers. And with virtualised servers you can have backups and different redundancy items there which will certainly enable recovery from disaster to happen a lot quicker than would have happened in the past when we did not have virtualised systems but we had individual servers.

On item number three, it says, is Government still meeting with other stakeholders on the issue of disaster recovery? IDT meet with key departments on a routine basis and with the suspension, or postponement, or putting on hold of the thirty-one IT projects IDT can focus on introducing new systems to the disaster recovery plan. I think that is the key point when we are talking about those 31 projects.

Resources at IDT were being possibly spread far too thin, and it was important for me to make sure from this level, from the ministerial level, that there would be focus that could be given so that we could actually achieve certain items and tick them off as opposed to having ourselves with multiple different projects at the same point in time.

It says, how are all projects going to happen with a stagnant capital development budget? I am not entirely certain if it is fully stagnant. I think there may have been a small increase in the capital development budget. But as you can see, there are . . . I think that IDT has a proven track record of choosing projects and planning that do not necessarily require additional funding.

As you can see, there are a number of things that are happening inside the IDT budget where we are seeing reduced spending. For instance, we are doubling the bandwidth to all government departments, yet we are saving \$70,000 (I think that is correct). So the fact is that as you renegotiate service level agreements, as you look at consolidating efforts, as we are talking about going to a single phone system as opposed to multiple separate phone systems, those are places where you can identify efficiencies. And I think that those efficiencies have been demonstrated through, not only the efficiency committee which is chaired by the Junior Minister of Finance, but others where we are actually identifying places where savings can be had and putting that money to work in other places which will boost efficiency going forward.

So, that is a good example of those particular issues where, for instance, we are doubling bandwidth, yet we are spending less money while we double bandwidth.

There was a question regarding business system support, \$621,000 revised, and why was it reduced. It was reduced in line with the salary for a business analyst which is not going to be funded [so as] to achieve the 2 per cent salary uplift. We know the challenge that exists in various government departments where we have a spending freeze. However, we have increases in salaries, so those increases in salaries, those [costs], have to [come] from other places. So, that is where that particular money for the uplift was met.

The next question was training initiatives, what are they, what is required and why was the training budget reduced? The focus on training is to support the following: training for the portal, which is training for Drupal, voice services, advanced security, advanced service support and Project Management Professional.

Why was the training budget reduced? The training budget was most likely reduced to try and find money to stay inside the budget ceiling. However, one of the things which we found this year is that we are viring additional money to IDT, as I had mentioned to colleagues that they had come to see me at the Cabinet Office with a number of concerns, and we found additional monies for them from other departments which will be vired to assist.

So, that is just to make sure that we can meet the training needs because there is a need for training with IDT because we want to make sure they feel as though they are being supported. There are lots of new things that are coming out and we want them to have access to those items.

Moving on to the next question, item number eight, professional services, what is it? Explain the original and revised budget. And the reduction is the result of conducting more in-house support with less emphasis placed on using external support services. That is the reason why.

There was another question, What caused the change in communications budget? The change in communications budget was due to the increase of new sites, in some cases an increase in bandwidth that resulted in carrier renegotiation.

Another question that was asked, was 33060, business systems support, please explain the change in employment number. I think I covered that before, and the same issue about cost cutting measure for the 2 per cent salary uplift—contrary to the popular opinion of the Shadow Minister of Finance.

An Hon. Member: Whatever.

Hon. E. David Burt: I am just saying . . .

An Hon. Member: Whatever.

Hon. E. David Burt: We stayed inside our budgets, came with \$29 million less than anticipated in spending. That is a pretty good thing, when you look at it.

There was another question about what was the modernised process for resolving tickets? I think I covered that, but as the Opposition Leader said I went quickly, so I will try to go slow. It was a self-service tool for account password resets. Over 70 per cent of the tickets that are lodged with the service desk are due to account management—someone has forgotten their password, someone has been locked out. So the way that you can make that more efficient is if you put in self-service consoles.

The way you do self-service consoles, if individuals are registered with, for instance, their phone number, you can then do a reset and it can send them a text message via their items or other self-service tools, where you can go online, verify different passwords or security questions that you may know and it will unlock your account and allow you to manually reset your password. The same thing as if you were losing your password in any type of online service, as opposed to having to call the service desk, wait to the wonderful music that is playing while you are on hold and get the individual. It is just a quicker way of resolving that particular situation.

There was a question as to when will the new telephone system will be implemented? The new telephone system will be phased in over a period of three to four years. There are 5,000 users. But the base system will be installed in the 2019/20 budget year—three to four years, it will be a relatively long transition. There are a lot of sites and all the rest. But the new internal base system will be installed in this fiscal year.

There was a question about online services and how those were particularly measured, as you had said, 70 per cent and 60 per cent. And that is feedback from the user base via email and general feedback from business systems owners. So, for instance, online services with a portal, et cetera.

Moving on to ICT policy innovation. The question which asked how much policy and legislation is being done internally and externally—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes.

Hon. E. David Burt: I will try to get back to that particular question, or that particular answer.

There was a question asking me to speak to the marketing and promotion programme, more things required as to where those things were. I think what is important, Opposition Leader, is to recognise that most of government's external marketing is done by the Bermuda Business Development Agency. So, there is not a significant amount of external marketing

that would be done on the business development side from internal government departments.

However, regarding the publications specifically for this, the publications were *The European*, which has included content on Bermuda for the World Economic Forum, and we will be in the World Business Forum edition, and the other publication has been *The World Commerce Review* and has carried an editorial quarterly.

On the question about when will the first strategy for cybersecurity be expected? I had spoken with the Minister who has overall responsibility for cybersecurity and he said that the plan is finished and is in execution phase. It is one of those things that as much as we would like to table here, it is not something that we are going to put inside the public domain, letting everyone know what Bermuda's cybersecurity strategy is. But it is a public sector and also private sector and also, as I said, there are the government's assets which need to be secure. But there is also a broader level on a national level of making sure that private assets are secured.

We have seen other places where there have been blackouts, and those blackouts have been due to computer intrusions and otherwise. So, there are lots of different systems; but that is a plan or a strategy that is both with the public sector and with the private sector.

There was a question regarding Cybertips, I believe. Cybertips has been in place since 2007, with major programmes. A team goes out to schools regularly to speak to students, the teachers and parents. There is the annual Digital Leadership conference for students which will take place on the 27th of March. Last year, 600 middle and senior school students attended, and then there is the annual Safer Internet Day for seniors, and this was the fifth year of that particular initiative. And I was pleased to attend as the Minister for that one, specifically.

Regarding cybersecurity funding, there was a question on that. In the IC policy budget we are coordinating the [Cybersecurity] Governance Board. Also, we will provide funding for Cyber Essentials which crosses over with privacy and also will work on the policy development to enable the development of cybersecurity legislation.

There was a question about the change of money for cybersecurity between National Security and ICT Policy Innovation, regarding performance measures on page B-74. Cybersecurity was moved from 77003 and 77005. A discontinued item was achieved in its proper fiscal year and, as was stated, the National Security retained the responsibility for cybersecurity. But Head 67 is providing secretarial support for the Cybersecurity Governance Board . . . I am sorry, not secretarial, secretariat support.

The first question was, How much policy and legislation is being done internally versus externally? We develop policies internally; however, there is a

contractor that is working with the Department of ICT Policy and Innovation on the development of the privacy legislation and the advancing of that. And I believe that the advertisement went out for the selection of a privacy commissioner, and I know those interviews are taking place.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. E. David Burt: Yes.

There was a question about disaster simulations. Disaster simulation also relates to work being done in the Disaster Risk Reduction and Mitigation Team [DRMMT] under National Security, in collaboration with the Bermuda Cybersecurity Strategy and there is a critical national infrastructure component of the strategy that would provide cybersecurity simulations and the focus of such simulations would vary.

And just as a final matter on cybersecurity, the Cybersecurity Governance Board had its first meeting in February. So, as I said, they have moved to the implementation stage as opposed to the discussion and formulation stage.

Those are most of the questions which I have. I am sure if I have missed any questions, I will be asked those questions again. However, I will just focus, going back to Head 43 talking about ITO, because I think that it is important. I am happy that today I heard the Government say where they would spend more money . . . I am sorry, the *Opposition* say where they would spend more money. And I would sincerely hope—

[Inaudible interjection]

[Mrs. Renee Ming, Chairman]

Hon. E. David Burt: I would sincerely hope that in the exact same place where they are saying they could spend more money that I hope they will be as transparent to say in which place they wish to cut money, because you cannot spend more unless you wish to cut. And I think what we have done is demonstrate that you can keep spending frozen, increase spending in certain areas while reduce spending in other areas, while continuing to make sure that you are efficient.

And I want the listening public to remember that we were given a budget in 2017/18 that estimated that as a country we would spend \$923 million of the capital account. And despite giving public sector pay increases for the first time in many years to public sector workers, we ended up coming in \$29 million below that figure. Again, we said we are going to spend \$923 [million], coming in \$29 million below that figure.

So, we hear a lot of noise about spending and all the rest, but you have to look at the facts. And the facts are that in this [brief] time that we have been in office we have been very effective in spending the

money and we have managed to make sure that we can reassign the priorities properly and also take care of our public sector workers, Madam Chairman.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Chairman: Does any other Member wish to speak?

[Inaudible interjections]

The Chairman: The comments to the Chair, please. Thank you.

Does any other Member wish to speak?
Premier?

Hon. E. David Burt: I was hoping that there would be some persons to ask additional questions, but I guess I covered them all. So, with that, Madam Chairman, I move that Heads 43 and 67 be approved.

The Chairman: It has been moved that Heads [43] and [67] under the Cabinet be approved. Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection.
Agreed to.

[Motion carried: Non-Ministry, Cabinet Office, Head 43 and Head 67 were approved and stand part of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 2019/20.]

[Pause]

[Crosstalk]

Hon. E. David Burt: Madam Chairman, I move the following heads to be approved as printed. Heads 1, 2, 5, 56, 85, 92, 98, 101, 9, 74, 75, 88, 10, 11, 12, 28, 38, 39, 58, 59, 49, 68, 81, 82, 97, 71, 93, 29, 50 and 95 together with the heads already approved during the debates on the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 2019/20.

[Crosstalk]

[Pause]

The Chairman: Members, we are just sorting out a matter. We will be right with you.

[Laughter and crosstalk]

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Madam Chairman.
Madam Chairman, I did move that those heads be approved. Shall I move on?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. E. David Burt: Okay. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman, I move that the Current Accounts Estimates, the Capital Development Estimates, and the Capital Acquisition Estimates be approved.

The Chairman: So ordered.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you.

Madam Chairman, I move that the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the financial year 2019/20 be approved.

The Chairman: So ordered.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman, I move that the approval of the Estimates be reported to the House.

The Chairman: So ordered.

The Committee rises and the House resumes. The Chairman reports the approval of the Estimates of Revenue [and] Expenditure for 2019/20 as printed.

[Gavel]

[Motion carried: The Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for Financial Year 2019/20 were considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed.]

House resumed at 5:57 pm

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

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR 2019/20

The Speaker: Good afternoon, Members.

Is there any objection to the heads that were moved to bring conclusion to the annual budget debate being reported back to the House?

No objections.
Mr. Premier.

BILL

FIRST READING

APPROPRIATION ACT 2019

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance, I am introducing a Bill entitled the Appropria-

tion Act 2019 with the Governor's recommendation signified.

The Speaker: So moved.
Any objections to that?
No? Continue.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move in accordance with Standing Order 28(5)(1) that under the provisions of Standing Orders 41, 12, and 42 the remaining stages of the Bill entitled the Appropriation Act 2019 be taken forthwith.

The Speaker: Any objections?
None. Continue.

BILL

SECOND READING

APPROPRIATION ACT 2019

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the Bill entitled the Appropriation Act 2019 be now read the second time in the House.

The Speaker: Any objections?
None. Continue.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move clauses 1 to 6, inclusive, together with the Schedules A, B, and C as printed.

The Speaker: Continue—no objections?
Continue, Member.

[Motion carried: Clauses 1 through 6 together with Schedules A, B, and C passed.]

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
Mr. Speaker, I move the preamble.

The Speaker: Yes.

Hon. E. David Burt: Okay, thank you.

BILL

THIRD READING

APPROPRIATION ACT 2019

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move that the Bill entitled the Appropriation Act 2019 be now read the third time by its title only.

The Speaker: Any objections to that?
No objections.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the Appropriation Act 2019 do now pass.

The Speaker: Are there any objections?
No objections.
So moved. It is passed.

[Motion carried: The Appropriation Act 2019 was read a third time and passed.]

MESSAGE TO THE SENATE

APPROPRIATION ACT 2019

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the following message be sent to the Senate:

"To the Honourable President and Members of the Senate: The House of Assembly has the honour to forward herewith the undernoted Bill for the concurrence of your House, the Appropriation Act 2019. Copies of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 2019/20 are also forwarded for the information of your House."

The Speaker: Thank you, Premier.

That brings us to a conclusion of the annual budget debate. We now move on to the other Orders of today, and I believe that there are two items that are going to be dealt with today, but I understand that you would like to do the [Order] No. 7 first, instead of [Order] No. 3. Is that correct?

So, [Order] No. 7 is the second reading of the Dental Practitioners Amendment Act 2019 in the name of the Minister of Health.

Minister.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 29(1)

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

Mr. Speaker, I move that Standing Order 29(1) be suspended to enable the House to proceed with the second reading of the Bill entitled the Dental Practitioners Amendment Act 2019.

The Speaker: Are there any objections to that?
There appear to be none.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 29(1) suspended.]

BILL**SECOND READING****DENTAL PRACTITIONERS AMENDMENT ACT 2019**

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

I stand before this Honourable House this evening to present the Bill entitled the Dental 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 Dental Practitioners Act 1950 is the legislation that guides the regulation of dentists, dental hygienists and dental technicians. The Bermuda Dental Board is the regulatory authority charged with ensuring high standards of professional competence and conduct for the dental profession and to advise the Ministry on issues pertaining to them. Accordingly, the Board and the Ministry's efforts to advance standards for professional practice are ongoing.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill entitled the Dental Practitioners Amendment Act 2019 proposes to improve the regulation of dentists by making explicit provision for appropriate indemnity insurance coverage and registering dentists for special procedures.

Mr. Speaker, the Board has registration criteria that sets forth what is required to satisfy an application for registration as a dentist. Required documentation includes those documents that attest to the education, professional qualifications, experience and character of an applicant. Additionally, the Board requires proof of indemnity insurance coverage for practice as a dentist and this requirement is currently outlined in the standards for the profession in their statement of conduct.

Mr. Speaker, indemnity insurance is a best practice standard for health care professionals, and it serves to protect the practitioners and the public from claims of negligence and malpractice. The Bill will update the Act and make indemnity coverage an expressed legal requirement for dentists. Most recently, this requirement was established in the Psychological Practitioners Act 2018. The proposed amendment for indemnity insurance coverage will not require any additional change to current practice because dentists already have a requirement for indemnity insurance coverage through established standards for their profession.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill clarifies that the statement of conduct prepared by the Board includes standards for ethical conduct, standards of practice, and scopes of practice for the dental profession. This amendment aligns the Act with the Ministry's other legislation for health professionals.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill proposes that the Board has authority to register dentists for specified procedures and to enter these qualifications on the Regis-

ter. The Board has identified, Mr. Speaker, several procedures that require additional oversight in order to maintain high standards of professional competence and conduct. These specific procedures include dental implants and restorations, sedation, sleep medicine, and cosmetic procedures involving Botox and dermal filler injections. Some of these procedures carry an increased level of risk for patients that may require an increase in the level of indemnity insurance coverage. Additionally, the Board needs to assure that dentists have received adequate education, training and continuing education to perform these procedures.

Mr. Speaker, the Board has best practice standards drafted for each of these specified procedures that I have just mentioned, including the statement of conduct for dentists, and it is important to note that the proposal for the addition of standards will undergo consultation with the dental profession. This consultation process allows the Board to receive feedback and set reasonable and realistic timelines for compliance. Dentists who plan to perform or are currently performing these specified procedures will be given the opportunity to be a part of the discussion before they are held to any new standards.

Overall, Mr. Speaker, the Bill entitled the Dental Practitioners Amendment Act 2019 ensures that the Board can continue to uphold high standards of professional competence and conduct, essentially safeguarding matters for public health.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

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

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

Mr. Speaker, we have no objection to this Bill. I just wanted to point out, by way of general debate, that, very clearly, professional standards and protection of the public are tantamount in our responsibility to ensure that the public is safeguarded.

I noted as the Minister gave her brief that it will now be mandatory for malpractice insurance to be held by dentists such that the indemnity arrangements and the appropriate cover ensure that anybody practising dentistry will be able to have that coverage. So, very clearly, we want to ensure that our people are protected.

I had to say that during the Minister's brief, she mentioned some of the cosmetic things that dentists are permitted to do under their present codes of conduct. And I have to say that it was quite surprising to me to hear that dentists can actually administer Botox. It just does not seem to me to be a synergistic relationship. But with that being said, presumably the

necessary education and underlying training is a prerequisite in order for them to get that necessary permission in order to do so. But it just seemed like a strange bedfellow here, Mr. Speaker.

But, with that said, we have no objection to the, you know, for the approval of this particular Bill.

Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable . . . we recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 19. Honourable Member Atherden, you have the floor.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister, I just wondered . . . there is an indication that there will be consultation with the persons, with respect to specialised people who will be, if you will, just being specialised practitioners. And there is an indication that there would be consultation with those persons already practicing these particular specialised items. And I just wondered who will make the decision as to whether a person will go forward to continue to be a specialised dentist, and on what basis will they decide that a person who is already doing it might or might not be able to continue?

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

No other Honourable Member?
Minister?

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Honourable Members for their comments.

With respect to the question that was asked just recently by the Honourable Member from [constituency] 19, as I indicated, the Dental Board actually will be consulting with the dentists that are providing those types of procedures right now, and that they will be looking to identify special requirements as it relates to academic requirements, continuing education requirements and the like. That consultation process will take place with all of the dentists, but the first, I guess, tranche of consultation is with the dentists that are currently performing the Botox and the implants. So, there is heavy consultation.

In addition to that, those four areas that I note, the Botox, implants, those particular areas that I spoke about, the standards are already addressing that. But in furtherance to that . . . because section 12B speaks to the standards already, which I will speak about in a moment because that addresses another question concerning indemnity insurance. However, the Dental Board will continue . . . the consultations have already commenced, and they will continue with consultation, particularly with the individual dentists that are providing those particular [procedures], dental implants, restorations, sedations, and

cosmetic procedures as well. And the procedures will also require that they have indemnity insurance.

I know you have a question, but just to answer the other question . . . I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, just to make it clear to Members and the public as well, currently they do have to carry indemnity insurance. But it is under their standards pursuant to section 12B of the substantive legislation. But like other practitioners, we wish to add like we did for the Psychologists Practitioners Act, the recent amendments, we want the substantive Act to have a requirement that they carry indemnity insurance as opposed to being referenced in their standards in the Act.

So, they do have to have it now, but it is part of their standards pursuant to section 12B. But we want the Act . . . this amendment will say in the body of the Act that they must have a requirement for providing indemnity insurance.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

No, no, no, just a minute . . . we are in the House. You want to move it to Committee, Honourable Member.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Minister, you got to move us to Committee before anybody else can respond!

[Laughter]

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Mr. Speaker, I would move that the Bill entitled the Dental Practitioners Amendment Act 2019 be now read a second time and be committed.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Deputy?

House in Committee at 6:09 pm

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

COMMITTEE ON BILL

DENTAL PRACTITIONERS AMENDMENT ACT 2019

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

Minister, you have the floor.

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

I would like to move all eight clauses, please.

The Chairman: Continue.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Mr. Chairman, this Bill seeks to amend the Dental Practitioners Act 1950 to make appropriate indemnity insurance an express requirement of registration as a dental practitioner and would also give the Bermuda Dental Board express power to impose on dental practitioners additional registration requirements in respect of specified procedures where it believes that this is necessary to safeguard the health of patients.

Clause 1 provides a citation for the Bill.

Clause 2 inserts definitions and expressions used in the new section 6A (indemnity arrangements) and 7AA (registration in respect of specified procedure).

Clause 3 inserts section 6A in the principal Act, which provides for mandatory malpractice insurance. It defines “indemnity arrangements” and “appropriate cover” and provides that a registered dental practitioner who is practicing dentistry in Bermuda shall have in force in relation to him or her an indemnity arrangement which provides appropriate cover for practising as such.

Clause 4 amends section 7 to make it clear that documents evidencing indemnity arrangements and, where applicable, suitability to carry out specified procedures must be submitted with an application for registration.

Clause 5 provides that, after consultation with registered dental practitioners, the Board may specify a procedure (a “specified procedure”)—namely, a specified procedure—that shall not be carried out by any registered dental practitioner after a day that is set by the Board unless the practitioner meets the standards and requirements of the Board in respect of that particular procedure, if the Board believes that such standards and requirements are necessary to safeguard the health of patients. And it also provides for registration in respect of specified procedures.

Clause 6 amends section 7A to make it clear that documents evidencing indemnity arrangements must be submitted with an application for re-registration.

Clause 7 amends section 12B to make it clear that a statement of conduct under that section may contain guides to ethical conduct, standards of practice or scopes of practice.

And clause 8 is a consequential amendment to the Dental Practitioners (Registration) Regulations 1950 to provide for registration of a specified procedure to be entered in the register.

The Chairman: Are there any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Pat Gordon-Pamplin.

Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Chairman, as I said while we were in the debate of the whole, we have no objection to this Bill. But I just had one quick question and that is in respect of clause 5 on page 3, when it speaks to registration in respect of specified procedures, that this registration is required.

Is it going to be necessary for the practitioner to display their licence to do certain procedures as one would do in certain circumstances, or is it just implied based on the fact that their licence is current?

The Chairman: Any further speakers? The Chair recognises the Honourable Member, Mrs. Atherden.

You have the floor, Mrs. Atherden.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

This is also getting, I guess in terms of [clause] 5, and it comes down to [clause] 6, in terms of the indication that a practitioner shall not carry out a procedure unless he meets the standards in respect of the procedure, and I do not see anything in here that indicates how the Board is going to make sure that the procedure is . . . that the person meets the [standard], and I do not see anything that indicates if the person does not meet it and is aggrieved, how they would, how the Board would be able to stop them.

Thank you.

The Chairman: Minister?

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

Mr. Chairman, with respect to the last question, just for clarity, the Dental Board will actually be the one that will make the decision as to what are the qualifications required for providing the specialised procedures. And the Dental Practitioners Act, similar to other pieces of legislation that speak to the 28 or so professional boards that come under the Ministry of Health, also have the professional conduct committees provisions as well. So, if a person is aggrieved by a decision that the Board has made against their licence, their practice, et cetera, then they have the appeal processes that are contained within the professional conduct committee’s provisions.

In addition to that, Mr. Chairman, as it relates to the licence itself, the licence will lay out the parameters of what that particular dental practitioner is able to practice. So . . . I am not speaking to you, of course, but if somebody wanted Botox, and they went to the dentist and their dentist did not provide it in their licence, then they may shop around and go to somebody that has the licence listed to say that they are allowed to provide Botox.

The Chairman: Mrs. Atherden, did you get the answer that you required?

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Yes.

The Chairman: Okay.

Hon. Jeanne J. Atherden: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: All right. Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I just needed clarity to say if the licence itself was required to be displayed with respect to its conditions. So, one could have a licence but, like an elevator, you go in the elevator it says my licence can be seen in the head office or something. Does it have to be displayed at the point of service or in the office?

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Yes, the licence does have to be displayed publicly so that the persons that are coming in to the facilities can see the licence.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?
There appear to be none. Minister, you want to move these clauses?

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
I would like to move . . .

The Chairman: Clauses 1 through 8.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: —clauses 1 through 8 be approved and stand as part of the Bill.

The Chairman: It has been moved that clauses 1 through 8 be approved. Any objections to that? There appear to be none.
Minister?

[Motion carried: Clauses 1 through 8 passed.]

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman.
I 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: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Bill be reported to the House as printed.

The Chairman: It has been moved that the Bill be reported to the House as printed.
Are there any objections to that?
There appear to be none.
Approved. The Bill be reported to the House.

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

House resumed at 6:18 pm

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

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

DENTAL PRACTITIONERS AMENDMENT ACT 2019

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

No objections. So moved.

That now brings us on to the next Order for today and that is Order No. 3, which is the second reading of the Land Title Amendment Act 2019—

An Hon. Member: Land title? Land tax?

The Speaker: Land Tax—Land Tax Amendment Act 2019 in the name of the Minister of Finance, and I believe the Junior Minister—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes

The Speaker: Junior Minister.

BILL

SECOND READING

LAND TAX AMENDMENT ACT 2019

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

Mr. Speaker, with the Governor's recommendation I move that the Bill entitled Land Tax Amendment Act 2019 be now read the second time.

The Speaker: Any objections?

No objections.

Continue on, Junior Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am sure I am going to hear Mr. and Mrs. Smith—

[Laughter]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: —come up in this discussion. Honourable Member did not hear me on that side.

The Speaker: Continue on. Continue on.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Speaker, the Bill now before the House is the Land Tax Amendment Act 2019. This Bill provides for revised land tax rates for various annual rental value (ARV) bands.

Mr. Speaker, land tax is charged under the authority of the Land Valuation and Tax Act 1967 and the Land Tax Act 1967. It is assessed on the annual rental value of each valuation unit depending on whether the unit is a private dwelling or a commercial property. The Tax Commissioner's land tax officer calculates the amount of land tax charged on all valuation units and demand notes are issued to taxpayers half-yearly. The amount of tax is determined by multiplying the ARV by the appropriate tax rates. Annual rental values are established every five years and are updated periodically to reflect improvements to property. The owner of each valuation unit is liable for tax.

Mr. Speaker, private dwelling units are taxed on an extremely progressive scale of tax rates. Let me emphasise that again: Private dwelling units are taxed on an extremely progressive scale of tax rates. There are seven annual rental value bands with a minimum rate of 0.8 per cent and a maximum rate of 47 per cent. Bermudians who are 65 years or over, who own and occupy a private dwelling are exempted from tax on the first \$45,500 of the annual rental value. Commercial properties are currently taxed on the single rate of tax at 12 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, the progressive rate structure for private dwellings is heavily skewed to higher value properties, making the property tax highly sensitive to reassessments in value. To illustrate the tax structure is heavily skewed. The assessed value of properties up to \$44,000 ARV accounts for 84 per cent of the tax base—84 per cent of the tax base, but only 18 per cent of the tax revenue—while properties at the higher band, which is roughly 1.6 per cent of the properties, account for 43 per cent of the taxes collected.

An Hon. Member: [Is that] 16 per cent? Or was it 6 [per cent]?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: No. It is 1.6 per cent of the properties, of those properties. I can answer that in Committee if you want me to.

Mr. Speaker, currently, the land taxes range from \$28.80 per year—per year, divide that by 12, two dollars—something a month—to \$228,720 per year (Thank God that is not my house, Mr. Speaker), further illustrating the highly progressive nature of the system.

Mr. Speaker, in the report presented to the Government, the Tax Reform Commission recommended that the land tax structure for residential property should be amended by levying a flat rate of \$500. You will recall that the Reform Commission was made up of Members, myself on this side and Honourable Member Jeanne Atherden on their side. We had suggested a minimum of \$500 for an ARV under \$22,000. This procedure would replace the bands under \$22,000 with a flat \$500 rate which would have provided for a more equitable distribution of the land tax burden. The view of the Tax Reform Commission

was that the existing rate structure is not fairly weighted. It is clear from this proposal that the TRC considered that the tax rates for the two lowest bands were too low. An important principle in any tax system is the ability to pay and from this proposal, it appears that the TRC are of the view that persons owning properties of \$22,000 or less could afford to pay \$500.00 per year, or \$41.66 per month for their properties. The TRC expect that this proposal for a residential tax rate reform to yield an increase in revenue of approximately \$8 million, before seniors' exemptions.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members will recall the TRC also proposed a tax on residential rents, which would have yielded \$26 million. During the pre-budget consultation process, the Ministry carefully considered all land tax proposals and it was announced in the 2019/20 National Budget that Government would be amending the land tax rate structure for residential properties to generate additional revenue. The proposal is as follows:

- All properties with an ARV of one dollar to \$22,000 will pay a flat rate of \$300.
- All properties with an ARV above \$22,000 pay a flat rate of \$300, plus the rates below.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, if it is over \$22,000, then the tax band . . . and it is going to be hard to explain because people will not be able to see it. But, there is a variation of tax rates from 0.8 per cent up to 50 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, this proposal will yield an additional \$12.6 million in land tax revenue per annum. And, Mr. Speaker, I thought it was important that at least Honourable Members would be able to see . . . if you see this graph here, that the graph—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: If they can see the graph, the Honourable Members will see that the high bands pay the most taxes.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes, I will lay it on there so Members can see it if they want to. The lower bands pay very little land tax. You can see that. So, I will put that on the table so people can see it.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: The maximum dollar exemption afforded to seniors under the new rate structure, which will be effective July 1st, is \$1,941 per annum. So, the seniors will get \$1,941 [exemption] per annum on that, which is roughly \$45,400 ARV.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is that to maintain government services at a reasonable level and to avoid financial failure, the Government needs to in-

crease revenue. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Finance is confident that this approach will provide the government with additional revenue from land tax.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me just read this part out so Members can see it:

- The first band runs from zero to \$11,000, the government will collect roughly \$617,000.
- The second band, 11,001 to \$22,000, they will collect roughly \$4 million—\$4,130,400.
- The third band, which is \$22,001 to \$33,000, they will collect \$5,822,777.
- The fourth band, which is \$33,001 to \$44,000, the government will collect \$4,226,623.
- The fifth band, which is \$44,001 to \$90,000, the government will collect \$17,162,158.
- The sixth band, which is \$90,001 to \$120,000, the government will collect \$7,162,350.

Here is the striking thing, Mr. Speaker, the seventh band, which is approximately about . . . and I can give this list to you also, Mr. Speaker.

- The seventh band, which is only roughly 400 homes in that band, will collect \$21,052,970.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Right. That is 420 . . . roughly 420 homes.

And this is interesting, if you look at the graph here, this is studio, one bedroom, two bedroom, three bedroom, four bedroom, and these are the small bands—400 [homes] right here. Those two bands alone collect roughly \$29 million. That is why the graph goes up there in the revenue. When we talk about progressive land tax, it is progressive.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Amounting to roughly about just over 400 homes, also. And that is one of your homes is it not, Cole? So, you are in that top league, Cole.

Mr. N. H. Cole Simons: Misleading the House, Mr. Speaker.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Make sure you're factual, now.

[Laughter]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I know factual. He knows it.

The Speaker: Make sure you are factual.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: There may have been some misunderstanding among the public relating to these new land tax rates.

Mr. Speaker, in regard to commercial land tax, Honourable Members are aware that in the 2018/19

budget, as a temporary measure, land tax rates on commercial properties were increased by 5 per cent, which raised an additional \$15 million in land tax revenues. This provision will expire on June 30, 2019, and the legislation provides for the rates to revert back to the 7.0 per cent. It is now proposed to amend the land tax on commercial properties from 7 [per cent] to 9.5 per cent, and the land tax on tourist properties will go from 7.0 per cent to 8.0 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, Government has always maintained that everyone in Bermuda needs to do their part in helping to pay off the deficit. Therefore, the primary purpose of this Bill is to amend the land tax rates to ensure additional revenue to the government so that this Government can continue to do the work the people elected us to do, which is to provide a better and fairer Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, just before I close, I will just give you some more data so Members can be aware of it.

In the first band, Mr. Speaker, which is roughly about 2,000 homes, zero to \$11,000 ARV (there are roughly 2,000). The average person paid about \$25 per month. In the second band, which is one-bedroom apartments, roughly, it is just under 14,000 in that group, and they pay on average about \$25 per month.

Interestingly enough, most of the people that rent are between studio/one-bedrooms and some two-bedrooms. In the two-bedrooms, there are just under 8,000 rental units, and the average person paid roughly, in that bracket, \$63 a month. And again, in the \$33,000 to \$44,000, roughly under 4,000 homes, they paid on average \$107 per month.

The \$44,001 to \$90,000 (this is in Cole's bracket), paid on average \$365 per month. And the \$90,001 to \$120,000 paid on average \$1,136 per month. And the \$120,000-plus, on average they paid \$3,540 [per month], although they said the highest land tax in their bracket is just about \$240,000 for the year.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, Honourable Members are advised that the land tax valuation department is in the process of conducting the quinquennial revaluation of land, which is due to go on deposit 31st of March 2020 and will come into effect on January 1, 2021. During this process, the Ministry will have to make further adjustments to rates to maintain levels of tax collecting. Also during this time, the Ministry will look to transition the land tax structure so that it is less susceptible to large changes in valuation.

With these introductory remarks, Mr. Speaker, I now ask Honourable Members from that side if they have anything to say. Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Junior Minister.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the Junior Minister in his remarks indicated that Government's responsibility is to increase revenue in order to be able to provide services to the taxpayers, which they demand. What the Minister has failed to say . . . and persistently throughout the course of this financial season we have not heard about our Government's responsibility to trim its sails, to cut its costs. And the minute we say cut costs, Mr. Speaker, we hear people jumping up and down saying show us whose paycheque you want to slash.

And I say again, Mr. Speaker, that with effective and progressive thinking in terms of how a Government can cut its costs, it does not automatically follow that Mr. or Mrs. Smith has to go home without a paycheque. We have smart minds in this Honourable place. And I do believe that we can determine how to cut costs without putting people out of work. So, that is said.

Mr. Speaker, we have the quinquennial revaluation process for which the initial review will go on deposit on the 31st of March of 2020. And that will give individuals the opportunity during that process to be able to have a look at the valuation that has been applied to their particular property to determine whether it is appropriate, given the circumstances of the amenities that they have, the location in which their property exists, and various reasons that they might decide, or they may determine that they might want for the Land Valuation Department to have a second look.

So, we understand. It is important for the public to understand that the deposit of the quinquennial review revaluation process is an integral part of their responsibility to ensure that they are being fairly represented, because once that review is completed, there is little chance that the department will have the ability to go back and change anything if somebody believes that they are being hard done by in respect of the amount of tax to which they have been ascribed.

Mr. Speaker, the Junior Minister also indicated that the commercial rents had an increase that was temporarily in effect, and that it was going to go down, or that that increase expires at . . . I believe he said March—

An Hon. Member: June.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: I am sorry, June 30th. The increase expires at June 30th. So, it should revert back to where it was before, but they are going to put it up a little bit, in the commercial rent space.

And I think that most of us have an appreciation that to the extent that commercial owners may have a better stream of revenue, we can almost understand that if you are going to tax the commercial sector, you would tax those people. If you are going to

tax any sector, you are going to tax those people who have a better stream of income.

But as I warned a few days ago, in another segmental debate, to the extent that commercial owners have their costs increased, it follows, just as sure as night follows day, that those increased costs are going to be passed on to the tenants and, ultimately, if the tenant is in a retail public environment, those costs will ultimately be passed on to the consumer.

I cannot stress that enough, Mr. Speaker, because as we have seen little bits of taxation added on to another, added on to another, added on to another, collectively it starts to add up to real money. And that real money impacts, Mr. Speaker, when people at the struggling end of the economy just do not have the revenue to be able to support the consistent increases—small increments, as the Government would have you believe. But every small increment adds on to the next small incremental onto the next small increment and, ultimately, it becomes a fairly large increase. And it is costing the struggling taxpayer more and more and more because we have not seen any pay cuts.

Now, in respect of this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker, the Minister indicated that 84 per cent of the houses reside in bands one through four, which are contributing by way of the aggregate only 18 per cent of the amount of revenue.

He then said 1.6 per cent of the other houses fall in the other bands. So, I would ask the Minister to confirm—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Point of order—

The Speaker: Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes, the Honourable Member . . . the first part was right; but it was the last band that was 1.6 [per cent]. Not the rest of them as she said.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Ah. Okay.

The Speaker: Thank you. Was that helpful for you, Member?

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes—

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: That is helpful, because I wondered when the Minister was speaking when he said 84 per cent . . . I said you mean 16 per cent being the rest? Because I thought when he said the rest, I thought he meant all of the rest other than the first four bands.

So if, at the top end, band seven of \$120,000 ARV and above . . . and the Minister indicated that

there were only 400 houses in that band. But those 400 houses actually accounted for \$21 million of the land tax. So one can see that, yes, it is progressive. And, presumably, if there is someone who can afford a house that is in that range of \$120,000 ARV, then the amount of the billing that they might have for their land tax is not something that the average person, that somebody like me, would be overly concerned about in terms of, *Do I have the money, to meet this bill?* when it comes every six months.

But it is critical to say, Mr. Speaker . . . as we get into Committee we will be able to discuss it a little bit more. But if I go back to the Budget Book, the Budget Book had indicated that there was a base charge on every single band of \$300. And that kind of gave cause for a little bit of mathematic confusion, because it just did not seem to tie in with what the Minister was intending. So, what was listed in the Budget Book was wrong in terms of the Schedule, but it seems to have been corrected in the actual Bill that we are debating today.

But one of the things that gave me cause for concern, Mr. Speaker, in this Bill is when your valuation unit is in excess of \$22,000, which is, you know, we are sort of in a band, . . . well, for bands one and two the Budget Book had indicated a base charge of \$300 all the way down the line.

But it would seem to me that if we are in this particular situation in which we have \$22,000 being the amount for which there will be a \$300 charge, which the Minister included in his brief, that this \$300 base charge ought to become *the base*, and I am not sure that I am understanding why people whose houses go over that next level ultimately appear to be paying twice by having a specific percentage appended to bands one and two, and that is giving an amount that they would have to pay for band one, band two, and the Bill that we have now is saying as well as the base rate of \$300. So, it seems as though they are paying twice.

Now, in the Budget Book, Mr. Speaker, the proposed tax rate for bands one and two were listed as zero in terms of the proposed tax rate, with a base charge of \$300. But according to the legislation that we have bands one and two have a 0.8 [per cent] and a 1.8 per cent rate of tax, as well as the \$300. So, I am not sure if that is what the Government intended. It would seem to me that the Government would have intended to have no additional tax other than the flat \$300 on the first two bands, and then the progressive calculations on the other bands as we go higher.

So, I would be curious to hear, you know, how the Government is intending to resolve this. But I will end where I began, Mr. Speaker. The Government's responsibility is not only to raise revenue. The Government also has a responsibility to show that it can expend the revenue that it raises from the taxpayers in a responsible way. And we cannot, Mr. Speaker, have to find ourselves in a situation where we are

raising extra money, extra money, extra money, extra money, and paying extra consultants, extra consultants, extra consultants, extra consultants, and the man on the street has got to pay for it. And he is now struggling because his land tax is going up over and over and over again, little bit by little bit by little bit.

Mr. Speaker, it is Chinese torture. It is a drip of water being dropped in the same place over a consistent and persistent period of time, and it is bound to make an indentation. We must realise that with this process, one day our taxpayer is going to break.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak?

We recognise the Honourable Member from constituency 22. Honourable Member, you have the floor.

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

I recall when changes to land tax were implemented by the previous Government; there was a considerable amount of confusion. And because the Honourable Junior Minister pointed out to the House quite recently that I am not an accountant, I hope he permits me a few straightforward questions just to make sure that I have understood what is going on. And, for the benefit of the House and the listening public, I have three questions.

Mr. Speaker, all of these arise from the box that is the chart under [clause] 5 of the Bill, which has the annual rental value bands one to seven, and then an amount of the Annual Rental Value and then a rate of tax. So, that is the chart I am looking at. I know that the Honourable Junior Member has provided two other charts, and I might refer to them in a minute, but I really have three questions and they are these:

Firstly, I have compared the "Rate of Tax" in the right-hand column with the "Rate of Tax" in the existing 1967 Act, as previously amended. And as I understand it, the rate of tax is not going to change at all in bands one, two, three or four. It is going to remain the same. And then in bands five, six and seven, the rate of tax will go up.

Previously in band seven, the rate of tax was 47 per cent; it is going up to 50 per cent. Previously in band six, the rate of tax was 25 per cent; it is going to 30 per cent. And previously, under the Act . . . band five is going from 12 per cent up to 17 per cent. And as I have understood it, that means an increase in percentage terms for band seven of 6.3 per cent; an increase in percentage terms for band six of 20 per cent (25 [per cent] is going to 30 [per cent]); and in band five a 41.6 per cent increase in payments. So, that is my first question, if I have understood that correctly.

The second thing . . . and this was a matter that cropped up previously. What is happening with

bands one and two? If you read the amending language in the Bill up at [clause] 3 (and we will come to that in committee), it seems to suggest that bands one and two pay a base rate of \$300. So, my second question of three questions is this: Do they only pay a base rate of \$300, or does band one pay \$300 plus 0.8 per cent; and does band two pay \$300 plus 1.8 per cent? That is my second question.

And my third and final question . . . I think when the Honourable Junior Minister presented his opening to the House, I think what he said was the land tax increases are going to be \$12.6 million. So, we know that the increased taxes in this budget are \$39 million. Have I correctly understood the Honourable Junior Minister to say of those \$39 million in tax increases, \$12.6 million are land tax increases?

And those are my three questions. I would be grateful for answers for at some point in time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Any further speakers?

No further speakers. Junior Minister?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Let me answer, I believe the second to last question first.

I think you asked, Were bands one and two \$300 only. Yes. So bands one and two will be \$300. Band one will be \$300; band two will be \$300. It changes in band three.

Band three would be—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: No. The \$300—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: No. Band three would be . . . it would probably be best to get in Committee to discuss this type of information.

The Speaker: Okay, well, you can move us to Committee.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Well, let me just say, before I do that, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Members keep on talking about the Government's raise in taxes. I have not seen a Minister of Finance yet that has not raised taxes. And that starts with the former Minister Bob Richards.

We talked about raising [the rate] from 47 per cent to 50 per cent. Do you know that the Honourable Member raised the land tax, the top end, from 23 per cent to 47 per cent? Did you all forget that? The second band he raised from 19 per cent to 25 per cent. Do people forget those things? Is it short memory? Every Government has raised taxes.

And what they failed to share, Mr. Speaker . . . normally the Minister of Finance who speaks for the Opposition would at least come and give his ideas to the country of what they would do. This Opposition has failed—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: —has failed to . . . oh, they are talking about cut.

And what they have not said is what they would cut. We know what they cut. The furlough days . . . would they have gone back to furlough days? You just cannot get up here and just shoot the breeze like, you know, you do not live in the real world.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: You have just . . . you cannot say I am not going to raise taxes.

The Speaker: They are presenting their viewpoint.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: And we understand that, Mr. Speaker. We understand the politics of it. And that is why the Honourable Member keeps on talking about Mr. and Mrs. Smith. Always talking about Mr. and Mrs. Smith. I understand Mr. and Mrs. Smith. Right? My parish if full of Mr. and Mrs. Smiths. But the parishes that some of them live in are in that top bracket, in the top last two brackets, in particular.

So, Mr. Speaker, you know, we understand that at the end of the day, because we clearly have the glide path of what they had planned to do and raise payroll tax on the employee and the employer, taxing labour, once again. We all knew they were going to put the general service tax in place which would increase the cost of doing business in Bermuda.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: The Honourable Member is misleading the House, talking about a glide path. He does not have a crystal ball. What he needs to be doing is talking about what *he* is doing. He cannot say what he *thinks* we were going to do.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Speaker—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Based on history.

The Speaker: You can move us to Committee—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: —so we can go to Committee and discuss the clauses.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: It was not about a crystal ball, because in their last budget they projected their rates. The evidence is there. It is not about any crystal ball. The evidence was there of how they planned to raise their revenue from . . . sorry, if they had won 2018/19 and 2019/20. That is why they talked about balancing the budget on the back of labour and of individuals! It is not about any crystal ball. It was clear. Goods and services would have been increased for the average Bermudian. The payroll tax on the employer . . . so we understand that.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those few remarks, I would love to get into Committee and talk more in detail if they want to.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you. Deputy?

House in Committee at 6:51 pm

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

COMMITTEE ON BILL

LAND TAX AMENDMENT ACT 2019

The Chairman: Honourable Members, we are now in Committee of the whole [House] for further consideration of the Bill entitled [Land Tax Amendment Act 2019](#).

Junior Minister Furbert, you have the floor.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Chairman, I move all clauses. Clauses 1 through—

The Chairman: Four?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Six.

The Chairman: Oh, six, yes. Okay.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Clauses 1 to 6.

The Chairman: Continue.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Chairman, this Bill seeks to amend the rates of tax payable under the Land Tax Act 1967, called “the principal Act.”

Clause 1 is self-explanatory.

Clause 2 amends section 1 of the principal Act (interpretation) to insert a definition of “tourist unit” which excludes vacation rental units as defined by section 15A(1) of the Bermuda Tourism Authority Act 2013, and makes a consequential amendment to subsection (2).

Clause 3 amends section 2 of the principal Act (rates of tax). New paragraph (a) introduces a base rate of \$300—a base rate—to be paid in respect of any valuation unit which is a private dwelling with an annual rental value not exceeding \$22,000. In respect of any valuation unit which is a private dwelling with an annual rental value exceeding \$22,000, new paragraph (b) applies the base rate of \$300 in addition to the percentage of ARV payable in accordance with the rates specified in the table in the Schedule (which is replaced by clause 5). New paragraph (c) modifies the land tax payable in respect of valuation units other than private dwellings from 12 per cent of the ARV of the unit (applied by Land Tax Temporary Amendment Act [2018]) to 8.0 per cent in the case of tourist units, and 9.5 per cent for all other units—that is, commercial units.

Clause 4 inserts new section 2A into the principal Act. This provides for a rate of tax of 7 per cent of the annual rental value of any valuation unit (other than a private dwelling) which is situated in any of the economic empowerment zones [EEZs] designated under section 2A of the Economic Development Act 1968. This maintains the status quo as such units were exempt from the increase from 7 per cent to 12 per cent made by the Land Tax Temporary Amendment Act 2018.

Clause 5 amends the Schedule to the principal Act by replacing the table (land tax on private dwellings) so as to modify the percentage rate of land tax payable in respect of such portion of the annual rental value of a private dwelling unit as falls within each of the seven ARV bands. As provided by clause 3, the percentage rate, in addition to the base rate of \$300, will be payable in respect of private dwellings with an annual rental value exceeding \$22,000.

Clause 6 provides for commencement on 1 July 2019.

The Chairman: Any further speakers? The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Pat Gordon-Pamplin.

Mrs. Pamplin, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Chairman, I want to go to clause 4 . . . well actually clause 3.

Clause 3 [amendment to section 2] (a) says “the base rate of \$300, where the valuation unit is a private dwelling with an annual rental value of the unit not exceeding \$22,000.” So, \$22,000 is effectively

band one and band two. Band one goes up to \$11,000 and band two goes up to the \$22,000.

So, what this is saying (my understanding from what is listed here) is that bands one and two will pay \$300 total. Not \$300 for band one and \$300 for band two, but just \$300 for bands one and two.

The Chairman: Anything up to \$22,000.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: So, up to \$22,000. So, that is \$300.

So, at the moment, if somebody has an ARV at the top end of band one in which the rate is now 0.8 per cent, and he is paying \$88 a year, that \$88 is now going to be \$300. They will go from \$88 a year to \$300 a year. And it just seems that this is an inordinate increase for somebody on the lower end.

We have heard the Government say they want to make sure that they look out for the little guy, and the little guy who just about is struggling to pay his \$88 a year . . . we have to hope that they can reach senior-hood so that that part of it is exempt, because other than that you are going to find people are going to be struggling. It is a lot of money—the difference between \$88 and \$300.

And even on band two, if an individual is in that band, band two would cost them \$198. So that, combined with the \$88, would take them up to \$286. And while it might be okay to say from \$286 to \$300 is not a big leap, but from \$88 to \$300 is quite a leap for somebody who is already struggling and is just about managing in that rate.

The other question that I have is, when it comes to the bands in excess of [\$22,000], it seems as though we are double-dipping, based on how the legislation is worded.

This is in [clause 3, amended section 2] subsection (b), which effectively says that if your unit is in excess of \$22,000, you are going to pay according to the rate specified in the band. So, is the Minister saying that if you are at the \$33,000 mark, you are going to pay 0.8 per cent on band one, 1.8 per cent on band two, 3.5 per cent on band three plus the \$300?

That is what this is saying. And I am not sure that this is what they intended, to double up on the person who is just over the \$22,000 mark and they find themselves having to pay that extra \$300 as well.

The Chairman: Let me let the Minister . . . don't go on any further. Let the Minister answer that—

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Okay.

The Chairman:—so we get very clear on that one.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Okay.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes.

The Chairman: Minister, do you want to elaborate on that a bit?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Well, I thought the Honourable Member just asked a question, were the first two bands \$300, which is correct—zero to \$11,000, the band will be \$300, which is roughly \$0.83 per day.

And let me just say this, Mr. Chairman . . . and I see the Honourable Member Jeanne Atherden, who is missing from this Honourable House, was on the Tax Commission—

The Chairman: Stay tuned to this here.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes, but my point is that it was supposed to be \$500 based on the Tax Reform [Commission] suggestion. And the reason why we suggested \$300 . . . (\$500, so that is why I am getting \$300), the \$500 . . . because the average person who rents a car—

The Chairman: Minister—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: rents a car—

The Chairman: —with due respect.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I know you are—

The Chairman: You are losing us now. Let me try to assist.

At present, somebody with an ARV of \$33,000—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes.

The Chairman: Say, for example, their annual rental value is \$400 a year. That is the present value before this Act.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes.

The Chairman: What they will pay is \$400 per year plus the \$300. Have I got that right?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Yes.

The Chairman: Okay. That is what we need to understand that.

Mrs. Gordon—

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

Mr. Chairman, as I said, I fully understand the higher bands and the higher levels. But this differential at the lower end with having that \$300 minimum band up to \$22,000, plus you are paying on band one another \$88 and on band two another \$198 on top of the \$300 that they are charging you. So, they are charg-

ing you twice for bands one and two when you reach over into band three.

You are paying \$300 plus—

The Chairman: I hear you.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: This says that where the valuation is in excess of \$22,000, in respect of such portion that falls within a band specified in the first column, the rate scheduled in the second column in relation to that band, *plus* the base rate of \$300.

So, that really is saying that if you are . . . to my mind, this is saying that if you are at \$25,000, as an example, you will be paying the 3.5 per cent on that \$11,000 . . . I am sorry, that \$4,000 band (if you are \$25,000), plus the \$300 for bands one and two.

To me, if the Honourable Member says that the . . . if the valuation up to \$22,000 is a flat \$300, over \$22,000 you are going to pay these rates and *not* have the rate of tax of 0.8 [per cent] and 1.8 [per cent], which is the way it was described in the Budget Statement. The Budget Statement indicated that there would be zero per cent on bands one and two—

The Chairman: That was a—

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: —with a \$300 flat.

The Chairman: The way it was laid out in the book was a mistake.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Okay. So, I am just . . . you know, I mean we have to abide by what the Government says they want to do. But I can tell that from the complaints that have come to me—the comments that have been made to me by a person in the street who has to pay and fork up this extra money—it is creating financial hardship. And I just want the Government to let . . . I just want my constituents to know that we have stood in this House to make representations on their behalf, to express our concern with this amount of increase in their land tax.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Any further speakers? The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Mr. Pearman.

You have the floor.

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

The Honourable Junior Minister invited me to speak and put my questions in Committee, and I do so.

I have a question, but it will involve us quickly looking at [clause] 2 of the Bill first and then looking at [clause] 3. And then I will pose the question. But I think it is helpful if I just look at the two [clauses].

At [clause] 2, under subsection (a) of the Bill, we see the definition of “tourist unit.” And I think it is

important just to point out that the definition of “tourist unit”—

The Chairman: Members, I . . . one second.

Members, I would like to hear. We have got chatter from both sides.

Continue, Mr. Pearman.

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

I think it is important just to recognise before I put the question that the definition of “tourist unit,” we can see it expressly excludes vacation rental unit as defined in the Bermuda Tourism Authority Act. So, a tourist unit is a tourist unit, but it is not a vacation rental unit, which is sort of an Airbnb type.

And we see further down at [clause] 2 [amended section] 1(2), at the end of that, “no tourist unit is a private dwelling.” So, there are three different categories of house here. There is private dwelling, tourist unit, and vacation rental.

If we turn over then, Mr. Chairman, to [clause] 3, we then see (a), (b) and (c), and in (c)(i) and (ii) how these various types of dwellings are going to be dealt with—(a) and (b) are straightforward. These are private dwellings. Both (a) and (b) are private dwellings, (a) is those not exceeding [\$22,000]; (b) is those in excess of [\$22,000]. That is easy enough. We park that.

Moving on to (c), we see “subject to section 2A” (and 2A is economic empowerment zone exemptions which do not apply to my question) “in respect to the valuation unit not falling within paragraph (a) or (b)—” (i.e., not a private dwelling) “(i) the rate of 8% of the annual rental value of any tourist unit;” (now, remember we looked at the definition of tourist unit and it did not include rental units, annual rental units), and “(ii), the rate of 9.5 % of the annual rental value of any other unit.”

And my question for the Honourable Junior Minister is this: One would logically presume that the 9.5 per cent rate that applies to “any other unit” can only apply to annual vacation rentals. Have I correctly understood the legislation?

Is it 8.0 per cent of ARV for tourist units and 9.5 per cent of ARV for vacation rental units? Or is there some other type of unit to which the 9.5 per cent will apply?

The Chairman: Minister?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is correct that the tourist unit will be 8.0 per cent. So, he followed me on that one. And I could be wrong, but 9.5 per cent will have to do with the commercial rents.

The Chairman: Mr. Pearman.

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

If that is correct, then given the definition that “tourism unit” expressly excludes vacation rental unit, are we to understand that there is no land tax applicable to vacation rental units, given the Honourable Member’s answer.

The Chairman: Honourable Member—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: No, the vacation rental . . . sorry, the rental value . . . sorry, the ARV . . . the vacation rentals do pay land tax based on the ARV.

The Chairman: Honourable Member, Mr. Pearman.

Mr. Scott Pearman: At what percentage rate do we find from this section will be applicable to vacation rental units if it is not 9.5 per cent at [clause] 3 [amended section 2](c)(ii)?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Okay, so a tourist unit is not a vacation rental unit. That is what the definition says. The definition in 2(a)—and I stand to be corrected by my technical people—that a tourist unit is not a . . . we only considered a vacation rental unit a tourist unit, but does not include vacation rental unit. Okay?

But a vacation rental unit is taxed on the ARV as any other unit is.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Mr. Chairman, if . . . I am sorry.

The Chairman: Let Mr. Pearman complete, if you do not mind.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: No, that is what he said.

Mr. Scott Pearman: I am grateful to the Honourable Member.

So, if I have correctly understood you, then the land tax payable by an annual vacation rental unit would either be under [clause] 3 [amended section 2] (a) or (b) depending on the ARV value of that annual rental unit. Is that correct?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: It could be under . . . it could be run from ARV one to seven, depending on what the . . . it is like a private dwelling. So, there are people in Tucker’s Town that have vacation rental units.

The Chairman: Mrs. Gordon-Pamplin.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, if I could just help the Minister, or the Junior Minister, with this, with respect to vacation rental units such as Airbnb. I will declare an interest because I have one. The rate is 4.5 per cent. It is charged by the Tourism Authority, but it is determined on the rack rate, not the ARV.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairman—

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: So, the property itself—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Point of order, point of order.

The Chairman: What is your point of order, sir?

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: The 4.5 [per cent] has nothing to do with land tax.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: That is what I was just saying. I was just going to say that.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Okay.

The Chairman: Continue.

Hon. Patricia J. Gordon-Pamplin: Yes, that is . . . it is a 4.5 per cent vacation rental tax on the rack rate of the property, not the ARV. The unit itself would be subjected to land tax depending on its annual rental value for the property itself. So, as a vacation rental property, you actually pay two taxes. You pay your land tax based on where you stand on the ARV scale, and then you also pay your vacation rental tax of 4.5 per cent to the BTA based on the rack rate.

I pay it painstakingly, Mr. Chairman. I know.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Point of order.

The Chairman: Minister—

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: The Honourable Member is incorrect. You do not pay . . . the owner does not pay 4.5 per cent. The person who is renting out the unit pays 4.5 per cent. There is no—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: But you said that there is an average rental value plus 4.5 per cent. But it is implied that the owner pays it. The owner does not pay 4.5 per cent.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?

The Chair recognises the Honourable Member Mr. Pearman.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Mr. Chairman, as it happens I happen to have the Bermuda Tourism Authority Act [2013] in front of me. And section 15A . . . it actually says that the proprietor of a vacation rental unit or a holder of a vacation rental or an agent shall pay.

So, respectfully, I think the owner does pay.

The Chairman: Okay, we are not—

Mr. Scott Pearman: Nonetheless, nonetheless, my question is not that.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Chairman: What is your point of order, Member?

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: The Member is misleading the House. The proprietor is the . . . it would be Airbnb.

The Chairman: One second.

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Just—

The Chairman: We are not discussing that. I allowed it, but we are not discussing it. And I understand. I think it has been cleared by the Junior Minister and all those who have spoken.

Continue, sir.

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

Mr. Chairman, my final point, and it was a question that I posed in the debate, was that the Honourable Junior Minister in respect of the tax increases referenced the figure of \$12.6 million. And the question I posed in debate, and I would be grateful for an answer, is that . . . of the \$39 million in increased taxes, is the \$12.6 million reflective of the land tax increases?

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Honourable Junior Minister.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Let me just check the book, but I believe that is the rate for the land tax plus the commercial. Just one minute.

[Pause]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Member, are you referring to A-4? Can you refer to what page . . . you said the Budget Book, right?

Mr. Scott Pearman: No, you opened introducing this Bill and you read out a figure of \$12.6 million of tax increase, and I was just wondering if that is the collective land tax increase. What that number was is what I asked in the debate, and I was told to wait until Committee, and I have done so.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: All right, let me just—

Mr. Scott Pearman: What does that \$12.6 million figure include?

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Residential only.

The Chairman: Any further speakers?
There appear to be none.
Minister, do you want to move—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Whoa. I expected this to be lasting all night.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Chairman: It's raining. I've got to walk home.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: But—

The Chairman: You want to move your Heads *[sic]*.

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Chairman, I move Heads *[sic]* 1 to 6.

The Chairman: It has been moved that—

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Clauses! Clauses 1 to 6.

The Chairman: —clauses 1 to 6 be approved.
Are there any objections to that?
There appear to be none.
Approved.

[Motion carried: Clauses 1 through 6 passed.]

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I 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. Wayne L. Furbert: I move that the Bill be reported to the House as printed.

The Chairman: It has been moved that the Bill be reported to the House as printed.
Are there any objections to that?
There appear to be none. The Bill will be reported to the House as printed.

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

House resumed at 7:13 pm

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

REPORT OF COMMITTEE**LAND TAX AMENDMENT ACT 2019**

The Speaker: Good evening, Members.

Is there any objection to the second reading of the Land . . . sorry, any objections to the Land Tax Amendment Act 2019 being reported to the House as printed?

No objections.

So moved. It has been reported back to the House.

I understand that brings us to a close of the matters on the Order Paper for today. Would you like to do your third readings, Ministers?

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 21

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Mr. Speaker, I move that Standing Order 21 be suspended to enable me to move that the Bill entitled the Dental Practitioners Amendment Act 2019 be now read a third time by its title only.

The Speaker: Any objections?

None.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 21 suspended.]

BILL**THIRD READING****DENTAL PRACTITIONERS AMENDMENT ACT 2019**

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: I move that the Bill do now pass.

The Speaker: Thank you.

[Motion carried: The Dental Practitioners Amendment Act 2019 was read a third time and passed.]

The Speaker: Junior Minister?

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 21

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: Mr. Speaker, I move that Standing Order 21 be suspended to enable me to move that the Bill entitled the Land Tax Amendment Act 2019 be now read the third time by its title only.

The Speaker: Are there any objections?

No objections. So moved.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 21 suspended.]

BILL**THIRD READING****LAND TAX AMENDMENT ACT 2019**

Hon. Wayne L. Furbert: I move that the Bill be now read a third time by its title only.

The Speaker: Thank you, Junior Minister.

[Motion carried: The Land Tax Amendment Act 2019 was read a third time and passed.]

The Speaker: Deputy?

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Walter H. Roban: Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn until Friday the 22nd of March.

The Speaker: March [22], at 10:00 am?

Hon. Walter H. Roban: At 10:00 am.

The Speaker: Any Member wish to speak to that?

No Member wishes to speak to that? We stand adjourned until Friday morning at 10:00 am.

Members, have a good week.

[At 7:15 pm, the House stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Friday, 22 March 2019.]

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