



**2025/26 SESSION
of the
BERMUDA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

10 JULY 2026

*(Sitting number 39 of the 2025/2026 Session)
(pages 3155-3220)*

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

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10 JULY 2026
10:13 AM**

Sitting Number 39 of the 2025/2026 Session

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

The Speaker: Good morning, Members.
The Clerk will now lead us in prayers.

PRAYERS

[Prayers read by Mr. Somner, Clerk]

The Speaker: Good morning.

An Hon. Member: Good morning.

The Speaker: [Good] morning.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: The House is now in session.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

[Minutes of 12 June and 26 June 2026]

The Speaker: Members, the Minutes from the sittings of the 12th of June and the 26th of June have been circulated.

Are there any amendments required?

[No audible response]

The Speaker: No amendments. The Minutes will be printed as confirmed.

[Minutes of 12 June and 26 June 2026 confirmed.]

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR

The Speaker: There are none.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER
OR MEMBER PRESIDING**

APOLOGIES

The Speaker: We have been informed by the following Members that they will be absent today: Minister Lightbourne; Government Whip, MP Tyrrell; MP Famous; MP Wayne Furbert; and MP Michael Fahy all have indicated their absence today.

BERMUDA OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REPORT 2025

The Speaker: Members, I have received the Annual Ombudsman's Report, which covers the period of 1 January to 31 December 2025.

This report is submitted in accordance with section 24(1) and (3) of the Ombudsman Act 2004.

Thank you.

MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE

The Speaker: There are none.

**PAPERS AND OTHER
COMMUNICATIONS TO THE HOUSE**

The Speaker: We have four such Papers today. The first is in the name of the Premier.

Premier.

**SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE (NO. 1) FOR
FINANCIAL YEAR 2026/27**

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

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the powers conferred by section 96 of the Constitution, I have the honour to attach and submit for the consideration of the Honourable House of Assembly the [Supplementary Estimate \(No. 1\) for financial year 2026/27](#).

The Speaker: Thank you.

The second Paper this morning is the name of the Minister of Youth, Social Development and Seniors.

Minister.

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
ANNUAL REPORT 2025**

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of this Honourable House of Assembly the [Human Rights Commission Annual Report 2025](#).

The Speaker: Thank you.

The next [Paper] is in the name of the Minister of Tourism and Transport, Culture and Sport.

Minister.

CIVIL AVIATION (AIR TRANSPORT LICENSING) REGULATIONS 2026

Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of this Honourable House of Assembly the [Civil Aviation \(Air Transport Licensing\) Regulations 2026](#), as made by the Minister responsible for Aviation, in exercise of the powers conferred by section 18 of the Civil Aviation (Air Transport Licensing) Act 2007.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The second [Paper] is also yours, Minister. Would you like to present that one?

TOURISM INVESTMENT (ROSEWOOD BERMUDA) ORDER 2020 REVOCATION NOTICE 2026

Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly the [Tourism Investment \(Rosewood Bermuda\) Order 2020 Revocation Notice 2026](#), as made by the Minister responsible for Tourism, in exercise of the power conferred by section 6A(1) of the Tourism Investment Act 2017.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

That brings us to a close of the Papers and Communications for today.

PETITIONS

The Speaker: There are none.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS AND JUNIOR MINISTERS

The Speaker: This morning we have . . . the first Statement is from the Minister of Youth, Social Development and Sport *[sic]* . . . and Seniors, rather.

Minister, would you like to present your Statement?

FAMILY PRESERVATION TIER II PROGRAMME PROGRESS UPDATE

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Good morning.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to update this Honourable House on the progress of the [Family Preservation Tier II Programme](#) an initiative launched in alignment with Government's 2024 commitment to strengthen supports within the social and youth development sectors.

Mr. Speaker, as part of this commitment, the Department of Child and Family Services was tasked with reintroducing an intensive, community-based model of family intervention, historically known as CMIT [Coordinated Multidisciplinary Intervention Team]. This enhanced model, now formally established as Family Preservation Tier II, operates as a specialised extension of the department's existing Family Preservation Team. Its purpose is clear: to provide acute, high frequency intervention to families whose circumstances place their children at elevated risk of future abuse or neglect.

Mr. Speaker, the need for this programme is grounded in clear and compelling data. Thirty per cent of families served by Family Preservation were assessed as being at high risk for future child abuse or neglect. Family Strengths and Needs Assessments conducted during this period revealed significant concerns in parenting skills, coping skills and mental health, resource management and basic needs, and substance use. Mr. Speaker, these findings mirror broader departmental trends, where parenting capacity and coping skills have consistently emerged as the most significant areas of need among families receiving services.

Mr. Speaker, families with these profiles require intensive intervention, defined by increased frequency of contact, in-home coaching, and community-based support. Research and practice both confirm that when contact increases, assessment accuracy improves, intervention becomes more effective, and the timeframe for reducing risk shortens.

Mr. Speaker, the Tier II programme aims to empower families to overcome adversity by addressing both immediate crises and long-term needs. The model focuses on building resilience, strengthening protective factors, and fostering meaningful community connections. Through direct one-to-one support, in home coaching, and community-based services, the programme provides practical assistance at a grassroots level. Families benefit from strengthened functioning and cohesion, enhanced parenting capacity through education, modelling and coaching, and improved advocacy and access to essential community resources such as housing, financial assistance, health care, education, and employment. The programme is designed to reduce risk factors contributing to child protection involvement and to promote sustainable change, improved coping, and long-term independence.

Mr. Speaker, staff onboarding for Family Preservation Tier II was completed in February 2026. All team members have undergone comprehensive orientation training to ensure they are fully equipped to deliver the level of service required for high-risk families. Training has included Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Families, SCARS, mandatory reporting and investigation skills, legislation training, court report writing, strategies for working with high-risk families, hoarding assessment and intervention, professional

department and standards, activities of daily living, and structured approaches to in-home intervention. Ongoing in-service training will continue as the programme matures, with regular reviews of what is working well and areas requiring improvement.

Mr. Speaker, at present, 10 families have been referred to the Tier II programme from both the Family Preservation and Foster Care teams, with additional referrals currently being processed. Early feedback indicates that families are engaging well with the model and that workers are advancing in building rapport with families to address complex needs through structured, high contact intervention.

Mr. Speaker, the Family Preservation Tier II Programme represents a significant step forward in our commitment to safeguarding Bermuda's children and strengthening families. By investing in intensive, community-based intervention, we are breaking cycles of risk, building resilience, and supporting families in achieving long-term stability and well-being. This Government remains steadfast in its dedication to ensuring that every child in Bermuda is safe, supported, and given the opportunity to thrive.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Members, the next Statement is in the name of the same Minister.

Minister, would you like to continue with your second Statement?

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to submit to this Honourable House the [Annual Report of the Human Rights Commission](#) for the year ending 31 December 2025.

Mr. Speaker, the Commission has a statutory remit to protect and promote human rights under the Human Rights Act 1981. The Commission's mandate involves education, the promotion of principles of equality and non-discrimination, the investigation of alleged contraventions of the Act, and the resolution of complaints of discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, as Bermuda's National Human Rights Institution, the Commission plays an important role in protecting and promoting human rights while supporting the effective implementation of international human rights standards. Guided by the United Nations Paris Principles, the Commission carries out its work through complaint handling, education, outreach, advocacy, policy engagement, and advice to government and stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, the Commission serves both as a complaints-handling authority and as a public resource. Through its officers, the Commission provides guidance to individuals, employers, service providers, land-

lords, educational institutions, community organisations, and the government regarding rights and obligations under Bermuda's human rights framework. The Commission furthers its objectives by

- receiving and assessing complaints of discrimination;
- investigating alleged contraventions of the Human Rights Act;
- providing voluntary mediation services;
- referring appropriate matters to the Human Rights Tribunal;
- conducting education and outreach initiatives;
- participating in policy reviews and consultations;
- providing guidance to support compliance with human rights obligations; and
- promoting understanding of human rights across Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, included in the Annual Report you will note that during the 2025 calendar year, the Commission received 215 intakes, consisting of complaints, queries, and special programme applications, representing a significant increase from the previous reporting year. Of these, 96 were complaints, 118 were queries, and one was for a Special Programme application. The most [commonly] identified protected grounds were sex at 19 per cent, disability at 18 per cent, and ethnic or national origins at 14 per cent. These figures continue to highlight the areas where members of our community most frequently experience concerns about unequal treatment.

Within the protected areas of discrimination identified by complainants, employment-related discrimination accounted for 31 per cent of reported concerns, followed by discrimination relating to goods, facilities and services at 17 per cent, and workplace harassment at 13 per cent. Overall, 70 per cent of intakes concerned employment and workplace-related matters.

The Commission conducted 24 investigations during the reporting period and referred nine matters to the Human Rights Tribunal, demonstrating a continued increase in matters progressing through the Commission's formal complaint-handling process.

Mr. Speaker, a major milestone during the reporting year was the publication of the report entitled "Disability Inclusion in Bermuda: Findings & Recommendations from a National Consultation." This report was informed by extensive consultation with more than 300 residents and was grounded in the principle of *Nothing About Us, Without Us*. The report provides a framework of recommendations to advance disability inclusion in Bermuda and to support implementation of Bermuda's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The consultation revealed that nearly one in two respondents with disabilities reported experiencing discrimination or harassment and highlighted the need

for stronger accessibility, accountability, representation, and coordinated national action.

Mr. Speaker, the Commission also strengthened its public education and outreach efforts during 2025, delivering 71 education, outreach and advocacy activities, including presentations, consultations, workshops, community discussions, and public awareness initiatives. The Commission continued to collaborate with a wide range of organisations, including Ageing and Disability Services, Bermuda Is Love, Beyond Inclusion, Vision Bermuda, the Bermuda National Library, Imagine Bermuda, OUTBermuda, and many other community partners.

The Commission further expanded its public engagement through the formal integration of social media into its communications strategy. Between March and December 2025, the Commission's digital platforms generated more than 194,000 views, reached over 51,600 individuals, and recorded approximately 5,400 interactions, helping to make information on human rights more accessible to the public.

Mr. Speaker, the Commission also represented Bermuda internationally through participation in the Caribbean Disability Network Conference in Barbados under the theme "Breaking Barriers: Advancing Inclusive Education for All Abilities." This engagement strengthened regional collaboration and allowed Bermuda to share lessons learned from its Disability Inclusion Report while contributing to broader discussions on accessibility and disability rights throughout the Caribbean.

The Commission continued its advisory role to Government and stakeholders, participating in approximately 20 policy reviews and consultations on matters including constitutional reform, disability rights, age discrimination, pay transparency, HIV criminalisation, and human rights protections.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Human Rights Commission for its dedication to the advancement of human rights in Bermuda and for stewarding the Commission's mandate with integrity and excellence.

In accordance with section 30A of the Human Rights Act 1981, I am pleased to have laid before this Honourable House the Human Rights Commission Annual Report for the year ending 31 December 2025.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Members, the next Statement this morning is in the name of the Minister of Health.

Minister.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS, IMPLICATIONS ON ACCESS TO OVERSEAS MEDICAL CARE

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address a matter of significant importance affecting Bermudians who require essential medical treatment overseas but find themselves unable to travel because they are subject to [international travel restrictions](#), commonly referred to as "stop lists" which may arise from a variety of circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, while Bermuda provides high-quality health care locally, certain specialised treatments, including advanced cancer care, cardiac interventions, organ transplantation, and complex surgeries, often require referral to specialist institutions overseas. When an individual is prohibited from entering the country where that treatment is available because of a past criminal conviction, the consequences can be profound and may directly affect their health, well-being, and quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, these consequences are not limited to those seeking medical treatment themselves. International travel restrictions may also prevent an individual from accompanying a spouse, parent, child, or other loved one who must travel overseas for urgent or life-saving medical care. For many patients, particularly children, the elderly, or those facing serious illness, the presence of a trusted family member provides essential emotional support, assists with medical decision-making, and helps navigate complex health care systems. Being unable to accompany a loved one during one of the most difficult periods of their life can place additional emotional strain on both the patient and their family and may result in significant practical and financial challenges.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that the public understands the nature of these restrictions. Entry into any foreign country is a privilege and is governed by the laws of that sovereign nation. For example, the United States may refuse entry, in some cases permanently, to individuals whose criminal history renders them inadmissible under US immigration law, including certain controlled substance offences and other criminal offences. These determinations are made solely by US immigration authorities based on an individual's personal circumstances. They are not decisions made by the Government of Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, the public should also be aware that a conviction which is regarded as "spent" under Bermuda's laws may nevertheless continue to be considered by US immigration authorities when determining admissibility. The Government of Bermuda cannot overturn, influence, or intervene in decisions regarding an individual's eligibility to enter another country.

Mr. Speaker, for those affected, there is a process to apply for a travel waiver. However, this is a discretionary process that can take many months, and in some cases more than a year. While an interview may be expedited in exceptional circumstances, the required security and background screening must still be completed. Consequently, a travel waiver should not,

and cannot, be relied upon for urgent or emergency medical travel.

Mr. Speaker, when a patient requiring urgent treatment cannot travel to the destination where the most appropriate care is available, alternative overseas treatment options must be explored. However, arranging treatment in another jurisdiction can result in significant delays, increased logistical complexity, and substantially higher costs, all at a time when timely access to care may be critical. In some circumstances, alternative treatment options may simply not be available within the timeframe required.

Mr. Speaker, this issue serves as a powerful reminder that the choices we make today can have consequences that extend far beyond the immediate moment. A criminal conviction may not only affect employment opportunities, educational prospects, or international travel for business and leisure; it may also limit access to life-saving medical treatment, prevent someone from supporting a loved one during a serious illness, and create barriers at times when family presence matters most.

Mr. Speaker, the decisions made in youth or early [adulthood], often without consideration of their long-term implications, can continue to affect an individual decades later. A single poor decision may have lasting consequences for one's health, family responsibilities, and ability to respond to life's unforeseen challenges. Mr. Speaker, I therefore encourage all residents, and particularly our young people, to carefully consider the long-term consequences of their actions. Protecting one's future means preserving opportunities—not only the opportunity to work, study, and travel, but also the ability to access essential health care when needed and to stand beside those we love during their greatest time of need.

Mr. Speaker, the Government will continue to support residents in accessing medically necessary care wherever possible. However, we must recognise that decisions made by foreign governments regarding entry are beyond Bermuda's control. Protecting one's future ability to travel internationally for health care, family responsibilities, and other important life events is, in many respects, a matter of personal responsibility.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you. Thank you, Minister.

That brings us to a close . . . sorry, I should have turned the page.

Members, we have one more Statement this morning, and that's from the Minister of Economy and Labour.

Minister, you can present your Statement for us, please.

Hon. Jason Hayward: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND BERMUDA JOB CONNECT: ADVANCING BERMUDA'S WORKFORCE

Hon. Jason Hayward: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to provide this Honourable House with an update on [significant workforce development initiatives](#) that continue to strengthen Bermuda's labour market and advance this Government's commitment to creating meaningful opportunities for Bermudians.

These initiatives include the continued implementation of the Youth Employment Strategy through our Summer Employment Programmes and the successful launch and ongoing enhancement of Bermuda Job Connect. These initiatives demonstrate the Government's commitment to ensuring that Bermudians have access to the education, skills, practical experience and employment opportunities necessary to participate fully in Bermuda's economy.

Mr. Speaker, the future strength of Bermuda's economy depends upon the strength of its workforce. For that reason, this Government continues to invest strategically in programmes that prepare Bermudians for employment, support employers in developing local talent, and create sustainable career pathways that respond to both current and emerging labour market needs. During the past quarter, the Department of Workforce Development successfully delivered several significant initiatives while simultaneously relocating its operations to Bermuda College and maintaining uninterrupted services to the public. This level of operational delivery reflects the dedication, professionalism and resilience of the department's staff and our valued partners across both the public and private sectors.

Mr. Speaker, the Youth Employment Strategy remains one of the department's flagship initiatives and continues to play a vital role in preparing Bermuda's young people for successful participation in the workforce. More than a summer employment programme, the Strategy provides structured pathways from education into employment by combining practical work experience, professional development, mentoring and career planning.

Planning for the 2026 Youth Employment Programme commenced months before the first student entered the workplace. Departmental officers coordinated employer recruitment, student registration, application assessments, placement matching, employment contracts, payroll processing, orientation sessions and ongoing engagement with students, parents and employers.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that the department successfully placed 174 students into meaningful work experience opportunities during the 2026 programme. This includes

- 102 college and university students participating in the Summer Employment Programme; and

- 72 high school students participating in the Summer Internship Programme.

These placements were made possible through the continued support of government ministries, public authorities, educational institutions and private-sector employers who remain committed to investing in Bermuda's future workforce. Their willingness to provide mentorship, supervision and practical workplace experience continues to strengthen opportunities for our young people while building the next generation of Bermudian professionals.

Mr. Speaker, the department recognises that meaningful employment begins with meaningful preparation. This year's orientation programme was delivered under the theme "Level Up: From [Participant] to Professional." Students participated in structured sessions designed to prepare them for workplace success through training in

- professionalism;
- workplace expectations;
- effective communication;
- teamwork and collaboration;
- ethics and accountability;
- [personal] branding;
- financial literacy;
- career planning; and
- developing a growth mindset.

These sessions encouraged participants to view themselves not simply as just [summer] employees, but as emerging professionals beginning their career journeys.

Throughout the summer, students have continued to receive career coaching and professional development opportunities designed to reinforce workplace learning and encourage continual personal growth. In partnership with the Office of Youth Affairs, programme participants also attended the National Youth Conference where they engaged in workshops focusing on leadership development, public speaking, civic engagement, innovation, media communication and problem-solving. These experiences complement workplace learning by equipping our young people with the confidence, resilience and transferable skills necessary to thrive throughout their careers.

Mr. Speaker, preparing young Bermudians for the future of work also requires investment in emerging skills. Accordingly, the department expanded its employability training by introducing courses in Artificial Intelligence for [personal] and professional productivity, workplace communication, emotional intelligence and resilience.

Through our partnership with MASC, participants also benefited from practical workshops designed to strengthen workplace readiness, communication, emotional control under pressure and the personal habits necessary to sustain long-term employment. These initiatives reflect the department's commitment to ensuring that Bermuda's workforce is prepared not

only for today's labour market but also for the changing demands of tomorrow's economy.

The success of the Youth Employment Programme demonstrates what can be achieved when government, employers, educators and community partners work collaboratively toward a common objective. Every student placed represents another Bermudian gaining practical experience, developing confidence and taking an important step toward long-term employment and career success.

Mr. Speaker, while investing in Bermuda's youth remains a priority, Government also recognises the importance of modernising how Bermudians connect with employment opportunities throughout every stage of their careers. For that reason, the department successfully launched Bermuda Job Connect on 6 April 2026, replacing the former Bermuda Job Board with a comprehensive digital workforce platform designed to support job seekers, employers, educators and workforce partners through one integrated system.

Unlike its predecessor, Bermuda Job Connect is not simply an online vacancy board. It represents a significant transformation in the delivery of workforce development services, providing career planning tools, employability resources, labour market information, online learning opportunities and enhanced employer recruitment capabilities.

The platform enables individuals to create professional profiles, explore career pathways, access training opportunities and manage employment applications, while employers benefit from improved recruitment tools, organisation profiles, [applicant] management features and workforce data that supports more informed hiring decisions.

Mr. Speaker, the successful implementation of Bermuda Job Connect occurred during one of the department's busiest operational periods. Despite competing priorities, the department successfully delivered this important digital transformation through careful planning, collaboration and an unwavering commitment to public [service].

Recognising that technology alone does not guarantee success, the department invested significant effort in supporting employers and job seekers throughout the transition. The team worked closely with the platform developers to provide employer onboarding, technical assistance, platform demonstrations, workshops and one-on-one consultations. Weekly meetings with developers enabled continuous refinement of the platform and ensured that user feedback informed ongoing system improvements.

Mr. Speaker, early results demonstrate encouraging adoption by Bermuda's workforce and employer community. Since the launch of the new site there have been

- 1,199 users registered on the [platform];
- 80 organisations were successfully onboarded;
- 167 employment opportunities were actively advertised;

- 1,509 job applications were submitted;
- 442 active job seekers were utilising the platform;
- more than 2,600 Career Card views were recorded;
- 130 online learning courses were in progress; and
- users collectively recorded [over] 16,500 hours of employability engagement.

The department will continue to enhance the platform by expanding employer participation, strengthening workforce [analytics], increasing online learning opportunities and further integrating apprenticeship and career development services into one seamless workforce ecosystem.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the director, management team and dedicated staff of the Department of Workforce Development for their professionalism, innovation and commitment to serving the people of Bermuda. I also thank our employer partners, educational institutions, industry representatives and community organisations whose collaboration continues to make these achievements possible.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Members, that brings us to a close of the Statements by Ministers and Junior Ministers for this morning.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The Speaker: There are none.
The next—

[Crosstalk]

The Speaker: We are starting the Question Period now, and I am going to—

[Crosstalk]

PREMIER'S QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: We will do the Premier's Questions now, and the first question this morning is from the Opposition Leader.

Opposition Leader.

Hon. Ben Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning.

The Speaker: Good morning.

QUESTION 1: POPULATION REQUIREMENT FOR BERMUDA'S SUSTAINABILITY

Hon. Ben Smith: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Premier, demographic decline and a shrinking workforce, continued emigration, and a birth rate below replacement level represents Bermuda's greatest long-term challenge. What population does the Government believe Bermuda requires to sustain our economy, health care system, public services, and what measurable strategy has been adopted to achieve this objective?

Hon. E. David Burt: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

In regard to the Opposition Leader's question, I cannot give him a figure off the top of my head. I know that there have been reports on this that were previously done. I think they were tabled in this House and debated in this House, so I would ask the Honourable Member to refer to those reports.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Hon. Ben Smith: Supplementary. Would the Honourable Premier tell us that he does not have a target population for Bermuda to sustain its economy going forward?

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, that's not what I said.

What I said is that we have done reports on this particular matter which have been tabled in this House, and I would ask the Honourable Member to review those reports. He asked me for a figure off the top of my head, and I am not going to give him a figure off the top of my head. There was research, there was work that was done on that, tabled in this House, and debated in this House.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Supplementary or new question?

Hon. Ben Smith: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

So, the Honourable Premier and Finance Minister is not, off the top of his head, able to tell us what population Bermuda needs in order to sustain itself with its economy, considering what the major issue we have with a death rate that is above our population repopulation, and with the emigration that [we are] continuing to have, this has to be one of the major things that he would be thinking about. So, he should have a number that he could at least tell the population and the people in this House.

An Hon. Member: Hmmm.

The Speaker: Been reports done.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I

I am not entirely certain if there was a question in that, but the answer is the same as I gave before. There was . . . the Honourable Member started in re-

gard to a question related to population, et cetera, and all the rest. I had said that the Government has published reports and that those reports were debated in the Honourable House. The Honourable Member can go ahead and refer to that.

The Speaker: Thank you.
New question?

QUESTION 2: ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

Hon. Ben Smith: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Honourable Premier, throughout your premiership you have spoken about economic diversification, yet Bermuda's economy remains overwhelmingly dependent on international business. Can the Honourable Premier tell Bermudians what sector or industry the Government believes will drive Bermuda's economy over the next 20 years outside of international business?

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, the Government debated an entire Economic Development Strategy inside of this Honourable House, and that particular matter was approved by this Honourable House. That Economic Development Strategy lays out five particular pillars, deals with strengthening what we have and expanding what we have, and I will ask the Honourable Member to refer to that document which was debated and passed and approved in this Honourable House.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Hon. Ben Smith: Supplementary. So, would the Honourable Premier tell the House and the people of Bermuda whether he believes that any diversification in our economy has worked under his administration?

Hon. E. David Burt: The answer, Mr. Speaker, is unquestionably yes.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Hon. Ben Smith: Yes, supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, could the Premier give the Honourable House and the public of Bermuda any indication of what that diversification is and what positives that he can speak to, other than international business, [which] continues to be the pillar that is running everything in this country?

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, the growth in financial services and expansion of financial services is important. The Economic Development Strategy speaks to building on what we have and then expanding into other places, Mr. Speaker.

So, let's talk about economic diversification and what has taken place. We now recognise there's a \$100 million project in Southside, recognising from Google from the very beginning—

An Hon. Member: Aah!

Hon. E. David Burt: —where we spoke about the fact that we could have international and a technology part, Mr. Speaker.

On matters related to financial services, the diversification of the financial services landscape, Mr. Speaker, with additional things which are coming which were laid inside of the Economic Development Strategy.

On matters related for tourism, we have the largest tourism investment in this country's history. Significant additional matters that are related to tourism investment orders and investments into the country, Mr. Speaker.

The Economic Development Strategy lays out, we build on what we have, we also go to other sectors, and I think there is demonstrable progress in that. And if the Honourable Member will not accept that a \$100 million investment from Google on technology matters and other things on subsea cables is not diversification, which was clearly stated in the Economic Development Strategy, then I am not entirely certain what qualifies for him.

The Speaker: Third question.

QUESTION 3: BERMUDIAN HOUSEHOLD PURCHASING POWER

Hon. Ben Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Honourable Premier, your Government frequently highlights increases in pension, financial assistance, and other benefits as they increase the safety net that the middle class is falling into. Has the Government measured whether the average Bermudian household has greater purchasing power today than when he first became the Premier?

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, it is clear that wages are rising faster than inflation. That is what we have seen. We have seen median incomes come up. We have seen all the rest. We have seen the measures of which we have taken to increase purchasing power for persons as well. So, it is important to note that over the time period that is what we have seen, Mr. Speaker.

In addition, whether it is from the public sector workers, in addition, whether it is the matters related to the reduction of taxes and making sure persons, the average Bermudian, Mr. Speaker, over the time which we have been in office, have paid \$8,000 less in taxes. That is an average Bermudian. An average family means more than \$15,000 less in taxes than we had when we came into office. We continue to make sure,

whether it is pensions, whether it is boosting income levels for financial assistance, whether it is making sure that we have additional benefits that are available, whether it is expansion of child care, so that persons who are making up to \$130,000 have access to assistance in child care. We have made sure that we have supported persons across the board, Mr. Speaker, and on that we are going to continue to support persons across the board.

An Hon. Member: Minimum wage.

Hon. E. David Burt: Yes, let us not forget the minimum wage and let us not also forget, Mr. Speaker, that we are doing another pension increase today. That is what we are doing, Mr. Speaker. It is about continuing to build on the record that this Government has established.

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.
Supplementary?

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Hon. Ben Smith: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, outside of the people who have the ability to work in international business, the people in Bermuda that the Premier continues to refer to that he is giving more benefits to, are they the ones who are supposed to look at those increases and whether they match the increase in the cost of living? Are they able to say that they can survive better now—

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Hon. Ben Smith: —compared to when the Premier took over—

An Hon. Member: As the leader.

Hon. Ben Smith: —as the leader.

An Hon. Member: Absolutely.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, they left persons with the highest tax burden in history.

An Hon. Member: Aha! Go on!

Hon. E. David Burt: We have cut taxes for working people. We have provided the boost. We provide the assistance. They told seniors that money doesn't grow on trees.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: That's right!

Hon. E. David Burt: We made sure they kept up with the rate of inflation, Mr. Speaker. So, unquestionably,

the record, Mr. Speaker, is better than when we took office.

The Speaker: Thank you.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Second [supplementary]?

Hon. Ben Smith: Second supplementary.

So, Mr. Speaker, I guess the Premier is stating, for the population who are listening, that the benefits that he is giving are making them feel that they are better off today than when it started because the cost of living, the cost of food and electricity and health care, the burdens of everyday people . . . he is saying that his Government has made all of those people feel better over the last eight years.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I could honestly answer this question—

An Hon. Member: Then do.

Hon. E. David Burt: —for the next 22 minutes.

An Hon. Member: Go ahead and do it.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. E. David Burt: I am not going to because I can go through the entire gamut, Mr. Speaker.

So, when we want to talk about compare and contrast, let's start on item number one, the issue of gas prices, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: Come on.

Hon. E. David Burt: What we have been through during our time in office [includes] two major gas spikes. And when that party doubled taxes on gasoline, it was this party's fiscal discipline and management of the budget that enabled us to eliminate the taxes on gasoline and keep it in a price freeze to make sure that people were protected from the pump.

Now, let's go over—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. E. David Burt: Now, the Honourable Member is just sitting there chirping when he knows that it is completely . . . completely not factual.

So, let's go on to electricity prices, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Go on.

Hon. E. David Burt: Let's move on to electricity prices. *[Inaudible interjections]*

An Hon. Member: Going up.

Hon. E. David Burt: Whereas they doubled—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: —doubled—

An Hon. Member: Oh yes!

Hon. E. David Burt: Doubled—

An Hon. Member: It just went up again.

Hon. E. David Burt: —the price, the taxes on gaso-
line—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, they don't want to hear the [answer]. So, when they talk, I will stop until they stop to listen.

An Hon. Member: Oh, I'll speak to that.

The Speaker: Speak to me.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Members, you want to hear . . . you asked a question. You want to hear the answer. We have got to hear the answer.

Continue, Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: So here we are, Mr. Speaker.

So, on the matter related to electricity taxes, the Honourable Members, the honourable party opposite, *doubled* the tax on electricity, Mr. Speaker. This party, through our fiscal discipline, eliminated that tax entirely, Mr. Speaker, making sure that savings were passed on to persons.

I can go on to payroll taxes again to make sure that we recognise that persons who are making under \$132,000 a year are paying less in taxes, meaning that there is more money in their pockets, Mr. Speaker.

Shall we go on to the other matters that are related to assistance for families? I have spoken about child care, Mr. Speaker. I have spoken—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Just talk to me. Go ahead.

Hon. E. David Burt: I am fine, but it is as though—

Hon. E. David Burt: It is as though if they forget the record, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: It is as though they don't want to recognise the particular matters that have been progressed forward, Mr. Speaker. It is so . . . it is amazing.

So, when we talk about these things, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member wants to say that payroll tax changes, that pension increases, that record agreements with public sector workers to boost . . . to go back to historic pay levels which were reduced underneath their term in office, don't matter. But guess what, Mr. Speaker? They do matter. They do matter to the persons in this country.

They do matter to the persons who are working in construction. They do matter to those persons who, who are working in construction, Mr. Speaker, who may be on average salaries, who would have been paying \$8,000 less in taxes in the time that we have been in office than if it was the opposite party, Mr. Speaker.

When you put more money into people's pockets, it gives them more ability to do. And what are we doing otherwise, Mr. Speaker? Record investments in affordable housing, which you have seen from the Honourable Deputy Premier.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. E. David Burt: We are going to continue to expand, Mr. Speaker. We are going to continue to press ahead. And we are able to do this because of our sound management of the budget.

We can go back to the first question that he asked, Mr. Speaker. Because the first question he asked was about economic diversification. We tabled an Economic Recovery Plan. We tabled an Economic Development Strategy.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: We are executing on those particular matters. And, Mr. Speaker, we are continuing to press ahead.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Opposition Leader, you have used all three of your questions. The next Member who indicated they have questions today is MP Weeks.

Would you like to put your question?

QUESTION 1: AFFORDABLE HOUSING, GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO PROVIDE

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning.

Mr. Speaker, few issues matter more to Bermudians than the security of a place to call home. Those of us, like myself, who are out there canvassing receive a lot of calls about housing and [about] how we can assist as Members of Parliament. So, can the Honourable Premier tell this House how this Government is delivering on its commitment to provide affordable housing for the people of Bermuda?

The Speaker: Thank you.
Premier.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for his question. I wish to also take the opportunity to pay tribute to the time in which he served and worked as Minister of National Security, recognising that he can—

[Crosstalk]

Hon. E. David Burt: Are you okay?

—and continues to be a valued Member of the Government benches.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for his question because housing, as we recognise and understand, is not an abstract issue. And for Bermudians to find a safe and stable place to live, whether young families can plan their future, or whether seniors can live and remain secure in their country, what we will recognise, Mr. Speaker . . . And I think it is important to contrast . . . I think it is important to contrast the record of delivery on housing over the last five years. Over the last five years, Mr. Speaker—we can even go longer than that, over the record—

An Hon. Member: Thirty.

Hon. E. David Burt: Oh, the Honourable Member wants to go to 30 years?

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Oh, they want to go to 30 years, Mr. Speaker? They want to talk about Loughlands? They want to talk about Southside? They want to talk about all those other housing developments? We can go back there, Mr. Speaker, because we recognise what they have not done.

But let's go, Mr. Speaker. A few weeks ago—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Talk to the Chair. The listening audience on the radio is waiting to hear your answer.

Continue on.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, the Government outlined a comprehensive multi-site

plan to invest an estimated \$150 million into delivery of 229 residential units across Bermuda. We know that those particular matters are being advanced in addition to that. And we know that we are going to see advanced precast concrete construction that is going to take place, whether or not those are properties in the East End of the Island and also the West End of the Island. But, Mr. Speaker, the reality is that [this] is part of a much wider effort. That is just the latest phase. We know about the significant number of units that are being renovated and brought back into use, whether it be at Harmony [Hall], [or] whether it be in various places.

And in addition to that, Mr. Speaker, this is what is important. This is what is also important, Mr. Speaker. It is important to recognise that it is multifaceted. So, whether or not we are talking about housing for seniors, whether or not we are talking about housing for young people, whether or not we are talking about housing for families, all of these matters are being progressed by the Deputy Premier and the Bermuda Housing Corporation [BHC] to ensure that we can.

The Honourable Deputy Premier said and promised that we are going to put out an Affordable Housing Strategy to make sure we advance those particular matters. We are. And that is what is important, because housing, just as it is in Bermuda, Mr. Speaker, is an issue globally. And from our perspective, we are going to continue to work and make policies that are going to make sure that more housing is available for Bermudians.

The Speaker: [Microphone not on.]

QUESTION 2: AFFORDABLE HOUSING, GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO PROVIDE

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker . . . Thanks for that, Mr. Premier.

Mr. Speaker, can the Honourable Premier advise what this programme will mean specifically for my constituents and families in the central parishes?

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

Mr. Speaker, I can speak on matters related to the central parishes: That we have completed new units at Harmony Terrace [East] and delivered homes in Middle Town as well.

But what I can say, Mr. Speaker, is globally, whether or not it is in the East End of the Island at Tommy Fox Road in St. David's where new homes are being built as part of the first 84-unit phase at Channel House where we are doing retrofitting as well, specifically for senior living. As we know, senior living is a challenge.

And it is important, Mr. Speaker, as you recognise, as you expand housing supply persons can move from one place into something that is more available, which might create additional supply in other places. So

that is also important, Mr. Speaker. At Battery Road, the Chelsea apartments and other places in the east that are also being done are being renovated and brought back to use to families who need them. So, whether it is in the East End of the Island, Mr. Speaker, whether it is the central [area] of the Island, or whether it is the West End of the Island, we are continuing to advance on affordable housing projects under the leadership of the Honourable Deputy Premier.

The Speaker: [Microphone not on.]

QUESTION 3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING, GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO PROVIDE

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Yes, Mr. Speaker, and thank you.

Mr. Speaker, can the Honourable Premier remind this House how this Government's record on delivering homes for Bermudians compares to that of the former administration?

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, can I ask the Honourable Member to repeat his question? There was too much chirping.

The Speaker: Member, could you repeat your question?

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, can the Honourable Premier remind this House how this Government's record on delivering homes for Bermudians compares to that of the former administration?

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Well, Mr. Speaker—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: I . . . I . . . I—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Uh-uh.

[General uproar]

Hon. E. David Burt: I thank the Honourable Member for his question.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, the Honourable [Premier], unfortunately, is misleading the House. He already answered that in the questions before that. He already answered it. He did the comparison as to what he thought we did and what they did.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: He already did it. In addition to that, the Housing Minister has already put that in the public domain and answered the same question—the exact same question. To ask for a reminder is duplicitous.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Well, you are going to hear it right now.

The Speaker: Members, when asking questions, be mindful of the fact that if the information is already in the public domain—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I don't know if it is out there.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: —you are limiting the person who answers to what they can say.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: —I note that the Honourable Member has asked for a comparison, and I think that it is important, Mr. Speaker—

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable [Premier] is misleading the House. I did not ask for a comparison.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I said that the comparison has already been made.

The Speaker: He was talking about the Member who put the question. He—

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: No, no, no. That is all right. That is all right.

[Laughter]

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member has asked for a comparison, and I think it is incredibly appropriate.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: The comparisons are in the public domain because they were provided by comprehensive briefs from the Minister of Housing in prior sittings.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member has asked for a comparison, and when we talk about a comparison in Housing policy from the former Government to this Government, it could not be more stark, Mr. Speaker. It could not be more stark. Because what we have seen, Mr. Speaker, since the pandemic is record investment in affordable housing—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: That's right.

Hon. E. David Burt: —hundreds of units that have been brought online, that have been renovated, persons who are being able to get affordable housing options. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, it is not just where it is talking about house building. Let us not forget, it was this particular Government that not only expanded the capability for Bermudians to get houses through the Mortgage Guarantee Programme,—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Aha!

Hon. E. David Burt: —which has delivered multiple Bermudians being able to own their first home,—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: That's right.

Hon. E. David Burt: —[it] reduced mortgage rates, [and] reduced down payments as well. Those are measures of which this Government has done, Mr. Speaker. And so, it is very interesting to see from a contrast perspective . . . from a contrast perspective, whether it was this Minister of Housing [and Municipalities], whether it was the Minister who had responsibility for Housing before, the investment that has been made

into Bermuda Housing Corporation has been at record levels, which has seen hundreds of units that have been delivered.

What did they deliver when they are in office, Mr. Speaker? They finished one Progressive Labour Party project that they downsized, which they criticise now because they did not downsize any more housing, Mr. Speaker. And then for the rest of their time they delivered not a single affordable home, Mr. Speaker. The record of zero versus the record of hundreds. It is a very appropriate . . . And we will continue to make sure that people in this country recognise and remember which Government is going to deliver affordable housing and is committed to putting the money to do so.

Oh yes, Mr. Speaker, let me not forget, the money for which they cancelled those houses, we still have to pay money for it.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Mr. Speaker, Standing . . . point of order.

The Speaker: Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Imputing improper motive]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Standing Order 19(11)(f), [imputing] improper motive.

The Premier knows that the reason the OBA had to cancel those projects is because they were left with a massive deficit, which they had to borrow money [for] just to pay the civil servants!

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: No!

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: So, they did not want to cancel housing; they wanted to pay the civil servants.

[Inaudible interjections and general uproar]

The Speaker: Okay. Thank you.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Thank you. Thank you. That completed the questions from MP Weeks.

The next question this morning is from the actual Member who just sat down.

MP DeCouto, would you like to put your question now?

QUESTION 1: "CENTRALLY MANGED FUND" PROJECTS TO BE IDENTIFIED AND FUNDED

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Honourable Premier will recall that there is a . . . in the budget [there] was a \$14 million "centrally

managed fund” (quote/unquote) that did not have any specific projects allocated to it or identified. Have any specific projects yet been identified and selected or approved to be funded by those funds?

Thank you.

The Speaker: Premier.

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

To my knowledge, I believe there has been one approval . . . two approvals. One [was] for matters related to entrepreneurship and for the BEDC [Bermuda Economic Development Corporation], advancing the national entrepreneurship policy. And the other one is matters related to artificial intelligence. [I am] happy to get these specific details to the Honourable Member. [I] was planning on discussing those particular matters when we do the [Supplementary Estimates] next week.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

SUPPLEMENTARY

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Yes.

Could the Minister advise what the amounts were and how the amounts were determined and approved?

Thank you.

Hon. E. David Burt: It was amounts that were requested by the particular ministries. I do not have those figures off the top of my head. I do know that out of the total \$14 million, we have not even come close to half or something. But as I said, we are discussing supplementary estimates next week. I was expecting to make sure that those particular details were shared at that particular point in time, but I am happy, happy to get the specific details to the Honourable Member, as matters related to finances, et cetera, are perfectly legitimate matters for scrutiny in this House. And [I] have no issue sharing those.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Sure.

Second supplementary or . . .

[No audible response]

The Speaker: Okay.

The next question this morning is from the Opposition Whip.

Opposition Whip, would you like to put your question?

QUESTION 1: GRAND ATLANTIC NOT AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS

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

Good morning, Premier.

Considering [that] housing is on the docket this morning, would the Premier consider the fact that 79 units were built at Grand Atlantic for residential homes by the PLP Government.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Seventy-nine units were built for residential housing. It has become a basketball of what-should-it-be?

Does the Premier believe that that was a wise investment wasting taxpayers' money to have it for residential, as they talk about building all of these homes, and they had the opportunity to put 79 units in place and to put Bermudians into it? We are now, years later, bringing in housing—

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Mr. W. Lawrence Scott: The Honourable Member is misleading the House by not acknowledging the impact that the OBA had on the project when the Government was trying to move it forward by saying it was going to fall into the ocean, that people should not be able to live there, and then used it for—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Okay. Okay.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: No, no. no.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: That is not a point of order.

The Speaker: No. Settle down.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you very much. I did not even finish the question, and he is trying to finish it for me.

The Speaker: Go ahead. Put your question.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: So, well, now that he said that . . . considering the fact that this PLP Government wasted millions of dollars for residential homing, to then put it into a project for a hotel that blew up like dynamite, to now trying to decide . . . and it is still not full, Mr. Speaker. Could the . . . could the—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I said in this House last week, in my Ministerial Statement, that is 100 per cent full.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Thank you. But [that] was not for low-cost [housing]. It is for people who can afford it.

They built those original homes for people who needed low-cost housing.

An Hon. Member: That's right.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: So, you cannot hide behind the fact that now you are charging \$3,000 for a unit for people, foreigners, who can afford to rent it. So, was that a good investment in the taxpayers' money by the PLP Government?

The Speaker: Okay, that is your question. The question was, was it a good investment?

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, that was possibly the longest question I have ever heard asked in this House.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: It's a record.

[Laughter]

Hon. E. David Burt: And so I am happy to answer the question, Mr. Speaker, because let's look back at the history.

An Hon. Member: Correct.

Hon. E. David Burt: I think it is important to remember the history, because this project that was built was built over the exact same successful model that has delivered a significant amount of affordable housing at Loughlands. Let's remember, it was the exact same model—different property, same developers, same Bermuda Housing Corporation, same things, et cetera. When those properties went up there, Mr. Speaker, it was the One Bermuda Alliance . . . sorry. I think at that point in time was the United Bermuda Party. And then, you know, [it] switched. Maybe it was the BDA [Bermuda Democratic Alliance], and then, you know, morphed into . . . What is it called? You know, so it is all three—the Combined Opposition.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: At that point in time, Mr. Speaker, then said—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Then—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Then said, Mr. Speaker—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Then [they] said, and I quote, as we all know these matters, *These things will fall into the water. They will not be safe.* And so, Mr. Speaker, it is quite rich for those individuals to then wonder why persons did not want to buy houses when they sat there and said they are going to fall into the water.

But let us continue, Mr. Speaker, because it is important to remember that when they became the Government,—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Aha!

Hon. E. David Burt: —and this Member may have actually been—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Remind them.

Hon. E. David Burt: Sorry?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Remind them.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: They then decided that after scaring people so they could not then sell the houses, they decided that they were going to change their project. So that is fine. The project was changed, and it was a—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: It went to America's Cup.

Hon. E. David Burt: But yes . . . But however, yes . . . And that is important to note, Mr. Speaker. It is important to note that the project . . . it would not be safe. But yet they managed to find a way to house America's Cup people—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Oh, yes.

Hon. E. David Burt: —inside of those particular units. I digress, Mr. Speaker. Let us move forward, Mr. Speaker.

So, we get to the political perspective. There is a view trying to make sure that we make the numbers and the figures work, and so there was a view and a proposal to move forward on matters related to the conversion of that particular property to a matter of a hotel

property. [It] went through that. All those things have been spelled out and shared here in this particular Honourable House, debated many points in time. Where we got to is that we said at the end of the day, with the things that were happening, we needed to make another change. The reality is, Mr. Speaker, good governments observe where they have their particular situations and make adjustments where it is necessary.

Here is reality, Mr. Speaker. Number one, the units are fully rented. Number two, they are not all rented at market rates. There are units that are rented at discounted rates for Bermudians who are returning home, which is important, Mr. Speaker, because we are making sure that we use everything at our avenue and disposal to ensure that we will continue to house Bermudians.

So, the Honourable Member has asked a question as to whether or not this made sense. I would say at the very beginning the investment was sound as it was built off the exact same model that delivered significant affordable housing at Loughlands. And if it was not for the sabotage of the Opposition at the time, we would probably not be having this conversation and debate at this time.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: That's right.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Supplemental.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, indeedly.

The Speaker: Yes, you have a supplementary.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes.

The Speaker: Go ahead.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: So then, considering the answer that—

The Speaker: If your question could be a little shorter, we will get a shorter answer.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes. Considering the answer that the Premier has just given, would the Premier consider it to be duplicitous and somewhat hypocritical if he says that the OBA said it was going to fall in the water, after the OBA was Government? They had a second shot at this property, and they continued on to make it a hotel. He is blaming us for making it a hotel, but he continued to make it a hotel. Is it duplicitous that he did not go back to his original design by the PLP

Government to put Bermudians in affordable housing by continuing to put it in a hotel?

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Mr. Speaker, can I have a point of order?

The Speaker: What is your point of order?

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: My point of order is that, just for memory's sake, I was that Minister in 2011.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait.

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Allow me to give the point of order.

The Speaker: Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. I want to hear what the point of order is.

[Inaudible interjections]

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: He is misleading the House, Mr. Speaker. And I have the facts. I was that Minister in 2000—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: No, you don't. I was there. I was there. So, when the PLP returned to power, it was difficult telling our people about the low-cost housing—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order, Mr. Speaker, this is a point of clarification—

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: —because they thought it was going to fall into the water.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: We are not accepting a point of clarification.

The Speaker: Your point of order was that you were the Minister. That is all I got out of that. So, what was the point of order that you were trying to do rather than go to a long statement? I am trying to get a statement.

An Hon. Member: He does not have one.

The Speaker: Okay. You want to—

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: He was misleading the House, Mr. Speaker.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Let the Premier respond. I think the Premier was ready to respond. He got up.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member has asked whether or not the project should have been changed or not changed, Mr. Speaker.

[Timer chimes]

Hon. E. David Burt: The reality is, right now, Bermudians are currently being housed at that property. There are those who are there below market rent. We are using everything at our disposal while also . . . while also, Mr. Speaker,—

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. E. David Burt: —providing record—

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. E. David Burt: —investments in affordable housing across this country.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Members, that brings us to the close of the 30 minutes for the Premier's Question [Period].

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: We will now start the clock at the 60 minutes for the regular questions. And we will begin with the fact that there are written questions. And the written questions are both, some for an oral response and some for a written response. And we will start with the written responses first. And the clock begins.

The first question [for a written response] was from the Opposition Leader to the Minister, to the Minister . . . well, it would have been the Junior Minister at the time, but the Minister of Education sits here now. And I believe you already have the answers.

Hon. Ben Smith: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTIONS: NUMBER OF STUDENTS GRADUATING FROM SENIOR SCHOOLS

Hon. Ben Smith: Will the Junior Minister please provide for this Honourable House, for each graduating class of Government senior schools from June 2022 through June 2026, the number of students in that class who were enrolled in Government schools from the commencement of their first year of primary school?

Hon. Ben Smith: Will the Junior Minister please provide for this Honourable House, for each graduating class of Government senior schools from June 2022 through June 2026, the number

of students in that class who were enrolled in Government schools from the commencement of their first year of middle school?

Hon. Ben Smith: Will the Junior Minister please provide for this Honourable House, for each graduating class of Government senior schools from June 2022 through June 2026, the number of students in that class who were enrolled in Government schools from the commencement of their first year of senior school?

The Speaker: Thank you.

The second question, again, at the time was for the Junior Minister, but now the Minister sits here. And that was from MP Tucker. And that, again, was related to Education. Do you have your written answers?

Ms. Robin Tucker: Yes, Mr. Speaker, thank you.

QUESTIONS: CHILD SUPPORT NEW ELECTRONIC CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Ms. Robin Tucker: Will the Junior Minister please provide for this Honourable House an update on the purchase of the new Electronic Case Management System to support the management of child support payments that was promised in 2024, and the timeline for implementation?

Ms. Robin Tucker: Will the Junior Minister please outline for this Honourable House how the ministry is ensuring timely processing, monitoring and enforcement of child maintenance orders while the new Electronic Case Management System remains outstanding, and what safeguards exist to prevent delays or lapses in payments to parents?

Ms. Robin Tucker: Will the Junior Minister please confirm for this Honourable House whether the new Electronic Case Management System will integrate with other government databases, including the Tax Commissioner, Immigration, and Social Insurance, so that the Ministry can more effectively identify, track, and enforce unpaid child support obligations?

The Speaker: Thank you.

The third question is an oral question, so it will be dealt with here on the floor. And that is from MP King to the Minister.

And, MP King, would you like to put your question now?

[Pause]

The Speaker: MP King stepped out. We will move on.

The next question is, again, an oral question. And that is from MP Linda Smith. And that is to the Minister of Education.

Would you like to put your question now?

Ms. Linda Smith: Yes, I would.

The Speaker: Thank you.

QUESTION 1: DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING ACCESS TO AUTOMATED SERVICES

Ms. Linda Smith: Good morning, Mr. Speaker, and good morning, Members of the House and the listening audience.

My question is, given that much, if not all, of the Department of Planning's public services are automated via its portal, will the Honourable Minister please inform this Honourable House about what the Department of Planning is doing to ensure that its services are fairly accessible to all of the population, particularly our seniors and vulnerable people who cannot easily navigate the department's technology?

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for that question.

I will [preface] this by saying it is not that the department is . . . I think the question said: *What are they starting to do?* This has always been the case with the Department of Planning, and that is the reception front desk is available during regular business hours to answer any questions and assist those who are unfamiliar or have challenges with the department's online system.

The department has always had kiosks in the reception area for officers to assist members of the public with their queries and to demonstrate how to find and submit information online.

Ms. Linda Smith: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Ms. Linda Smith: Yes, I do.

Inaccessibility to access is access denied. Does the Minister agree with that? And if so, for senior citizens and vulnerable and disabled people to make their way into the Department of Planning to ask questions or get general information and quick answers to questions to determine whether or not what they are seeing is a problem and whether there should be some enforcement or something can be done to help them with the predicament that they find themselves in is very difficult. And so, my question is: While other people can access answers to questions via technology, in many cases senior citizens cannot access that because they do not have the abilities to navigate the

technology. But is there anybody who is answering the phone, a hotline, somebody they can talk to? They actually give up because they feel like they cannot get the answers that they need. So that is really the bulk of my question.

Thank you.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: I don't . . . I don't—

The Speaker: Go ahead, Minister.

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

I thought I did answer that by saying the front desk is available to answer questions. The telephone number is a public number, and if you can dial and call in, someone will answer the phone and provide you with the answers. If they wish to come up to the department, they will be assisted in navigating anything they need to find on the computer and shown how that process actually works.

The building that they are in has been recently renovated. It is fully accessible based on the Department of Planning's requirements that all new buildings be accessible. So, anyone can come into that building, whether they are in a wheelchair, whether they are otherwise disabled, get into the elevator, come up to the third floor, and everything they need to find is accessible. If they cannot make it in, they can pick up the phone and call, and they will be assisted by the front desk.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Second supplementary?

Ms. Linda Smith: Yes, I do. And that really is the crux of the matter—accessibility. Because when people call, oftentimes the phone does not get answered—

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, point of order.

Ms. Linda Smith: —and my question is:—

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, point of order.

Ms. Linda Smith: —Is there somebody who is dedicated—

The Speaker: We have got a point of order. We have got a point of order.

Ms. Linda Smith: My question is—

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Point of order.

The Speaker: There is a point of order. You have to take the point of order.

Ms. Linda Smith: Oh.

The Speaker: Yes.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to quote. I cannot quote the exact Standing Order, but the Member is making assumptions that the phones are not answered. She would have to bring proof of that. My team has guaranteed me that the phones do get answered.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Okay.

Members, the Minister is re-emphasising the fact that his team tries their very best to answer every call.

Ms. Linda Smith: I am sure that the team does, but the reality is it does not actually work out that way in many cases.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: For who?

Ms. Linda Smith: And I can tell you I have made efforts to call the Department of Planning on behalf of other people, and I have not been able to get through. So, you know, everybody should be able to get an answer and be heard, and that is not what is happening in reality.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Was there a question?

Ms. Linda Smith: My question is: Does the Minister accept that? And if so, what is going to be done about it?

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

Mr. Speaker, I do not understand. I am trying my very best to figure out what is being asked here. If you call and you do not get an answer, you call back until you get an answer. If 100 people are calling at the same time, obviously, they cannot call . . . They cannot answer 100 people at the identical time. And if you call and you do not get someone, or you leave a message you will get called back. But if you call and you do not reach anyone, you call back, and someone will answer the phone, Mr. Speaker. That is all I can offer.

The Speaker: Okay.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Supplemental?

The Speaker: [Microphone not on.]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: I have a supplemental, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: You have a supplemental question?

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: We will take your supplemental.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Would the Minister accept that perhaps as a Minister, the responses that he gets from the Department of Planning are perhaps a lot faster than the general public, who often have to wait a long time, or their questions or messages are lost and not picked up?

Thank you.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: What was the question?

The Speaker: I am trying to put that in the right context for a response. The question is—

[Crosstalk]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: May I re-ask it, Mr. Speaker? Perhaps I will try to clarify it.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Okay, if you can clarify it, clarify it a bit more.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Would the Honourable Minister accept that perhaps his experience with the Department of Planning results in much more responsive answers to his questions than the general public? Our constituents are telling us their messages are often not responded to.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Well, see . . . see—

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, the answer to that is simply no. The public gets a much faster response than the Minister does.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member. Your second question?

QUESTION 2: DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED RELATING TO COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES OR BUSINESSES OPERATING WITHIN RESIDENTIAL ZONES

Ms. Linda Smith: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Will the Honourable Minister please inform this Honourable House about how many complaints the Department of Planning has received since the pandemic regarding residentially zoned properties being used for commercial purposes, including concerns about in-

creased traffic, storage of commercial materials, and even light industrial activities?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, it is estimated between 30 and 40 requests for investigations have been received since 1 March 2020 relating to commercial activities or businesses operating within residential zones. Approximately 10 of these matters have escalated to code cases for further investigation and enforcement action.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Ms. Linda Smith: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And what enforcement activities are taking place in the ones that obviously are official, you know, are proper cases?

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, enforcement cases could result in fines [or] civil penalties. It could result in having to apply for retroactive applications or proper planning applications to receive permission for whatever is going on.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Ms. Linda Smith: Yes, I do.

And this kind of ties back to my original question. This problem has obviously been more difficult for seniors who may not be being heard. And what is being done to protect their properties and their quality of life in homes where their access is either being delayed because there is construction equipment moving in and out of a property that is landlocked by houses around that? And I believe there are some cases like that.

So, my question is, what is being done for a senior who cannot navigate the portal and maybe is not having their phone answered at a regular time and on a regular basis and as it is needed, to help them navigate the problems that they may be having?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, again, there is a process for reporting things that you feel are against planning reg—

The Speaker: Is the microphone on?

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Yes. There is . . . My voice is . . .

Mr. Speaker, there is a process for reporting activities that people may deem as illegal as we have had complaints, as I have detailed complaints as such. But Mr. Speaker, it is obvious this line of questioning is

speaking to a specific or maybe a couple of specific cases. I remind that Member that I remain available for her to send me those specific cases, and I will do the investigation myself. It is a simple process, Mr. Speaker, and I get it all the time where persons will say: *I think I am having an issue with something that is going on in the Department of Planning. Could . . . could you actually look into that?* And then when we tend to look into it, it tends to come down to the person does not like what they have been hearing from the Department of Planning, and they would like further action. That is probably most of the cases.

However, I stand here today and offer anyone on that side. If they have an issue and they wish to come and talk to me directly, we can work it out, Mr. Speaker. We do not have to have this back and forth and innuendos of, *I have been speaking to dozens of people and this is what has happened.*

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: It could possibly be anyone—

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

[Imputing improper motive]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Yes, Standing Order 19(11)(f) is imputing improper motive. It is not innuendo. It is a recitation of fact. And I am sure they have constituents who are coming to them saying: *Hey, MP So-and-so, I am calling this department, and no one calls me back.* So, I do not appreciate that.

The Speaker: And what was missed there was that the Minister was offering a solution to the Members, saying, if anybody—

An Hon. Member: Aha!

The Speaker: If anybody has a problem—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: No. He is saying if anybody has a problem, please contact him, and he will assist the Member.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

But the innuendo is that we are making these things up. It is not innuendo; it is factual information we receive from the voters.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Okay. The Minister offered help to you, to [help] any Member. I take your point. I do not want

. . . I do not want missed what was offered. The offer was to any Member, if your constituent is calling you about something that is bothering them in the process, the Minister said he is prepared to help any Member. I do not want that piece lost in there. Okay?

[What is] your third question . . . third question, Member?

QUESTION 3: SOUTHLANDS PARK, STATUS OF PLANS FOR ZIP LINE FACILITY

Ms. Linda Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Will the Honourable Minister please provide this Honourable House with an update on the status of future plans for the use of Southlands Park given that the Development Applications Board, the DAB, sided with environmental groups and the public's opposition to having a zip line facility in the park?

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, thank you for this question. It allows me to provide some clarity on some things that happen in Planning that people tend to misinterpret.

Mr. Speaker, the DAB does not side with objectors, but rather resolves to agree with the department's recommendation that is contained within the report, which is publicly accessible on their customer site. However, the question about development at Southlands Park is not for the Department of Planning. That is for the Department of Public Works—Public Lands and Buildings, or the Department of Parks to answer because they are the ones that would be making applications for development.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Ms. Linda Smith: Yes.

So, I guess my question is, who is the final arbiter in the decision about whether or not there is going to be a zip line facility in Southlands Park?

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, once again, [this is] an opportunity to educate. You make an application to the Department of Planning. It is vetted by the Department of Planning and the planners. They make a recommendation on what the decision should be on that. That decision is then passed on, given to the Development Applications Board, which looks at the report, which looks at what has been submitted by the applicant, and they are the ones that make the final decision on whether Planning permission is granted or not.

As we do know, there is an appeal process that can take place. And that can be if it has been refused or if it has been approved. Someone can appeal that particular decision. And that decision then goes to the Minister. And that is the process of how Planning appli-

cations are adjudicated within the Department of Planning.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Supplementary?

Ms. Linda Smith: Yes, I do.

The Speaker: Second supplementary.

Ms. Linda Smith: So, given what the Minister has just described, my question is: What is the status of Southlands, the application that has been put forth by the zip line enterprise for Southlands?

The Speaker: Minister, go ahead.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, as that Member started her very first question, the electronic system within the Department of Planning is quite extensive and quite open, and the status of that application is in the public domain. You just have to go to the website, look up that Planning number, and it will give you everything that is happening with that Planning application.

The Speaker: Thank you.

That completed all your supplementaries and your questions.

That brings us, Members, to an end of the written questions for today. We will now move on to questions that were generated from the Statements that were given this morning. And the first Statement this morning, or the first Statement that has questions this morning—

Mr. Robert King: Excuse me, Mr. Speaker. I had my questions. I had a bathroom break. I did not want to go ahead and—

The Speaker: Mr. King, you are back in. Yes? Okay?

Mr. Robert King: I am wondering if, you know, I might have an opportunity to ask questions.

The Speaker: MP King was absent at the time and stepped out to go to the bathroom.

Minister, I think the questions are directed to the rest of the team.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Robert King: Yes . . . No, the questions are for the Junior Minister of Justice.

The Speaker: Justice. Okay. Okay. All right.

MP King, you have questions in this morning that require an oral response. You can put your first question.

QUESTION 1: DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS REVIEW PANEL REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Robert King: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you for allowing the questions as well.

Will the Junior Minister please inform this Honourable House which recommendations contained within the Department of Corrections review panel report have been fully implemented, which remain outstanding, the reasons for any delays, and the anticipated completion date for each outstanding recommendation?

The Speaker: Junior Minister.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And thank you, MP King, for your questions.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for his questions. I will remind the House that it was this Government that commissioned the independent review, tabled the panel's report in full, and confronted its findings with candour. We invited this scrutiny.

The report contains 75 recommendations, and every one of them is being actioned through a live post-inspection action plan developed jointly by the Department of Corrections and the Prison Officers Association with direct support from the United Kingdom Ministry of Justice. Each recommendation carries a responsible—

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Thank you.

Each recommendation carries a responsible officer, a target date, and an evidential standard. Several recommendations have already been completed or reflect commended good practice being sustained. Others are in active delivery with target dates in this current quarter and the remainder are tied to the budget cycle or, in one case, to legislative change.

Where original dates have slipped, the causes of various staffing pressures, the report itself identified together with operational priorities and the scheduling of UK specialist support and revised timelines have been set under active management.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Attorney General and Minister of Justice, in her Ministerial Statement to the Senate on 20 May 2026, committed to reporting on this reform programme quarterly, and she remains fully committed to doing so. The detailed account the Honourable Member seeks will be provided as part of that promised quarterly update. That is the appropriate vehicle for information of that depth. It is already committed and will be honoured. This Government set the standard of accountability on Corrections reform, Mr. Speaker, and it will keep it.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Mr. Robert King: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Junior Minister for his response.

Understanding that the issues at the Department of Corrections do include the safety of officers and inmates, infrastructure, potential human rights violations through lack of programming, staff being overworked due to lack of staff, and the commensurate risk to mental and physical health, which three areas of the . . . well, which three recommendations were given priority to be dealt with immediately? I know that you said there were 75 recommendations, and out of the 75, there must have been some triage which identified things that needed to happen within the next six months. So, I am hoping that the [Junior] Minister can provide clarification on that.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Thank you, Member.

Mr. Speaker, as we know, the substantive Minister sits in another place, and I do not want to speak out of place on her behalf. So those questions can be noted, and hopefully we can get a response back to that Member.

The Speaker: You commit to providing a response then?

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Yes, [I] commit to providing a response.

The Speaker: Okay.

Supplementary or your second question?

Mr. Robert King: Supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Would the Junior Minister agree to submit the answers to those questions for the next sitting of the House?

Mr. Dennis Lister III: I will have to be guided by the Minister, but hopefully we can . . . the substantive Minister.

The Speaker: Second question?

QUESTION 2: DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS REVIEW PANEL REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Robert King: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Will the Junior Minister please advise the Honourable House what measurable improvements have been achieved since the publication of the Department of Corrections review panel report with respect to safety and security of correctional officers, assaults and violence within correctional facilities, staff recruitment and retention, inmate rehabilitation outcomes, and recidivism?

The Speaker: Junior Minister.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let me first say how this Government approaches measurement. We will report real data on internationally accepted standards on a consistent quarterly basis as this House deserves honest measurement. In that spirit, I take each limb in turn.

A) Safety and security of correctional offices. Officer safety remains a significant concern, and I will not pretend the risk has yet measurably decreased. What has changed is the foundation. An HMPPS [His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service] specialist security team is on the Island this month to drive security enhancements. The head of national locking recommendations is being progressed. Monthly meetings with Works and Engineering are prioritising security critical repairs, and a condition survey of all facilities is currently underway. Measurable improvement will follow this work, and the data will be reported as it develops.

B) Assaults and violence within correctional facilities. The position is the same, Mr. Speaker, and I say so plainly. Risk levels within the facilities have not yet measurably decreased. The security enhancement initiatives being delivered with the HMPPS security team are designed precisely to mitigate those risks, and trend data on assaults and violence will come to this House through the quarterly reporting cycle.

C) Staff recruitment and retention. Recruitment of correctional officers is actively underway with preliminary assessments completed. The HMPPS staff profiling team completed a full workforce profiling exercise on Island from the 12th to the 19th of May, and its formal report will drive smarter deployment. Two officers are in the Overseas Territories' Next Generation Prison Leaders programme including UK investigation training. An independent staff engagement survey will run this fiscal year, and supplemental funding has been approved by Cabinet for dedicated maintenance staff to relieve operational pressure.

[Pause]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Sorry, Mr.—

The Speaker: Supplementary or—

Mr. Dennis Lister III: I am not finished, my—

The Speaker: Oh. Okay.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: All the answers got cut off, Mr. Speaker, so I have to go digital.

D) Mr. Speaker, inmate rehabilitation outcomes. Rehabilitative opportunity is expanded. Bermuda College APACE [Athora Professional & Career Education] courses are available now. Additional programmes aligned to the college's academic year are

targeted for September with open university discussions broadening tertiary options. The Right Living House therapeutic community continues its structured substance misuse support, and Narcotics Anonymous support is being extended to remanded inmates for the first time.

There are also efforts to engage inmates actively in the development of key initiatives. As several initiatives remain in implementation, assessing overall effectiveness today would be premature. Key performance indicators will be established and measured once implementation matures, and the results will be reported to this House.

E) Recidivism. Recidivism is, by definition, a lagging indicator and insufficient time has passed for any change in reoffending to be measurable.

The Speaker: Supplementary, or your third question?

Mr. Robert King: Supplementary.

The Speaker: Okay.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Mr. Robert King: I took on board that the Junior Minister said that they report on the data, and that is appropriate. [The] question I have is: How is the data going to be used? What are the key performance indicators, and what is the reduction percentage that we are looking for in particular areas? What is the performance measurement that we are going to be using by percentage in terms of reduction of recidivism and other areas as well?

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Thank you, Member.

As I stated previously, Member, I will have to defer to the substantive Minister and hopefully can provide the responses to you.

The Speaker: Third question?

QUESTION 3: DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS REVIEW PANEL REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Robert King: Third question, Mr. Speaker.

Will the Honourable junior Minister inform this Honourable House whether the Government has sought independent implementation, oversight, or technical assistance from His Majesty's Prison Service or other internationally recognised corrections authorities to ensure that recommendations of the Department of Corrections review panel report are fully implemented and consistent with international best practise, and if not, why not?

The Speaker: Junior Minister.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Mr. Speaker the answer is yes. The Ministry of Justice has established an oversight committee drawn from the Department of Corrections, Prison Officers Association, and relevant subject matter experts. Additionally, there are regular engagements, virtual and on Island, with a UK Ministry of Justice representative who is providing direct implementation support. An Overseas Territories prison advisor is coordinating specialist training. The HMPPS staff profiling team completed its workforce exercise on Island in May, and two officers are enrolled in the overseas territories Next Generation Prison Leaders programme with UK-based investigation training.

The Speaker: Supplementary or . . .

Mr. Robert King: Supplementary.

The Speaker: Okay.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Mr. Robert King: Will the person or persons responsible for oversight be stationed in Bermuda for a period of one to three years to ensure that the recommendations are implemented? Because what we do know is that the advice and council of consultants is sought, information and data are received, proposals on how to resolve issues, and then it falls apart because the lack of oversight and ensuring that the projected targets are achieved. So, the question I am asking is: Will a person, the representative, be stationed in Bermuda for a period of one to three years to ensure recommendations are implemented? That is my final question.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Junior Minister.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As mentioned again, Member, I will defer to the substantive Minister to get a response to your question. Thank you for your questions.

The Speaker: Now, Members, that brings us to the close of the written questions this morning. About half the time has been consumed, but we do have 32 minutes left. And we will go to the questions from the Statements this morning.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: The first Statement that has questions this morning is the Statement by the Minister of Youth, Social Development and [Seniors].

Minister, you have Members who wish to ask questions in regard to your first Statement. And the first question is from MP Tucker.

MP Tucker.

QUESTION 1: FAMILY PRESERVATION TIER II PROGRAMME PROGRESS UPDATE

Ms. Robin Tucker: Thank you Mr. Speaker.

My question is . . . Well, first of all, the Minister mentioned that 10 families were referred to the Family Preservation [Tier II] Programme, and she also mentioned that other families are in progress for referral. So, I just wanted to know the number of families that are currently in process for referral.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do not have that answer, but I will endeavour to get that answer for the Member.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Do you have a supplementary or second question?

Ms. Robin Tucker: No, Mr. Speaker. I do have a second question.

The Speaker: Go right ahead.

QUESTION 2: FAMILY PRESERVATION TIER II PROGRAMME PROGRESS UPDATE

Ms. Robin Tucker: [My] second question is, Can the Minister tell us what the family-to-staff ratio is, please, for that particular programme?

The Speaker: Okay.
Minister.

Hon. Tinee Furbert: The programme has, Mr. Speaker, six . . . I am sorry . . . three social workers and three social workers' assistants. Currently we have capacity of between eight and ten families each.

The Speaker: Okay. Thank you.
Supplementary or new question?

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Ms. Robin Tucker: Supplementary.

Thank you to the Minister.

[I] just wanted to know if that is international best practice.

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Ms. Robin Tucker: Great.

The Speaker: Supplementary or third question?

Ms. Robin Tucker: Supplementary, please, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Okay. Go ahead.

Ms. Robin Tucker: I would just like to know if the number of staff is sufficient to meet the growing demand. So, is it sufficient for now, or because the demands keep growing, are they looking, or will they be looking to hire additional staff?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker this is a new programme, and programmes under Government are constantly under evaluation to see whether or not new staff are required. But right now, we know that it is sufficient staff. Once our numbers increase, we can make a better evaluation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Third question?

Ms. Robin Tucker: Just a supplemental, please.

The Speaker: Supplemental on that?

Ms. Robin Tucker: On that particular . . .

The Speaker: Well, you had your two supplementals.

Ms. Robin Tucker: Oh, did I? Okay sorry.

The Speaker: Yes. That is why I said your third question.

Ms. Robin Tucker: Okay, third question, then.

QUESTION 3: FAMILY PRESERVATION TIER II PROGRAMME PROGRESS UPDATE

Ms. Robin Tucker: I just want to know as the demands increase, does the Ministry have anything in place to ensure that staff do not experience burnout particularly in circumstances where dealing with high-risk families is quite difficult?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

There are governmental processes that every government area that has human resources would go through where if more staff is required, there are processes where we have to apply for staff. So, there are processes in place that if we needed staff, we could seek out staff.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Ms. Robin Tucker: No, Mr. Speaker. But I would like to clarify because the response was not actually what I was asking. I was speaking about the existing staff and potential burnout having to deal with high at-risk families and what the Ministry had in place to ensure that that staff did not experience burnout. Or if they did, what was sort of that process for care for the staff?

The Speaker: You are asking: Is there a support system in place for the staff?

Ms. Robin Tucker: Yes, please. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Okay.
Minister.

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Yes, Mr. Speaker. In every government department there is a support programme, that is [the] EAP [Employee Assistance Programme], if any staff experience burnout. This is a new programme, Mr. Speaker. The staff are quite excited and engaged and are loving the opportunity to be able to establish rapport with their clients. The staff know that if they are experiencing burnout, they can reach out to their relevant managers [or] supervisors to be able to get support. But there are also . . . I would like to reiterate there are processes in place for our governmental human resources to explore assistance for more staff should that need arise.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Ms. Robin Tucker: Do I have one last supplemental, or am I done? I am done? Okay. All right. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Okay.

The Member MP King also has questions for you on that.

MP King.

QUESTION 1: FAMILY PRESERVATION TIER II PROGRAMME PROGRESS UPDATE

Mr. Robert King: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Regarding the Family Preservation Programme, technically it is not really a new programme.

It is essentially the souped-up version of the CMIT [Cross Ministry Intervention Team] programme. Would I be correct in saying that?

The Speaker: The question is: Is it just an upgraded version of an old programme? Is that what you are asking?

Mr. Robert King: Yes, as opposed to *souped-up*. Yes, sir.

The Speaker: Okay.

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Mr. Speaker, let me see what the staff say about their souped-up programme.

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Mr. Speaker, it is a programme that has been modelled off of the CMIT programme. I would say that it is a new programme because the CMIT programme has not been in place for a number of years. The staff, like I mentioned already in my Ministerial Statement, have undergone different extensive training for this particular programme and—

Mr. Robert King: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Robert King: The Minister has actually answered the question. She said yes, so I would like to get into my questions.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Robert King: No, no, no. Mr. Speaker, what the Minister said was that the question—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Wait, wait, wait. No, no. I'm saying, you said you got the answer you are looking for?

Mr. Robert King: Yes. The Minister basically said that it is essentially a new improved version of the CMIT programme, that the piece of —

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Robert King: The additional information was already shared before by the specific training.

The Speaker: Okay. So, you are satisfied you got your answer?

Mr. Robert King: Yes, yes, yes. That was fine.

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Can I finish, please?

The Speaker: Minister, I am not sure where he got it, but he got the answer. You want to add to that?

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Yes, I would Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I just also want to add that the programme is definitely a modified version to address our current needs and our current trends and clients that we currently have relationships with.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Okay. All right. Thank you.

Member, do you now have a supplementary [question] you would like to put to that? Or a new question?

Mr. Robert King: I do. I do have a supplementary.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Mr. Robert King: Yes, sir.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Mr. Robert King: Understanding that the programme has been improved, and it ought to be . . . In everything that we do we must seek improvement to make sure that we are meeting the needs of the community.

The Speaker: Put your question.

Mr. Robert King: What specific key performance indicators are going to show that the programme has been successful?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for that question.

Every family that engages within the services of Family Preservation Tier II undergoes assessments and benchmarks as well as an individual plan in which goals and objectives have to be achieved. And so, by those particular measures, Mr. Speaker, the team is able to collect data and to follow the progress of our families.

The Speaker: Supplementary or new question? Second supplementary or new question?

Mr. Robert King: Second supplementary.

If we accept that the number of persons requiring services has increased, it would suggest that we need to determine what the problem is. Why are more persons in need of the service? So, what percentage of reduction in persons receiving services or requiring services is the Ministry seeking to achieve over the period

of 12 months? Is it a reduction of 10 per cent, 12 per cent, 25 per cent?

Thank you.

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Mr. Speaker, this programme is a support programme for families who require that support. I am not going to make a prediction in regard to what the reductions would look like for particular families as we do see families fluctuate, come in for support. And they can be released, and then they can come back, or [be] discharged. But it is a programme to assist families when there are needs that . . . when their needs come about.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

There are your two supplementary [questions] on that. Would you like to ask the second question?

Mr. Robert King: Second question, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION 2: FAMILY PRESERVATION TIER II PROGRAMME PROGRESS UPDATE

Mr. Robert King: Understanding that more persons are requiring services, the CMIT programme . . . what programme is it modelled off whether it be locally or other jurisdictions to show that this approach will work and achieve the required performance?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Mr. Speaker, in my Ministerial Statement I did speak to this being an intensive community-based model of family intervention recognising that every jurisdiction is different and has different characteristics. Mr. Speaker, the programme has pre- and post-assessment, pre- and post-interventions, and we will continue to track ongoing progress, which I will commit to come back to this House to share, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Supplemental or new question?

Mr. Robert King: Supplemental.

The Speaker: Okay.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Mr. Robert King: If after two years the programme is receiving more . . . well, more persons are entering the programme than leaving it, what accountability and review measures or processes will be implemented to make sure that there is a reduction of persons requiring services? So, if after a year [or] two years, we are seeing more people entering, what review process will be

put in place to ensure that we are achieving the goal of having families who are empowered not requiring these specific intensive services? That is my final question.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do not see having more persons utilising this service as a bad thing, Mr. Speaker. We will probably see more families utilising the services because it was not a service that existed before. And so, we . . . You know, we should be hearing from our Members across the way that they, you know, [say] *Great!*, that this programme has now been put in place to support our families, Mr. Speaker. So, in two years I have no doubt that our numbers will increase, and we will also track like we do and report in our budgeting cycle families who are . . . what our intake is, and what our discharge rate is. And so, I will report back to this House particularly during Budget Debate in regard to what those numbers will look like.

The Speaker: Thank you. And the Member indicated he had no further questions.

Thank you.

Minister, that is the end of the questions for that Statement; however, there are questions on your second Statement that the Member wants to ask questions [about]. And again, it's MP King.

MP King, would you like to put your question for the second Statement?

QUESTION 1: HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Mr. Robert King: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Will the Honourable Minister inform this Honourable House whether the Government has assessed whether the findings of the October 2025 Department of Corrections Panel Report raised any human rights concerns under the Human Rights Act 1981.

The Speaker: Premier . . . Minister.

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Mr. Speaker, that question is [a] very specific matter that I would have to take back to the Human Rights Commission, but I will endeavour to get to the answer for that question. I don't have that answer right now.

The Speaker: Okay. Thank you.

Supplementary or second question?

Mr. Robert King: Second question.

The Speaker: Go ahead.

QUESTION 2: HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Mr. Robert King: Will the Honourable Minister advise which recommendations made by the Human Rights Commission in its 2023 and 2024 annual reports have been fully implemented by Government.

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Mr. Speaker, I would also ask for specifics as it relates to this. We are constantly . . . which you will see I tabled in the House today some changes to the human rights legislation and we work very closely with the Human Rights Office in advancing human rights legislation and policy.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

SUPPLEMENTARY

Mr. Robert King: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

If complaints of discrimination continue to increase, does the Minister accept that Government's actions have yet achieved their intended outcome?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Mr. Speaker, discrimination is all around us. People stereotype, Mr. Speaker.

The Human Rights Commission has demonstrated in their annual reports the amount of work that they do put in into our community with educating. I think actually the work that they are putting in with educating our community and our public is increasing the number of questions and intake opportunities that do come through the Commission.

So, they are doing their work, Mr. Speaker, and they are educating our community. So, again, the increase in numbers is not necessarily a bad thing. If you also take the opportunity to read the report, you will see that many of the cases . . . the case summaries have been dropped. The matters have been worked out. Every opportunity to interact with the Human Rights Commission is an opportunity for education and reducing how people respect and discriminate against one another.

The Speaker: Second supplementary or third question?

Mr. Robert King: Third question.

The Speaker: Okay.

QUESTION 3: HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Mr. Robert King: So, my question is: Does the Minister accept that when there are more persons who require services that this is an indication that the Ministry objectives are being achieved? So, more persons requiring government services is an indication that the approaches are working.

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Mr. Speaker, people could be more aware of the services that are available and they are seeking support. Mr. Speaker, seeking support is not a bad thing

An Hon. Member: Say it again.

Hon. Tinee Furbert: It is not a bad thing. Our numbers are just reporting that more people are coming forward to get the support that they need, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Supplementary . . . second . . . That was your third question.

Mr. Robert King: Yes.

The Speaker: So, your first supplementary on your third question?

Mr. Robert King: First supplementary on the third question.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Mr. Robert King: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Would the Minister accept that the approach required to reduce the number of persons requiring the CMIT (Cross Ministry Intervention Team) intensive services would require a holistic approach that goes across other ministries working collectively to address the underlying concerns?

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Mr. Speaker, these questions are supposed to be for the Human Rights Annual Report. We have finished the family preservation questions.

The Speaker: Yes. Keep . . . Yes, okay.

The Member acknowledged it. Fine. Okay.

Thank you, Member and Minister. Those are the final questions for that Statement.

However, the next Statement that has questions is the Statement by the Minister of Health. Minister, MP Pearman would like to put questions to you.

QUESTION 1: INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS, IMPLICATIONS ON ACCESS TO OVERSEAS MEDICAL CARE

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

I thank the Honourable and Learned Minister for her Statement today and I've raised my question with her in advance, so she is aware it is coming.

The Statement today used the expression "stop lists." It was in quotes. But there is a common misconception in Bermuda that there are such things as "stop lists" when in fact there are not. And I know that at least on our side we have had several meetings over the . . . since I've been an MP, with various representatives of the United States inviting us to really clarify that there are not such things as "stop lists." There are just restrictions on immigration. And I would invite the Minister just to clarify that for the general public.

Thank you.

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Honourable and Learned Member for that clarification. I did indicate that it was a commonly referred to language; however, to be precise, the correct US immigration law language is "inadmissibility or denial of entry." And I will endeavour to (a) correct the record and (b) use that terminology moving forward.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you.

No more questions? No?

[No audible response]

The Speaker: Okay.

Members, that brings us to an end of the questions of the Statements today, which brings us to an end of the Question Period. Thank you for your participation, Members and Ministers.

And now we will move on to the next item on the Order Paper, which is the Congratulatory and/or Obituary Speeches.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

The President: Does any Member . . . MP Swan, would you like your three minutes?

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

The Speaker: Go right ahead, sir.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Mr. Speaker, I want to start off by expressing profound condolences to the family of the late Rickai "Pugi" Raynor. I will associate all my colleagues and everybody in this entire House. [He] is the brother of my cousin, Honourable Minister Jache [Adams]. It was a very tragic loss, and it has hit his family

very, very hard. And I happen to know the Raynor family. I know the Adams family very well, Simmon's family. And I just pray that the comfort they need will be provided.

In looking at the paper, I recognise the face, Ms. Frances Smith Baker, who I knew from my Ariel Sands days running golf events for the Bermuda Government way back 40 years ago. And I looked, I said, she was the executive housekeeper for Ariel Sands. I just looked to make sure that somebody mentioned Ariel Sands. And there they were, the old Ariel Sands family, that great hotel property down on the South Shore that once was there, Mr. Speaker.

On a happier note, I had the honour of witnessing an historic victory of a young lady, age 19, win the Bermuda Ladies [Open] Championship [Division] on the same week that her mentor, who taught her at age eight, won the Bermuda Open Championship 48 years prior. And I caddied for her. Her name is Sienna Mosquera. She shot a record 67 on the second round of Port Royal [Golf Course]. She had such a big lead. Sometimes you have to imagine what you do when you are that far in front. But that's an experience you only get once in your life. And she won very admirably.

And overseas, Darina Betschart, who I witnessed put a golf club in her hand at age three, was down playing golf representing Bermuda in the Caribbean [Amateur] Junior [Golf] Championships where Bermuda is now a full member of that association in the Dominican Republic. And she won the Girls Under 15 Championship. Her brother, Oliver, has done great work in golf, being coached by a childhood colleague of mine, David Ogrin, who is in Texas.

And they both find themselves over there with their parents, who I salute the efforts of their parents, both of these children. The key to their success is their parental support, their talent, but the support that they get from their parents.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Timer chimes]

The Speaker: Thank you, MP Swan.

Junior Minister Lister, would you like your three minutes?

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to start off my three minutes by sending condolences to a number of families. And please, I do apologise if I do sound rushed.

Mr. Speaker, to the family of Ms. Carol Bassett, who passed recently. I associate Minister Darrell, Minister De Silva, and Minister Rabain—

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: I will associate to whole House, Mr. Speaker.

Also, Mr. Speaker, to the family of Ms. Lorraine Simmons, who passed, mother of . . . I will associate MP De Silva.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: I will associate to the whole House again, Mr. Speaker.

[She is the] mother of a very well-known . . . Mr. Owen Simons, who is musically talented.

Also, I would like to also send condolences to the family of Ms. Tammoi Ann-Marie Simons, Mr. Speaker, who I attended church with and also Bermuda Institute for a time.

And then to a constituent of mine, I'd like to send condolences to the family of Mr. Coleridge Hayward. [I will] associate MP Wilmot.

And I'd like to also just associate condolences and remarks with the . . . associate my remarks with the condolences to young Rickai "Pugi" Raynor. So, Mr. Speaker, again, it's always sad to hear of when a person passes, no matter what age, so we would like to, again, send sentiments of condolences to the families.

On a lighter note, Mr. Speaker, this past week, I had the opportunity to attend two youth events. First of all, on this past Wednesday, and I will associate the Minister of Youth, [Social Development] and Seniors. (And please correct me if I got it wrong.) They held the Youth [Parliament] Debate on Wednesday in these Chambers where present Youth Parliament members got to debate against former Youth Parliament members, and the topic of the debate was: Should we lower the voting age to 16? [It was] a very good debate. Unfortunately, I wasn't there at the end to see who won the debate or find out who won the debate, but I think all speakers contributed well to it, and it's . . . you know, look forward for the young people of Bermuda . . . we have hope that there are young people interested in politics and can freely speak their mind on issues.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: And I associate MP DeCouto, who was also in attendance.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I will associate Minister Rabain. This Sunday gone, I had the privilege to be a judge at the Alpha Beautillion where we had five contestants: Mr. [Max] Wallace from Somersfield Academy; Mr. Jaylen Mitchell from Mount Saint Agnes; Mr. Amiel Trott from Warwick Academy; Mr. Tobiah Goodchild from Saltus Grammar School; and the winner, Mr. (and I hope I got his name right) Ciaran Smyth of my alma mater, Bermuda Institute. So again, it's good to see young men participating and doing positive things and being recognised for it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Timer chimes]

The Speaker: Thank you, Junior Minister.

MP Robinson. MP Robinson, you have your three minutes.

Mr. Dwayne Robinson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise to associate myself with the condolences given. I know the Honourable Member Kim Swan had associated the House with the passing of Rickai Raynor. But I couldn't leave the House and head back to Riviera without extending specifically the condolences on behalf of Riviera and that community, which I am a part of, in its profound loss of Rickai, and how all of us noticing the water truck not in his yard has been quite jarring for most of us. And, you know, he also was one of the inspirations behind why my son is into electric bikes and dirt bikes. So, it is a loss that they are feeling profoundly. And the Riviera community has expressed it to Ms. Adams and to Mr. Tucker . . . Mr. Raynor, sorry, about their specific losses and instances that they had interactions with Rickai in the neighbourhood and how much of an impact he had on the surrounding area.

And as the MP, I couldn't park my car home and not have risen today to associate. In moments like this, it's important to remind ourselves that we are colleagues and that we can reach across the aisle in moments of tragedy like this and loss of life within each of our families and try to comfort one another and look out for each other during these tough times. So, I just send strength to Minister Adams' family in this tough time and hope that they are receiving the adequate support from all who knew Rickai.

And on a lighter note, I wasn't present last session but I'm sure that there were congratulations given to the graduation of The Berkeley Institute. But I had a special graduate, my little brother, who was involved in that. And I wanted to publicly give congratulations to the graduates of The Berkeley Institute and him specifically. And also, to the graduations of—

An Hon. Member: Say his name.

Mr. Dwayne Robinson: I am not going to say his name. He . . . he gets embarrassed.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dwayne Robinson: And also, to associate myself with the graduation for CedarBridge Academy because—

Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo: That wasn't said.

Mr. Dwayne Robinson: Well, congratulations to the CedarBridge Academy graduates. My alma mater. I couldn't congratulate Berkeley without congratulating CedarBridge Academy. And I wish all of those students a bright and wondrous future.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Deputy Speaker, you have your three minutes.

Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo: Yes. Good morning, good afternoon, Mr. Speaker, to the House and the listening public. I just have congratulatory remarks.

First of all, I would like to congratulate all of the recipients who received awards or scholarships from the Bermuda Hospitals Board. I will go ahead, even though she's not in her seat, and associate the Minister of Health.

The Speaker: She's right here. The Minister is here.

Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo: Oh, I didn't see . . . I do apologise. I couldn't see your hand.

[Laughter]

Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo: I will associate the Minister of Health with these remarks.

The Speaker: All right.

Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo: We need, especially when it comes to mental health and that the population of those suffering from mental health has grown. And so, we need our young Bermudians to definitely equip themselves in the field of health so that all of Bermuda benefits from that. So, I was happy to see that quite a few persons were recipients of the awards coming from the [Bermuda] Hospitals Board.

I would also like to associate . . . not associate myself, I would like to give congratulatory remarks to the recipients of scholarships from the Bermuda Arts Council. Again, you know, through culture, we are able to express our voices in many different ways regarding what goes on in the public at large. And it is good that we encourage our creatives to go out and do some of the work that they do.

And I would like to say a special congratulations to Mr. Devray Denwiddie, who is the father of my youngest grandchild. He was one of the recipients.

I would also like to associate myself with the graduation for CedarBridge Academy, because I had put that down to speak to first, but MP Robinson beat me to it. No. An excellent cadre of graduates. I think it was, I don't know if the current Minister can speak to the number of young people there. It was 90-something.

An Hon. Member: Ninety-two.

Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo: It was 92 graduates. And we had . . . many of them received all sorts of scholarships. And so, it bodes well for our public schools. Our children are still doing a great job. And so . . . and I was delighted to see how many young people operated in a way that they were able to get so many of the private

scholarships as well as the public scholarships that we offer to our students. So, kudos to our young graduates.

And on that note . . . I'll associate the Minister of Education.

[Timer chimes]

Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo: On that note, I take my seat, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

MP . . . Opposition Leader. MP Smith.

Hon. Ben Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to be associated with the congratulatory remarks that MP Foggo just gave on CedarBridge Academy's graduation. I also was in attendance there. Congratulations to all of them and what they'll be doing in the future.

But I would like to make special note of . . . there was a musical component between two young people that really showed a talent level that can—

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Hon. Ben Smith: As somebody who grew up in a musical household, seeing those two young people sing the way they did. And we also got to hear the steel pans that played—really impressive. [I am] looking forward to seeing them maybe continue that on and bring music—Bermuda music—back, because I think that would be really important for us to continue to see that growth.

Mr. Speaker, I also like to give congratulations to a mother and son who are actually over in the UK dealing with football. First is Na'im Zuill, who has just been given . . . he is one of the scholars for the Bolton Wanderers. This is an Under-17 youth football player that has continued to progress. And this next step for him is encouraging as we have our young people in different places trying to take their sport prowess further. But with that, his mother has also just had the opportunity to become a football agent in the UK.

The Speaker: Hmmm.

Hon. Ben Smith: It's a . . . it's a very difficult testing that they have to go through in order to reach that level. And only 5 per cent of sports agents for football are actually female. So, it's a double congratulations to Carla Zuill for that accomplishment.

An Hon. Member: Associate.

Hon. Ben Smith: And I associate—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Ben Smith: —everybody on our side for sure.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would not be able to take my seat if I did not give special birthday wishes to my mother—89 years old this year.

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Ben Smith: And I know that as a strong Somerset woman, she'll be looking forward to us taking the Cup back later on this year.

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: Oh, no.

Hon. Ben Smith: She had on her red yesterday on her birthday. And I'm looking forward to her having that celebration.

So, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Okay.

MP Weeks, you had jumped up before and up again.

Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo: Don't be saying anything about Somerset.

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Did the Member sitting next to you congratulate Somerset? Did I hear?

[Laughter]

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: No, no, no, no.

The Speaker: It sounded like a prayer that time.

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: No. She refuses to keep quiet too, Mr. Speaker.

[Laughter]

Mr. Michael A. Weeks: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my heartfelt congratulations and deepest gratitude to Mr. Franco Harris for his outstanding research into gang violence, focusing specifically on the unique dynamics and challenges of island life in Bermuda.

Over the last few years, Mr. Speaker, when I sat in a different place, I have had the distinct pleasure of working closely with Mr. Harris, both locally here on the ground and remotely. Throughout this collaboration, his dedication, his professionalism and academic rigour have been nothing short of exemplary. It is also worth noting, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Harris is currently completing his doctoral studies, and this vital research

forms a cornerstone of his advanced academic pursuits.

Mr. Speaker, the impact of Mr. Harris's work already extends far beyond our shores. He recently had the distinct honour of delivering a presentation on his findings in London to police commissioners from across the British Overseas Territories. This international platform underscores the global relevance of his research, proving that the insights gained here in Bermuda are helping to shape the policing and security discourse across the entire region.

Mr. Speaker, gang violence is a complex, multifaceted issue. What makes Mr. Harris's work so vital is its localised lens, examining how the distinct geographic, social and economic realities of an island's ecosystem shape these challenges. The insights he has generated have provided the Ministry of National Security with invaluable data and actionable perspectives. This is practical truth that will directly inform our policy development, Mr. Speaker, community outreach and strategic interventions moving forward.

So, on behalf of my former Ministry of National Security, and I will definitely associate those in the entire House and the Government of Bermuda, I want to formally thank Mr. Harris over these last couple of years for his tireless efforts. His work is a major asset to our ongoing mission to create a safer, more secure Bermuda. I ask this Honourable House to join me in congratulating Mr. Franco Harris on the successful completion of this vital study, celebrating this milestone in his doctoral journey and wishing him continued success in all of his future endeavours.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, MP.
Minister.

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

Mr. Speaker, I'd first like to send congratulations to MP Michael Weeks for that beautiful black and gold tie that he's wearing today.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to be associated with the comments given for the passing of Ms. Carol Bassett. Ms. Carol Bassett was a long-time educator in the Bermuda public school system coming from the classroom all the way through the work that she did within the Department of Education. But, Mr. Speaker, she also leaves behind a teaching dynasty as her son, and I believe her two daughters are also teachers, or one daughter is also a teacher within the system. I'm not familiar with her daughter, but I do know of her son, Lavar, who was a critical member of the Education Reform Unit until he went back into the classroom over the last few years up at CedarBridge.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to send condolences to the family of Roland "Rocky" Darrell, long-time resident—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: And I associate Robin . . .

The Speaker: Tucker.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: MP . . .

An Hon. Member: Tucker.

The Speaker: Tucker.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Tucker. [Mr. Darrell was a] long-time resident of the Devil's Hole area. Those of us who grew up down there, and I'm sure MP Tucker will find out there is a friendly rival between what we call "D'Alley" and South Shore. And I grew up on D'Alley, which is at Sommersall Road and Judkin Lane. But the Darrells are from Darrell's Oval, which we, fittingly, later on will be discussing something around Tucker's Town. And they grew up on Darrell's Oval, which is named after that family where some of the original cricket games for Eastern County actually took place over there.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to send congratulations again to all of the high schools that demonstrated . . . and associate myself with the congratulations to the graduates that walked across. But, Mr. Speaker, this was a special graduation. This graduation signalled the first cohorts that have passed through the new Signature Learning Programme system. And they are the first recipients of the Signature Learning diplomas. And so, this is a special moment in my previous stint in the world that I do occupy that was brought into fruition. And I was extremely proud to be able to witness the first recipients walk across the stage with those particular diplomas.

It was also a very special moment for me at CedarBridge in which I presented the inaugural Vincent Rabain Excellence in Trades Awards. We often talk about bringing trades back to our schools and trades and services is one of the Signature Learning programmes at the CedarBridge Academy, which specifically gives students an opportunity to expose themselves to the various trades throughout Bermuda. And I was privileged that the first recipient is studying to be an electrician, which my father was a certified master electrician.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

[Timer chimes]

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like the House to send a letter of condolences to the family of Ms. Paulette Smith. Ms. Paulette Smith was a constituent of mine, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Owen Darrell: I'd like to associate MP Weeks. She was a constituent of mine. And I'd like to tell a brief story that many of us may have also encountered . . . that when I first started canvassing, Ms. Smith's house was one of the first houses that I attended. And she, if anyone knew her, was very sharp with her tongue and very direct in how she felt. And at first, I was taken aback and I said, *Oh, this is a little difficult*. But she would always reach out to me, and she would always send me messages of encouragement. And I'd go back to her house, and she'd be sharp with her tongue again. And I'd say to her, I'd say: *But, Ms. Smith, every time I come, you put my picture on your refrigerator*. So, at that point I knew that we were definitely building a relationship.

But it was the work that Ms. Smith did in the community, Mr. Speaker. She, if anyone knew her, she was, although very direct, she was also private. But she was open about her medical journey that she was going through at the later stages of her life. And not only did she speak on it, she took that into action. And she was a very, very valued volunteer at P.A.L.S., Mr. Speaker. And it was her . . . I know P.A.L.S. have been doing their walk for many, many years. But it was Ms. Smith who encouraged me a couple of years ago to start the P.A.L.S. walk. I continued it again this year. And if those of you would remember, I even took a visiting Minister with me this year.

And I had the fortunate (I guess some people would say unfortunate) kind of encounter where I was able to sit down and have a very lengthy conversation with her just maybe days or weeks before her passing. And I will say that she left a very clear message for me. She left a very clear message for her daughter. And I'd like to send condolences to them: her son, Anthony, and her daughter, Loukeisha, her grandchildren, Tre Shun, Ciana (who also helped with my campaign) [E] Amir and Kaius. But she left very clear instructions for all of us, what she wanted to be done after her time on this earth was complete. So, I just wanted to get up and send condolences to her family and say that Paulette Smith was definitely a huge part of my journey as I started to be a representative.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.
MP DeCouto.

[Timer chimes]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I did previously associate with the Youth Parliament. Those who know me know I get quite set in my ways of thinking. And I did want to note that I was just about swayed by some of the arguments of the Youth Parliamentarians, and it was very impressive. So, thank you.

I did want to congratulate Bermudian sailor Sebastian Kempe. He won the Canadian Championship in the ILCA7, a.k.a., Laser sailboat. That would be a highly competitive—

[Inaudible interjection]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Yes, I associate MP Swan.

And for those who know, he is on a journey to qualify for the Olympics for Bermuda, and he is a former Youth Champion in that class as well. So, congratulations to him.

I also want to wish luck to Jessica Lewis. Most of you will know that she is a four-time Paralympian for Bermuda, and she will be attending the Commonwealth Games and competing in the 400 metres. And that is the first time these games are including para athletics. So, I want to wish her a lot of success. And of course, for the rest of the contingent, which is a long list of names, which will be familiar to many of us, so I will omit them for brevity.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Members, we are on that 12:30 mark. Are there any other Members who wanted to give a condolence briefly, or you want to wait until we come back and continue?

It looks like there are a few Members getting up. So, being there are a few Members getting up, I will suggest that we break now, and we will continue the condolences and congratulatory remarks when we return from lunch.

And Premier, would you like to just move the House to lunch?

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

Mr. Speaker, I move that this Honourable House do now adjourn until 2:00 pm.

The Speaker: Are there any objections?

There are none.

Members, the House now stands adjourned for lunch until 2:00 p.m.

[Gavel]

Proceedings suspended at 12:32 pm

Proceedings resumed at 2:16 pm

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

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

[Gavel]

The Speaker: The House is now in session for the afternoon session.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

[Continuation thereof]

The Speaker: Members, when we broke this morning, we were still on the matter of congratulations and condolence remarks.

Does any Member wish to continue on that?
MP Foggo, you are on your feet.

Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo: Ming, Ming.

The Speaker: I mean, MP Ming, geez.

[Member] Foggo, you're standing next to her, see?

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Talking to her.

Go ahead, MP Ming.

Mrs. Renee Ming: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker and listening audience.

Mr. Speaker, what a mistake to make. My guess is that fact that she's a St. George's girl—

[Crosstalk]

The Speaker: It's those two St. George's girls . . . it was those two St. George's girls. That is what it was.

Mrs. Renee Ming: We can let it fly. We'll let it fly for today.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Mrs. Renee Ming: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to, first of all, offer condolences to the families of Sylvia Zuill and Dane Brown. Both are constituents of constituency 1. *[They]* have grown to, because they . . . Actually, both are not originally from St. George's, but they grew to love St. George's and call it home. And they will definitely be missed in and around the constituency.

And on a happier note, Mr. Speaker, I know this was said before, but I wanted to add to the comments. Constituency 1 hosted the 21st Dame Jennifer *[M.]* Smith Future Leaders Award Ceremony last week. And if you ever want to know what our young people are doing, I will tell you there are some out there—most of them, from my view, anyhow—are doing great things.

We had two people selected from each of the primary schools in the Parish of St. George's. So that would be East End Primary, St. George's Preparatory School, and St. David's Primary. East End Primary, there was Rasheva Smith and Daniel Mallory. It's funny, we're saying Rasheva because that's her correct name, but having her around the school for six years, we actually call her "Sheevy" so much.

From St. George's Preparatory School was Ryan Millett and Jaravano Williams. And for St. David's Primary, we have Kenzie Pitcher-Wade and Rie Simmons. These young people, guys, if you heard the résumés or the bios [biography] and just look at the things that they do in school, outside of school, academically, athletically, they had community service. They were doing some great and awesome, wonderful things. But the real thing of why they were selected is because even at a young age, they have demonstrated early leadership skills. And so for that, they were honoured at the ceremony.

I would also like to congratulate The St. George's Collection. They held a fashion show yesterday at the Hillcrest Boutique Hotel. What an awesome place to actually have a fashion show. The businesses from St. George's that were involved in that were The Things We Love, English Sports Shop, Frangipani, and Dreamscape [Designs]. And if you ever get a chance, and you should make sure because it's where you all came from, come down, have a look, and see what it is that St. George's has to offer. I'd like to associate MP Foggo with these comments as well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you listening audience.

The Speaker: Thank you, MP Ming.

Minister Furbert, would you like to make your contribution now?

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Mr. Speaker, I would like to be associated with the comments in regard to the Youth [Parliament] Debate. Mr. Speaker, a well-done event always gives our young people the opportunity to show us how they perform. And indeed, they did teach us many things, I would say, about the form of debate, both the current Youth Parliamentarians and former Youth Parliamentarians who did an excellent job. So, I would like to congratulate them and, of course, the team of the Office of Youth Affairs who assisted with organising and putting that event on.

I would also like to take the opportunity to congratulate the graduates of the Happy Valley [Child] Care Center. There are about 16 young ones who participated in a leaving ceremony who will be going on to our public preschools and private preschool programmes. Congratulations to them and, of course, the

hard-working staff that provide quality early childhood education programmes for our young people.

I also, Mr. Speaker, would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge and congratulate . . . We all got an email, I believe, in regard to a young Bermudian, 25-year-old, Anthasia Campbell, who was participating in a beauty pageant in England, which I believe occurred on July 12. I don't know the outcome of that pageant, but I would assume that there were many applicants and selections that would make it difficult for Ms. Campbell to reach where she did reach. And so, a big congratulations to her and acknowledgement for our very own Bermudian, who was born and bred in Bermuda, who was selected to participate in this pageant.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

MP Tucker, you have your three minutes.

Ms. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to associate with the congratulations given with regard to the Youth [Parliament] Debate and as well as the comments made for Ms. Campbell.

I would also like to express condolences to the family of Mr. Roland "Rocky" Darrell. I was associated earlier this morning in our morning session. Minister Weeks and Minister Rabain would also like to be associated as well, even though Minister Rabain associated me earlier.

And I also would like to express condolences to the family of Mrs. Josephine Reynolds. I've known Mrs. Reynolds for a number of years, as her granddaughter and my daughter were in high school together. And I actually got my grandmother name from Mrs. Reynolds, when . . . My grandmother name is Lita. And my daughter's friend, who's Asia Ming-Raynor, used to call her grandmother, (Mrs. Reynolds) Lita.

[Inaudible interjection]

Ms. Robin Tucker: And, oh, and MP—

[Inaudible interjections]

Ms. Robin Tucker: Did she? Okay, so—

[Inaudible interjections]

Ms. Robin Tucker: So, I'd associate—

The Speaker: Member, you want to add some more contributions to that?

[Laughter]

Ms. Robin Tucker: I would like to associate MP Foggo and MP Smith—

The Speaker: Yes, do that for them.

Ms. Robin Tucker: —with those comments as well. Sorry, I beg your pardon, MP Swan.

[Laughter]

Ms. Robin Tucker: And just, again, express condolences to Joyce, that's Mrs. Reynolds's daughter, Joyce Ming, and as well as Mrs. Reynolds's granddaughter, Asia Ming-Raynor.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

[Does] any other Member wish to make a contribution at this time? None other?

[No audible response]

The Speaker: Thank you, Members.

Before we move on, I'd just like to add my remarks and the condolences that were sent earlier to the Bassett family on the passing of Ms. Carol Bassett. Yes, much was said about her contribution to education. I've known her from that perspective. I have also known her from her church community, and I know her family personally, so I know her loss will be felt from all quarters that she had a presence in. So, my remarks will be added to those that have been expressed already.

Thank you, Members. We'll now move on to the next item on the Order Paper.

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: We have Government Bills and Opposition Bills to be introduced today.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

The Speaker: The first of the Government Bills is introduced in the name of the Premier and Minister of Finance.

BILLS

FIRST READINGS

TAX CREDITS AMENDMENT ACT 2026

CORPORATE INCOME TAX AMENDMENT ACT 2026

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

Mr. Speaker, I move the following Bills to their first reading so they may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: [Tax Credits Amendment Act 2026](#) and the [Corporate Income Tax Amendment Act 2026](#).

The Speaker: Thank you.

Would you like to do the second matter . . . Oh, don't move. That's right, the tax, okay.

The third item is from the Minister of Youth, Social Development and Seniors.

Minister.

BILL

FIRST READING

HUMAN RIGHTS AMENDMENT ACT 2026

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce the following Bill for its first reading so that it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: the [Human Rights Amendment Act 2026](#).

The Speaker: Thank you.

And the next item is in the name of the Minister of Health.

Minister.

BILL

FIRST READING

BERMUDA HEALTH COUNCIL (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) ACT 2026

Hon. Kim N. Wilson: Mr. Speaker, I'm introducing the following Bill for its first reading so that it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: the [Bermuda Health Council \(Miscellaneous Amendments\) Act 2026](#).

The Speaker: And the next is in the name of the Minister of Home Affairs and it will be presented on her be-

half by the Minister of [Public] Works [and Environment].

BILL

FIRST READING

COST OF LIVING COMMISSION AMENDMENT (NO. 2) ACT 2026

Hon. Jache Adams: Yes, good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am introducing the following Bill for its first reading so that it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: the [Cost of Living Commission Amendment \(No. 2\) Act 2026](#).

The Speaker: Thank you, Members.

OPPOSITION BILLS

The Speaker: We have one Opposition Bill in the name of the Member MP Richardson.

Would you like to present your Bill at this time?

STANDING ORDER 28(1)

Mr. Jarion Richardson: Mr. Speaker, per the provisions of Standing Order 28(1), I move for leave to introduce and read a Bill for the first time by its title only.

The Speaker: Continue.

FIRST READING

ROAD TRAFFIC AND MOTOR CAR (ROAD SAFETY AND PENALTIES) AMENDMENT ACT 2026

Mr. Jarion Richardson: Mr. Speaker, I am introducing the following Bill for its first reading so that it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: the [Road Traffic and Motor Car \(Road Safety and Penalties\) Amendment Act 2026](#).

The Speaker: Thank you.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS

The Speaker: There are none.

NOTICE OF MOTION

ENDING HOMELESSNESS TOGETHER, PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS

The Speaker: We have a Notice of Motion from the Minister of Youth, Social Development and Seniors. Minister.

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

That this Honourable House consider and approve the "Plan to End Homelessness—Ending Homelessness together," which was tabled in the House of Assembly on the 27 March 2026.

The Speaker: Thank you.

That brings us to the close of the Notices of Motions and Bills today. We now move on to the next item.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Speaker: And the first Order to be done today is the consideration of the [Contributory Pensions \(Amendment of Contributions and Benefits\) Order 2026](#) in the name of the Premier and the Minister of Finance. Minister.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Members and the listening audience, the Premier is just getting himself ready to present.

So, Members and the listening audience, we will now hear from the Premier on the introduction of this matter.

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

Mr. Speaker, I move that consideration be given to the draft Order entitled the Contributory Pensions (Amendment of Contributions and Benefits) Order 2026, proposed to be made by the Minister of Finance in exercise of the power conferred by section 37 of the Contributory Pensions Act 1970.

The Speaker: Any objections?

None.

Continue, Premier.

DRAFT ORDER

CONTRIBUTORY PENSIONS (AMENDMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS AND BENEFITS) ORDER 2026

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

Mr. Speaker, the . . . sorry . . .

Mr. Speaker, on this particular matter, we are discussing the Contributory Pensions (Amendment [of Contributions and Benefits] Order, which reflects this Government's continued commitment to keep our

promise to make sure that we increase pensions by the rate of inflation every single year.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. E. David Burt: Sorry?

Every year. Yes, every year.

Mr. Speaker, I do not need to speak to you or others about the contribution that our seniors have made to this country. And therefore, it is no surprise, Mr. Speaker, that this Government remains committed to increasing pensions by the rate of inflation every year, which is something that we promised inside of our Election Manifesto. We recognise the many challenges that seniors will face due to rising costs, and our goal is to provide continued support so they can live in dignity, as they deserve.

And it's important to note, Mr. Speaker, that pensions are just one aspect of that. Whether it's financial assistance, whether those are the other things of which we have done, whether or not they are public sector retirees, where they have seen an increase in that as well, Mr. Speaker, these are the things of which this Government continues to do to ensure that we pay homage and make sure that the relationship between the Government and the seniors of this country remains a sound one.

Mr. Speaker, Bermuda offers retired individuals a combination of social insurance benefits from the Contributory Pension Fund [CPF] and a mandatory employer-sponsored occupational pension. Ideally, the social insurance benefit serves as the first tier, or basic pension, which a second tier occupational pension should supplement. However, many retirees are not receiving occupational pension, through no fault of their own. And this situation is mainly because occupational pensions were not mandatory until 1999 when the [National Pension Scheme \(Occupational Pensions\) Act \[1998\]](#) was enacted. As a result, some retirees rely solely on social insurance benefits for their income.

Mr. Speaker, this situation could be better. And the Government continues to work to ensure that seniors who rely heavily on their social insurance benefits do have a dependable source of income. But it should be noted, Mr. Speaker, that individuals who are still having challenges, who may not have occupational pensions can always, of course, avail themselves of the other social assistance programmes that are available, including financial assistance.

Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding what I have just said, the CPF benefit provides an important base for retirement income. Currently, the maximum pension paid under the CPF is about 29 per cent of the median annual gross earnings for Bermudians, as indicated in the Bermuda Job Market Employment Brief produced by Department of Statistics in [October] 2025. This compares closely with the United Kingdom, where the full basic state pension as a percentage of average earnings is about 30 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the Order is to increase pensions and other benefits under the Contributory Pensions Act 1970 by 1.74 per cent as of 16 August 2026, when increases are typically made to the benefits. Per the government actuary, the 1.74 per cent increase in benefits would represent a small negative impact on the fund.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members are advised that according to the Consumer Price Index, the cost of living increased by 1.74 per cent from September 2024 to August 2025. This figure represents the average year-to-date change since the last benefit increase. Therefore, the proposed benefit increase fully covers the prevailing rate of inflation to ensure that our seniors are not disadvantaged.

Mr. Speaker, there are five types of benefits payable under the Contributory Pensions Act 1970. All the pensions and allowances will be increased by 1.74 per cent. These pensions and allowances are:

- contributory old age pension;
- contributory widows' [and] widowers' allowance;
- contributory disability benefits;
- non-contributory old age pension; and
- non-contributory disability benefits.

Mr. Speaker, the current maximum basic contributory pension is \$1,206.00 per month. The average contributory pension currently payable, which includes additional increments added to the basic pension, is approximately \$1,323.00 a month. Altogether, some 15,086 persons are currently receiving benefits underneath this Act. The proposed 1.74 per cent increase will raise the maximum basic contributory pension to \$1,227.00 a month. And with additional increments, the average benefit will increase to approximately \$1,346.02 per month. Beneficiaries, Mr. Speaker, can . . . sorry, let me just make sure I've got this right, Mr. Speaker. Beneficiaries can expect to see a 1.74 per cent increase in their regular monthly payment for the 15th of each month, starting on September 15, 2026.

[Crosstalk]

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the fact that this 1.74 per cent increase marks the eighth pension increase—yes, Mr. Speaker, you heard correctly, the eighth pension increase—the Progressive Labour Party Government has put through in its time in Government, which is in stark contrast, as I think we have heard many times today, to the former Government who made our seniors wait five years for a pension increase while telling them that money did not grow on trees. As a reminder, Mr.—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Yes, they only did it in an election year. Yes, in an election year. That was it. So, every other year, *seniors, no, no, no*. And when election time

came coming, they are like, *Here, have an increase*. An increase, by the way, Mr. Speaker, that did not match the rate of inflation.

But importantly, Mr. Speaker, this Government is different. This Government will keep its promises. And for the history, just remember, this is what we have done since 2017. In August of 2017, just one month after being elected, we kept our promise to increase pensions by 1.75 per cent. In August of 2018, Mr. Speaker, 1.4 per cent. In August of 2019, Mr. Speaker, 1.2 per cent. In August of 2021, Mr. Speaker, 2.75 per cent. And that increase was slightly higher than the prevailing rate of inflation. In August 2023, Mr. Speaker, 4.1 per cent to account for change in 2022, and 2023 In 2024, Mr. Speaker, a 2.4 per cent increase. And in 2025, a 2.3 per cent increase. And today we are passing our eighth increase of 1.74 per cent effective on the 16 August 2026.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, this Government does keep its promises to our seniors. And guess what, Mr. Speaker? I know there are a lot of speakers who actually listen to us and they note and recognise the difference in approaches that governments take. One government makes sure that we take care of our seniors, increasing their benefits, whether that be through social assistance, whether it be through pensions, whether that be through retirement benefits, or whether or not that be through other measures, Mr. Speaker. And we know, recognise, and understand the approach that was taken by the Opposition party when they were in Government.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER
[Imputing improper motive]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: The Honourable Premier is imputing improper motive by implying that the One Bermuda Alliance does not take care of the people. As we have well established in this House, the prior Government, prior to the prior OBA Government, had spent so much money and incurred such a deficit, a loan had to be taken out just to pay the Government employees.

[Inaudible interjections]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member.
Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, the Shadow Minister of Finance should know that he is clearly misleading the House on his point of order. And, Mr. Speaker, he should know that not everything is imputing improper

motive because we can say what our views and our opinions are.

But here's the fact, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is so misleading and so misled and so confused that he does not even realise that pensions are not paid out of the Consolidated Fund.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. E. David Burt: They are paid out of the Contributory—

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. E. David Burt: —Pension Fund, Mr. Speaker.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Point of order, Mr. Speaker!

The Speaker: Point of order. Point of order.
Let me recognise your point of order.
What's your point of order, Member?

[Inaudible interjections]

POINT OF ORDER
[Unparliamentary language]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Yes, Standing Order 19(11)(d). The Premier is using insulting and disrespectful language.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: And I invite him to politely retract his colour commentary, which is not necessary.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, the pensions are funded out of another pot. And as we will hear from my remarks later, they are running out of money under this Government and will run out short of Government action. Thank you.

The Speaker: Mr. Premier, I know you are clever enough to not cause the gentleman to keep jumping on his feet.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, he's going to jump up as much. But guess what, Mr. Speaker? I'm going to say what I want to say in this House, Mr. Speaker, because I know by the laws.

The Speaker: Within . . . within . . . within the confines. Within the confines—

[Crosstalk]

Hon. E. David Burt: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, I will note and understand that you did not rule my comments out of order, Mr. Speaker, so I shall continue.

So, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: I'm asking you to be guided in how you put your comments—

[Crosstalk]

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I absolutely can.

The Speaker: Be respectful . . . we are respectful that it's an opinion, but your opinion cannot necessarily be throwing stones every place—

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I take your point. But here is the reality, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member got up on a point of order, his same tired point of order around matters that are related to, *Oh, salaries, oh, woe is me, what's it called*, without recognising and remembering that the largest deficits in the country's history occurred under their watch, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: That's right.

Hon. E. David Burt: Under their watch. It was them who said they were going to borrow \$800,000 . . . \$800 million to last for five years, and it only lasted for three.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: And they had to go back, Mr. Speaker. But here's the thing.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Here's the thing, Mr. Speaker. Here's the thing, Mr. Speaker. Here's what's important.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: When it comes to contributory pensions, they, Mr. Speaker, *they*, Mr. Speaker, refused to give seniors a pension increase. It had nothing to do with paying civil servants. It had everything to do with their philosophy and approach to governance.

POINT OF ORDER *[Misleading]*

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Mr. Speaker, point of order.

The Premier is intentionally misleading the House. Because our philosophy is not to deny benefits, and he knows it. Our philosophy is to ensure that the pension fund is robust and can last, unlike this current pension fund, which is going to run out of money without further action.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: It is your opinion it doesn't have to be reflected—

[Crosstalk]

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, the record is clear. Four years they did not increase pensions. Why are they getting upset that we're telling the truth?

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: What do they want? What word do they wish to use? Their *approach* to governance. Their approach to governance was: We are not going to give seniors a pension increase. That was their approach. Their approach to government was—

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. E. David Burt: —that we are going to—

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order. Point of order.
Give your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER *[Misleading]*

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: The Premier continues to intentionally mislead the House, because I have laid out for you, Mr. Speaker, speaking as the Shadow Minister of Finance, the OBA philosophy, and he can stick to the facts. It is correct that pensions could not be increased, and I have explained—

[Inaudible interjections]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: —and I have explained—

The Speaker: Members, Members, Members.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: —why they had not been increased. But that is not a philosophy, Mr. Speaker, that is not a philosophy of not increasing.

[Inaudible interjections]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: That is a philosophy of ensuring pension payments—

The Speaker: Wait, wait, wait, wait.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: —can continue to be paid over a longer period of time.

The Speaker: Okay. Okay. Thank you.

Let me add in on this. The comments that were being made were speaking to a historical—

An Hon. Member: Approach.

The Speaker: —approach that was done in the past, and using the reference to a historical approach, which is clear on what was said and done during that time period. And that's the reference that is being made.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Go ahead.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I am going to take every single time that I get up in this Honourable House of Assembly to talk on this particular matter to make sure that I am clear that the people of this country remember the approach of the One Bermuda Alliance in Government. They came into office, and for four years told seniors, *No, you're not gonna get an increase.*

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes, they did.

Hon. E. David Burt: *No, you are not going to get an increase. No, you are not going to get an increase. No, you are not going to get an [increase].*

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: That's right.

Hon. E. David Burt: And here's the fact, Mr. Speaker, when they are reminded about it, they stand up *point of order, point of order, point of order*, and make every excuse of which they wish, Mr. Speaker. If they wanted to increase pensions, they would have done so, like this Government has. But no, Mr. Speaker, they chose not to. That is the record. Whatever you want to ascribe to it, approach, philosophy, views, take it. Whatever it is called, Mr. Speaker, the reality is they would not increase pensions for seniors until election year. Those are the facts, Mr. Speaker. *Those are the facts.*

I hear no point of order on those facts, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Those are the facts.

Hon. E. David Burt: All right, so let's keep going, Mr. Speaker, because that's where it is. And where we find ourselves now, Mr. Speaker, is a significant increase in the pensions which are being given to our retirees,—

Hon. Ben Smith: We need more.

Hon. E. David Burt: —because that is the record of a Government that—

[Laughter]

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, it is rich. We hear from the . . . we hear, Mr. Speaker, we hear from the Opposition Leader: *We need more.* But then he sat as part of a party that didn't give any.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: That's right.

Hon. E. David Burt: So, Mr. Speaker, let me continue—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: —let me continue to press ahead.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Yes, point of order, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: The Premier is misleading the House because there were increases made, which he had said himself. So, I definitely invite him to retract that factual comment. Thank you.

The Speaker: Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, let me move on, because this is just—

The Speaker: And it were factual he just asking you to clear it up.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, the record is clear. They gave one pension increase in five years on the eve of an election. That's the record. That's what they did.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: And we make sure that our seniors keep up with the rate of inflation. Theirs did not even match the rate of inflation.

I'm surprised they don't just, you know, just—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Keep quiet.

Hon. E. David Burt: —keep quiet because it gives me more opportunities to remind the people of this country the difference in approach,—

An Hon. Member: Oh, yes.

Hon. E. David Burt: —the difference that it makes when you have a Government that actually believes in

keeping its promises and believes in increasing seniors' pensions by the rate of inflation.

And, Mr. Speaker, so I laid through the history of the times of which we've done this year after year after year after year. And in every case which this Government has increased benefits for our seniors, the increase has been in line with or exceeded the prevailing rate of inflation, thereby placing seniors' pensions under the Consumer Price Index and in good stead.

Mr. Speaker, in the 2026 increase in benefits accompanied by an increase in contributions per the government actuary of the contributions is to be increased by 2.5 per cent per annum more than benefits. This is estimated to continue to make sure that the fund remains healthy. Mr. Speaker, you should also note that contributions last increased in August 2025 by 4.81 per cent. That was again, 2.5 percentage points more than the increase in benefits. And the Ministry of Finance will continue to manage the CPF's position. The proposed increase in contributions for employees and employers is 4.25 per cent which is 2.51 per cent more than the benefits increase proposed for the year. The effective date for the contribution increase is August 2026.

Mr. Speaker, currently the weekly contribution rate is \$75.30 for individuals under the age of 35 and \$37.65 for those over the age of 65. The proposed increase of 4.25 per cent will raise weekly contribution rates to \$78.50 for individuals under 65 and to \$39.25 for individuals over 65. This increase in weekly contributions amounts to \$3.20 per week, Mr. Speaker, which is \$1.60 when split between employer and employee.

Mr. Speaker, the pension reform work is developing options to sustainably address and secure future benefits. The reality is, Mr. Speaker, as we said, we have managed to fix the Public Sector Superannuation Fund [PSSF] by making sure to extend its life and putting it in a positive position that has enabled us to then go ahead and to give retirement benefits to public sector retirees, which we debated the last time in this House. Mr. Speaker, in reference to our Throne Speech commitments on matters related to the work and as stated inside the budget, the Government is committed to tabling a Position Paper in regard to our approach for social insurance reform or the reform of the Contributory Pension Fund. Those particular matters will be set out.

The actuaries are currently actually either on Island this week or next week going through a series of meetings and reviews on the matter that we did on all of the previous pension reform items. Because it is important that we fix these particular funds for the long term, as this Government has done with the most important one, which is the Public Sector Superannuation Fund, which removed a \$2 billion unfunded liability from the Government's balance sheet.

Mr. Speaker, just to speak to the fund itself, the fund as of 31 March 2026 had net assets of over \$2.36

billion representing approximately 10 times the value of benefits paid in this fiscal year in 2025/26. The effect of this, [is that if] the CPF received no further contribution [it could] continue to pay out pensions [at] the prevailing rate for almost 10 years. However, the reality is contributions will continue through time and will be increased from time to time. Consequently, prudent investment of pension funds is an important factor in the fund's financial position.

In this regard, Mr. Speaker, the Government's sound investment strategy for pension fund assets is achieving good results. And as of 31 March 2026, the Contributory Pension Fund investments stood at \$2.211 billion. The nominal rate of return for the 10 years preceding 31 March 2026 was 7.4 per cent. Mr. Speaker, as evidenced by the 2023 actuarial report tabled in this Honourable House on 4 March 2025, the viability of the fund in the short- to medium-term is good with the fund being positive for the next 19 years, until 2042.

However, in addressing the long-term challenges associated with pensions generally, as we said, we are going to make sure that we bring forward a Position Paper on these particular changes. It is noted, Mr. Speaker, that the funding policy of the CPF is based on sustainable funding rather than full actuarial funding. And that is that contributions plus investment income should cover benefits and administration expenses on an annual basis while the fund builds sufficient reserves to cover years of benefits and expenses and to withstand future adverse circumstances. That is something that is standard with these types of funds, Mr. Speaker. So, it is important to recognise that though a fund may not be 100 per cent funded, you want to make sure it's sustainable because you're recognising, of course, that there are contributions that are going to continue to come in.

Mr. Speaker, as we note, though there is a positive short- to medium-term outlook, we do know that there is the work that needs to be done to stabilise the Contributory Pension Fund, which means that there is going to be a various number of measures. I am pleased, Mr. Speaker, that the measures that were put forward from our actuaries are actually broader than the initial set of measures that were done, which I think will actually result in . . . when the Position Paper that does come, following its approval by the Cabinet, to this Parliament, we will see, Mr. Speaker, a wider range of options where we can actually move forward and actually fix this issue for the future as well.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to making sure that we deal with those particular matters because it's important that this Government continue its record of striking the right balance between social and fiscal responsibility. But the right balance, in our eyes, Mr. Speaker, is to keep faith with the seniors of this country, ensuring that we increase their pensions every year by at least the rate of inflation. And that, Mr. Speaker, is the record of this particular Government.

So, in closing, I wish to assure Members again and, more importantly, current and future pensioners, that the Government recognises the challenges they face. We will continue to take the appropriate and decisive steps to enhance benefits paid from the National Pension Plan and ensure the fund has the ongoing ability to pay for such benefits in the future.

And, Mr. Speaker, if I can, because I think that it's important to note that on a monthly basis, since we have come into office, the maximum contributory pension has increased by \$271 a month, Mr. Speaker. That is over three . . . sorry, that is over \$3,000 a year. Those are the changes that matter when you keep your promise by increasing the rate of pensions by the rate of inflation to ensure that persons have more money in their pockets, Mr. Speaker. That is the reality. That is this Government's record, and I commend this Statement to the House and look forward to the support from the Opposition unless they want to be recorded as, once again, not supporting an increase to seniors' pensions.

The Speaker: Thank you, Premier.
Opposition spokesman.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Yes.

The Speaker: MP DeCouto, you have the floor.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: So, first of all, Mr. Speaker, I have to correct the Premier's incorrect statement because if a government feels it doesn't have the money to pay the pensions, that doesn't mean they don't support increases. That means they couldn't put together—

[Inaudible interjections]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: We, in this House, while we have been Opposition, have supported the pension increases.

So, the listening public needs to hear that. [We] have supported the pension. And we support this. But the public needs to hear some important stuff.

[Inaudible interjections]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: The public needs to hear some important stuff.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Members, Members.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: As we know, based on the actuary reports, the current social insurance, or CPF, [Contributory] Pension Fund, will not be able to make full payments after 2042. Now, Mr. Speaker, that means if you are like me, if you are working today, in the absence of actual change, personally, I would not count on having that full amount of money.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: You don't have to. You have a trust fund baby.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: The Premier—

An Hon. Member: Ooh!

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Members, Members, Members!

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Members, Members—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Members. Wait, wait! Members, Members. Members!

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Members . . . Deputy [Premier].

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: That's unnecessary, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Deputy [Premier].

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: And I take, I take extreme personal prejudice.

The Speaker: Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Members, we've been in a good tone. There has been a little humour, but don't take it below that, please. Because things get . . . we know how sensitive things can be to individuals, and we have seen it in the past, and we don't want a repeat of it.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Yes.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: You know, Mr. Speaker, it's one thing to hurl invective—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Ah! Ah!

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: —and it's another thing for it to be . . .

[Inaudible interjection]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: —badly intentioned and incorrect.

The Speaker: Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait.

Members, let's let the afternoon go smoothly without us having to get caught up inside conversations that are going to naturally, by the tone of the comment, lead us in the wrong direction. Let's put that to rest now.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be guided by your remarks, of course.

[Inaudible interjection and laughter]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: You know, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Members, Members.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: —I'm here to discuss policy.

The Speaker: Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait.

Members, I was serious just now. I was real serious. We have seen how these take us down the wrong tone, and emotionally, people get bent out of shape. We are heading down a track right now that can lead us in that same space. We have seen it happen in the past. We don't need to go down that road again, okay?

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Now, Mr. Speaker, thank you.

Back to the matter at hand: the social insurance or the Contributory Pension Fund, which some people rely on, especially older people. As I was saying, because we know from the most recent actuary reports, this fund will no longer be able to make its full payments in 2042, which means, basically, if you are still working today and you are middle-aged or younger, in the absence of actual action from this Government, my personal advice is do not factor that too deeply into your retirement plans.

The Premier said he's committed to tabling a Position Paper. Well, we will listen when they table an actual amendment or an actual change in laws or actual finances. But until then, it's just a lot of hot air, Mr. Speaker. A lot of hot air. Because we would love to cut cheques. But, you know, Mr. Speaker, the pension money, it doesn't grow on trees. The pension money doesn't grow on trees.

[Inaudible interjections]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: You know where the money comes from, Mr. Speaker? It comes out of the pockets of the working people. So, if you're working today, [it] is the money you pay into the pension fund today that pays for the payments to go to other people. And so, we noted that although the increases are only 1.74 per cent, the deductions are 4.25 per cent. And I say "only" because I think the Premier said: *Oh, they're now doing \$270 extra a month.* That's great. We know most peo-

ple's health care costs, as set by the Government, have gone up more than that. So, they're looking at this and going, *Well, okay. But I'm still short. I'm still short.* And the Premier doesn't want to talk about that. Okay?

[Inaudible interjections]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: This does not cover the increases in the cost of living that people are seeing in health care and insurance. And as you know, Mr. Speaker, we have come up here and we have proposed a lot of specific things on how Government could actually adjust health care costs instead of letting a lot of CIT money . . . but the Government has allowed CIT money to go into the pockets of the insurance company shareholders while increases are—

Hon. E. David Burt: We are back to this again, Mr. Speaker? Point of order.

The Speaker: Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Hon. E. David Burt: Come on, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, with the greatest of respect, if you're going to assign the Government benches a certain standard, the same standard must be held on that side, Mr. Speaker. We ruled on that last week, the last time, and he's gone back there again, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Yes, yes, I got you. I got you. I got you. I got you. I got you, Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: He's misleading the House. There is no money that has gone from CIT to shareholders, Mr. Speaker, none.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Okay.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: I got you. That matter had come up the last time, and it was clarified the last time around.

And . . . wait, wait. Before you got on your feet, I just wanted people to understand that once it's been clarified that it isn't the case, then we need not to bring it up as if it is the case. Unless you have proof of something different, the way it has been stated was accepted and that's what it was. Okay?

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Well, we know it's a matter of public record that that company's accountants have booked a \$20 million-plus credit, due to CIT, and that company will also be spending \$20 million on a share of buyback for the shareholders. I leave it to the public to do the math. I leave it at that.

And I was talking about the cost of insurance to everybody who's receiving the social insurance. They have to buy maybe vehicle insurance, maybe insurance for their house. And of course, we know about the health insurance costs, which the Government has increased, and those costs have really outpaced the social insurance costs.

So, look, we're glad to see the increase. We support the increase. But we know that until we see specific actions (right?) to fix this fund up, like had to be done for the public servants' fund, this is like a major ticking time bomb for the working person today. And we are on the record saying, because it's sort of a critical piece of national concern, Mr. Speaker, we would use CIT money, for example, to help ease the transition in whatever changes, not perhaps on an ongoing basis, but to ease and smooth the transition. Because we know that for many of the public servants, the PSSF changes were, for some of them, a bit of a shock. So, you can imagine maybe putting some funds in there.

So now where was I going with that?

An Hon. Member: You are right.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: I am right, Mr. Speaker, and you heard it here from the Government benches. I'm right.

[Inaudible interjections]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Now, what he said, the fund remains healthy. I don't know about you, Mr. Speaker, but my pension fund running out in 18 years, I don't consider healthy. But I guess that's a matter of opinion. I will leave it to the Premier to have his own opinion on that.

Like I said, we are deeply concerned about the lack of progress on the social insurance reform. We talked about the cost of living. Again, everybody in Bermuda knows these costs of living statistics, the CPI, which comes out so after the fact, [it] doesn't really match what people are feeling. And we talked about the health insurance. We talked about the other insurance. We talked about food. Housing, Mr. Speaker. Now I know the Government's making some efforts there and broadly, it's the right direction. Although, you know, we have a lot of feedback on that.

[Inaudible interjection]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: So, to make it sound like this 1.74 per cent is going to be life-changing, is not the case.

An Hon. Member: What?

Another Hon. Member: They need more.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: We know people need more and that is why this fund needs to be reformed pronto. And we know that the Premier won't be around here from October as Premier, so I hope that his successor, whoever that will be, can put this to the top of the agenda because it is one of the most important things.

The other key issue with this fund, Mr. Speaker . . . okay, obviously there's the money going in that comes out of taxpayers' pockets, nothing comes on trees. It comes out of the working person's pocket, out of their pay cheque, that goes in. Okay? [It] is the demographic issue. Okay? We know that Bermuda has an ageing population and that the number of working people compared to the number of people retiring is growing and that's another huge pressure on the fund. And we know that from my leader's, the Opposition Leader's, questions earlier today. We know there's a serious issue with the total population demographics and how that impacts things like shared funds, like social insurance, health insurance, things like that.

So, another key issue will be how can Government get this economy going so there are more working people paying into these funds that will make them healthier. Because frankly, our belief is that the number of working people is lower than people think, and of course we have the census and we do not know, but most people feel that the population has declined. And I suspect that this fund may be in more trouble than people think.

So let me wrap it up there, Mr. Speaker, and summarise as [follows]: Yes, we support. We all like to write cheques to help people out. But I think I've highlighted a couple of key issues that we think the Government needs to be moving a lot more rapidly on with a lot higher sense of urgency.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, MP.

Does any other Member wish to make a contribution at this time?

Any other Member?

MP Swan, you have the floor.

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

Mr. Speaker, let me declare my interest. I am a senior. And the Honourable Member who just took his seat, refers to the pension increase as merely someone writing cheques. I beg to differ. I beg to differ for the simple reason of the . . . I know people get tickled-up when I use this type of analogy. The ethos of a PLP Government committed to doing for working-class persons, and a business-minded, conservative government, or want-to-be government, that will do things that might not necessarily carry the better interest of the ordinary folk.

And people say: *Yes, that I not true, Swaney. We understand folk and we are out there.* But I remember being one time on a jury when a young lawyer and her actions spoke louder than words. I will never forget that. That was . . . that . . . that . . . and it just so happens the young lawyer is in this Honourable House as Minister of Health. She gave a compelling presentation. There were some multiple persons on trial.

I just want to say this, that if a government can prioritise and use what it inherited as the reason for making sure that seniors did not receive increases in a five-year period, but found the money to make sure that . . . and I love sailing. So let nobody . . . I come from a family that sails, fishes and farms. Could find the money to fund that to the tune of \$100 million.

An Hon. Member: No!

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: That is a different mind-set. And when I say that if we look at where we came from to get there, we had just come from a global pandemic, Mr. Speaker. I heard people saying they left us with nothing. Let me tell you this: That between 2000, between 2001 to about 2006, the country . . . and Mr. Speaker, you would know this better than anybody in this House—

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: —enjoyed the most buoyant economic time ever.

And I have seen some governments in the past that have done some good things as well. It is a story for another day. Some folks do not like the fact that I am not afraid to talk about it. But I will say this: When the recession hit in 2008, many persons in this country did not even accept that there was a recession. Do you know who did?

Now, I may get this wrong, but I attended a meeting down at the bottom floor, just below where my studio is. And I declare my interest. I work for Inter-Island Communications, doing it once a week now, one hour. But I have a lovely radio show. I have been a part of that family for over 10 years. But there is a tri-annual (Am I right, Honourable Minister?) conference that is held by . . . it might even be the [Bermuda] Trade Union Congress [BTUC]. And do you know . . . I believe at that event unionised hotel workers accepted a pay freeze. Unionised hotel workers accepted a pay freeze before everybody else was saying: *There is no recession. You are just making it up. PLP is causing that.* Ask me how I would know that. Sometimes you have been around long enough to know what mind-set was propelling that argument at the same time. Okay?

So, a government that was in buoyancy . . . and I will say this. The late Mr. C. Eugene Cox had a fund that I wish during that buoyancy time would have been further supplemented. I certainly believed in that fund. It would have helped insulate Bermuda. The Gov-

ernment invested in people. My colleagues back 10 years prior to that when confronted before recession, made sure that my Portuguese cousins went home. Okay? I remember that too because a lot of those I had gotten to know. Okay?

So let us go forward now. And what am I talking about, Mr. Speaker, 2008/09, 2009/10, 2010/11. Decisions made in boardrooms tore the heart of this country. You do not hear that talked about. You do not see reports written about that. You do not hear people talking about the fact that the brightest of the bright in this country made poor business decisions that tore the heart out of this country economically. Tore the heart out of this country economically. So much so, Mr. Speaker, so much so that a labour government came to a United Bermuda Party Opposition, wanted to hold hands together because they were going to bail out who? The Bank of Butterfield! To the tune of a quarter of a billion dollars.

And I knew many legacy families who had a lot of wealth in this country, who I am sure look at the PLP a little bit differently today than they did there, [that] came to the rescue. Do not let me get started. I cannot go down that road because the same bank that the PLP rescued does not necessarily rescue its pensioners and some of its employees the same way.

I declare my interest: My 93-year-old mother is a pensioner of that organisation. Served her life there, working alongside people like former Member of Parliament Colin Benbow, who was in the Educational Officer, with people like Mr. Brock, and the like.

[Crosstalk]

[Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I am here to say this: That when you look at the context of what took place between 2008 and 2012 . . . sorry, Madam [Deputy] Speaker, when you look at what took place between 2008 and 2012, there is no reason why deficit spending occurred. The Government had no choice. And yes, when Members would come, and Honourable Member Cannonier would know better, having been the Premier in 2012, that he had to make decisions based on [it], and recalibrate and work through it. So, I could accept that he could not find an increase in 2013/14. But 2015, 2016 and 2017, to finally come up in 2017 on the eve of an election does not show that seniors factored into the mind-set at that particular time.

Now, what does that mean? [It means] that a senior in this country who did not have an increase, incrementally though it be, prevented them from keeping pace. They, as my late neighbour and mentor, PTB director used to tell me, you got to have that incremental savings. You just build up incrementally. But when you take away from people incrementally, you are doing

that much damage, and you do not get caught up when you are taking back.

The one thing . . . and when I talk about the mind-et, this Government has made sure that increases have happened. Increase—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: You will have your chance. You will have your turn . . . time to talk. We are talking about . . . we are talking . . . we are talking about pensions.

Pensions have increased and seniors can count on it. I wish . . . I wish I heard Opposition Members as exercised about the increase of cheese that I have had to endure over the last 25 years as they do with the fact that we have found a way, unlike them, to make sure that our folk can somehow see that we are committed to them in this way.

So yes, I am here to say I am very pleased, Madam [Deputy] Speaker, very pleased that we have had this put forward today. And I am very pleased that the commitment of the Government is to ensure that our seniors are cared for as best they can [be] because it is difficult. Many of them are land rich and cash poor. Maybe that \$100, or so, or a couple hundred dollars here and there does not mean much to many. But when you retired in 1995, and you have lived a good life, and you are still around at 90-odd, and your pension does not even cover the insurance bill, that is a reality for many folks. And many folks will look at the Government for the answer.

But I would look for the Opposition to be understanding that this Government in this case is on a good wicket and has exercised . . . and most people, if they listen to the Opposition, would not appreciate that this Government has been fiscally prudent.

An Hon. Member: Prudent!

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: And why? It is because we have engaged in fiscally prudent practices. That has allowed us to pay down on the debt. And you do not do that with a windfall. You do that incrementally doing the right things. The dollars mean that when you were doing the right thing you just got a little bit more boon and benefit, and we appreciate that. And we will do our best to make sure that it is properly distributed in that way. But, albeit for us to be that forward-thinking in the first place, to put ourselves in a position to be able to take advantage of such a boon, wouldn't it?

So, Mr. Speaker . . . Madam [Deputy] Speaker, I just want to say thank you for these measures coming forward and lend my voice of support.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other Members who wish to speak?

I recognise the Member from constituency 30.

Member, you have the floor.

Mr. Dwayne Robinson: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And first of all, I think the Shadow Minister on our side laid out our party's position quite well. I do support this pension increase.

I rise today because . . . I did not really intend to speak today. But the debate has devolved a bit into a matter of ethos. And when you cast a wide brush on my colleagues and I, I have a problem with that. So, I must clarify the ethos of the One Bermuda Alliance.

We have supported every pension increase that the Progressive Labour Party has brought to this House. But we have a duty as the Opposition to remind this Government, that at times seems to forget the ageing population, the rising cost of living, and things that our constituents—all our constituents—are contending with now.

An Hon. Member: That's factually incorrect.

Mr. Dwayne Robinson: So, when we get up . . . It is not factually incorrect, I would say to you, that Honourable Member. Because when we get up and we mention those things, it is twisted into us opposing or being doom and gloom, or simply not accepting that the Government is making any sort of progress. That has never been our position.

Our position is we want sustainability, longevity. We do not want governance just for today. We want governance for today and for future generations. And that is the ethos of the One Bermuda Alliance. Not just for today, but for future generations. It is easy to govern for now. And we have seen this on many different occasions. Because when we got into our contentious thing (and well understood), the contentiousness over the airport, certain Members in this Chamber have had the most use of that airport, I would say, since then, more so than on my side.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Dwayne Robinson: And for the cost of living, when it came to the ageing population, legislation was brought forward. It was contentious. Maybe it could have been amended. But again, not much was done since then, 10 years ago, and we find ourselves in an ageing demographic crisis in which there will not be potentially enough ratepayers to sustain the benefits, to sustain what we are doing today. As the Shadow Minister pointed out, 18 years . . . [in] 18 years my son would not even be finished with college yet. That is not sustainable. That is not governing for the future. That is our problem.

And before any Member opposite gets to their feet and continues to try to frame this argument that the One Bermuda Alliance simply does not want to support a pension increase, they will be categorically incorrect.

They cannot point to one time in the Hansard that we have voted against a pension increase. But we continue and will continue (apparently, much to the vexation of Government) to argue for sustainability for our future generations and to make sure that sound principles of governance and fiscal responsibility are employed in our pension. And yes, increase, of course, because as the Honourable Member just said, you know, the price of cheese is going up. Our seniors need help, yes. But there will be more seniors. There will be a time when I am a senior. There will be a time where—

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Dwayne Robinson: Well, I am going to try. I am going to try—

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

Mr. Dwayne Robinson: Yes, thank you.

But there is going to be a time when there are going to be future generations of seniors. And the problem is when you look at governance today, a lot of Members who are passing legislation and these increases will not be here to reap the rewards or benefits. And if we continue to govern the way we are going, what is going to be left for my son? What is going to be left for our children . . . if we do not continue to put emphasis on sustainability and longevity?

There are people right now in the civil service who feel despondent that they have to work longer to retire, that they may not get the full benefits if they have to go past 65 now. This is a real thing that I know they have heard because we have all heard it. And we are not talking to a different electorate. We are knocking on doors. We are all hearing it, civil servants who are tired, but have been told that they must work longer because of decisions made for the future.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Dwayne Robinson: They might not like it, but that is the truth of what people are feeling and what they are telling their representatives. I invite them to explain it, but at the end of the day, I am just conveying what my constituents are conveying to me. They can take their time to refute it if they wish.

But I wanted to take to my feet simply to re-frame this debate, that it is two sides that support increases to pension. But—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Dwayne Robinson: Oh, there you go. There you go.

But this is the problem. And I think it is disingenuous to the listening audience that the Government continues to mislead the people on this particular point, because we have agreed and we continue to support

increase in pensions. We want longevity and sustainability, that is all.

And I invite the Members to bring their chirps to the floor when they are ready to speak during their time. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Are there . . . Okay. Are there any other Members who wish to speak?

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

HOUSE VISITOR

The Deputy Speaker: But before I allow the other Member to speak, I would like to recognise that sitting in our Gallery is the [Honourable] Attorney General, Senator Kim Wilson *[sic]* the Minister of Legal Affairs. Welcome.

An Hon. Member: Wilkerson.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Jache Adams: Good afternoon, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Much like the Member who just took his seat, I was not planning on speaking, but I must admit, his comments inspired me to do so.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

An Hon. Member: Well done.

Hon. Jache Adams: Because one of the key factors in this debate, Madam [Deputy Speaker, and [how] we are positioning ourselves is a difference of political ideology.

So, what the Opposition have said is that when they took Government, they faced hard times, difficult times, and thus had to take out a loan to pay the civil service. That is their argument. What I am saying is that . . . what they are saying is that they faced hard times, and as a result, the seniors had to suffer.

[Laughter]

Hon. Jache Adams: What we are telling you, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that we too faced hard times in the middle of a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Aha!

Hon. E. David Burt: Yes.

[Crosstalk]

Hon. Jache Adams: And our ideology said, under no circumstances will we not fulfil our commitment by increasing the pensions of our seniors.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Jache Adams: That is political ideology. So that argument . . . if you notice, [there is] silence. And that is how I like it. Yes?

[Laughter]

Hon. Jache Adams: Now there is an argument, Madam Deputy Speaker, about sustainability, about the fact that the fund is running out. However, I will remind the people and this Honourable House that it was this Government that has now gotten us to a balanced budget.

Now keep in mind, Madam Deputy Speaker, that is a balanced budget before receiving any dollar from corporate income tax [CIT]. That is important, because what they will continue to try to emphasise is the fact that we are benefactors of CIT, failing to realise that we reached a significant milestone of which they were unable to achieve.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Jache Adams: Without a dollar of corporate income tax.

We are then talking about a Government that had the hard conversations, and made the difficult decisions, and has now stood on this floor and said that we have now stabilised our PSSF. So, this is a space where I am now saying the future of social insurance is in good hands. We will, as we have always done, make the necessary decisions to ensure that the fund is sustainable beyond 18 years. That is a fact. The trend is there.

So, where we are, Madam Deputy Speaker, in this debate, to me, comes down to three things. The first is that this is a promise made and a promise that continues to be kept. Eight years. This is the eighth time that we have increased, or are proceeding to increase, pensions for our seniors. That is significant.

It then sends out a message. And a message that if we want to talk about the ethos of the Progressive Labour Party it is that we revere our seniors. We respect their contributions and all that they have done for this country. And so, we will continue to make the decisions, and we will continue to honour our commitment.

And so again . . . and then my third point, and I alluded to it earlier, was the fact that we have a history of fiscal prudence. I will remind the public and I will remind Honourable Members that whilst the OBA were in Government, they received a ratings downgrade.

Hon. E. David Burt: Yes.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Talk about it.

Hon. Jache Adams: Under this Progressive Labour Party, we are now proud to say that we have a ratings upgrade. That is a fact. No opinions yet.

And so, with that, Madam Deputy Speaker, I will begin to wrap up because I think my point is made. And I ultimately just wanted to lend support and appreciate the Opposition's support of this Bill as well.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Jache Adams: Absolutely.

An Hon. Member: You started and ended with that.

Hon. Jache Adams: But I just wanted to correct the record because I believe that the previous speakers on the opposite side said some misleading comments that were not correct, and I just wanted to stand up and make that known.

So, with that, Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank you for your time.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Are there any other Members who wish to speak to the [Order]?

There being no other Members, I call on the Minister . . . Are there other Members?

Member, are you going to [speak]? Okay, I recognise the Member from constituency 29.

Minister, you have the floor.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Apologies, Madam [Deputy] Speaker. I saw one of my colleagues standing up in the back.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: But obviously, he was having a chat.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to thank the Finance Minister and Premier for giving our seniors \$3,000 more a year. Notwithstanding the fact that Members opposite refer to it as a little bump. Madam Deputy Speaker, \$3,000 may not mean much to some of those on the other side, but we know it means a hell of a lot to our seniors.

When you hear Members opposite saying 1.74 per cent, and I will quote: *It should be more, and it should be more rapid and be more urgent.* And you have heard from many Members on this side, Madam Deputy Speaker. They had five years. Where was the urgency? Where was the rapidness when they were in power?

I will take a point of order, but there is none. And there is a reason for that.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Madam Deputy Speaker, . . . well, they cannot say anything when you are talking facts like these.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Madam Deputy Speaker, they said when they were in Government they did not have any money to give any increases. But you will know—

Hon. E. David Burt: They found \$100 million.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: —they found money for the America's Cup, \$100 million.

Hon. E. David Burt: Yes.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: They found millions of dollars for a commission of enquiry.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: They found money for an airport. They took away the airport.

An Hon. Member: Which you praised!

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: The airport, Madam Deputy Speaker, had a surplus of between \$10 [million] and \$14 million a year.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Let me emphasise that.

An Hon. Member: Do that, do that.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: The airport, the old airport, had a surplus of \$10 [million] to \$14 million a year. So, they took that away. They took that surplus away and gave away our airport.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: That continues to cost this country millions and millions of dollars. Millions of dollars! The \$14 million a year that we lost, and we will not talk about the MRGs that we paid out.

Hon. E. David Burt: Oh, yes, \$50 million.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Madam Deputy Speaker, \$50 million in MRGs. Fifty million!

Hon. E. David Burt: But tell seniors that money does not grow on trees!

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: But you could tell our seniors that money does not grow on trees.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: They said, Madam Deputy Speaker,—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Grumble, grumble!

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: They said that they could not pay employees.

An Hon. Member: We got shanghaied.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: They could not pay employees. Again, they found hundreds of millions of dollars for their agenda.

Hon. E. David Burt: Yes!

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Their agenda.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Now, that fellow chirping, that Honourable Member chirping over the back, should not speak at all this week after what he said last week about *those* people.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I guess our seniors are proud of *those* people too, ain't they?

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, some of the things, when you hear Members opposite [say]: *We did not have a deficit*. Well, of course they did not have a deficit. I am talking about the OBA, some of your former colleagues. Some of them still present.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: They said they did not have a deficit.

[Laughter]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes, right?

[Laughter and desk thumping]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes, they did not have a deficit, but they did not have that at-risk youth programmes.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: They did not. When we came on board, Madam Deputy Speaker, we had to close two senior's homes, if you recall. And what did we have to do? One of them was in, I believe, Member Renee Ming's constituency. The senior's home down by the golf club. That was one of them. The other one was out at Pembroke. So, we had to close two senior . . . They were in such bad shape that we had to close them.

Our ferries. Those unreliable ferries prior to 1998. That is correct. The unreliable ferries. No air-conditioning. Busses, no air-conditioning. Think about that. But when we came on board, what did we do?

What did they do with Financial Assistance? What did they do? Zero. Very, very little. What do we do for Financial Assistance? We spend over a million dollars a week. That is what we do for our people.

Madam Deputy Speaker, let me remind those Opposite that between 1998 and 2007, the GDP in this country doubled. It increased more than any time in our history under this Progressive Labour Party Government.

Now, the Honourable Member who took his seat (I think it is constituency 30) asked, what is going to be left for his son? We have made it very clear, Madam Deputy Speaker. And as was very well articulated by the Minister of Public Works, we have fixed PSSF, and we have made it very clear that this reform will continue to take place under this Government. I am very confident. I am not sure if I will be here, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am not sure if you will be here either. But in [2042] I am confident, I am confident that this Government will make sure that our seniors during that period will be covered as well.

And what gives me confidence is that I know that the people of this country have shown the confidence in us to run this country. I see no reason why that should not continue for the next couple of decades. In fact, I am fairly certain that if we stay on the track that we are on, I will go to my grave not seeing ever again another OBA Government.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: But Madam Deputy Speaker, I am going to finish where I started. Three thousand dollars may not seem like much to those on the other side. But we know that \$3,000 (\$230 a month) means a lot to some of our seniors, if not all of them. And I would thank the Finance Minister for sticking to his promise to increase pensions for seniors in this country every, every year.

And what that does, Madam Deputy Speaker, is speak to this Government. We have shown over and over and over that we care for the people of this country from top to bottom, whether it is giving our mothers day care allowance, whether it is giving our seniors FutureCare. We can sit here for an hour and give that list. But what we know is that the people of this country do appreciate us because they have shown that three elections in a row.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Are there any other persons who wish to speak?

I recognise the member from constituency 4. Minister, you have the floor.

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Madam Deputy Speaker, I will not be long, but I do feel definitely compelled to speak on behalf of seniors as representation for the Ministry of Youth, Social Development and Seniors.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not think we even really need to stand up and debate that this is an excellent [Order]. I constantly get calls every year from seniors asking, *Minister, when are we getting our increase? When are we getting our increase?* Because they understand that this Government has made a promise to them to be consistent with this increase every year. Every year, Madam Deputy Speaker. It does not matter the amount. What matters is that it happens. It is consistent and we have promised. We have made a promise to be consistent with increases for our seniors.

And so, I just want to stand to say that this is a no-brainer, Madam Deputy Speaker. And to our seniors who are listening, it is coming. It is coming September 15, 2026. So, look out for your seniors' increase. It is coming.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Are there any other Members who wish to speak to the [Draft Order]?

There being no other Members, I call on the Minister . . . and Premier. Sorry.

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

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the contributions of colleagues, and I recognise that it is a particular, what seems to be (my word), skill of the Opposition to sit on both sides of the fence. You know, one and the other, or we support, but.

But the Honourable Minister who represents constituency number 19, the Honourable Minister of Public Works and Environment, put it better than I could. Because he reminded us, Mr. Speaker, that all governments have hard times, that all governments govern through difficult times. But it is a question of the

decisions that you make during those difficult times. Because it would have been easy for us to say, *no, we are not going to give seniors pension increases*. But we did not.

An Hon. Member: No, we did not.

Hon. E. David Burt: We made sure that we did. And we found the mechanism of which to do so. And so, to hear the Honourable Member, when he gets up and says his comments and his point about saying, *Well, oh, there's, you know, we only want to do it if it is a responsible thing to do*.

It is a responsible thing to do.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Premier's misleading. That's not what—

The Speaker: Point of order, what is that?

POINT OF ORDER [Misleading]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Those comments were not made on this side of the House. We said we supported the increase.

The Speaker: Okay. Thank you.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: We support the increase.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member will know and recognise that not everything is done in a verbatim fashion. He got up and said that we need to make sure that if we are doing these things it is sustainable. That is what he said.

And here is the thing, Mr. Speaker, at the same point in time, he gets up and argues that the fund is not sustainable.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Do you understand what I am saying? At the same point in time, he gets up and says the fund is not sustainable.

So, under one point, the fund is not sustainable. He gets up and tells people, *Don't rely on it. Don't rely on it, because it's not going to be there*. But then he says, and we would not, you know . . . the excuse is that, *We did not want to give increases because we didn't think the fund was sustainable*. That is all the things which he said, looking back on history.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. Point of order.

Hon. E. David Burt: All the things he said looking back on history—

POINT OF ORDER [Misleading]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: The Premier is misleading the House. I did not say we think the fund is unsustainable. We have an actuarial report provided by the Government that states, as a matter of actuarial opinion, that the fund is not sustainable. That is not our opinion. That is about as factual as it gets up here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. E. David Burt: So, Mr. Speaker, those facts of which the Honourable Member represents the same exact facts they were in 2013,—

Ah Hon. Member: Aah!

Hon. E. David Burt: —2014, 2015, 2016, when they did not give a pension increase, Mr. Speaker. The facts are the same. And so, it then explains the reason why.

An Hon. Member: They want to have it both ways—

[Inaudible interjections and general uproar]

Hon. E. David Burt: It explains the reasons why, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Members, Members, I would like to hear the Premier without having to filter through all that noise.

Hon. E. David Burt: It explains the reason why.

It explains the reason why the Honourable Minister for [constituency] 19, the Honourable Minister of Public Works and Environment, Jache Adams, says it speaks to the philosophy. Because yes, you have to make a choice. You have to make a choice of what is important to you.

And what is important to this Government is ensuring that we put forward the monies that we promised our seniors, Mr. Speaker. That is where we are, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. E. David Burt: They can chirp as much as they want because it burns them, Mr. Speaker, that over four years in Government they told seniors who were experiencing hard times as well—

An Hon. Member: That's right!

Hon. E. David Burt: *No, no, no; no, you do not*. Even in action, *Okay, let's go ahead and give them a little token increase so we can keep them silent*.

Mr. Speaker, that is a difference. And so today, I am happy that the Opposition is finally trying to come

around. But I want the people to hear very carefully what the Shadow Minister of Finance said.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Point of order Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member is misleading the House—

The Speaker: What is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER
[Misleading]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: —intentionally misleading the House. He says, “finally coming around.” In this Chamber, we have supported tons of Bills, specifically. [For] the Premier to get up and say and to infer that, oh, finally, we are coming around, we are certainly not coming around to green, but we certainly are agreeing that there are some good Bills, you know, and some good things.

The Speaker: The point that you are making is that you want the listening audience to hear that the Opposition has agreed with the Government on many occasions. Particularly on—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I want the public to hear that he is misleading the House to infer that we do not agree on things in this House. That is what I am saying.

The Speaker: The Opposition wants you to know . . . they agree with you often Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Yes. Mr. Speaker, I did not say that. I have said at many points in time that most of the things that come to the House, 90 per cent of the things are approved.

But I want people to know and understand and listen and hear what the Shadow Minister of Finance said. Because it is important, again, Mr. Speaker. It is important that people know and understand because that party has a history of saying many things before an election—

An Hon. Member: That’s right!

Hon. E. David Burt: —and then changing their minds afterwards. And so, you must be very careful to listen to the words.

What did he say, Mr. Speaker? He said—

[Crosstalk]

The Speaker: Ah, ah, ah, continue to speaker to me.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. E. David Burt: You see, Mr. Speaker, it . . . point of order, Mr. Speaker. And I just need to make the

point, if we were making this much noise you would have told us to quiet down, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Speak to me. I . . . I . . . I hear where you are—

Hon. E. David Burt: I am just saying we have to be kept fair on both sides, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Members, Members yes. I am listening to the Premier, and we need to hear what the Premier is saying.

Hon. E. David Burt: So here we are, Mr. Speaker. It is important because the fact that the Pension Fund is not fully funded was the same situation in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016, when they did not give increases. Yet we—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. E. David Burt: Hold a second. Hold a second. See? this is the point. We make different decisions.

You are making my point for me. We make different decisions.

An Hon. Member: That’s right!

Hon. E. David Burt: So, unlike the other side, Mr. Speaker, who said, *Oh, we need to make sure we are responsible. That is the reason why we are not going to give increases.* We have a different view that we will give the increases.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: What is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER
[Misleading]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: The Premier, again, continues to mislead the House.

My colleague said we need to ensure it is sustainable, and that is why we would *reform*. We would make the increases, but take action, which is why my original comment said we support this, but we are disappointed in the Government’s lack of action in 2013, 2016 . . . sorry, excuse me, the 2016 report, the 2019 report. All of these pension reports say the same thing. Eight years, no action.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Basically, because we are a political organisation we have different philosophies. They may want to try to get down the same road, but there are different philosophies and one side is expressing their viewpoint of their philosophy and the other side is expressing their viewpoint of their philosophy. They may never agree on philosophy. What they agree on is get-

ting down the road to the same point, maybe. But not on philosophy.

Hon. E. David Burt: So again, Mr. Speaker, because I am going to try to make my point, uninterrupted, and given that I am the last speaker and I have unlimited time I am going to do this. And I hope we are not here until five o'clock—

The Speaker: No, we will not be here until five o'clock. No, no.

Hon. E. David Burt: —because I just sincerely hope the Opposition will listen to the point of which I am trying to make, Mr. Speaker, because I think—

The Speaker: We are all in agreement that we will not be here until five o'clock. That is for sure.

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: Because I think that it is important, Mr. Speaker, because this is an important point. And I go back to what the Minister of Public Works and Environment said.

The Honourable Member, the Shadow Minister of Finance, cannot have his cake and eat it too. He cannot have his cake and eat it too. You need to actually understand and read through the lines, Mr. Speaker, because it is the same approach that led to the seniors in this country being told that money does not grow on trees. His view of what he is saying is that the fund is not sustainable and that is the reason why not to give pension increases.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: He is misleading the House again. It is not my view. It is the professional actuarial opinion as provided by the Government to this Honourable House. Black and white.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Basically—

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker: Basically, what the Premier is saying is that the report may state what it states. The view of how you handle the information is different because it is two different viewpoints.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, they know the point. They just cannot get past the fact that for four years they told the seniors of this country, no.

An Hon. Member: For eight years you didn't do anything.

Hon. E. David Burt: No!

Oh, well, I will tell you what we did do in eight years. We did raise seniors' pensions every year by the rate of inflation. We made sure that—unlike them asking public officers to take furlough days, Mr. Speaker—we went ahead and made sure they got increases. We made sure, Mr. Speaker, that we expanded benefits.

[Cross talk and general uproar]

The Speaker: Members, the Premier is trying to wrap up. The longer he has to fight over the crowd, we could be here till five o'clock, and no one wants to be here till five o'clock. So, I suggest that if we tone it down, we can get the Premier to his endpoint quicker.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, they want me to move on, but I have not been able to make my point because I continue to get interrupted.

The Speaker: And we want you to make your point.

Hon. E. David Burt: I am trying, Mr. Speaker. I am trying, trust me. But every single time the Honourable Member who got up and said, the reason why—paraphrasing now (before he [raises] a point of order) that it isn't a quote . . . the reason why, you know, that increases may not have been given is because the fund is not sustainable. That [was] the reality then. It is the reality now. An actuarial report which states the condition of the fund does not dictate how the Government acts.

Their view was because the fund says this, the report says this, we are not going to give an increase. When we saw that, we said, *We understand what the fund says, but we are going to give an increase.*

There is a difference of approach. And that is what the public needs to know, hear, and understand because the man who would be Minister of Finance is adopting the exact same approach that the former Minister of Finance had.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: What is your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: The Premier is saying I am adopting the former approach. I have my own approach, Mr. Speaker, which has been laid out and sup-

ported by my colleagues here. He does not speak for me. And I ask him to keep it to the factual things which he can refer to and not mislead the House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I—

The Speaker: Premier, he said you cannot read his mind and speak for him.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I know the philosophy of which he approaches, and that is the exact same way. Remember, he started . . . he started his comments, Mr. Speaker, by saying if inside of these reports, et cetera, are not sustainable, that is probably the reason why they did not give an increase. That is fine. That is okay. He can have that position, Mr. Speaker.

But the public needs to know and understand what that position leads to. That position leads to what the public saw under the One Bermuda Alliance Government with no pension increases. That is what that view leads to, Mr. Speaker. That is factual, and that has happened.

No. So, Mr. Speaker, now not having been point-of-ordered, I will try to move on.

An Hon. Member: Oh!

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Hon. E. David Burt: So, now here is what is important as well, Mr. Speaker, because, Mr. Speaker, it burns them so much. It burns them so much that on this particular issue their history is what it is.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. E. David Burt: And do you realise . . . do you realise how much more noise they are making?

The Speaker: You will be all right.

Hon. E. David Burt: Oh, do not worry, I am going to go to my notes just to make sure that everyone in this country knows and recognises what, what, what, what this change actually means to them, Mr. Speaker. Because I do not want our senior citizens to know, to recognise, and to understand that this does not actually mean a change. So, let me go ahead again, Mr. Speaker.

So, the basic contributory pension, Mr. Speaker, will go up in our time in office, has gone up, the basic, by two . . . just under \$200 a month, or \$2,350 a year. That is what this Government has done by keeping our faith with seniors and making sure that we increase their pensions.

The overall rate of increase since this time of which we have been doing this, which is compounded over time, is now up to 19 per cent, Mr. Speaker. That

is important, matching the rate of inflation over that time. And then the maximum contributory pension, Mr. Speaker, has gone up by \$271 a month. Mr. Speaker, \$271 a month is over \$3,000 a year when added up. That is the difference that the consistent record of [what] increases of the contributory pension benefit has meant. And that, Mr. Speaker, is a good thing for our seniors.

I want to repeat it. The last time I said it in my statement, but I am going to do it again because the marked contrast between 2013—no; 2014—no; 2015—no; 2016 . . . *oh, it is election. Let's give them an increase that comes into effect.* That, Mr. Speaker, is their record.

But let us point to our record. In 2017—an increase; in 2018—an increase; in 2019—an increase. In 2021, after the COVID-19 pandemic, an increase for two years. So, it was above the rate of inflation. In 2023—an increase at the rate of inflation, 4.1 per cent. In 2024—a 2.4 per cent [increase]. In 2025—a 2.3 per cent [increase]. And 2026—a 1.74 per cent [increase]. We continue to keep our word.

And the one thing that I have faith and confidence in, Mr. Speaker, is that the Progressive Labour Party will keep faith with its election promise. And its election promise is that we will continue to ensure that contributory pension benefits go up with the rate of inflation. That is in our platform. That is our solemn promise. That is something that this government has continued to deliver, and we will continue to deliver going future.

So, with that, Mr. Speaker, I move that the said Draft Order be approved and a suitable message be sent to His Excellency, the Governor.

The Speaker: Thank you, Premier.

The matter has been agreed by the House so that the appropriate letter will be sent. Thank you.

[The Draft Order entitles the Contributory Pension (Amendment of Contributions and Benefits) Order 2026 was approved.]

The Speaker: (She wanted to get up in the Chair and take us to Committee.)

And that, Members, brings us to a close of the matter in reference to the Contributory Pension (Amendment of Contributions and Benefits) Order 2026.

[Order] number 2 is carried [forward].

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I do note, but I would like to make a statement, if I could, on this particular matter, that I know that . . . because it is a disappointment. [Order] number 2 is the report, right?

The Speaker: No, no, no.

Hon. E. David Burt: Justice?

The Speaker: [Order] number 2 is Justice.

Hon. E. David Burt: Then I will defer on that one.

The Speaker: [Order] number 2 is carried [forward]?

Hon. E. David Burt: We will carry it, unfortunately.

The Speaker: Okay, [Order] number 3 is the motion that was done by the Honourable Premier in reference to the Commission of Enquiry.

Hon. E. David Burt: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: And that is being carried over too. And you would like to make an explanation on it being carried over?

MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO HISTORIC LAND LOSSES IN BERMUDA WHICH WAS TABLED FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY ON 10TH DECEMBER 2021

[Carried forward]

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement on this, Mr. Speaker, just to make sure that it is put on the record. Because it is, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, particularly unfair to the persons and the families and to this House and all the rest who went ahead and put together this report. Mr. Speaker, I note that Members Opposite have introduced—

The Speaker: Well, let me just say that . . . it is a commitment to make sure it gets done as long as the right parameters are in place. So, I do not want it to feel like we are being blocked unnecessarily here.

And I know that you and I have talked about that quite a bit to make sure that all the, what could be seen as issues (I will use that word) . . . we are going to iron out all those issues so that we can go forward and have the matter discussed at the appropriate time.

Hon. E. David Burt: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful, and I am not in any way, shape, or form . . . but I think that the members of the public deserve an explanation, especially the people who have written to yourself, who have written to myself, et cetera, all the rest.

We went through this, we came to a space of agreement, and I note that there was something additional that was introduced on this. I sincerely hope that we recognise that these are old matters, and I would reach out to the Leader of the Opposition and say, let's move this forward together.

There is no reason why the Opposition needs to continue to object to us putting forward this motion.

The Speaker: Now, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait—

Hon. E. David Burt: Put it forward so we can have—

The Speaker: Now take a seat, take a seat. That's not what happened.

It is not the objection of the Opposition. It is the introduction of facts that we have to verify to make sure the facts are clear in the way that we move forward. And it is not . . . there has been no (how do I want to put that?) . . . there has been no position that says that this is where another organisation stands versus where the Government stands. It is . . . there are facts on the table. Our job as a Parliament is to make sure the facts give us the latitude to do what we need to do. And we are doing the assessment of it.

You know—

Hon. E. David Burt: I am grateful, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I think you know clearly that it is a matter we would like to see proceed. But we have to make sure that—

Hon. E. David Burt: I am grateful, Mr. Speaker, and I sincerely hope that we can have a written ruling and I would hope and indicate that Members Opposite, if they have an objection to this matter progressing, as they said, or introducing new information, that they can put those matters in writing—

Mr. Scott Pearman: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. He is misleading again.

The Speaker: I'll, I'll—

Hon. E. David Burt: —as the Government has put those matters in writing to the Chair.

The Speaker: We will iron out any issues that come so that when we get to the point there will not be . . . you will not have to start a debate with this type of issue. We will clear it out; we will get a path that will get us into the debate without this being part of the debate. Okay?

Thank you. All right.

Hon. E. David Burt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am assuming item number 4 has been carried over.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: Item—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Mr. Speaker? Not to be pedantic and carry on this, but if we, as the Opposition, don't give a statement as well on this issue, it is one-sided.

An Hon. Member: There should be two points out of this.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, it is one-sided, and it has been unfair, quite frankly, today.

The Speaker: Mr. Whip? I will give you an opportunity to clarify anything you need to be clarified on this, but—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, yes.

The Speaker: —let's not set—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: No, I will not—

The Speaker: What I should have cautioned was that—

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Okay.

The Speaker: —let's not set this as a precedent that we get up when something is not being done and try and have a discussion on why it is not being done. A decision was made that it is either done or not done, and we stand by that.

But I gave latitude to the Premier, so now I am obligated to give latitude to you guys, to the Opposition.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will simply say this—

The Speaker: I am going to guide you to be—

Mr. Scott Pearman: I will say three sentences and sit down.

The Speaker: —relatively brief, please.

Mr. Scott Pearman: The impression was twice given in this Honourable House by the Honourable Premier that the reason that the motion is not progressing is owing to some sort of objection by the Opposition.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

Our Parliament is governed by rules and Standing Orders. You were made aware of the relevant rule and Standing Order. We have a rule of sub judice. You were made aware of it. You were made aware by the court of what cases are proceeding before the court, and you made your ruling. And your ruling was that the motion did not proceed.

The suggestion that we did anything other than draw to the attention of the Speaker's office what was going on in the court and the proper rules, that is all we did, and we did not block. We just follow the rules around here.

Thank you.

The Speaker: I will state that information has been brought to my attention. That information will be assessed. That information will be assessed, and the decision will be made [as to] when we proceed, okay? And

I think that covers everybody in the room on that point. Okay?

Premier, item number 4 . . . item number 4 is being carried [forward] as well. And would you like to close?

Hon. E. David Burt: No problem, Mr. Speaker, but, Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise a point of order.

The Speaker: Point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. E. David Burt: The point of order is, Mr. Speaker, that the Government is in possession of a written ruling from yourself on this matter, and the information that was introduced predates that ruling. So all I was asking is to ensure that we can get a written ruling on this matter. That is it.

SPEAKER'S RULING

[Precedent on sub judice decisions]

The Speaker: And, Mr. Premier, I would really value that behind-closed-doors conversations do not make it to this floor. I really would appreciate that.

This conversation is going down a road that is bringing closed-door conversations into a space that should never have been discussed in the public. Those were conversations of us trying to work this thing out.

And you know that my office has done a heck of a lot to try and get us down the road. And we have been very accommodating to both sides to make sure that we get a clear path without anything that is going to come back and hinder us later on in life on this matter. Not our life, but, I mean, the function of Parliament when it comes to making decisions on sub judice.

We have got to protect the precedent that is set. And that is why we are taking the course that we are taking to make sure. And the conversations that we have had, both sides, behind closed doors, are supposed to remain behind closed doors, Premier.

Hon. E. David Burt: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would—

The Speaker: And you know I have given a commitment to make sure we have moved in a way that provides a latitude for us to go.

The information and the latitude you referred to predated recent information that has been presented. If the recent information presents and needs to be clarified, then the best thing for us to do is to clarify the information before we proceed. We are doing that. And you know that. That is what we have talked about already.

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

Mr. Speaker, I just only asked to make sure that we can get a written ruling on the particular matter. That was it. I think that it is important for the House—

[Crosstalk]

The Speaker: Premier, Premier—

Hon. E. David Burt: I am trying to move to—

The Speaker: Wait, wait, wait, wait.

Premier, I have asked that we do not continue this conversation, because the more we continue, our private conversations, behind-closed-door conversations, are being exposed where they should not be exposed. Because . . . and that closed . . . and let me clarify for the listening audience.

The closed-door conversations are something that happen regularly in this Chamber between Members of both sides when matters are on the floor. This is not a separate case of how things are handled. It is a regular occurrence that behind-closed-door conversations take place to resolve issues that come before the House.

And the worst thing that we want to do is set a precedent where private, behind-closed-door conversations now become conversations that take place in this room. It is just not the precedent we want to set. Because then it is going to question whether or not we can have open and frank conversations behind closed doors to resolve a matter without the fear of it becoming public knowledge.

Every negotiation has closed door conversations that do not come out in the public. And this is where we are today on this matter. And the commitment is that we are going to find a way forward. But we have to deal with what has been presented. That is all it is. And I would prefer that we end this conversation here and now. Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. E. David Burt: No worries, Mr. Speaker. I await the ruling and thank you.

And I move this Honourable House to now adjourn until Friday, July 17.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Does any Member wish to speak to that?
Minister Furbert.

BERMUDA FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do want to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to just highlight an area that we do not highlight enough, but we all have the opportunity to use their service. And that is the fire and ambulance service, Mr. Speaker. If

anyone in our community has had the opportunity to experience their service, it is an exceptional service.

And I want to applaud the teams within Bermuda's Fire and [Rescue Service] team who endure and witness many health emergencies, and they do it with such profession . . . profession and professional service. And so, I do want to take the time to applaud Bermuda's Fire and [Rescue] Service. And any time anyone ever experiences their service, that they should let them know how they are doing.

SENIOR ABUSE

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Mr. Speaker, I do want to speak to an issue. And that is an issue that has been recently in the news in regard to senior abuse.

Mr. Speaker, every year in budget debates, I take the opportunity to share what senior abuse is looking like for us here in Bermuda. As the Minister who has responsibility for Youth, Social Development and Seniors—but we all have responsibility for youth, social development and seniors—I do not take lightly any senior abuse. And anyone who takes it upon themselves to abuse a senior, and it is notified through the office of Ageing and Disability Services, will be prosecuted to the fullest.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it has been recently reported that the numbers have increased as it relates to senior abuse. And I want to add some context to that, because we do now have an ageing demographic. We know that our numbers as far as persons who are seniors are increasing and they will increase year after year. So, we will see an increase in numbers. And there are many reasons why a senior may experience abuse. First of all, I want to clarify that it is wrong for any senior to be abused.

But the number one category in which seniors are being abused is psychological, meaning people are using words, being coercive, saying the wrong bad things to seniors, which can be very traumatic because you know, words can sometimes hurt more than the actual physical abuse. And usually when physical abuse occurs, psychological abuse occurs before that. But there are many categories, so I just do not want to use the term “senior abuse.” There is psychological, there is physical, there is financial abuse. And actually, the numbers for financial abuse have gone down from last year to this year. So, the awareness that we have been doing in the public domain, as far as ageing and disability services—and I want to acknowledge the Bermuda Police Service, who also have taken a handle in making sure that we educate our community, and particularly our seniors, around financial abuse—is working.

But it is not just a campaign or an awareness that we must do once a year. We all have seniors in our lives. Particularly us as MPs, we have many seniors in our lives. And we must take responsibility in sharing what those red flags are for senior abuse. There can be

very difficult circumstances for seniors, particularly living with family members, because we know, we have research that tells us that family members are actually the ones who are abusing seniors.

But it can be very difficult for seniors when they have to rely on someone to help them. As we get older, we all will have to rely on someone to help us. So how you raise your children is important. How you make them responsible, Mr. Speaker, is important. How you teach them morality and how to have moral behaviours is important, Mr. Speaker. So, there are some values that we have, or we would have learned, or would have been educated to, as it relates to treating and respecting our seniors.

Mr. Speaker, there also has been reporting from the Opposition in regard to the Office of the Public Guardian. And I am glad we both agree on both sides of this House that the Office of the Public Guardian is something that is needed.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Hon. Tinee Furbert: But to say that this Government is failing in the area of the Office of the Public Guardian . . . that is what was reported in the paper, that this Government has failed.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Well, I would say the OBA failed because they first introduced the Office of the Public Guardian.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Tinee Furbert: But do not worry, Mr. Speaker, we will get it done.

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

Hon. Tinee Furbert: We will get it done.

An Hon. Member: Heard that one.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Because we are a Government that has consistently demonstrated that when we say we are going to do something, we will do it.

An Hon. Member: It could take 30 years, though.

[Laughter]

Hon. Tinee Furbert: It could take 30 years for you.

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: Yes!

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Mr. Speaker, we are proud to announce that we have drafting instructions within our Chambers and the Attorney General will speak more to it soon. But we are progressing the Office of the Public Guardian for our seniors so that they can have additional protection.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Tinee Furbert: So, when it does come to this House, I would appreciate the banging on the tables even more.

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Another Hon. Member: Mm-hmm.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: We said we would.

Hon. Tinee Furbert: Because we will get it done. And you will see, again, because [of] this Government's promise kept—

An Hon. Member: Yes.

Hon. Tinee Furbert: We will see who the real failures are, Mr. Speaker.
Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Does any other Member wish to make a contribution at this time?

You are packing up to go?

Mr. Dennis Lister III: No, I am stepping up—

The Speaker: Oh, you are stepping up to speak.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Yes, yes.

The Speaker: And Junior Minister Lister, you have your 20 minutes.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
I will not take 20 minutes, Mr. Speaker, but—

An Hon. Member: Take your time.

[Laughter]

HSBC ATM BANKING

Mr. Dennis Lister III: In the vein of the speaker before me, Mr. Speaker, I just want to raise an issue.

There is a saying: "He who knows it, feels it best," Mr. Speaker. And I say that because I was shocked and surprised this past week. I live in the West End. And if you live between . . . I am going to narrow it down a bit, but if you live between Barnes Corner and

Somerset Bridge, Mr. Speaker, and you are a client of HSBC, there is only one location where you can go to do some banking at the ATM, at Port Royal [Service] Station or Esso.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Whale Bay Port Royal. But that is the only ATM.

Well, Mr. Speaker, to my surprise, last week (as I said, I live in the area) I went down to the gas station to go to the ATM. And I walked in, and I went to where it was, and the ATM is gone, Mr. Speaker. Shocked and totally surprised, I went to the cashier and asked what had happened. And the cashier said they were told that the machine is going to be taken away and there is no . . . it will not be replaced [with] no further instruction.

So, Mr. Speaker, that left me upset because if you live in between Somerset Bridge and . . . I said, Barnes Corner. But if you really think about it, the next ATM for HSBC is at Warwick Gas Station down by the bowl. So, if you live between Warwick and Somerset Bridge, and you are a HSBC customer, you have nowhere to go to use an ATM.

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: So, Mr. Speaker, I am inconvenienced. I now have to go up into Somerset. Yes, there is a branch up there [with] ATMs, or on my way travelling to Warwick I have to stop at Warwick Gas Station.

But, Mr. Speaker, as I said: *He who knows it, feels it best*, because there are many people who live in that area that I mentioned that now have to change how they . . . when they have to go to the bank. If you lived in Granaway Heights, Spring Benny's, George's Bay, Rockaway, Mr. Speaker, you knew that if you had to go get some cash, you ran to the ATM, made a withdrawal, or they had the ATMs where you can do your deposits and transfers. So, you do not have to go to the bank to go in to make a transfer to another account (if it is an HSBC account) because you could do it at the ATM. Mr. Speaker, that has been taken away from [us].

And I will say, Mr. Speaker, if there is a plan that HSBC has to instal a new ATM there, you know, communication is good. Because as I said, when I spoke to the cashier, they told [me] that there was, you know, they are just taking it away. And to the point that the gas station even has a petition there for anyone who comes in who regularly used that ATM, they can sign the petition. Which I did, Mr. Speaker, because, I said, it impacts me. I now have to go further out of my way to go to the ATM if I want to take out from my HSBC account up into Somerset, or as I said, on my way driving to work.

So, Mr. Speaker, and as I said, I understand that the bank might have its reasons, but it should be

communicated because that has inconvenienced its customers.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think at a minimum, when we talk about minimum access to banking, I think having an ATM in an ideal location to service its customers is a minimum level or access of banking. And I think that has been taken away from its customers. So, as I said, Mr. Speaker, as I live in the area and there are many area residents: MP De Silva lives in the area—

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Yes.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: —MP Scott Simmons, [and] MP Jamahl Simmons. Their constituents will be impacted by this. So, I want to speak on behalf of those who are impacted.

And just to raise this to HSBC, if it is that they are taking it away for good, I ask [for] better communication. If they are replacing it, again, better communication to the customers in the area that use that ATM because it impacts them. And, you know, we have seniors who live in the area, the Rockaway Senior Centre, and there are probably seniors who go there to get cash out they needed. Now they have to go further out of their way, especially if they have limited transportation, to now get cash. So, it impacts a lot of people, Mr. Speaker.

So again, I do not want to speak too much on that. But again, it is just raising that concern that it has impacted a lot of people. And we would love to hear more from HSBC on what the plans are to do in that location.

INSTILLING RIGHT MORALS, ETHICS AND PRINCIPLES IN OUR YOUTH BEGINS AT HOME

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Mr. Speaker, switching gears here. The downside of us having sessions in the House every other week is that we did not have Parliament on the Friday after Father's Day. And I know there may have been some that said Happy Father's Day, but Mr. Speaker, I did not get a chance to speak to Happy Father's Day . . . not just to you, but to all fathers.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: But that is not where I am going at, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Happy Father's Day. New father. Yes, yes.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: What I am going at, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Happy Father's Day, Junior.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Thank you, thank you.

The Speaker: That is what he wanted; he is a new father.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Yes, I am a new father, I declare my interest.

But where I am going at, Mr. Speaker, is [during the] last session in this House, MP Richardson, he did speak of road behaviour and, you know, the increase of road deaths and things like that, Mr. Speaker. And he spoke a lot of what Government can do and more police in force. And I do not disagree with him, Mr. Speaker. But what I do go a bit further to say is that, Mr. Speaker, it starts at home.

The Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: And we have to . . . and I know not all homes are dual-parent homes, there are different home situations. But I implore and I encourage our fathers, our male figures, grandfathers, uncles, older brothers, cousins, the like, to speak to your young males in your family. The statistics show that young males, especially Black males, are those who are most impacted [by] the accidents or fatalities on our roads. And so, the Minister who spoke before me, she said it starts at home. And that is where we have to, notwithstanding the actions by government and the police, but it has to start at home.

And, Mr. Speaker, I am going to use some of my own personal stories.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Mr. Speaker—

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Mr. Speaker, before I got my bike at 16, Mr. Speaker, I can remember vividly, many times, driving in the car with you, and someone would overtake us on a bike, and you would [say], you know: *It was crazy, foolish doing all this here. I do not ever want to see you doing that on your bike.*

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: If not?

Mr. Dennis Lister III: If not, I am not going to say what the “if not” was.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: But, you know, you always say it, you never want to see us doing it on a bike. And, Mr. Speaker, I did take that to heart, and I will declare there were times where I did go against that. As a youngster, you know, I did speed, I did have those moments.

The Speaker: [INAUDIBLE]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: But, I always remembered, you know, the things that you would say to us in the car, or someone . . . you see someone else doing it, you know, that stuck in my mind. And as I got older, you know, you have to live by those things. As they say, if you train up a child, they will remember it as they get older.

And so, it goes back to, again, Mr. Speaker, males and females, mothers, grandmothers, everyone is impacted by road fatality. Again, I implore and stress for our males to please step up. Take the time to speak to a young person in your family. And it does not have to be a family member, it could be someone in your neighbourhood. You know, you see them doing something wrong, going down the wrong way. Or you have seen them on a bike, you know, we see some crazy stuff—pop a wheelie on a corner, overtaking in between vehicles. If you have seen someone, just take the time. You know, it might seem kind of hard to go out of your way, but that five seconds can change or save someone's life.

So, I encourage and implore the Government. We did see last week, the chairman of the Bermuda Road Safety Council announce that they will soon be launching the new Operation Road Safety Plan for five years. So, the Government is doing what we are doing. And again, the police, you will see the speed cameras coming on. All of those factors, plus with, as I said, males, females, mothers, fathers, everyone, just take the time out to talk to our young people. You know, five minutes of fun can turn into a lifetime of pain and agony. And you have to balance that.

And also, sometimes, Mr. Speaker—which I reflect again, growing up in your household, Mr. Speaker—you made sure to instil in us a healthy fear of you so that we knew that if we did something wrong, first, we had to face or answer to you first, before we had to answer for what we did wrong. And I think, you know, and that still stands with me to today, Mr. Speaker. And so, if we have more fathers and male influences instilling a healthy bit of fear in the younger children, the grandchildren, you know, that will help them when they have to go on in life to make decisions. Because it is always . . . and I said this before in this House, Mr. Speaker. I remember in my elementary and middle school years, the first day of school, every day, you said to the teacher that if I acted up in class, [the teacher] could correct me, but then [the teacher should] let [you] know, and when I got home you dealt with me. So, if we instil that in our children, again, that can make a big positive influence.

We see a lot of antisocial behaviour going on. There are many different reasons. But as I say, if we can get our males to stand up.

An Hon. Member: Bring back the cane.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Bring it.

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Mr. Speaker, I can say I have had the cane enough times, so I am not going to disagree. We can bring back the cane because,—

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: —because it puts a healthy fear in our children, Mr. Speaker, and that is what we need. It is a health . . . when it comes to discipline, Mr. Speaker, there is a balance between . . . I do not want to say abuse. But there is a balance when it comes to discipline and correcting your children, with doing it responsibly and then you going overboard. But we have to find that balance, Mr. Speaker. And I can say, Mr. Speaker, growing up, you know, at the time, I did not think it was a balance, but I can look back now and say—

[Laughter]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: —you know, that balance got me to where I am today, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: That's right.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: So, we need more of that in our society and, you know, we are a village. We need to go back to that village. In the old school days, if you got in trouble in school, even without cell phones by the time you got home your granny already knew what happened. So, you were getting cracked by your granny.

And so, we need to go back to those days. And within reason, you know, we do not want to just be hitting young children for no reasons or, you know, going overboard. But within reason, we have to bring back some discipline, correction. And it might seem hard, you know, love hurts, tough love. You know, they say if you love something, you do have to let it go. But if . . . if you hold on too long, it does not mean you love it because you sort of crush it. It is like a flower. You know, you have to let it bloom, cannot hold it. Well, you know, with our children and young people, we have to give them some tough love. And tough love means being hard. Sometimes it means saying no. Sometimes it means saying no.

An Hon. Member: Sometimes it means stop using your tablet.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Sometimes it means saying no.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Or get rid of your leader.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Sometimes it means saying no, Mr. Speaker, when—

[Desk thumping, laughter and inaudible interjections]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: I will stay out of that one, Mr. Speaker. But sometimes it means saying no when the child might want to hear yes. But we have to be hard. We have to stand in our . . . as parents and as an older people's society, we have to stand our ground.

And, Mr. Speaker, earlier in the debate, we heard a lot about seniors and when you will see pension. But Mr. Senior, I can guarantee—Mr. Speaker—(Mr. Senior.)

[Laughter]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Mr. Speaker, I can guarantee you that if we were to survey most of our seniors in society, they will recall growing up when, they got licks when they got in trouble. But that is what made them who they are today and got them through life.

So, if we want our young people to live to be productive members of society, and to live to be seniors, and to be able to benefit from the increase in pensions when they get to that age, Mr. Speaker, we have to instil in them the right morals, ethics, principles, so that when they go through life, they can be positive in what they do. So, Mr. Speaker, as I said, I am not going to be long. That was just my points I wanted to raise.

But again, as I said, I did not get to say it before, but to all fathers, and every day is a Father's Day because—Father's and Mother's Day—because they have to raise children. It is not a clock in, clock out job. It is a 24/7 job, Mr. Speaker. So, all parents, I want to commend them for the jobs they do, but encourage them, and especially males, to step up and help correct a young person where you can. Because they can . . . it might not only impact them, it impacts the wider community. Because if they can go off to do something positive, they can come back and contribute positively to Bermuda.

So, with that, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, MP.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Boy. We are going to do ladies first. How is that?

MP Tucker, you have your 20 minutes.

Ms. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will not be 20 minutes.

The Speaker: Okay.

SENIOR ABUSE

Ms. Robin Tucker: But I cannot sit here, especially when comments have been made about an article that I put in the paper, and I have to address it.

And I am going to address it very briefly, but I just want to say that I am very happy to hear, and I will . . . anytime I have spoken in this House or in the other place, if I felt like the Government has done something well, I am the first to get up and celebrate it. Right? I care about what's good for this country. What has not been good for this country, Mr. Speaker, is that a promise being made in a Throne Speech about having an Office of the Public Guardian in 2020, and we are six years later—

[Inaudible interjections]

Ms. Robin Tucker: —we are six years later, having paid people to work on the Office of the Public Guardian, and we now find out that senior abuse has increased, and we have no Office of the Public Guardian, and that is an issue. And so, I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, that again, I am glad to know that it is coming. However, I will say, and I want to make it very clear, that I will continue to speak about it until such time that it is in place.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you.

Is there any other Member who wish to speak?
MP Richardson.

INSTILLING RIGHT MORALS, ETHICS AND PRINCIPLES IN OUR YOUTH BEGINS AT HOME

Mr. Jarion Richardson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Given the opportunity for bipartisanship on road safety, it behoves me to stand after MP Lister and to contribute. Where we can work together, we should. And so, I want to endorse a lot of the points MP Lister was making, especially those that, our behaviour starts in the home and how much work it takes there.

I was, Mr. Speaker, going to talk to the Road Safety Council's plan, but I will have plenty of opportunity next week. I do not believe that it is what it should be, but again, in the spirit of bipartisanship, I want to reiterate that I agree with MP Lister's points, the vast majority of his points. I think that road safety is an issue that is imminently fixable if we work together as legislators.

And to that end, I just want to say that I will have the opportunity to speak a lot more on this issue next week, and I do not intend to pre-empt that debate.

The Speaker: Yes, we would not want you to pre-empt it.

Mr. Jarion Richardson: And I am very, very happy right now that it has the attention of enough people that this Honourable House will have an opportunity to

make a difference in the fight against the catastrophes that are happening on our roads and to our families.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Does any other Member wish to make a contribution at this time?

Opposition Whip.

LAWLESSNESS ON OUR ROADS

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, just very quickly on this roadside, I do not know who the National Security representative is in the House of Assembly at this present time.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Collective responsibility? Yes. Just very quickly, I received an email, several emails actually, on the issue of Middle Road and the lights that lead up to . . . is it Tee Street? Yes, that lead up to Tee Street. And those lights have been there for a while, some work getting done. And the emails were quite concerned. The fact that we had an accident on South Shore and then the road . . . everything was backed up. A 15 minute ride took an hour and 20 minutes just to get into town.

But today, what I witnessed on Middle Road and continue to witness on Middle Road at the Paget lights (and then today was even worse) is the fact that the lights are . . . and I called Public Works, just to get a better understanding if they were aware of the timing of the lights. But there is a period in between the two minutes that you get to drive through, or the one minute, either way, going east or west. In between that, both lights are red. And they sit red for about a minute and that is to allow traffic for the people who live in between that short space to be able to get out, to merge into the main road. What I continue to see is that they cannot merge onto the main road because the main road and the people on the main road, when those two lights go red, continue driving through it. Now, there is a major accident about to happen.

Today, during lunchtime I was at the traffic light. It went red. Oh, okay, cool. I counted the cars, 16 cars continued to go through—just cars—until finally somebody said: *Let me just obey the law*. Sixteen cars. I cannot even tell you how many bikes went through. Both lights were red and they were still going through. So, I am imploring whoever is going to be, or representing, National Security in the House, something has to happen.

Public Works is working on it. They have been communicating with the construction people. I talked to them. So, they have been communicating. The problem is, is that right now on the roads it is lawless, complete just do whatever. And you know what? It is funny because when you are on the road sometimes, you say:

That has got to be Pookie going through there. Why would he do that? Executives. Think about it. You think about it.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Think about it. Right?

The Speaker: It's a St. David's thing.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: It is the typical profile that you would say, yes, yes, they are going to go through it. Right? Everyone is going through this light. Everyone. And for the life of me, public, please, obey the law. The light is red. And then when something happens, guess what we do? *Ah, you know, I was racing . . .* and we want to be sympathetic. And the Honourable Minister, who has just gotten up, Junior Minister of Finance (I just understand) and was a part of road safety, he is making a compelling appeal. We have completely lost it. On the roads, completely lost it.

And then again, you open up the paper and you saw the other day another overturned car. On a straightaway this time. How does that happen? People are not paying attention. And this appeal is to the public, listen. And to the police. I know you have got challenges. We do not have a highway patrol like we used to. Something has got to happen, especially at points where we are talking about the Middle Road. There is going to be a catastrophe. And it is not the guys, just the guys, Minister. I am watching the girls lick along, also. So mentally, we are losing it. And just anything goes now.

And that stretches across the whole spectrum of how we are living today. A lot of the problems that we have today are because we did not use that rod. Or the fear of the rod. And now everybody comes to the, you know . . . and I will say this here. You know, many of us came up in single parent homes with just a mother. If the father was not there, the mother held the line. And I dare say now, mothers are not even holding the line because these kids are just doing whatever. Do not look at them wrong, Housing Minister. Do not look at these kids wrong.

So, something has got to happen. The police need to get to some of these hotspots. And I am imploring the Government just to speak to the new National Security Minister. I do not have his number. Or the representative that is in here because I do not know who that is.

An Hon. Member: All of them.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Oh, yes, it is all of them. So, all of you better do something about getting some police down there to—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Sorry, no, I called yesterday. Yesterday. That is how I found out all about, and then today I witnessed what I witnessed. Right?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, oh, yes, that is true. Did not get an answer because the one who emailed me said he did not get an answer. No one answered the phone, so I will get him to—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: No, I am going to get him to call the Honourable Minister of Education. He will direct him in the right place.

The Speaker: Thank you, [Member].

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: So—

The Speaker: I was about to ask if anybody else . . . you look like you are going to sit down.

STUDENT BUS PASS QUANDARY

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Yes, yes, yes, I was going to sit.

Just one other thing I wanted to say. My grandson . . . yes, listen, I was helping my grandson. He came home, you know. He is trying to get his bus pass. Right? So, he goes to the bus stop.

An Hon. Member: The bus terminal.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: No, he went to the bus terminal here in town—yes, the central bus terminal in town. They told him, well, because he is in high school away, he cannot get a pass. Huh? This is a taxpaying family. He cannot get a pass. Where's the Minister? Okay, so he cannot get a pass.

An Hon. Member: Collective.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: So, collective, yes, yes, yes. I am like, *Hey, hey, what you talking about, mate?* Do not let me go down to that bus stop.

An Hon. Member: Point of clarification.

The Speaker: Point of clarification.

You want a point of clarification?

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: No, I need to finish because I want to be quick. I want to be quick.

So, so, it don't . . . I said, *Okay, well, look. What did they tell you? Oh, go up to Education.*

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: That is what they should have said. They did not say it. They told him he cannot get a pass.

You are not listening to me, are you? They told him he cannot get a pass. This is going to turn into a half an hour.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: I am not shouting. They told him he did not, he did not get a pass.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Talk to me, talk to me and you will be all right. Just talk to me.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: All right? He could not get a pass.

The Speaker: Just talk to me.

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: So, I am like, okay, cool. Let us go up to Education. So, we go and we get there and got to go on the second floor. So, we get to the second floor and you got to make a call to get somebody.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: So, so, so, we make a call. *Hey, Bill, you are not supposed to come here. You got to . . . you got to go down to cross Shopping Centre down there.* That is how they spoke. Just like that.

I am on the phone. *Yeah, Bill, look, you got to go down there with them across from Shopping Centre. You know where One Communication is.*

I said: *You have to go down to One Communication, get a pass?* So, okay, cool. I am, you know, because I am trying to make sure that my grandson does things right. Do not get all upset. I am not getting upset. I am like, okay, fine. We go there.

Three places just to get a pass. Just to get a—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: Oh, no, no, no, no, no. We followed instructions on where to go, and everywhere we were told to go, until eventually we got the right place. So, we got to do some better communication, especially to our students. He is excited now. He has got his pass. He can catch a bus.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. L. Craig Cannonier: No, no, it was a teaching lesson because otherwise I would not have known that people just did not know what they were doing. Yes. The bus terminal told him, *Naw, boss, you cannot get a pass.* Now, there you go. So, we need better commu-

nication, and that is all I am getting at is, just we need to help our students out, not make things difficult. One building to the next building to the next building just to get a pass.

The Speaker: All right.
Minister.

STUDENT BUS PASSES ISSUED BY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Mr. Speaker, and I will start off with exactly what everybody else says. I was not expecting to speak, but since the Opposition did not give me an opportunity to give a point of clarification, I will take this opportunity to do so, so that everyone out there knows what the proper process is. Mr. Speaker, every single student that attends school in Bermuda—

An Hon. Member: Ah! Hello.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: —knows that the bus passes are issued by the schools. And if that person does manage to lose the bus pass, or they do not get the bus pass at that particular time, the next process is they attend the Department of Education and they will be issued a pass. They will take a record of it and they will issue the pass to any student, whether they are Bermudian or they are coming from overseas. That is the process. So, I am unsure about what happened at the—

The Speaker: Whether they are in school here, or school overseas.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: We got it, we got it. I got it. We got it.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: It is where they attend school, Mr. Speaker, because if they attend school in Bermuda, those passes are sent to the schools and they are issued. Any other student, then, must show up at the Department of Education—

The Speaker: Okay. Yes.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: —and they will be issued a pass. And that includes any student that does not attend a school in Bermuda.

The Department of Education's offices are located, as the speaker said, down by the shopping centre on Victoria Street. They moved there maybe a year ago and so that is where they were. Where he happened to go was the Ministry Headquarters, which is located on 44 Church Street.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: The bus pass is for students.

For the public's edification, bus passes for students are not issued by the Department of Public Transportation. They are issued by the Department of Education, and they keep a record of these things so they know who has got them and how many they have given out. So, anyone who is seeking a bus pass for their child who might be returning from school overseas and would not have gotten one from their school, just [got to] the Department of Education Headquarters down there on Victoria Street, across from [the] shopping centre and they certainly would be accommodated for that.

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister, for the clarification.

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

The Speaker: Thank you.

Does any other Member wish to add any comments this afternoon? It looks like I am going to stand on my feet before anybody else does.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: How is that one? Thank you.

Members, we thank you for your participation today. It is not five o'clock yet. That is good. It is not five o'clock yet.

We thank you for your participation and, unlike normal, we will be back next Friday instead of the following Friday. So do not get your Fridays mixed up and show up a week late because you will be here by yourself.

An Hon. Member: All by yourself.

The Speaker: All by yourself.

[Inaudible interjection]

LAWLESSNESS ON OUR ROADS

The Speaker: That's right.

So, in saying that, have a decent weekend. Be safe.

And I do want to make a comment in reference to MP Cannonier's comment around the people going through the stoplight. Similar, just one day this week, I am coming down. I stopped. I was the first car. I stopped at the stoplight. When it turned red, two, three cars behind me stopped and all of a sudden, a bunch of cars just came through. There were not two or three, there were about four or five cars behind me. They just kept coming through. We had already stopped. We had stopped to indicate that the light has changed. You are supposed to stop, and these cars from the back just kept coming through. So yes, it is an issue that should be addressed.

With that said, the House now stands adjourned and we will see you next week Friday, at 10:00 am.

[Gavel]

The Speaker: Thank you.

[At 4:36 pm, the House stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Friday, 17 July 2026.]