



**2025/2026 SESSION**  
of the  
**BERMUDA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**  
**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**27 JUNE 2025**

*(Sitting number 15 of the 2025-2026 Session)*

*(pages 1157-1202)*

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

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**BERMUDA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY  
OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT  
27 JUNE 2025  
10:04 AM**

*Sitting Number 15 of the 2025/2026 Session*

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

There are no other announcements.

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

**MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE**

**PRAYERS**

**The Speaker:** There are none.

*[Prayers read by Mr. Clark Somner, Clerk]*

**PAPERS AND OTHER  
COMMUNICATIONS TO THE HOUSE**

**The Speaker:** Good morning, Members.

**The Speaker:** I believe that the Minister for the Cabinet [Office] has a paper.

*[Gavel]*

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

**The Speaker:** The House is now in session.

**The Speaker:** Good morning.

**CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

*[Minutes of 13 June 2025]*

**PRIVACY COMMISSIONER  
PRE-IMPLEMENTATION ANNUAL REPORT  
JANUARY 2020–DECEMBER 2024**

**The Speaker:** Members, the Minutes from the 13<sup>th</sup> of June have been circulated. Are there any amendments required?

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly the Privacy Commissioner Pre-Implementation Annual Report January 2020 to December 2024 as required by section 34 of the Personal Information Protection Act 2016.

There are none. The Minutes will be printed as confirmed.

*[Minutes of 13 June 2025 confirmed]*

**MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR**

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**The Speaker:** There are none.

There are no other papers or communications.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER  
OR MEMBER PRESIDING**

**PETITIONS**

**APOLOGIES**

**The Speaker:** There are none.

**The Speaker:** First, we have received notice from the following Members who will be absent today: MP Leroy Bean, MP Scott Pearman, MP Vance Campbell, MP Douglas DeCouto have all indicated that they will be absent today.

**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS AND  
JUNIOR MINISTERS**

**OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REPORT  
1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2024**

**The Speaker:** We have eight Statements this morning. The first is in the name of the Premier.

Premier, would you like to present your Statement?

**The Speaker:** I would also like to read out that I have received the Ombudsman Annual Report, which covers a period of the 1 January to the 31 December 2024. This report is submitted in accordance with section 24(1) and 24(3) of the Ombudsman Act 2004.

**Hon. E. David Burt:** Sure, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Go right ahead.

## S & P AND MORNINGSTAR RATINGS BERMUDA'S STRONG RATINGS CONTINUE

**Hon. E. David Burt:** Good morning to you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with this Honourable House encouraging news that highlights the strength of Bermuda's economy and the confidence that global investors continue to place in our Island. Mr. Speaker, two globally respected rating agencies, [S&P Global and Morningstar DBRS](#), have completed their latest assessments of Bermuda's creditworthiness. These are independent institutions with no local political interest, whose work is based entirely on data, policy analysis and economic fundamentals.

On May 13, S&P reaffirmed Bermuda's long-term sovereign credit rating at A+ and its short-term rating at A-1 with a *Stable* outlook. Just yesterday, Morningstar went one step further, upgrading Bermuda's long-term issuer ratings to A (high) and upgrading our short-term ratings to R-1 (middle).

*[Desk thumping]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** All outlooks were confirmed as *Stable*.

Mr. Speaker, this upgrade is a direct result of Bermuda's economic recovery, sound fiscal policy and credible institutions. S&P stated, "The stable outlook reflects our expectation that, . . . the local economy will remain healthy, and will support solid government finances and low debt, as well as Bermuda's . . . external asset position." While Morningstar stated, "The upgrade reflects Morningstar DBRS's view that Bermuda's robust growth outlook and steady improvement in public finances have strengthened its credit quality."

Morningstar further noted that Bermuda recorded economic growth of 4.9 per cent in 2023, with growth between 4.5 per cent and 5.0 per cent projected for 2024, surpassing previous estimates. They cited the performance of international business and the steady rebound in tourism as key contributors to this growth. Mr. Speaker, the agencies also highlighted Bermuda's improving fiscal position. Morningstar reported that our deficit has averaged just 0.4 per cent of GDP over the past four years, and the Government has achieved its first balanced budget in more than two decades.

These are not our words, Mr. Speaker, they are the findings of unbiased independent analysts. Morningstar stated plainly: "Bermuda's track record of prudent fiscal policy is a key credit strength." Morningstar also pointed to our declining debt ratio, which has fallen from 46 per cent of GDP in 2020, at the height of the pandemic, to 35 per cent in 2024, and is projected to continue falling in the years ahead.

Morningstar stated, "The government debt ratio is projected to decline over the next several years,

even before accounting for the effects of the new corporate income tax." This is further evidence that the improvement in Bermuda's public finances is the result of sustained fiscal discipline and economic momentum, not dependent on future revenues. The report went on to note that, debt dynamics are expected to remain favourable even without additional revenue from the new tax, underscoring the credibility of Bermuda's current fiscal trajectory.

Mr. Speaker, this Honourable House will recall that in this year's budget, this Government confirmed a \$19.7 million surplus for fiscal year 2024/25, the first Consolidated Fund surplus since 2003. For fiscal year 2025/26, we are predicting a surplus of \$43.3 million. This progress is the result of fiscal discipline, effective policy and sustained economic momentum, which is being recognised internationally with this sovereign rating upgrade. The agencies also [referenced] the strength of Bermuda's institutions. S&P noted that, Bermuda benefits from effective policymaking and institutions, a stable political environment and a strong legal system.

Mr. Speaker, though sovereign ratings may not mean that much to the everyday Bermudian, these ratings carry significant weight. They help determine our cost of borrowing, influence investor perceptions and reflect the judgment of professional analysts who examine economies around the world. For Bermuda to maintain an A+ rating from S&P and to receive an upgrade to A (high) from Morningstar is a clear signal to the global community that this Government is managing Bermuda's fiscal affairs responsibly. Mr. Speaker, while both agencies noted longer-term challenges, such as economic concentration and demographic pressures, they also acknowledged the Government's commitment to addressing these through prudent reforms.

These include continued economic diversification as outlined in Bermuda's Economic Development Strategy; health care transformation as we move to universal health care; and the building of fiscal buffers through sustained surpluses and planned debt reduction. These efforts are aligned with the direction set out in the 2025/26 Budget. As I stated in this Honourable House last month, Bermuda has recorded four consecutive years of strong GDP growth, achieved the lowest unemployment rate in 50 years, witnessed record levels of Bermudians working in international business, and returned to a balanced budget for the first time in more than two decades.

Mr. Speaker, we also continue to invest in infrastructure, affordable housing, and health care, with capital expenditure at its highest level since 2010. We have reduced payroll taxes for 86 per cent of workers, cut energy taxes by 80 per cent, and delivered tax relief across the economy, all while delivering a budget surplus. That is responsible Progressive Labour Party governance in action.

Mr. Speaker, as I close, I want to thank the public officers, policy advisors and all those across Government and industry who contributed to this successful outcome. The rating upgrade from Morningstar DBRS and the rating affirmation from S&P Global are testaments to our collective hard work and represent an independent vote of confidence in Bermuda's economy. The global economic environment remains uncertain; however, the findings from these independent rating agencies are a timely reminder that Bermuda remains well-positioned, both economically and institutionally, to navigate global headwinds that may arise.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Premier.

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

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker, colleagues and the listening public.

**The Speaker:** Good morning.

#### **TRUTH BE TOLD: YOUTH RISE AGAINST THE VIOLENCE—A MOVEMENT BEGINS**

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today with pride, gratitude and hopefulness to share with this Honourable House and the wider Bermuda community the profound and inspiring event held earlier this month on June 10 titled, "[Truth Be Told: Youth Rise Against the Violence](#)."

Mr. Speaker, this spectacular and moving event featured teams from five schools across Bermuda who have been working for the last several weeks on anti-violence messages. Work that culminated in those teenagers making powerful presentations to a large audience at Pier 6 on Front Street. This event was attended by some of my Cabinet colleagues, permanent secretaries, school teachers, students and a throng of parents. The positive energy throughout the building was palpable and captivating, particularly because of the authenticity and profoundness of the teenage presenters.

Mr. Speaker, this event, hosted by the Ministry of National Security, was not merely an assembly or ceremony. It was a moment of truth, courage and transformation. It marked a major inflection point in our national conversation about violence; one led convincingly by our young people.

Mr. Speaker, "Truth Be Told" forms part of our Government's broader National Violence Reduction Strategy, and specifically, our Stop the Violence Campaign, which aims to confront the root causes of violence through awareness, education and direct community engagement. The event's purpose was clear: To create a meaningful platform for Bermuda's

youth to express their voices authentically on the harsh realities they encounter. It posed a challenging question to our society: What happens when we stop speaking for our youth and instead listen intently to their voices and hear their stories?

On that night, Mr. Speaker, we witnessed a compelling and inspiring answer. Mr. Speaker, over the past several months, students from CedarBridge Academy, Bermuda Institute, Mount Saint Agnes Academy, The Berkeley Institute and Success Academy boldly chose to be part of the solution to the violence affecting their lives and communities, becoming active participants and leaders in this critical conversation. Each of these five schools created original, student-led media campaigns that explored some of Bermuda's most challenging social issues. With boldness, creativity and remarkably disarming honesty, they addressed:

**The Snitch Culture.** Bermuda Institute's campaign, "Unlocked," bravely tackled the harmful silence that allows gang violence to persist, emphasising that real strength lies in protecting one's community through speaking out when they know something related to a violent incident. They poignantly told the audience that we can't heal unless people tell the truth and that silence has not made us safer.

**Mental Health.** That was CedarBridge Academy's theme. "The War Within" explored the profound connection between violence and mental and emotional trauma, highlighting the necessity of acknowledging pain and promoting emotional healing and well-being. They told us to "talk before it turns toxic" and that "violence is a scream for help."

**Youth Stabbings.** [The] Berkeley Institute's "One Knife, One Moment, One Chance," exposed the brutal consequences of carrying weapons, urging young people to choose life-affirming paths over impulsive actions. These students told the audience that they had "seen things they should not have had to see" and asked the profound and provocative question, "what does the future look like if we do nothing?" Part of their slogan was "A Sharp Choice of Peace", a fitting pun for knife-related violence in our community.

**The Ripple Effect of Violence.** That was Mount Saint Agnes Academy's campaign. "The After-shock" passionately portrayed how acts of violence deeply impact and hurt families, schools, and entire communities, calling on everyone to help break the cycle. They refreshingly and honestly affirmed that violence was not just a public school problem and that it is indeed an "everybody" problem; and stated that violence in our community is not the Bermuda they deserve.

**Gang Recruitment.** Success Academy, through their campaign, "Still I Rise," explored why young people feel drawn toward gang affiliation, urging understanding and systemic change to effectively address the root causes of this problem. During this presentation, we were told that the "youth do not just

speak, they carry voices” and that our youth need “more consistent father figures.”

Mr. Speaker, these campaigns, created alongside Bermuda’s talented videographers and artists, including Ra’ees Tankard, Dion Greene, Marq Rodriguez, Kyle Hamilton and Jayde Gibbons were raw, moving and unforgettable. They offered a mirror to our society, challenging us to reflect deeply on the state of our community and our collective responsibility for change. Each of these presentations, Mr. Speaker, merits celebration and recognition. Each student who took part demonstrated immense courage and leadership by being a part of this project. They turned their pain into power, their experiences into messages, and their voices into catalysts for lasting change.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to recognise and celebrate the remarkable students who were honoured on last Tuesday night for their outstanding contributions to this powerful movement. The Voice of Change Award celebrated students who bravely and authentically raised their voices to address difficult truths about community violence. Their honesty, valour and ability to speak forcefully yet vulnerably helped spark meaningful reflections and deeper understanding in our community. Recipients of the Voice of Change Award were

- Giana Romeo of Mount Saint Agnes Academy;
- Jayden Belboda-Ravenau of The Berkeley Institute;
- Cezinee Cox of The Berkeley Institute.

Mr. Speaker, the Creative Vision Award recognised students who showed exceptional creativity, originality and artistic leadership. These students played key roles in visually expressing their campaign messages, demonstrating strong design direction, symbolic storytelling and an imaginative approach that captured the depth and seriousness of their messages. Recipients of the Creative Vision Award were

- Jayce Fough of The Berkeley Institute;
- Kamaya Lynch-Wade of Mount Saint Agnes;
- Kacia Barnett of The Bermuda Institute.

The Impact in Action Award is a team award celebrating the school campaign judged to have the greatest potential to inspire real-world change in Bermuda. Judged live by a panel using criteria such as clarity of message, creativity, community relevance and delivery. The Impact in Action Award was awarded to the students of The Berkeley Institute for their exceptional campaign, “One Knife, One Moment, One Chance.”

Mr. Speaker, each of these young awardees, and indeed all participants, have shown exemplary commitment and character. While we recognise these outstanding achievements, it is vital to reiterate that every student who participated is a winner. Each one of them is a young leader in our community and their bravery in confronting uncomfortable truths should

inspire us all. I extend special thanks to our dedicated sponsors: One Communications, MS Reinsurance and Nspire Bermuda. Their generosity and genuine commitment to youth empowerment made this initiative possible and we sincerely applaud them for supporting such a momentous and meaningful programme. Mr. Speaker, our gratitude also extends to the dedicated educators at each school, as well as the passionate members of our Gang Violence Reduction Team, led by our now-colleague MP Bishop Leroy Bean, and including Darren Woods, Bishop Lynn Landy and Cadre Smith. Their guidance and tireless work provided the safe space these students needed to flourish during this project.

Mr. Speaker, the “Truth Be Told” event is just the beginning of an important movement in Bermuda. A movement led by our youth and supported by us all. The campaigns presented will soon be widely accessible on social media platforms, including YouTube, Instagram and our dedicated website [www.stoptheviolencebda.com]. I implore everyone to engage with these youth-led campaigns, reflect on their messages and turn their calls for change into action. These campaigns mark the beginning of an ongoing, youth-led movement that will continue to grow, educate and transform the culture of silence into one of courage, truth and healing. Bermuda’s young people have spoken clearly: The violence impacting their lives is not theirs alone to solve. It is ours collectively. The change for which they are advocating requires each of us to take responsibility, to step out of the shadows of silence and into the light of active participation.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, let us honour these courageous young people by ensuring that “Truth be Told” is not merely a powerful moment, but a lasting movement, and a commitment to a safer, more compassionate, healthy and just Bermuda. Because, Mr. Speaker, when our youth rise, we must rise with them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

Members, the next Statement is from the Minister for the Cabinet [Office].

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

### HOUSE VISITOR

**The Speaker:** But Minister, before I acknowledge you, I just want to acknowledge in the Gallery we have visiting with us today Dr. Raddic. Am I correct? Dr. Raddic? And Dr. Raddic is here off a cruise ship, but not as a tourist. She is one of those who offers services as a medical team on the different cruises. So, I think she has a number selected for this season on the cruise ships coming in and out of Bermuda. We welcome you to Parliament this morning.

Now, I am trying to remember correctly. Some of us may know. She is not politically connected here, but your brother-in-law was a politician in one of our sister islands, if I am correct. Right? So, we understand your political interest in visiting us here this morning. Enjoy your time here and enjoy your stay in Bermuda. Thank you.

*[Desk thumping]*

*[Ministerial Statements, continuing]*

**The Speaker:** Minister.

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

### **BUILDING AMENDMENT ACT 2025, TABLING OF**

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** Mr. Speaker, later today I will be [tabling the Building Amendment Act 2025](#). This Bill addresses the broader and ongoing discussion about streamlining the Department of Planning's procedures, particularly concerning building permits.

Mr. Speaker, in a Ministerial Statement delivered to this House on May 30, I spoke frankly about the public perception and the genuine frustrations surrounding our planning system. Whether you are a homeowner renovating, a small business expanding or a developer shaping the next phase of our Island's growth, the message remains consistent: The process can feel too slow, overly rigid and unclear. That is a message we have heard, and this Bill is part of our response.

Mr. Speaker, one of the reforms I announced on 30 May was the development of a Competent Persons Scheme (or CPS). I mentioned then that legislative changes were underway to enable the introduction of this scheme. Initially aimed at solar installers, the CPS would allow qualified professionals to self-certify their work without needing stage-by-stage inspections, while still being subject to oversight and spot checks by the Department of Planning. But let me be clear, the CPS is just one example. The amendment before us, the amendment that I will be laying today, lays the groundwork for many such modernisations, including more efficient reviews, better use of professionals and more innovative building permit management.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill proposes a simple procedural change to amend section 23 of the Bermuda Building Act 1988, replacing the affirmative resolution process with the negative resolution process for regulations made under that section. This will allow technical regulations, such as those required for CPS initiatives, to be updated more effectively, without needing to refer each change back to the full House for approval, while still ensuring parliamentary oversight and accountability. This change enables us to act more swiftly when appropriate, while maintaining the

standards and protections the public expects. It supports our broader goal to develop a more responsive, reliable and efficient planning system. This change also aligns with our goal to

- be builders, not blockers;
- respect the time and deadlines of applicants and professionals, without compromising the role of the government; and most of all
- reflect the kind of practical reform the public has asked for and that we in this House have a duty to deliver.

Mr. Speaker, I trust that all Honourable Members, on both sides of this House, will recognise the value in this small but powerful amendment, and I look forward to a constructive and forward-looking debate when the Bill is brought forward for a second reading in two weeks.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

Members, the next Statement this morning is in the name of the Minister of Youth, Social Development and Seniors.

Oops, sorry. I jumped over the Minister of Health. Minister of Health, why did I do that?

*[Crosstalk]*

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** I do not know, but thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning.

**The Speaker:** There you go.

### **PUBLIC HEALTH RISKS OF NICOTINE-CONTAINING PRODUCTS AND LEGISLATIVE REFORMS**

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members, today I rise to address a public health issue that affects our youth, our families and the integrity of our regulatory system—the unchecked proliferation and marketing of [nicotine-containing products](#).

Mr. Speaker, this matter directly relates to a commitment that the Government made in the 2025 Throne Speech and that I reiterated in this Honourable House on the 28 March. On that occasion, I highlighted the role that smoking and vaping play in contributing to respiratory diseases, cancers and cardiovascular issues. In response, the Government pledged to advance new restrictions on flavoured vaping products as a concrete step towards reducing harm.

Mr. Speaker, the urgency of that commitment is underscored by the evolving landscape of nicotine use. Nicotine, while long associated with traditional tobacco use, is increasingly being repackaged and marketed in modern formats including vapes, oral pouches, lozenges and gum, often with flavours and packaging that are unmistakably appealing to youth.

These products, some of which were originally developed to support smoking cessation, are now being sold in convenience stores, gas stations and duty-free outlets in a manner that trivialises their medical intent and bypasses appropriate health oversight.

Mr. Speaker, global evidence is clear. According to the World Health Organization and the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention, nicotine is a highly addictive substance that can harm adolescent brain development, impact memory and concentration and increase the risk of future substance abuse. Flavoured nicotine products, in particular, have been found to increase initiation rates among youth and Bermuda is not immune to this trend.

Mr. Speaker, we are now witnessing the sale of fruit-flavoured vapes and nicotine pouches, lozenges and gum being sold outside of pharmacies, often without age verification. They are often packaged like candy and displayed next to chocolate bars at the checkout. Let me be clear, Mr. Speaker. These are medical products that should only be sold in registered pharmacies, as outlined in the Pharmacy and Poisons Act 1979.

Mr. Speaker, in response to this growing concern, the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the Chief Medical Officer and the Bermuda Health Council, will enforce the current restrictions requiring that nicotine products be sold only by registered pharmacists in registered pharmacies and, additionally, begin urgent legislative reforms to strengthen public protections. Mr. Speaker, these include:

1. Public education and retail engagement. We will launch an awareness campaign and provide clear guidance to retailers to avoid unlawful sales and protect public health. We will reaffirm and enforce the requirements that nicotine products must be sold only by registered pharmacists in registered pharmacies, with appropriate labelling, dosing limits and oversight as set forth in law.
2. Clarifying legal restrictions. We will amend legislation to further define nicotine-containing products, ensuring that newer forms like pouches and lozenges fall explicitly under the same regulatory scrutiny as liquid-nicotine used in vapes.
3. Age restrictions. We will introduce clear statutory restrictions prohibiting the sale of all nicotine-containing products to individuals under the age of 18, aligned with the protections already in place for tobacco under the Tobacco Control Act 2015.
4. Flavour Bans. We will restrict or ban non-therapeutic flavours that are designed to appeal to youth, such as candy, dessert and fruity variants, except for those explicitly approved for smoking cessation in clinical settings.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to closing the loopholes that have allowed these harmful products to be sold unchecked and without proper control. While we respect the role of legitimate smoking cessation aids, these must be distributed responsibly and only for their intended use, not disguised as lifestyle accessories for our young people. Mr. Speaker, I urge all parents, educators, retailers and health care professionals to join us in this effort to safeguard Bermuda's young people. The future of our country depends on the health and the well-being of the next generation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

Now the Minister of Youth, Social Development and Seniors. I think I have you in the right order this time, how is that?

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

**The Speaker:** Good morning.

### JOB READINESS PROGRAMME

**Hon. Tinee Furbert:** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in this Honourable House this morning to applaud the work of the Office of Youth Affairs, our Youth Services Team, on the successful launch and initial outcomes of their [Job Readiness Programme](#).

Mr. Speaker, this cornerstone initiative directly supports goal number four of the Government's National Youth Policy which is to "Increase employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for young people." This pivotal Job Readiness Programme has been strategically developed to provide Bermuda's young people with essential skills and work experience to prepare them for formal employment options. Mr. Speaker, this programme is a result of years of hard work carried out by the staff in the Office of Youth Affairs. A programme that began as a kernel has blossomed into a bountiful crop and this is truly remarkable.

Mr. Speaker, the Counsellor-in-Training (CIT) programme was initiated several years ago at our community centres under the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Recreation. Inspired by international youth development models from organisations such as the Boys and Girls Club, CHARACTER COUNTS! and the YMCA, Bermuda's CIT programme focused on positive youth character development. This programme not only engaged participants during the summer, but it also provided essential leadership skills and promoted community involvement in a safe environment. Mr. Speaker, many participants who showed an interest in becoming summer day camp counsellors progressed from junior counsellors to camp counsellors, and some even secured employment with the Department of Youth and Sports.

Mr. Speaker, during the summer months, the CIT programme provided activities for primary school students. However, it did not include provisions for high school students. Following advocacy by parents, the programme was expanded to include high school students. Consequently, a Leadership-In-Training [LIT] initiative was introduced to extend opportunities during mid-term holidays and uphold the core leadership objectives. Mr. Speaker, the Job Readiness Programme, is a hybrid of the CIT and the LIT launched in the summer of 2024. This programme was specifically offered to high school students in both public and private schools from S1 to S4. Mr. Speaker, the Office of Youth Affairs staff reached out to school principals and counsellors, attended school assemblies, shared information via social media and provided Government press releases in order to raise awareness of this beneficial programme.

Mr. Speaker, the programme's structure was meticulously crafted to ensure participants gain valuable real-world experience. Successful applicants who were able to meet the entry requirements participated in a comprehensive orientation session, completion of a two-week volunteer service period at either the Eastern or Western Zone Community Centres. These youth were to then commit to a minimum of five hours of work per day during the school term breaks. This immersive approach ensured students develop a strong work ethic and necessary practical skills. Mr. Speaker, the advantages of a programme such as this are substantial for young individuals. It fosters skill development in various areas, including communication, leadership, teamwork, critical caregiving skills, how to create safe and nurturing environments for children and develop crucial soft skills like time-management, self-control, conflict resolution and resilience among others.

Mr. Speaker, the first cohort of the Job Readiness Programme saw an enthusiastic response with 10 high school students registering. They demonstrated remarkable dedication with several students committing to staying with the programme for the entire summer, immersing themselves in the world of an Afterschool Programme worker by shadowing programme workers both in the field and in the office, gaining invaluable work experience. Mr. Speaker, an important aspect of the programme is its direct pathway to employment. Senior high school students were eligible for paid positions as Afterschool Programme workers. Additionally, students could earn community service hours and receive an individualised professional reference letter for use in future job applications. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to report on the immediate success of this pathway. From the inaugural cohort, four outstanding youth were hired into formal employment. I, alongside the Office of Youth Affairs, proudly acknowledge the accomplishments of these young individuals who have only recently graduated from high school and are now embarking on

their next educational journey. Those persons, Mr. Speaker, are:

- Jaidan Durrant. He emphasised learning much from coworkers and enjoying interactions with children, taking away self-control and conflict resolution skills.
- Makylie Smith highlighted the energy of the children and learning patience as key takeaways from the programme.
- Deja Steede found meeting and interacting with the children helped her become more open-minded.
- Daetona Simons cherished the relationships built with staff and children, noting the programme pushed her to be more disciplined and reliable.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the Senior Programme Supervisor, Ms. Renee James, who designed the Job Readiness Programme. She heard the voices of Bermuda's young people and created a programme that spoke to their exact needs. The success of this first cohort underscores how The Office of Youth Affairs' staff shows unwavering commitment to the National Youth Policy's goals. Mr. Speaker, the next cohort of the Job Readiness Programme is set to begin on 30 June. The Office of Youth Affairs is targeting a cohort of 12 youths. I encourage interested young people to apply at [www.ospbermuda.bm](http://www.ospbermuda.bm) that we may continue to support the next generation of Bermuda's youth workers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

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

**Hon. Alexa Lightbourne:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Good morning.

#### **BERMUDA'S COST OF LIVING: COST OF LIVING SUMMIT 2025**

**Hon. Alexa Lightbourne:** This morning I rise to provide an update to this Honourable House and the people of Bermuda regarding the [2025 Cost of Living Summit](#), which was held on June 25 at the Hamilton Princess.

The event brought together 258 residents and stakeholders and was live streamed to ensure broad access. Mr. Speaker, this Summit marked a significant milestone in the Government's ongoing efforts to address the cost of living in Bermuda. The Ministry of Home Affairs is especially grateful to the stakeholders who joined the Government for a day of candid and constructive dialogue on key issues impacting affordability; imports, food security, utilities, housing and health care. The Ministry was intentional in selecting a

diverse cross-section of participants, ensuring that the discussions reflected a broad range of expertise, casting an informed light on the lived experiences, conversations that are too often confined to siloed forums. This integrated approach allowed for a more fulsome examination of the interconnected drivers of cost.

Mr. Speaker, despite some early scepticism, the Ministry was clear in its intent to approach the cost of living and affordability [crisis] differently and to invite collective action. The Ministry acknowledged that it was neither feasible nor effective to place the full burden of solving this issue on the Government but rather invited collaboration. The Summit was a declaration that shared responsibility is essential to meaningful change. Mr. Speaker, the Summit began with presentations from Economist Craig Simmons and Dr. Jahni Smith, who outlined findings from the Ministry-commissioned Cost of Living Survey conducted in March of this year. Their analysis framed the Summit's panel discussions, highlighting the shift from a tourism-based to an international business-led economy and the resultant pressures on housing, food, health care and utilities. These insights grounded the dialogue in data and gave voice to the lived realities of residents and businesses in Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, the industry panel discussion, moderated by Ms. Jessica Mello, focused on Bermuda's supply chain challenges. This discussion confirmed the Island's heavy reliance on imports but challenged the need to explore trade diversification and expanded partnerships with Latin America and/or the Caribbean. These insights included the cost impact of empty return freight and the untapped potential of digitisation to lower logistics costs. Following this, Mrs. Liana Nanang Omodele led a panel featuring restaurant operators and food retailers and wholesalers which explored the drivers of food pricing, including duties, shipping and operational overheads. The panel advocated for consumer education, regulatory reform, agriculture policy review and the value of white-label and non-branded goods as cost-saving alternatives.

Mr. Speaker, the local agriculture and fisheries panel, moderated by Mr. Arthur Wightman, emphasised the critical role of local production in improving affordability and accessibility. The discussion highlighted the underutilisation of arable land, the importance of improved access to water and the need for education and public engagement in food production. Panellists also recommended revisiting legislative restrictions to enable responsible import expansion while ensuring protection from invasive species.

Mr. Speaker, a panel led by Mr. Ryan Perinchief addressed Bermuda's utility sector. The discussion focused on the urgent need to modernise and regulate all essential utilities, and reduce energy, water and telecommunications costs, recognising that this can happen through fuel diversification, improved infrastructure and adoption of international best practices to manage cost burdens. The panel moderated

by Mr. Daniel Woods addressed unlocking Bermuda's housing. It identified limited supply, outdated regulations and high construction costs as major contributors to the current state. Recommendations included reforming planning policies, advancing landlord and tenant legislative reform and fostering public-private partnerships to enable innovative and cost-efficient construction techniques.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the panel sessions, the Summit featured two presentations from my colleagues, the Hon. Kim Wilson, Minister of Health and the Hon. Zane De Silva, Minister of Housing and Municipalities. The updates highlighted Government strategies to ensure equitable health care access and to increase the supply of affordable housing. Mr. Speaker, the Summit met its core objective to educate, inform, invite feedback and demonstrate the power and potential of collective problem-solving against the backdrop of real data provided by the survey which validated and contextualised the lived experiences of the public to inform policy refinement, legislative reform and near-term action.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry is now in the process of collating the Summit's feedback and combining it with the survey data. A report will be tabled in this Honourable House as promised and published for the public to capture both.

Further, Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that the Ministry has already begun advancing relief and has conducted legislative and policy review of key import-related laws, revision of landlord and tenant legislation, with consultation expected to begin in July of this year. We have also conducted successful industry stakeholder engagement to confirm short near-term solutions. The Ministry is particularly grateful that industry partners in the retail, wholesale and utilities sectors have already committed to doing things to improve affordability. These commitments will be published on the [costofliving.gov.bm](http://costofliving.gov.bm) website in the coming weeks.

The Ministry also wishes to thank the Cost of Living Commission for its continued support. Note that later today, the Commission will convene to review the Summit's outcomes and contribute to the public communication of the Ministry's affordability strategy, including its implementation roadmap and regulatory reform timeline. This final report will include both the data, summit costs and the solutions that will be advanced toward affordability.

Mr. Speaker, the Summit received an overwhelming volume of positive feedback from both the public and stakeholders alike. As the Ministry continues to lead the Government's cost of living agenda, this feedback affirms the strategic direction taken and reinforces the necessity of engaging across political lines, sectors, and communities constructively.

Mr. Speaker, the Summit concluded with a call to action. Attendees were invited to sign a Commitment Wall, symbolising their role in creating a more

affordable Bermuda, and to complete feedback surveys on the public policy proposals discussed. These surveys will remain live on the Summit website until July 4, and all residents are encouraged to participate. Mr. Speaker, the true success of the Summit lies not only in the policies it inspired, but in the collective spirit it reignited. Through the Summit, we were reminded that personal responsibility is a seed, but it must be watered by collaboration and shared resolve. Further, we were reminded that the road to a more affordable Bermuda is not paved by Government alone but rather walked together, by every household, business and representative.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Home Affairs has demonstrated that it is committed to action over rhetoric. I thank the members of the Ministry team, industry leaders that volunteered their time to provide direction and the Government's communications team. This Cost of Living Summit confirmed that when government, industry and the community unite, not just in words but in work, real progress is not only possible, but it is inevitable. The 2025 Cost of Living Summit will be remembered as the moment in our history that Bermuda did not just talk about relief, but we built it together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** Members, the next Statement this morning is in the name of the Minister of Tourism and Transport, Culture and Sport.  
Minister.

**Hon. Owen Darrell:** Mr. Speaker, good morning.

**The Speaker:** Good morning.

### INVESTMENT IN SPORTS AND ATHLETES

**Hon. Owen Darrell:** I rise today to share with this Honourable House recent developments in the area of sport, highlighting our continued commitment to recognising student athletes, supporting elite athletes and [investing in the development of the National Sports Governing Bodies](#). Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, June 12, the Department of Sport and Recreation hosted the National Junior Athlete Sponsorship Programme [NJASP] at the Butterfield and Vallis Conference Room at the Bermuda College. This annual initiative aims to recognise and provide development opportunities to Bermudian junior athletes between the ages of 15 and 19, who clearly show commitment, promise and achievement in their respective sport.

This year, Mr. Speaker, \$50,000 was allocated to 10 recipients to continue development overseas and five National Sport Governing Bodies to bring in coaches. These contributions will support and provide

opportunities for Bermudian junior athletes to reach their full potential and hopefully represent Bermuda at major sporting events in the future.

Mr. Speaker, during the National Junior Athlete Sponsorship Programme ceremony, \$10,000 was allocated to the recipient of the Dame Flora Duffy Award. The Dame Flora Duffy award contribution is intended to provide training and competition inducements to a promising athlete between the ages of 19 and 23, who are likely to achieve elite athlete status at the senior level given their continued participation and commitment to their sport. The 2025 recipient of this award was Bermuda National Athletics Association athlete, Ryan Outerbridge.

Ryan Outerbridge is a standout distance runner who has made significant strides in both national and collegiate athletics. A senior at Franklin Pierce University, Outerbridge has earned NCAA Division II All-Region honours in the 1,500 meters, the steeplechase, and the 5,000 meters, underscoring his versatility and endurance. Mr. Outerbridge has also participated in the annual Bermuda Half Marathon and has impressively burst on to the scene as runner-up for the past two consecutive years. His performances have made him a standout competitor in this iconic race. It is hoped that Mr. Outerbridge will represent Bermuda at major festivals in the very near future. Also, Mr. Speaker, I must add that Mr. Outerbridge is a former student of mine.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Owen Darrell:** Thank you, Deputy [Speaker].

Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, June 19, the Department of Sport and Recreation in collaboration with the Bermuda School Sports Federation (BSSF) hosted the annual Denton Hurdle Memorial Awards ceremony at the Warwick Academy. This prestigious event honours Bermuda's most promising primary, middle and senior school student athletes who demonstrate outstanding sporting talent, leadership and community engagement. This year, 57 student athletes were recognised across the three divisions. I take this opportunity to congratulate the 2025 Denton Hurdle Awards winners.

- The Primary School Champions were Keirra Broadley-Samuels from St. George's Prep. and Owen Fosker from Warwick Academy.
- Middle School Champions were Avery Taylor from the Bermuda High School and Chaz Edmead from Saltus Grammar School.
- The Senior Champions were Carina Bortoli from Somersfield Academy and Mr. Khari Sharrieff from the Berkeley Institute.

Mr. Speaker, I must also pause here and note that Khari Sharrieff, who is an exceptional athlete in football and athletics, has won this prestigious award at every school level, primary, middle and high school.

There is a plethora of potential that lies within our school system and these recipients represent the very best of Bermuda's young talent as they serve as shining examples. Mr. Speaker, in line with the objectives of the Bermuda National Sports Policy 2022–2027, I am pleased to confirm that the continued delivery of the Elite Athlete Sponsorship Initiative. This programme provides critical funding to Bermuda's top-performing athletes from recognised National Sports Governing Bodies to support their training, their competition and their international representation efforts. For fiscal year 2025/26, Mr. Speaker, \$154,500 was allocated to 25 elite athletes, from 15 different sports, allowing them to pursue excellence on the global stage. This initiative directly supports Goal 2.1 of the National Sports Policy, to "Increase Government funding for high performance athletes and teams by 30 per cent." It reflects the Government's belief that our athletes should not be limited by financial barriers, and they strive to achieve sporting excellence.

Mr. Speaker, the various sports that are supported by elite athletes participate include the following:

- cycling;
- athletics;
- bowling;
- swimming;
- triathlon;
- pickleball;
- archery;
- motorcycle racing;
- para-athletics;
- wushu;
- rugby;
- boccia; and
- motocross.

And again, I must say, Mr. Speaker, "swimming."

Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to report on the allocations under the Sport Investment Programme [SIP]. This programme provides annual funding to recognised National Sports Governing Bodies to assist with their operational capacity, athletic development pathways, coaching education and grassroots expansion efforts. In 2025/26, a total of over \$2 million, Mr. Speaker, was allocated through the SIP to 26 National Sports Governing Bodies and associated programmes which is an increase compared to last fiscal year in which the allocation was under \$2 million. These investments are the cornerstone of this Government's commitment to the long-term development and sustainability of sport in Bermuda. The benefits of SIP are wide-ranging, from enhancing coaching capacity, to enabling more inclusive access to sports across all communities and higher performance.

Mr. Speaker, taken together, these three initiatives—the Denton Hurdle Awards, the Elite Athlete

Sponsorship and the Sport Investment Programme—demonstrate this Government's holistic approach to sport development. From recognising the next generation of talent, to empowering elite athletes and strengthening sport governance, we remain steadfast in our mission to ensure that sport continues to be a powerful vehicle for national pride, social cohesion and individual empowerment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. I believe you have a second Statement. Would you like to do that one as well?

**Hon. Owen Darrell:** I do, Mr. Speaker, thank you.

**The Speaker:** Go ahead.

### LOREN RESORT—EXPANDING TOURISM INVENTORY

**Hon. Owen Darrell:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members will be aware of the acquisition of the former Elbow Beach property by Sardis Developments Limited, the owners of [The Loren Hotel at Pink Beach](#). Mr. Speaker, this acquisition has been welcomed and represents a firm signal of the confidence in Bermuda's tourism destination. Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise this Honourable House and the public that it is proposed to afford relief to the developers of this new hotel consistent with that which is available under the Tourism Investment Act 2017.

Mr. Speaker, the developers intend to expand the existing Loren footprint to now include this newly purchased site, operating one hotel product in two separate locations. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members will be familiar with the scope of the relief which includes full relief from customs duty in respect to any of the building materials, furnishings, fixtures and equipment which are necessary for the building, furnishing and equipping, repair, maintenance, rebuilding, refurbishing or replacing of the resort. Full exemption from the hotel occupancy tax otherwise payable in respect of the resort. Full exemption from the employer's share of the payroll tax otherwise payable in respect of the person's employment by the resort. All for 15 years in keeping with the Act as well as six years of relief from land tax. Mr. Speaker, the proposed redevelopment is set to comprise 176 keys including hotel rooms, luxury villas and luxury condominiums. Honourable Members will have seen recent media coverage of the developer's early action regarding the site and the proposed demolition of the existing hotel building.

Mr. Speaker, I do know that there is bipartisan support for Bermuda's tourism growth and the action required to increase Bermuda's tourism inventory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

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

Thank you for your participation, Ministers.

## REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** There are none.

## QUESTION PERIOD

**The Speaker:** The Question Period for this morning, there are no written questions. The questions will come from Statements given this morning. Members, a few of the Statements this morning have produced questions.

The first Statement this morning that has a question would that from the Minister of National Security. Minister MP King would like to put a question to you this morning.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**The Speaker:** MP, you have the floor.

### QUESTION 1: TRUTH BE TOLD: YOUTH RISE AGAINST THE VIOLENCE—A MOVEMENT BEGINS

**Mr. Robert King:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members and the listening public.

Regarding the statements made by the [Minister of] National Security, I wholeheartedly . . . and I think the whole House can be associated with the great work that the kids are doing to promote anti-violence and finding appropriate non-violent means of resolving conflicts. So, we are fully in support of that initiative.

Questions that I have are related to what resources the Government is allocating to the initiative. I want to understand, is it a programme or is it an initiative that is driven by the youth themselves? Or is it an initiative or programme driven by National Security? Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I welcome the question from the MP from consistency 10.

Mr. Speaker, in answer to his question, the initiative comes under the Government's National Violence [Reduction] Strategy. And a part of our strategy is to involve the youth, so we have provided the financial resources. But the human resources have come from the children themselves. And hats off to them because the schools that were involved really produced some great skits (so to speak). And hopefully going forward we'll be expanding this initiative to other

high schools and perhaps middle schools. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Robert King:** Supplementary.

**The Speaker:** Yes.

## SUPPLEMENTARY

**Mr. Robert King:** Understanding that young persons are being recruited at a younger and younger age, what is the plan to address recruitment in primary schools and middle schools? Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thanks for that, Mr. Speaker.

I would like some clarity . . . recruitment for . . . what are we talking about?

**Mr. Robert King:** Gangs and crimes involving drugs and violence, knife crime in particular.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Speaker, that is not a part of my Statement, but I have no problem saying that the overarching strategy of the national anti-violence campaign by this Government is to address prevention, intervention and rehabilitation. A part of prevention is to try to help youngsters who are on the cusp of being recruited, be steered away from it. So that's the part of our anti-violence strategy campaign that is geared toward trying to steer youngsters away from a life of untoward behaviour.

**The Speaker:** Mm-hmm. Thank you.  
Second supplementary or new question?

**Mr. Robert King:** New question, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Okay.

### QUESTION 2: TRUTH BE TOLD: YOUTH RISE AGAINST THE VIOLENCE—A MOVEMENT BEGINS

**Mr. Robert King:** The question I ask is, What data and what research is guiding and informing the anti-violence strategy? Thank you.

*[Crosstalk]*

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Mr. Speaker, again, that's not from my Statement. But data gets collected, it's ongoing, you know, the data is there, and it is liquid. So, it is always ongoing.

**The Speaker:** Mm-hmm.

Just try to remember the question should come out of the content of the Statement that was written.

**Mr. Robert King:** I take that into consideration, Mr. Speaker, understanding that when we are—

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Robert King:** Thank you for that.  
When we are—

**The Speaker:** So, is this a supplementary or third question?

### SUPPLEMENTARY

**Mr. Robert King:** This would be a supplementary.

**The Speaker:** Okay.

**Mr. Robert King:** Understanding data is fluid and is readily available, is the Honourable Minister aware that the Bermuda Police Service's website has been down since 31 May due to the cyberattack?

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**The Speaker:** I am trying to tie that into [the Minister's] Statement. But that's always the challenge of it.

**Mr. Robert King:** No, no. The supplementary was based on the fact that data is readily available and the data and the crime statistics would have come from the Bermuda Police Service. It is difficult to get those statistics and data if the website has been down since 31 May. That's the point I'm making. Thank you. That's my last submission.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** That is not a point from out of my Statement. But if the Honourable Member has any other questions that are outside of the scope of the Ministerial Statement I presented today, as I have always said to him, I welcome any questions that he may have.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**The Speaker:** No further questions?

**Mr. Robert King:** No, that's it.

**The Speaker:** Okay. No further questions. Thank you.  
Members, those are the only questions for that Statement.

The next Statement that has questions is a Statement from the Minister of Health.

Minister, MP Tucker would like to put questions to you.

**Ms. Robin Tucker:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, good morning.

**The Speaker:** Good morning.

### QUESTION 1: PUBLIC HEALTH RISK OF NICOTINE-CONTAINING PRODUCTS AND LEGISLATIVE REFORMS

**Ms. Robin Tucker:** My first question is, I'd like to know if the Minister can clarify how sales for appropriate use, sales of, obviously, the products that were named, vapes and gum and all of that, how the sales for appropriate use will be controlled to meet the intended outcome.

Just for clarification, if I may, of the question I am asking. So, the same way that we can walk into a pharmacy and get . . . I don't know, Advil. At one point you had to get it from the pharmacist. Right? You walk in, the pharmacist asks you no questions. She hands you the Advil. Right? So, I am just trying to get clarification. Can the Minister give some insight into how selling the . . . how the sale of these products specifically by registered pharmacies and pharmacists will assist in achieving the ultimate goal of protecting youth and the public. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.  
Minister.

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated, the sale of these nicotine products is prohibited unless under the Pharmacy and Poisons Act and, as such, the pharmacies have the pharmacy inspectors who come under the Bermuda Health Council and they go and monitor the pharmacist to make sure that they are compliant with the legislation. So, the enforcement arm of this legislation will be governed by the pharmacy inspector.

**The Speaker:** Mm-hmm.  
Supplementary or new question?

**Ms. Robin Tucker:** Yes, a supplementary, please.

**The Speaker:** Go ahead.

### SUPPLEMENTARY

**Ms. Robin Tucker:** Can the Minister tell us how often the pharmacy inspector actually visits, what the cycle is that the pharmacy inspector visits the pharmacies to ensure compliance? Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** Mr. Speaker, I do not have that information, but what I can assure members of the public of is that during the course of her inspection she will be ensuring that retail establishments that are prohibited from offering for sale nicotine products will have to be compliant with the law and that also goes as it relates to the environmental health who will do the inspections as it relates to retail establishments.

**The Speaker:** Supplementary or second question?

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Supplementary. Okay.  
MP Cannonier, Opposition Whip.

### SUPPLEMENTARY

**Hon. L. Craig Cannonier:** Yes. Thank you. Thank you, very much. And good morning, colleagues.

In accordance with the question that was asked, there seems to be some confusion in that for some of these products [they] can actually be purchased from wholesalers who are not of a medical background or have certificates for certain products. So how does it . . . [there] seems to be a gap there on how we prevent retailers from getting some of these prohibited products into other stores outside of pharmacies. And I'm hoping that the Minister maybe can give some clarification. Or are they looking into this? Because, just to clarify, what we don't want is a retailer being able to get these products outside of maybe buying it from, you know, Bermuda Drug Company or that kind of a thing. And if Bermuda Drug Company is actually bringing these products in, then why would they be selling it to retailers who are not supposed to be selling it?

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** Mr. Speaker, thank you for that question. I can't speak to the Bermuda Drug Company as to why they are selling items to retailers that are prohibited. But I can say—

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

**The Speaker:** Point of order.

### POINT OF ORDER

**Hon. L. Craig Cannonier:** I did not say that Bermuda Drug Company was selling these products. I was using that as an example. So, to say that they are doing it would be unfair to Bermuda Drug Company. And I think it would be unfair to me because that is not what I am saying. But there are wholesalers selling the product.

**The Speaker:** Okay.

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

As the Ministerial Statement speaks to, what we are trying to prevent is unlawful sale of nicotine products that are not being sold pursuant to the Pharmacy and Poisons Act and instead are being sold by retail establishments. That is against the law. And what we are doing and what the Statement speaks to is the [assurance] of public safety, particularly as it relates to our youth.

What is going on with respect to wholesalers and how the products are being passed through, is not the subject matter of this Ministerial Statement. The subject matter of this is to ensure that retailers are compliant with the legislation as it relates to their inability to sell nicotine products in their establishment. That is what this Statement is about, and that is what we will be enforcing in law, not least of which it is not an old law . . . I'm sorry. It is not a new law; this has been on the books for decades. And in addition to that, we are ensuring that we are protecting public health, particularly as it relates to our youth.

**The Speaker:** Okay.

Supplementary or . . . Is this your second question or supplementary?

**Ms. Robin Tucker:** It is a second question, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Go ahead.

### QUESTION 2: PUBLIC HEALTH RISK OF NICOTINE-CONTAINING PRODUCTS AND LEGISLATIVE REFORMS

**Ms. Robin Tucker:** So, my second question is, the Minister did mention that this is just an enforcement of the current law. Right? But I am wondering, Mr. Speaker, whether there has been any conversation with the retailers who have been selling these products for ages. Right? So, has there been any conversation with them on the fact that the laws are now going to be enforced?

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, admittedly, a few years ago we did go through the Chamber of Commerce and had these discussions, particularly when we saw the proliferation of vapes. We will continue the engagement. As I have indicated in my Ministerial Statement those conversations will take place. But at the end of the day, the law is the law. And I am not sure that it is necessary for steps to be taken to enforce what is on the legal books. At the end of the day, again, we have received evidence—

**The Speaker:** Mm-hmm.

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** —that supports the increased use of nicotine products by our youth. We have seen from evidence from WHO the adverse impact it has on our youth and our developing brains. So, we recognise that the evidence supports restriction of nicotine products for our youth. We have also seen an increase in nicotine products being made available in retail establishments which, again, is contrary to the Pharmacy and Poisons Act. In fact, nicotine is classified under section 4B(2) [*sic*] (I believe) of the Pharmacy and Poisons Act as a poison. So, we are simply enforcing the law that is on the books.

**The Speaker:** Supplementary?

**Hon. L. Craig Cannonier:** Supplemental to that, yes.

**The Speaker:** Okay. Yes.

**Hon. L. Craig Cannonier:** Mr. Speaker, considering that we have received this information that suggests it is being sold in some of these other retailers that are not authorised to sell it, the Honourable Member said that they can see where there is an increased use of nicotine (as she just stated) being used by young people. Is [the Honourable Member] also saying or correlating that to the fact that they are actually buying it, underage people are buying this stuff from retailers as well?

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** Mr. Speaker, again, the issue as it relates to ensuring the protection of our young people is paramount. And because nicotine is a poison, it is specifically prohibited from being made available unless it is by a registered pharmacist and a registered pharmacy. What we are recognising, Mr. Speaker, and there is evidence that these items are being sold in retail establishments, in fact, some are even right next to the chocolate bars. And questions are not being asked as it relates to the age of the individuals. I myself walked into an establishment and saw the items right by the counter. And in fact, I looked twice because I thought they were like the Ice Breakers . . . what are those little . . . those little candies. And I had to look twice because I saw them and like *What is that?* And then I looked closer. And I asked the person at the cash register, and granted he was a young individual, and I said, *What are the restrictions of selling those?* And he said, *Well, I don't know.* And this is a well-known establishment. So, the reality is this is about public health and protecting our most vulnerable, and that is our youth.

**The Speaker:** Hmmm.

Supplementary or new question?

You have a supplementary or your third question?

**Ms. Robin Tucker:** I have supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Go ahead.

### SUPPLEMENTARY

**Ms. Robin Tucker:** But first, I would like to say that of course we support protecting our youth, but also we need to make sure that what we're doing makes sense. Right? For all parties.

So, I would just like to ask for those retailers that are currently, who have been allowed to sell these products, notwithstanding the fact that the law has not been enforced until now, but what are the retailers . . . what are their requirements as it relates to this particular now-enforced law? So, for people who already have supplies, people who have already been selling, what is their requirement? What are they supposed to do with their supplies now? So how does that work? If the Minister can provide some clarity around that, that would be helpful. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated, what has changed is the availability and the marketing of these products. The short answer to that question is it's illegal. Trash it.

**The Speaker:** Okay.

Third question or are you complete?

### QUESTION 3: PUBLIC HEALTH RISK OF NICOTINE-CONTAINING PRODUCTS AND LEGISLATIVE REFORMS

**Ms. Robin Tucker:** Yes, the third question is very similar to what MP Cannonier had asked. So, my third question is I'd like to know if . . . because we've been talking about retailers, but I would like to know if these products will be banned across the board, so the public can't even import their own items as well, right?

I recognise that the law has not been enforced until now, so I'm just trying to get clarification because not only do I want to know but other people want to know and have that clarification too. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** Let me let me break this down, Mr. Speaker. Under the Tobacco Control Act [2015 combustible tobacco products, cigars, cigarettes, et cetera, are permitted to be sold in retail establishments. Under the Pharmacy and Poisons Act, Schedule 4B [*sic*], speaks specifically to nicotine products. And the only establishments under the Pharmacy and Poisons Act that are permitted to sell nicotine products are registered pharmacists under a registered pharmacy.

There's a distinction. The Pharmacy and Poisons Act speaks to nicotine. The Tobacco Control Act 2015 speaks to tobacco. If it's a nicotine product, it's classified as a poison. So therefore, under the controls the only persons who can sell poisons are pharmacists and registered pharmacies.

Under the Tobacco Control Act a retail establishment can sell combustible tobacco products: cigarettes, cigars, rolling papers, et cetera, et cetera. Therein lies the distinction. Tobacco comes under the Tobacco Control Act, which can be sold in retail establishments. Poisons and nicotine come from the Pharmacy and Poisons Act which can only be sold in registered pharmacies by registered pharmacists. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Any further questions? None?

**Ms. Robin Tucker:** No. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Minister, do you mind if I ask something? Just for my own clarity? That means—

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** How can I say no to the Speaker?

*[Inaudible interjection and laughter]*

**The Speaker:** And this is just for me, if I walked into the store and saw it. Should be item be behind the counter where we have to ask the pharmacist for it? Or, it's okay sitting on the shelf for anybody to pick it up?

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** No. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And if we're speaking about the items that are—

**The Speaker:** Nicotine.

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** Nicotine, yes. They are meant to be behind the counter.

**The Speaker:** Okay.

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** Behind the counter. And likewise for tobacco, you'll recall we made legislative amendments in 2015. (I think it was. I can't remember.) But when we dealt with restrictions of smoking. So, under the Tobacco [Control] Act there are restrictions insofar as it cannot be sold to under 18-year-olds, et cetera. And the advertising, you have to have a label of health warnings and so forth. But if it's a nicotine product, you have to go to the pharmacist and it's behind the counter and you say, *I want that*. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** So, if it is displayed out front, that's actually an offence to the law.

**An Hon. Member:** Ah.

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** You mean out front by the till?

**The Speaker:** Yes, it is anywhere out front where anybody can just pick it up—

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** Correct. Correct. Like in some establishments it is like I said, next to the chocolate bars.

**The Speaker:** The only reason I am asking is because like you, I have seen it in other establishments.

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** Absolutely. Absolutely. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** It is an offence when we see that.

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** That is correct. But first and foremost, the establishments that no doubt you're speaking about and I'm speaking about, are not even supposed to have it.

**The Speaker:** That's true too. Yes. Okay. Thank you for that.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**The Speaker:** You have a question?

*[Laughter]*

**The Speaker:** Okay. I thought you guys were finished. Okay. MP Cannonier has a question.

*[Laughter]*

#### POINT OF CLARIFICATION

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

And this is . . . just to preface it. This is for clarity because there are a lot of people who are confused right now. And just so that . . . I'm glad that the Minister has clarified that the Tobacco [Control] Act and the [Pharmacy and] Poisons Act . . . because I've done that this morning with several outlets. And I will declare my interest. I recognise that one of the service stations, not mine,—

*[Laughter and inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. L. Craig Cannonier:** Yes. Yes. Let's make that very clear.

—was one of those who was in violation. So, my question is, They were given a letter to sign and unfortunately the owner of the establishment did not understand when he read the letter, because the be-

gining of the letter says that no nicotine products . . . Where's my . . . where did I put my phone?

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Hon. L. Craig Cannonier:** Oh. I wanted to read the statement so that it's clear. It says in the letter, *The Minister of Health provides this notice to remind retailers that under the Pharmacy and Poisons Act . . .* (And I guess have to declare my interest on both sides, the pharmacy as well, being general manager of the pharmacy before.) . . . *the sale of nicotine and nicotine products containing nicotine are prohibited.*

Now that's where the confusion came in. And so, I think we need to do an educational thing because the owner of the establishment . . . My question is . . . the owner of the establishment was confused because it said "nicotine" and he's just thinking, *Oh, well, cigarettes got nicotine. I can't sell cigarettes.* So, everybody went into a panic. The whole of Esso went into a panic. *We can't sell nicotine.* And there needs to be some clarity because the individuals who actually came to get the letter sent, I want to find out from the Minister, are they clear as well on the difference between the two Acts? Because it was obvious in the conversation that they were not.

**The Speaker:** All right. Minister, I opened a can of worms that time with my question.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** That's okay.

Mr. Speaker, I can't speak to who . . . all the details concerning this. But yes, there was a notice that has been . . . is being distributed to retail establishments. And insofar as the individuals who are serving the notice, which are persons who are part of Environmental Health because that's part of their remit, they also are fully aware of what the legislative requirements are and the difference and the distinction between the Tobacco [Control] Act and the Pharmacy and Poisons Act.

So, I don't know the circumstances in which the Honourable Member is speaking to, who delivered the letter [or] what was discussed, but recognising that the Director of Environment and conversations with him as recently as this morning and last evening concerning this matter that his officers are fully aware of the distinctions. And they are simply just serving the letter. But what I might add is that, again, part of what was revealed during the Ministerial Statement is that we will continue the dialogue with the Chamber of Commerce retail division, as well as other retail in the circuit so that they can ensure that they are compliant with the law. Right? Because everybody wants to be compliant with the law. So, we just want to ensure that and make sure that that information is passed on accordingly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Not opening up a can of worms but at the end of the day, if you are not a pharmacy, you shouldn't have it.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** Nicotine, correct.

**The Speaker:** End of story.

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** Correct. Correct.

**The Speaker:** End of story.

*[Crosstalk]*

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** Because what the Honourable Member failed to continue reading is . . . and it goes on to say: *The sale of nicotine products containing nicotine . . . outside of a pharmacy.* Those four words are in the letter which unfortunately were not read out. But in any event, you are correct. You are absolutely correct, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** If you are not a pharmacy, it should not be in your store.

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

**The Speaker:** And that's for the listening audience to hear and understand, hopefully.

Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Members.

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

**The Speaker:** MP King, do you have a question for the Minister as well or your answers . . . you got your answers from the dialogue already?

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Robert King:** Good morning again.

**The Speaker:** Member MP King also has a question for you.

#### QUESTION 1: PUBLIC HEALTH RISK OF NICOTINE-CONTAINING PRODUCTS AND LEGISLATIVE REFORMS

**Mr. Robert King:** Good morning to the House again.

Minister, do you have any stats on the number of prosecutions for establishments that have been selling nicotine products to underage persons?

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** I do not, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Supplementary or are you done? One more?

**Mr. Robert King:** Supplementary.

**The Speaker:** Okay.

### SUPPLEMENTARY

**Mr. Robert King:** The information regarding the sale and distribution of vapes and nicotine products to young persons, where did that information come from that would require a change in the law or an amendment to the law? Sorry.

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated we are not changing the law. This law is decades old. Insofar as the sale and distribution, we can say that this is occurring. Mr. Speaker, insofar as the data, I don't have the data. But nonetheless we are seeing it. I see it almost regularly walking across my office on Church Street, seeing young children smoking vapes. So, we know it's happening.

It is . . . the absence of any data I think in this particular scenario is somewhat offensive. We know it is happening. It is all about a matter of public health. And when . . . if prosecutions happen, and I'm sure the Honourable Member would know that I would not be entitled to the information about prosecutions. That is a different department. But in any event, this is about public health and public safety.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**The Speaker:** Second supplementary or second question?

### QUESTION 2: PUBLIC HEALTH RISK OF NICOTINE-CONTAINING PRODUCTS AND LEGISLATIVE REFORMS

**Mr. Robert King:** Second question. I take offence to asking for stats that will guide policy being seen as an offensive question. I've got a problem with that in principle, understanding that the purpose of the legislation and enforcement is to protect the community. So, question.

**The Speaker:** Yes, put your question.

**Mr. Robert King:** What is the Ministry of Health doing to address vape use in high schools in terms of a campaign? I know we had the anti-violence campaign that was done in the various schools. I'm just wondering what initiative the Ministry of Health is doing regarding anti-vaping in schools because we know in the private and public schools that's an issue as well. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Remember the question should be related to the Statement, and I don't think—

**Mr. Robert King:** No, no, no. It's related to the Statement in terms of the overarching policy is to protect those young persons from the use, borrowing what the other kids had done in the high schools to address that issue, I'm wondering as part of the National Strategy whether or not that was a consideration with the improved and increased enforcement of the law. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Okay.

**Hon. Kim N. Wilson:** Mr. Speaker, I can speak on behalf of the Ministry of Health. We have started a public awareness campaign as it relates to this. And that will continue as part of our remit with respect to public health. Insofar as what is happening in the Ministry of Education concerning this particular matter, I would invite the Honourable Member to speak directly to the Minister.

**The Speaker:** Okay. The Minister is saying that the door is open for a conversation with the Minister. Okay? Thank you.

No further questions for that Statement.

Members, the next Statement that has questions is the Statement from the Minister of Home Affairs. MP Fahy would like to put questions to you, Minister.

**Hon. Michael Fahy:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Good morning.

### QUESTION 1: BERMUDA'S COST OF LIVING: 2025 COST OF LIVING SUMMIT

**Hon. Michael Fahy:** Mr. Speaker, as you said, it's in relation to—

**An Hon. Member:** I don't think your microphone is on.

**Hon. Michael Fahy:** Oh, sorry. It is on. Let me just get a little closer to it. I'm a little tall.

Minister, in terms of your presentation, what would you say is the number one take-away solution from the Cost of Living Summit in terms of lowering the cost of living for Bermudians? Thank you.

**Hon. Alexa Lightbourne:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recognising that the Cost of Living Summit was in response to what the various pillars of the public and business owners told us was important to them and what was impacting costs on the shelves or cost to their business, each sector had their own respective learnings. So, I invite the Member to perhaps specify

a panel. I know he was in attendance and maybe one in particular stood out that he wanted me to opine on.

**Hon. Michael Fahy:** Thank you. Supplementary then.

**The Speaker:** Yes, supplementary.

### SUPPLEMENTARIES

**Hon. Michael Fahy:** Would the Minister at least agree that there was a common theme across every single panel that one of the ways to reduce the cost of living is to increase the economies of scale across all sectors for the purposes of purchasing power? Would the Minister agree to that statement?

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Alexa Lightbourne:** I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. And I wouldn't say that I would agree that each of the panels concluded that that was the solution. But as part of the discussion, as part of the intent of the Cost of Living Summit, options were explored using industry professionals and stakeholders to unpack some of the provisions associated with it. But I would invite the Member to direct questions relating to the Ministry of Economy and Labour as appropriate to further address these particular concerns.

**The Speaker:** Supplementary or new question?

**Hon. Michael Fahy:** Supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Go ahead. Second supplementary.

**Hon. Michael Fahy:** In the first instance, just to make it clear. It certainly was not the conclusion; it was just a common theme certainly as I was in attendance that economies of scale were important. With that in mind, does the Minister accept that is important to try and bring as many people into Bermuda and Bermudians to return to increase those economies of scale?

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Alexa Lightbourne:** Yes, thank you. And I invite the Honourable Member similarly to . . . I guess, revisit the discussions because that was not the conclusion nor the statement that I left, nor the feedback that was collated, or the notes of the scores of individuals who attended.

I think what happened in the Cost of Living Summit and the various industry panel discussions that took place were a litany of discussions, contributions, considerations that could solve cost in Bermuda. I think the fact that we are a small . . . our economy is declining to some degree, did not mean that we must as an absolute conclusion increase population. I

think we explored a number of solutions. And so, I'm not sure exactly what the Honourable Member would like me to respond to.

**The Speaker:** Second question?

### QUESTION 2: BERMUDA'S COST OF LIVING: 2025 COST OF LIVING SUMMIT

**Hon. Michael Fahy:** Second question, thank you.

Madam Minister, based on that remark and some of the others, what do you believe was the main actionable strategy then on saving energy costs? We are going to talk about specific panels.

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Alexa Lightbourne:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The panel discussion, as the Honourable Member who was there from the beginning until the end [knows], unpacked a number of options for the energy sector recognising that the regulator is the individual who . . . or the entity that supports any sort of policy considerations the Government may draft. A number of options were explored regarding how we might on behalf of the consumers lower energy costs. And so, there isn't one that I would leave or suggest to be more important or be the solution for energy costs. It is going to be a collaboration of both industry stakeholders, the public, as part of the solution to lower energy costs.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Supplementary or third question?

**Hon. Michael Fahy:** Supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Mm-hmm.

### SUPPLEMENTARY

**Hon. Michael Fahy:** So, the Minister would not agree that increasing the number of people in Bermuda would save on energy costs or not?

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**An Hon. Member:** Wow.

**The Speaker:** Minister.

**Hon. Alexa Lightbourne:** Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure that population was a part of my Ministerial Statement. I think we talked about the Cost of Living Summit and the various solutions and cross-sector collaboration was the spirit and also the emphasis of the Statement. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Supplementary or third question?

**Hon. Michael Fahy:** Third question, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Okay.

### QUESTION 3: BERMUDA'S COST OF LIVING: 2025 COST OF LIVING SUMMIT

**Hon. Michael Fahy:** Mr. Speaker, what was the cost to the Bermuda taxpayer of the summit this week?

**Hon. Alexa Lightbourne:** I'll refer the Honourable Member to the Statement which included the report that is forthcoming including all costs. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** That piece will come at a later Statement. Okay.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**The Speaker:** [The Minister] has indicated it will come at a later date.

### SUPPLEMENTARY

**Hon. Michael Fahy:** Surely everyone . . . anyway . . . I'm not going to go there. Mr. Speaker, so does the Minister have an idea of how much money was spent for the purposes of the cost of the summit? I mean, that's basic. Thank you.

**Hon. Alexa Lightbourne:** I'll invite the Honourable Member to read or refer to the statement as mentioned earlier. Thank you.

**Hon. Michael Fahy:** No more questions, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Okay.

Members, that brings us to a close of the questions for Statements this morning.

### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

#### HOUSE VISITOR

**The Speaker:** Before we move on, I would just like to acknowledge in the Gallery that we have Senator . . . Wilkerson—I wanted to call you by your first name that time. My apologies. Senator [the Honourable Kim] Wilkerson [is] visiting with us this morning. Thank you for gracing us with your presence. Thank you.

We will move on to the next item on the Order Paper.

### CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

**The Speaker:** Would any Member wish to make a contribution at this time?

MP Swan, I think you were on your feet first. You have your three minutes.

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

Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I ask this House . . . and [would] like my St. George's colleagues [MP] Ming and [MP] Foggo to be associated with the condolences for Mr. Ivan "Bootsie" Smith, a constituent of mine but who grew up in [constituency] 1. A St. Georgian through and through. Former secretary of St. George's Cricket Club. A PLP candidate in 1976 and a long-serving member of the Public Services Vehicle Licencing Board and a tourism ambassador in the transportation industry. A very colourful gentleman indeed and served Bermuda very well in that capacity. And I associate the Honourable Whip with that.

Also, Mr. Speaker, condolences . . . I attended last week a memorial service for Ms. Dorothy Chin Brandt, in Manhattan at The Explorers Club. [She was a] 30-year repeat visitor to Bermuda. One of my golf clients who became a very close family friend. And I was honoured to provide a tribute on behalf of all Bermudians that she came in contact with, a country she loved. And she was a politician. The first Asian elected in New York State. She was a pioneer in the Asian community. A very close friend of Mayor, the late David Dinkins who was her mentor and a dear friend of mine, dare I say.

And on a much happier note, I would like congratulations to be expressed and sent to one of our own in this Chamber, Sergeant-at-Arms Mr. Arnold Allen who was overseas representing Bermuda as a member of the Bermuda Karate Federation. I associate the whole House.

*[Desk thumping]*

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** That team did well. Mr. Allen continues to even compete. He competed. But on the podium was a [Zoe] Talbot in the Under-10 division, third place. Chan Simons, second place in the Under-10 and Talia Fox first in the Over-40 category serving Bermuda. Representing the Bermuda Karate Federation team against USA, Chile, The Bahamas, Trinidad, Haiti, [and the] Dominican Republic. They did very, very well and congratulations to them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you. And we did acknowledge that the Sergeant-at-Arms was off the Island last week for the tournament, but thanks for giving the results and update.

MP Ming, you were on your feet next.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**The Speaker:** You jumped up quick.

**An Hon. Member:** That is the way it is going to be in Cup Match—2 to 1.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**The Speaker:** You know why they are going to jump up quick? Because they are going to be bowled out so quickly. They will be in and out real quick.

*[Laughter]*

**The Speaker:** Yes, yes. We acknowledge that.

*[Desk thumping]*

**An Hon. Member:** Oh, boy. They are getting . . .

**The Speaker:** MP Ming.

*[Crosstalk]*

**The Speaker:** Would you like to—

*[Crosstalk]*

**Mrs. Renee Ming:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

*[Crosstalk]*

**Mrs. Renee Ming:** I hope I get back my whole 20 seconds for that nonsense Somerset talk that's going on around this House today.

*[Laughter]*

**Mrs. Renee Ming:** But, Mr. Speaker, I would like to first of all say, and I'm sure the House would want to be associated with this. Happy special person birthday to our own Deputy Speaker MP Lovitta Foggo.

**Some Hon. Members:** Ooh!

*[Desk thumping]*

**Mrs. Renee Ming:** I say *special person*. I don't want to get in trouble with any PIPA rules or anything, but you figure out who gets special person cards these days.

*[Laughter]*

**Mrs. Renee Ming:** And then you can figure out the age. Yes.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo:** I don't know what she's talking about.

**Mrs. Renee Ming:** Yes, free bus and ferry.

*[Laughter]*

**The Speaker:** Aah!

**Mrs. Renee Ming:** Yes, we wish her all the best and many more.

Mr. Speaker, this past Wednesday we celebrated the Dame Jennifer [M.] Smith Future Leader Award Ceremony in constituency 1. I'm associating MP Foggo with that and MP Swan.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mrs. Renee Ming:** The entire House.

And what we did was this is . . . this was our 20<sup>th</sup> year. So, I have stood in this House on my feet as long as I've been here to talk about this event. And it is . . . what we do is we honour young people who have demonstrated early leadership skills. So even if they're not the most academic, the most athletic, they have shown their school principals and their teachers that they are leaders at a young age. And so, it was awesome for us to be able to say that this has been . . . we started it in 2006 in constituency 1 and today in 2025, we are still holding this event, still recognising, honouring and celebrating our awesome young people. Because if you had the bios, Mr. Speaker, of some of these young people . . .

**The Speaker:** Mm-hmm.

**Mrs. Renee Ming:** Amazing. I just want to call out their names because it's important that we honour and recognise. So, from St. George's Preparatory School we had Sahaile Anderson [*sic*] and—

**An Hon. Member:** What?

**Mrs. Renee Ming:** —Bella Rodriguez, from East End Primary School—actually, let me say that correctly. Sahaile Anderson Outerbridge. From East End Primary School we had Jaze Anderson and Dominic Sewell. From St. David's Primary School we had Russian Thompson and Taya Fox.

And, Mr. Speaker, I don't . . . I wouldn't even have the time to be able to read the bios here, but these are some awesome young people doing some awesome things. One is a “kidpreneur.” She has her own website, ShopsSewMe.com. If you want to go in there and have a look and buy something.

I would also like to thank the village that helps me to put this event on. It's nothing I could do by myself. And just one phone call and I can have people just come right on board. And for that I am appreciative and recognise how blessed I am. So, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Continue to honour and celebrate our young people because they need us.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, MP.

The next up this morning would be the Minister in front of you here.

Minister Weeks, you have your three minutes.

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to be associated with the remarks first of all with the colleague who now has a senior . . . senior—

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** —special card that she has.

*[Inaudible interjections and laughter]*

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** And I had to take the opportunity. But, Mr. Speaker, I'm not there yet so I have to respect my elders.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** But I also, Mr. Speaker, I want to bring some congratulations to the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Darrin Simons on his recent appointment as President of the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police, the Commissioners of Police in the Caribbean area for the 2025/26 term. His election to this regional leadership role is a testament to the respect he commands among his peers and their confidence in his vision for modern collaborative policing across the Caribbean.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to bring congratulatory remarks to Mrs. Brenda Johnson. Those who have probably seen today's paper may have seen her on the front page. Mrs. Brenda Johnson retires today after 50 years of service to Bermuda as the traffic records manager of the Bermuda Police Service. So, I would like to congratulate her, and the whole House hopefully, in her next stage of her endeavours.

Mr. Speaker, I also like to extend my sincere appreciation to the dedicated men and women of the Bermuda Fire and Rescue Service for their ongoing commitment to the safety and well-being of our community. Just last week, Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of visiting the Elizabeth Hills seniors' residence on Happy Valley Road, where I witnessed first-hand the Bermuda Fire [and Rescue Service] commitment [to] outreach in action. As part of their fire prevention programme members of the [Fire] Service installed smoke detectors in the houses of approximately 15 senior residents. And I, Mr. Speaker, didn't just go there to witness it, I participated in, you know, visiting with the seniors and making sure that we were putting up the smoke alarms. So, hats off to the Chief Fire Officer Mr. Dana Lovell and his team for their commitment to doing their part in helping Bermuda to stay safe, especially our seniors, Mr. Speaker.

And as I take my seat, I think I want to be associated with the congratulatory remarks for the King Certificate and Badge of Honour Long Service Awards. I was there, but I was not here last week to show my appreciation, so I want to be associated with that.

*[Timer chimes]*

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

The special . . . what do they call it? The special group?

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**The Speaker:** The special person. The special person has the floor now.

**Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo:** Mr. Speaker, I'm always special.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**The Speaker:** Oh, that's right. That's right. Now she likes that. See that?

*[Laughter and crosstalk]*

**Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo:** So, Mr. Speaker, I rise to give congratulations to both East End Primary and St. David's Primary graduations. The Member from constituency 1 spoke about a leadership celebration just yesterday. But I can say when I will witness to our young people who are graduating out of primary school indeed, we have a whole host of potential leaders who are developing the skill set which will in the future put us in good hands. And I'd like to associate both the Member from constituency 1 and the Member from constituency 2 with these congratulatory remarks. And I—

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo:** Someone said the whole House?

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo:** No?

*[Laughter and crosstalk]*

**Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo:** I did not . . . I did not attend St. George's [Preparatory] graduation.

**An Hon. Member:** Oh, okay.

**Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo:** I can only speak to the events that I attended.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo:** Yes, thank you.

And, Mr. Speaker, I do want to be associated with the remarks for Mr. Bootsie Smith who was a well-known St. Georgian and indeed an ambassador *par excellence*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Madam.

Minister, it looks like you are the only one rising right now. You have the floor, Minister.

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** Yes, yes, yes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like for the entire House to be to be associated with congratulations to all of our graduates that have come through.

**An Hon. Member:** Yes. Thank you.

*[Desk thumping]*

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like . . . normally I don't pick out anyone in particular but it was especially rewarding to see the Year 8 students transition from Francis Patton Primary school and Purvis Primary School this year, so double congratulations to them as they went through expecting to leave after P6 but ended up staying and leaving after P8.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to have a heartfelt congratulations sent to Dr. Bertram "Bert" McPhee who turned 99 on Saturday.

**An Hon. Member:** Yes.

**The Speaker:** Yes. Yes.

**Some Hon. Members:** Wow.

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** Mr. Speaker, for some of our younger Members in the House, Dr. Bert, Dr. McPhee, arrived in Bermuda at a time when Black doctors were not openly welcomed. Yet, he rolled up his sleeves and served those who had nowhere else to turn. There are some people . . . there are a lot of people walking around here today, grandparents, parents perhaps even some people in this House who were born at the hands of Dr. McPhee at a time when White physicians would not see Black families.

**An Hon. Member:** Yes.

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** Dr. McPhee is a member of my fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated, and has been a member since 1946. That is 79 years of brotherhood. His stories are legendary. One of his favourites, which he spoke about again this weekend when I visited him, was his attendance at

the fraternity's 50th anniversary in 1956 where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was the keynote speaker.

**The Speaker:** Mm-hmm.

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** Imagine this. A man who not only practiced medicine at a time of racial resistance but sat in the same room as one of history's most remarkable voices spoke against that very type of discrimination. I've known him as a fraternity brother for nearly 24 years, and I've learned so much from him. He is the kind of man who will meet someone and say, *Oh, I remember when you were born*. And he would not be joking. So, Mr. Speaker, Dr. McPhee is a living, breathing archive of service, struggle and triumph. And we don't get many like him. So, on behalf of this House, and I would like to associate the entire House,—

**The Speaker:** Yes.

**Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain:** —and with deep gratitude wish Dr. McPhee a happy 99<sup>th</sup> birthday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

The Opposition Whip rose pretty quickly . . . the Government Whip, rather, rose pretty quickly that time.

Government Whip, you have the floor.

**Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell:** Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to highlight and also congratulate a much-needed service in this community in the likes of what's called the DailyMale, M-A-L-E. They provide a health clinic, a mobile health clinic offering free screenings for prostate cancer. And their mission—if you don't mind, I will read it out, Mr. Speaker. As I said, I'm trying to highlight it deliberately. It is, "To establish a community-led health charity for men in Bermuda to understand the importance of early detection and prevention of these diseases, and to provide them with the resources they need to make informed decisions about their health."

Mr. Speaker, I actually attended one of their sessions a couple of weeks ago because they tend to move around the Island to various clubs and organisations where men . . . congregate, especially men who look like me who are most likely to need this service. Anyway, I just certainly want to congratulate them for their efforts and what they're doing and wish them all the best going forward. And I hope the message has been sent that every man should actually try to attend one of these screenings as well.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I want to send congratulations to a very good friend of mine who was ordained in the Anglican Church on Wednesday of last week. He's now the Reverend Terry Hassell. And I want to associate a couple of my colleagues who actually attended there as well, and the Minister of Sport who I am sure knows him as well. And I know Terry from way back. He has a big heart, a big-hearted person. And I think he will actually do well in the ministry. He has shown his stripes already, so I certainly want to congratulate him and wish him all the best. Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

MP Simmons. The East End is jumping up quite a bit down there. But he is a West End fellow—

**Hon. Jarion Richardson:** There you go.

*[Laughter]*

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons:** Good morning, everyone.

**The Speaker:** He wears red and blue.

**Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons:** You see I've got my purple on, so it is red and blue together.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute on the passing of Mr. George Courtney who was a very strong advocate and supporter of the Progressive Labour Party, the Deputy Leader of the party. Zane De Silva is also wishing to be associated as well as Minister Tinee Furbert, and I will say everybody from the Progressive Labour Party side.

Mr. Courtney, I first became familiar with him before I was an MP when he was very active on Facebook. He seemed to enjoy tormenting the OBA and their supporters. But I really got to know him when he became a constituent of mine a couple of years ago when he moved to Packwood Home. [He was] a strong advocate for the party, strong advocate for Black economic empowerment. And it is sad to see him go because I will miss our conversations.

**The Speaker:** Yes.

**Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons:** Condolences to his mother, Sylvia—

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons:** —and Honourable Kim Swan tells me he went to Dalton [E.] Tucker [Primary School] too.

**The Speaker:** Yes, yes he did.

**Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons:** —but condolences to his mother, Sylvia, who actually just recently celebrated her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday, and to his siblings and all who loved him and will miss him. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Would any other Member . . . MP Lister. You have your three minutes.

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

I would like to first start off, Mr. Speaker, by echoing the sentiments spoken by the Minister of Digitisation (if I am correct) in congratulating all of the recent graduates from the public school system whether they be primary school, middle school or high school. And I would just like to . . . I'm not going to name them but just to the many numerous young cousins and relatives that I have. I just want to send them congratulations as they finish one phase of education, and as they continue on to the next phase.

Mr. Speaker, I would also just like to highlight and send congratulations to the Bermuda swim team . . . I know I should probably associate the swimming coach, MP Ben Smith. [The Bermuda swim team] recently competed at the Planet Swim Summer Championships in Florida. And I just want to highlight a few of the participants: young Caleb Ingham finished with two silver medals; young Brian Desmond [finished with] two bronze medals; and young Jorgia White set a new national record in the 1500 metres freestyle with 19 minutes and 25.7 seconds. So, Mr. Speaker, our young people are always excelling, and I would just like to recognise them.

And lastly, Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday I had the privilege of attending the "Hurt People, Hurt People" event put on at Bermuda College by the One Bermuda Ummah. The discussion was about . . . in relation to a lot of the violence that we have going on on the Island and how we can address it and different solutions. And also, the Minister of National Security, he was in attendance. So I would like to associate him. But it was a well-attended event, and I think we need more events like them. I know the Minister mentioned earlier the youth one that was put on that week, that same week also, but we need more so that we can again address the problems of violence in our community, find solutions, and that we can have a better way forward. So again, to the One Bermuda Ummah, congratulations on an event that was well-attended and hopefully we can use more of them to find a solution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Minister Darrell, you rose really quickly that time. You can have the floor.

**Hon. Owen Darrell:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I don't know if this was done in this place before but if it was, I'm going to do it again. I'd like to send condo-

lences to the family of Ms. Yvette Lynn (Baxter) Wilson. She was a constituent of mine in constituency 15. [I] did not get to meet her personally because by the end she had moved to Paget, a location that we have in Paget, the King Edward Memorial [Hospital]. But I would like to send condolences to her family, especially—and I'll associate Minister Weeks with this—her daughter, Ms. Natalie Simmons and her husband Rodney Simmons, who do still live in constituency 15 as well as her other daughter, Ms. Linda Baxter. So, I would like to send condolences to the Baxter family.

Also, I would like to send congratulations, Mr. Speaker, to a few individual graduates and I know the Minister from the Cabinet Office did, and others have talked about graduates throughout the Island, but I want to highlight a few in particular. And as we all know because we sit in this place, Mr. Speaker, that when election time comes we all ask for assistance from multiple different people and I'd like to congratulate these specific young people who answered the call to step up and assist and learn during the most recent General Election, particularly with my campaign. So, I am forever indebted and grateful to them. But I would like to call their names.

Congratulations to Ms. Ciana Smith who at the time of the election was my youngest voter. Ciana graduated from The Berkeley Institute yesterday. Also, Ms. Mahy Straw who graduated from The Berkeley Institute. Ms. Ra'eesah Robinson who graduated yesterday from The Berkeley Institute. Ms. Tayla Bean who graduated from The Berkeley Institute yesterday. And this one here, Ms. Alay Burgess, who we will be hearing more from because yesterday at the graduation she picked up many scholarships. She was an S3 student, Mr. Speaker, who graduated a year early from The Berkeley Institute and I want to just specifically, as I said, Mr. Speaker, say thank you to these young people because they could have sat by and they could have watched it all happen back in the run up to the election but they decided to step forward. They decided to assist and more importantly, Mr. Speaker, they did say at the end of the exercise that they learned quite a bit. And I wish them well in their future endeavours and maybe one day we may see a few of them here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

MP King. You have your three minutes.

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

I wish to extend condolences to the family of Ms. Kimberley Wilson of 91 North Shore who passed on June 18. [My] thoughts and prayers are with the family at this difficult time.

On a lighter note, I want to extend congratulations and praise to Ralph Scott, Jr., who is 17 years old, 6-foot 7 [inches], [and an] up and coming basketball player. You probably read about him in the papers. He is, you know, a tremendous young man, re-

spectful, focused and has a really bright future in sports, and in general.

And I also want to commend and congratulate Ms. Marley Tear who shadowed me over the last week who is interested in a career in politics. She got to visit over at the Archives and see the tremendous work that they are doing there. Also, [I am] in the process of getting her set up with the Youth Parliament here through your son, sir. Thank you very much. Take care.

**The Speaker:** Would you like to take your three minutes, Minister Furbert?

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity as well to congratulate . . . I know it has already been mentioned but I do want to stand to my feet to congratulate all the persons who have graduated from our primary and middle school and high school programmes. But I do want to make special mention to the graduates of Dame Marjorie Bean Hope Academy. I will associate the whole House and Minister Caesar (who sits in another place) with these remarks.

And you may have seen in the media, Mr. Dylan Peart who graduated while he was overseas because he could not be here to participate in the graduation ceremony. So, I want to send a big congratulations to him, but all the graduates of the Dame Marjorie Bean Hope Academy who will go on to do other programmes within the Government system or maybe other sorts of interests that they may have.

I want to also take the opportunity . . . I had the opportunity to attend BEDC's Pitch Perfect Match. And, Mr. Speaker, it was very beautiful to see our people, our Bermudian people pitching their entrepreneurship and business ideas through this pitch competition. Our people are so motivated and inspired and inspiring when they come forth with their business ideas. And we want to thank BEDC for the opportunity that they give our people, not just young people.

But I want to say a special congratulations to Ms. Trina Seymour who won the \$1,000 cash prize to go towards her business. And her business, or her product, was a Bermudian-inspired children's workbook that children can utilise throughout Bermuda. And she was, you know, . . . shared [she was] just so passionate about this workbook and I just hope that she gets all the support that she desires from our community.

Also Berym Bouncers, Mr. Speaker, I had . . . I don't know if anyone had the opportunity to watch Bermuda's very own Berym Bouncers. They are a skipping group. They will be representing Bermuda internationally I believe this summer. But the skill of those students . . . they made my heart stop at some points, how they were flipping and skipping with a great degree of skill and ability. So, I want to say a big

congratulations to Bemy Bouncers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.  
Does any other Member—MP Reverend Dill.

**Rev. Dr. Emilygail A. Dill:** Good morning—

**The Speaker:** Good morning.

**Rev. Dr. Emilygail A. Dill:** —and thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take the opportunity this morning to rise and give congratulations to Mrs. Barbara Dillas. Recently there was a documentary that was aired in the Somerset community. The documentary was produced by Marcquedelle Phillips Rodriguez and assisted by Mrs. Barbara Dillas and former Member of Parliament the Honourable Dale Butler. The documentary is entitled “Bus Stop Mural: Legacy of Somerset” our business history.

And for those of you who may not be familiar there is a beautiful mural that has been painted on the bus stop across from the Warren Simmons [Community] Field in Somerset. And the documentary explains the mural and it includes various individuals from the Somerset community who are telling the history of the various institutions that are highlighted in that mural.

And I would just like to thank Mrs. Dillas for her hard work along with the other members of the team and to thank the individuals who have taken the time to share the history of our community. And I encourage everyone who can to get an opportunity to hear about the wonderful Somerset community especially as we prepare for our upcoming victory this summer.

*[Inaudible interjections and laughter]*

**Rev. Dr. Emilygail A. Dill:** Thank you.

**The Speaker:** There you go. There you go.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** MP Tucker, you have your three minutes.

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

I first want to give condolences to the family of Mr. William “Billy” Gillies. I hesitate because he is, or he was a constituent, and whenever I would speak to him he had to correct me several times on the correct pronunciation of his name.

I would also like to extend condolences to the family of Mr. Lloyd Matthew. Mr. Matthew was my music teacher at Warwick Sec. [He] was a very kind man, somewhat very soft spoken, but he was very firm and fair in the many times that he had to tell me to shut up,

or the many times I got kicked out of his class—on occasion.

*[Inaudible interjections and laughter]*

**Ms. Robin Tucker:** I'll stay focused, Mr. Speaker.

I also would like to express condolences to members of my family on the passing of Aunt Eula, Aunt Eula Thomas. She will be interred later on next month. But again, just expressing condolences to Renée and Selena and the rest of the family.

I would like to express congratulations to Andre Lambe on claiming the ABO Regional Welterweight title.

*[Desk thumping]*

**Ms. Robin Tucker:** I would like to associate the whole House if everybody is in agreement. And as well as congratulations to Bermuda's newest ophthalmologists Addon and Addi Teye-Botchway who graduated fairly recently from the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. They both will be doing their residencies there as well. So, I just want to extend congratulations because they are constituents as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Does any other Member—MP Famous.

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, colleagues and most of all good morning to the people of Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to start off with some condolences to some folks from Devonshire. I am going to start off with Ms. Lois Ann Perinchief of Happy Valley Road, constituency 14. The MP reached out to her family. Mr. Matthew Rodill, [Jr.] of Chaingate Hill. That's my constituency. He is actually of Saber descent.

And Mr. Jelani Tweed who would be the grandson of . . . for those who went into the Army, Colour Tweed. He passed away recently as well, unexpectedly. He was also the cousin of . . . well, Reverend Tweed.

Mr. Speaker, also congratulations to my godson, Szaine Williams and the class of CedarBridge. And I single him out, Mr. Speaker, because he's the grandson of one of our greatest leaders, the Honourable Ottiwell Simmons. He is the youngest grandson of Ottiwell Simmons.

Mr. Speaker, a couple weeks ago I was invited to come to CedarBridge to . . . I forgot exactly what the programme is called, but I was invited by a teacher to come there and listen to young persons give presentations and we grade them on their speaking directly to the audience, the flow of their presentation, so on and so forth. There were three young men, I won't call their names because they are underage

(like the privacy issues) but these three young men each gave succinct presentations. One was on gang violence in Bermuda, the root causes and what are the possible solutions. Another young man gave a presentation on housing for seniors and he gives the statistics and what are the possible solutions. And another young man gave a presentation on affordable housing. Again, what are some of the root causes and what are some of the possible solutions. So, I want to give a shout-out to the class of—even though I'm a Berkeleyite. I want to give a shout-out to the class of 2025 at CedarBridge for the presentations and their teacher, Mrs. Wolfe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, MP.  
Minister.

**Hon. Jache Adams:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker.  
Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to first associate myself with the congratulations to all of our recent graduates from university right on down. Mr. Speaker, I emphasise *right on down* because next week will be a graduation for a special four-year-old—

**An Hon. Member:** Aha!

**Hon. Jache Adams:** —who graduates from preschool and will soon be going to “big” school. And so, I certainly wanted to associate myself with that.

*[Inaudible interjections and laughter]*

**Hon. Jache Adams:** Yes, who might that be, you might ask?

And also, I don't know if this was done previously, but also wanted to take the opportunity to congratulate a former colleague of ours, Senator Leslie Robinson, who was awarded with the—

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Hon. Jache Adams:** —I'm *late*? It happened already?

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Hon. Jache Adams:** Oh, the *late* Senator, okay. The late Leslie Robinson who was awarded the 2025 Fred Reiss Lifetime Achievement Award for the Bermuda Captive Conference.

*[Desk thumping]*

**Hon. Jache Adams:** Indeed, in her recognition, Mr. Speaker, we all know, and I firmly believe that the former Senator did not reach her full potential in her public life but her value and her contribution certainly in the captive space is well worth the recognition. Thank you.

*[Crosstalk]*

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Any other Member wish to make a contribution?

None.  
Premier.

**Hon. E. David Burt:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, as I will be the last one speaking today, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to rise to ask that a letter to be sent to the family of a constituent of mine who recently passed. His name is Mr. Dennis Leroy Woodley who passed away a week before last.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** Sorry? What happened?

The former chairman of constituency 18 for the Progressive Labor Party, Minister Michael Weeks, wishes to be associated with these condolences. But [Mr. Woodley] was the husband of Ms. Katina Woodley and father to Jaleela Woodley who is someone who is active in my particular constituency, Mr. Speaker. And I would just like to ask that a letter be sent to the family on his passing.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Minister.  
MP Simmons.

**Mr. Scott Simmons:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, my apologies. I recognise that the Premier has closed this particular part of the segment; however, I just wanted to rise and join Members of this House in sending certainly our condolences to [the family of] Mr. Lloyd Matthew who passed, the late Lloyd Matthew. He was a Member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church; however, he transcended religion. And he certainly immersed himself throughout our community. [He] was seen as an organist and a great musician. He contributed to our community. He will be very much missed. And I do believe the Honourable Member spoke about it earlier and that was that he moved quietly throughout our community, touching everyone. But also showing us the love of music, the contribution of music, and the fact that it is an intricate part of our lives and he will be remembered for just that. So, on behalf of my family, on behalf of the House, and also from the Deputy Speaker, I certainly want to send his family our deepest condolences at this time. Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker. And I apologise to the Premier. He did finish the segment.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Members, there are no further speakers. Before we move on, I would just like to add my remarks to the condolences that were expressed to the Smith family on the passing of Mr. Smith, from St. George's

there. Even though he was a St. George's fellow, he was a good friend, and we always found it very interesting to talk about St. George's history when I was down there visiting with him.

And exactly to the comments by, in regard to Ms. Dillas and her efforts on making . . . doing the mural on the bus stop in Somerset, I would like to be associated with those as well and congratulate her on her efforts for continually giving back to the community in the Sandys Parish.

But with that said, we'll 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

### GOVERNMENT BILLS

**The Speaker:** There are three Bills to be introduced this morning. The first is in the name of the Premier.

Premier, would you like to introduce your Bill?

## BILL

### FIRST READING

#### LAND VALUATION AND TAX (SPECIAL PROVISIONS AND POSTPONEMENT OF PREPARATION OF DRAFT VALUATION LIST) ACT 2025

**Hon. E. David Burt:** Thank you, very much, 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 Land Valuation and Tax (Special Provisions and Postponement of Preparation of Draft Valuation List) Act 2025.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

The next two are in the name of the Minister for the Cabinet [Office].

Minister.

## BILL

### FIRST READINGS

#### PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION AMENDMENT ACT 2025

#### BUILDING AMENDMENT ACT 2025

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

Mr. Speaker, I'm introducing the following Bills for their first reading so they may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: the Parliamentary Election Amendment Act 2025 and the Building Amendment Act 2025. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

## OPPOSITION BILLS

**The Speaker:** There are none.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS

**The Speaker:** There are none.

## NOTICE OF MOTIONS

**The Speaker:** There are none.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

**The Speaker:** The item to be dealt with today is the consideration of Tourism Investment (Clearwater Community Event Venue) Order 2025 in the name of the Minister of Tourism and Transport, Culture and Sport.

Minister.

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

Mr. Speaker, I moved that consideration be given to the draft order entitled Tourism Investment (Clearwater Community Event Venue) Order 2025 proposed to be made by the Minister responsible for tourism with written agreement of the Minister of Finance in exercise of the power conferred by section 5 of the Tourism Investment Act 2017.

**The Speaker:** Are there any objections?

There are none.

Continue, Minister.

## DRAFT ORDER

## TOURISM INVESTMENT (CLEARWATER COMMUNITY EVENT VENUE) ORDER 2025

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

Mr. Speaker, the purpose in bringing this [Tourism Investment \(Clearwater Community Event Venue\) Order 2025](#) before this Honourable House is to enable the grant of customs duty relief to the operators of Clearwater Community Event Venue. The Minister of Tourism and Transport, Culture and Sport, in consultation with the Minister of Finance deems that this tourism project to be an attraction which is in the national economic interest of Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to invite this Honourable House to take this Order under consideration. Mr. Speaker, the application for a Tourism Investment Order was submitted by Premier Tickets Limited (PTIX), a company founded by Bermudian Michael Branco and incorporated in Bermuda on 12 June 2024.

Mr. Speaker, PTIX partnered with 2.0 Collective to establish a community event at the Clearwater parking lot. The leadership team of PTIX includes Michael Branco, Chief Information Officer; Judy Benevides, Operations Manager; and Andrew Stoneham, Customer Care Manager. The leadership team of 2.0 Collective includes Polina Komsalova-[Branco] CEO; Alison Murdoch-Smith, Client and Creative Services Manager; and Nathan Swan, Creative Lead.

Mr. Speaker, PTIX has signed a two-year lease with the Bermuda Land Development Company Limited for this parking lot site situated on Cooper's Island Road. PTIX plans to set up a permanent venue for use by the community and event promoters providing a cost-effective turnkey venue. They will install base infrastructure including a 5,000 foot tent power infrastructure and containerised bars and facilities.

Mr. Speaker, PTIX has a flexi team of up to 52 Bermudian employees and has the capacity to staff every role for every size event, large or small. This team includes event managers, parking attendants, box office staff and gate attendants. Local security companies will be hired to coordinate and manage local event attendees.

Mr. Speaker, on 28 March 2024, the 5,000 square foot tent, previously located at Pier Six in Hamilton, were set up in the main parking lot at Clearwater Beach, Cooper's Island Road. The open configuration accommodates large crowds, up to 800 people standing inside and outside of the tent. This tent can be dismantled within 30 minutes in the event of windstorms in excess of 45 mph.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members will note that Premier Tickets Limited is seeking full relief from customs duty for a period not exceeding five years from the operative date of the Tourism Investment Order in respect of any equipment, goods and sup-

plies which are necessary for the operation of the attraction.

Mr. Speaker, Michael Branco and his team at PTIX have every confidence, and I concur, that this venue will become a vibrant component of the East End of Bermuda, enhancing our tourism offerings while simultaneously providing economies to the event organisers at Clearwater Beach.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recommend this Order for support of this Honourable House. Thank you.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

Does any other Member wish to make a contribution at this time?

MP Robinson.

**Mr. Dwayne Robinson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon to all of the folks listening in.

I just want to be really clear that the One Bermuda Alliance supports any sort of relief for the local economy and improving amenities for our tourism product, which is what this Bill is intended to do.

So, as the Minister was concise and to the point with it, I will also be that and say that we look forward to seeing more targeted relief to the local economy and infrastructure growth within the tourism industry. And this is a great start. So, he has my support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Any other Member wish to make a contribution?

MP Swan.

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. Thank you ever so much.

I am very much in support of this initiative, and I thank the Minister for his part in ensuring that it has come forward to this point. Just last weekend Mr. Speaker, I was in an indoor sporting facility purpose-built by [Robert Morris] University in Pittsburgh in which . . . it was very interesting because that university, a small private university, with 5,000 students who compete in Division One, has an outdoor dome and it houses a golf driving range. But when you're hitting off the mats, you look down there and you see the football pitch. And I . . . and it just dawned on me, because I said, *Boy, I want to go there around ten o'clock at night or nine o'clock and hit some balls* when I had the urge. And I couldn't. And I just realised the football pitch outline was for a purpose.

It was to be able to provide soccer playing for the university teams that compete indoors. And why indoors? Well, it gets kind of cold in Pittsburgh. But those teams practice year-round. And I got to thinking. I said, *You know what? In this country of Bermuda,*

*the greatest opportunity in tourism exists between November 1 and May when less than 50 per cent occupancy contains . . .* I hear people talking about growing the population. But I never hear them talking about growing the amount of population that comes to visit Bermuda between those months.

And a facility such as that, which is akin to what we're seeing happening out at Clearwater, it's the way in which we need to look as the type of amenities that would allow us to promote the time of year where the low-hanging fruit that doesn't require the greatest amount of infrastructure, it just causes us to find the thousands of people amongst the millions of people out there in the world who would choose to come to this wonderful country as they did hundreds of years ago. Because we once were a winter destination.

So, I'm very much supportive of this. It is certainly something that we can look to as a further example of the type of infrastructure that would benefit Bermuda greatly. And I'm ecstatic with the fact that the private sector entrepreneur spirit is recognising these opportunities.

And why do I say that? It is because everybody looks to the government to do everything. But the success in Bermuda tourism came about because we had a very vibrant private sector involvement in industry. And, you know, you saw it in guest houses and the like. Well, some of them are now condominiums. You saw them in small hotels which are now condominiums today. But what we see happening here with the amount of investment Orders that have come forward in recent years . . . I declare my interest. I used to present some before the Minister came to this Honourable House from the other place.

And I'm here to say that's because private industry is seeing the opportunity that's being realised through the success that's manifesting itself in this very country, in that very space. And so that is a good thing. And this is a good initiative. And I look to it to grow and encourage others to venture into where there is opportunity.

And I will close by saying this. The opportunity in Bermuda exists between November 1 and May, particularly because we have hotels that are 50 per cent undersold, or greater. And to me, that presents an opportunity, a great opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, MP Swan.

MP Foggo, would you like to make a contribution?

**Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be ever-so brief.

I feel duty-bound to speak on this because this tourism product is being situated right down there in constituency 3. More to that, this tourism product that will be placed down there in constituency 3, this

event product will be offering 52 jobs to our Bermudians so we will have about 50-some Bermudians employed. But that doesn't speak to the attendant services that will be associated with events like this, things like security. So by ensuring that we have put this product in place, I think Bermuda will benefit from—and certainly Bermudians because we're talking about 52 jobs, we definitely, Mr. Speaker, can say that we are creating an atmosphere, a vibrancy that St. David's will be able to . . . the community of St. David's will be able to enjoy, will be able to benefit from, and we can say that we are promoting something that has been to the benefit of our people.

I have many, many constituents who email me every day because they, given the skill sets that they have, perhaps still have not secured employment. And I have referred them to various institutions that are offering services in the St. David's area. And no doubt I will be pointing them to this event that will be taking place, this entity that will be housed down there in St. David's.

I'm excited about the fact that we will have our—and I'm emphasising Bermudians, our Bermudians employed down there in the St. David's community. And so that should bring some added dollars to that specific area as well because we do have a few restaurants down there. We have the beaches down there and during the summer months, in particular, you will have a whole host of people down there who can benefit from the extra activity that will be taking place in the community of St. David's.

It would have been remiss of me not to point that out. And so, I'm grateful that we are introducing something that will see more Bermudians employed, in particular. And likely more than 52 people, because as I said, there are attendant services that are associated with events such as this. So, on that note, Mr. Speaker, I say thank you to the Tourism Minister. I know that is not just what he is responsible for, but we are talking about tourism right now. And I look forward to this being a welcomed entity in the community of St. David's.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Member.  
Government Whip.

**Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I wish to associate my support to this Order that the Minister of Tourism has actually brought forward. Let me declare my interest in the first instance and say that I am the Chairman of the BLMC, where Clearwater comes under. And when the idea was brought to our board, we certainly grabbed it with both hands because we have been trying to get some excitement going down in the East End anyway.

**Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva:** What about Cup Match?

**Hon. Michael A. Weeks:** Oh, yes, that too.

*[Inaudible interjections and laughter]*

**Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell:** And so, having brought this forward, I see this as nothing but a positive for all Bermuda especially the East End. So, thank you, Minister, for bringing this forward. Thank you.

*[Crosstalk]*

**The Speaker:** MP Simmons.

**Mr. Scott Simmons:** Mr. Speaker—

**The Speaker:** MP Scott Simmons, you have the floor.

**Mr. Scott Simmons:** Mr. Speaker, this particular Bill put forward by the Minister is good stuff. It speaks very much to our community, and we just want to rise and congratulate him and his department and also congratulate those who vetted the process, looked over this particular proposal and saw the value in it.

Mr. Speaker, this is also an important part of what we are doing as the Government, and this is good. This is something that we have to highlight. We are doing it. There were those who were wondering whether or not we are doing it, is that we are supporting entrepreneurs. We are . . . when they bring proposals of merit, the Ministers and the Government are looking over what they are doing and that they are approving it and backing it up, Mr. Speaker. Not just with the approval but also with the tax relief or with the duty relief and the continued duty relief. Because I do believe, and the Minister can correct me, is a five-year process. This is a reflection of this Government's focus on its community. A focus on how we can promote and move our community forward, encouraging entrepreneurs, and really making a difference in our community.

*[Crosstalk]*

**Mr. Scott Simmons:** And so, kudos certainly to the Minister and to the other members who are involved in this and our Government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Does any other . . . Minister Lightbourne.

**Hon. Alexa Lightbourne:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I too rise in support of this Tourism Order, recognising that our tourism industry is evolving and having heard and listened to some of the statistics that were provided at the recent Cost of Living Summit, what is important and what it underscores is the vision that the Government has had and the success of it because what we see is private sector innovating and in response to what we have created as a policy and legislative framework for them to do so.

And so, I stand in support of that. And I stand in support of those who will be employed and benefit from this tourism opportunity and also this venue space. Noting that we see in other islands how there are an uptick of venues and things in which events and the like can be held attracting tourists, attracting locals, and attracting those who may have interest and attend.

And so, I support this. I support the entrepreneurs who have thought this important to create. And I thank them for taking some of the heat from constituency 14, as it has been constantly used and the parking and the like, it is often the thing that the constituents of constituency 14 would like to discuss and also see if we can address. So, I think this venue down in the east is purposeful and it does support, not only our community, our environment, and also our tourism products. So, thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

Does anyone else want to make a contribution?

Minister Darrell. Yes, close out.

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

And I want to just say thank you for the support that we have received for this Tourism Investment Order from both sides of the House which continues to show what the Government is doing as far as investment in tourism in this country. And as the MP from constituency 14 said, I am also, when it comes to our representative, in that same boat. As you know, the National Sports Centre has long been a useful venue similar to what we are talking about today. But to have a purpose-built venue down in a more suitable location will benefit everyone when it comes to the tourism products, the experiences that tourists will have, and locals alike. As well as, you know, support for the entrepreneurs who apply their trade in this space.

And I would just like to make one clarification for my colleague, the Deputy Speaker who mentioned 52 jobs. There are already 52 jobs that are in place from PTIX, who is going to put this community centre. So, what I think my colleague was saying, and the Deputy Speaker was saying, is that there will be possibly 52 additional jobs made.

**Some Hon. Members:** Yes.

**Hon. Owen Darrell:** So, thank you for that. Thank you for that. And I'm happy to make that clarification for you—52 additional jobs with all other, you know, vendors who come and they are going to support this venue.

So, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to everyone who has supported this second of many-to-come attractions that come under the 2017 Tourism Investment Act.

And with that said, Mr. Speaker, I move that the said draft Order be approved and that a suitable message be sent to His Excellency the Governor.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Are there any objections?

No objections. The matter has been [approved].

*[Motion carried: The Tourism Investment (Clearwater Community Event Venue) Order 2025 was approved.]*

**The Speaker:** Mr. Premier.

## ADJOURNMENT

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

Mr. Speaker I move that the Honourable House do now adjourn until Friday, 11 July [2025.]

**The Speaker:** Are there any objections to that?

There are none.

We have a Member who has risen to his feet to speak so . . . You have your 20 minutes, MP Famous.

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** Mr. Speaker, I will not need that 20 minutes.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

## GRANTING OF BERMUDIAN STATUS

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** Mr. Speaker, a couple of months ago we looked at the definition of the term *revisionist*. Someone who attempts to recreate what happened years ago and spin it into their definition of what's happening now.

Mr. Speaker, we talked about in the last sitting about people who deny genocide. People who deny land theft. And the conclusion, Mr. Speaker, at least that I came to, is someone who has very little credibility. So, Mr. Speaker, we are going to talk today about a word called "gentrification." And the definition is defined as, *A process in which poor areas experience an influx of middle or wealthy individuals who renovate and rebuild homes and businesses often resulting in increased property values and the displacement of other residents.* Gentrification, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Mm-hmm.

**Mr. Christopher Famous:** Mr. Speaker, we heard . . . , well, some read or heard an individual saying, *The solution to the cost of living is to bring in more people. The solution to the cost of living is to give away Bermudian status.*

Mr. Speaker, there's not one island where the population has increased that life has gotten cheaper for the residents. Not one island. Even if the volume of groceries comes in a little more and maybe, *maybe*, you will get that watermelon for \$11.00 now. If the cost of housing has gone up exponentially, that \$11.00 is wiped out. So, when people stand on their feet or get in front of the media and say the cost, the solution to the cost of living is to bring in more people or give away Bermuda status, we have to call it for what it is. A lack of credibility. Because they cannot show one iota of evidence where populations have gone up and the cost of living has gone down.

Mr. Speaker, supply and demand. As we all know, one of the biggest issues in Bermuda right now is affordable housing. It has always been an issue, but it's getting worse. We have an issue where Bermudians cannot afford to purchase property on their own Island. We are getting to a point now where Bermudians cannot even afford to rent in their own Island because the prices are just getting ridiculous, Mr. Speaker. The [Bermuda] Housing Corporation through Minister Burch, and now Minister De Silva, is doing what they can. But you cannot keep up with what's going on out there, Mr. Speaker.

We all have an issue where Bermudians are leaving because they can't afford to live in their own Island, Mr. Speaker. Even if you dropped the price of groceries and if someone cannot afford to pay rent, they are leaving. What is the sense of having groceries if you ain't got anywhere to live, Mr. Speaker?

So, when we hear people purporting that they are here to help the country, saying, *Let's just give away Bermuda status*, again, it goes to the word "credibility," Mr. Speaker. Because, let's think about it, how does giving status to people who are already here increase the actual economic activity? It doesn't.

But what it does do, Mr. Speaker . . . let me read a quote out of [The Royal Gazette](#). "Attracting foreigners to the island to boost the population was the obvious solution." Again, another quote, Mr. Speaker. The granting of—this is *The Royal Gazette* [27 June 2025], not my words. "The granting of Bermudian status to foreign nationals would mean them gaining unrestricted property ownership rights. . . ."

Mr. Speaker, when you now give status to people, they now have the ability to purchase unlimited amounts of property. They could buy apartments. They can kick the tenants out. They can do whatever. They now have the same rights as you and I, Mr. Speaker.

So, I'm going to leave this with the listening audience and both sides of the House. I want a show of hands from anyone who believes granting status to foreigners is going to lower the cost of living. Anyone?

Anyone?

No one?

I want to ask for a show of hands if there is anyone in this House who believes that granting sta-

tus to foreigners is going to lower the cost of housing. Is it going to help Bermudians?

Anyone?

No one?

Mr. Speaker, as we continue this dialogue of definitions—revisionists, genocide, and gentrification—let us remember, someone who says these things has no credibility. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, MP.

I'm going to take MP Smith over here on the side. MP Smith.

### **COST OF LIVING SUMMIT RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

I did attend the Cost of Living Summit and I have to say, my take away was [that] one of the major components to a solution would be to increase the number of people on the Island so that we are splitting the costs. And that did come up repeatedly in the discussions and the panel discussions. For instance, you know, the more containers on a ship the less it costs to bring the ship in. The economies of scale that you get when you order more groceries.

On the energy piece, the comment was made that the electrical system has been or had been designed for a population of 70,000 and of course the Chamber of Commerce is estimating we are somewhere between 55[,000] and 57[,000]. So, you know people do matter. But it is really important about how we go about growing the population.

One of the interesting statistics that came up during the course of the Summit was that somebody said that 30 per cent of our population is living in poverty. And you know we have heard that kind of thing before but that is absolutely stunning.

The other thing that was mentioned was that in the past 17 years (from 2008 to today), the volume of imports that would be, you know, goods coming across the dock, is 26 per cent less than it was in 2008. And that even during the time when there was a blip up in the number of imports coming in because of the America's Cup, we were still 16 per cent below where we were in 2008. You know, these are data points that do tell a story. And numbers do matter.

One of the things that was also interesting was some of the recommendations and suggestions that were made which are not major ticket items but there are areas where the community and government can come together to solve some of the problems that we have, and when we can do that incrementally, obviously, that kind of moves the lever in the right direction.

And one of them was . . . it came from the farmers who basically said that they are losing a lot of valuable crops due to the feral chickens. And that if we could do something about the chickens, that would be of benefit to them. And that there are also some

health issues with respect to the number of feral chickens that we have. I think that we could probably get some sort of government community effort around that, and that is something that could probably happen fairly quickly and then we are just into a maintenance programme.

So, I do think that there were some . . . there was (no pun intended) but some low-hanging fruit in terms of some of the recommendations that were made. I think it was a really good event in that it pointed everybody up in the direction of—this is a crisis. How we solve the crisis, I think is, like I said, going to be incremental. But I also do believe that it involves growing the population. But I don't believe it is giving away status, opening the floodgates, doing any of that.

I think that I would like to see a very structured strategy and plan to grow our population in the immediate term, but with a view on medium- to long-term and sustainability of our culture and our people going forward. It is not something that . . . we didn't get here overnight, and we are not going to solve it overnight. But I think that really there needs to be a really cohesive and coordinated plan to say, *What are we going to look like 10 years from now? And, Are we going to be around 10 years from now?* i.e., Are we going to be able to afford to live here 10 years from now? Or are we going to be part of the emigration boat?

Anyhow, I commend the Ministry on putting together the Summit. And I hope that there are further discussions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, MP Smith.

MP Simmons.

**Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons:** Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** You have your 20 minutes on the clock.

### **GRANTING OF BERMUDIAN STATUS**

**Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons:** I will not speak ill of the Member because he is not here. But I would like to thank the Member who just took her seat for saying that she does not support the granting of status.

**An Hon. Member:** Yes!

**Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons:** And I think it's a very clear thing because that's not the policy of her party. So, I hope that she will as a new voice influence and shape the direction to pull back from this position which they have held since 2012.

Mr. Speaker, those of us—

### **POINT OF ORDER**

**Ms. Linda Smith:** I would like to make a point of order.

**Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva:** What's your point of order.

**Ms. Linda Smith:** I did not say—

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Ms. Linda Smith:** —I disagree with granting of status. What I absolutely disagree with is opening the floodgates and granting status to people to build up the population. We have to put a plan around this. Okay? And it doesn't . . . it is not . . . it's not—

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Ms. Linda Smith:** —It is not one alignment.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Ms. Linda Smith:** Where's the plan? Where's the plan?

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**The Speaker:** All right.

**Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons:** So, let's be clear. Let's be clear.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons:** She doesn't want to open the immigration floodgates but wants to give away status.

**An Hon. Member:** That's right.

**Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons:** So, let's be clear. Your position is not the same as ours. We don't have to explain our position because our position is not the same as yours. You have to justify your position of granting status to whoever and wherever. And let me understand. Let me make something very clear.

**An Hon. Member:** Qualify.

**Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons:** One of the things—

**Ms. Linda Smith:** Point of clarification.

**Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons:** No, I'm not taking it.

**The Speaker:** He is not taking it.

**Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons:** One of the things that disturbed me about the One Bermuda Alliance since their defeat in 2017, you made policy decisions without

consultation that were not in your platform which led to the people blocking Parliament. Right? The largest protests since the 1970s. And never once have you said, *You know what? I'm sorry. You know what? Maybe I should listen to the people I work for who have told [me] unequivocally, unreservedly we do not support the granting of status.*

Listen up. Listen clear. Look—some people, and I don't want to pick on slow learners, but some people if they don't listen, they feel.

**An Hon. Member:** Yes.

**Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons:** So the licks weren't enough in 2016? The licks at the polls in 2017 wasn't enough? The licks in 2020 wasn't enough?

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons:** You think you know better than the people we work for. They don't want it. They've told you they don't want it. You know why they don't want it? I had an interesting book I found in a thrift shop recently on Bermuda's history. *The People of Bermuda. Beyond the Crossroads.* And there was an interesting factoid in this book. When the seats were cut for 40 [MPs] back during the constitutional conference, 60 per cent of the seats were predominantly White.

And do you know how they got there? Well, we can talk about the way the boundaries are cut and all that. The rapid influx of deliberate manipulation of immigration by the powers that be to shape the political landscape and economic landscape of Bermuda.

**An Hon. Member:** Read your history.

**Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons:** It's a fact.

**An Hon. Member:** Read your history.

**Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons:** Okay. This is the history we have experienced. So, when we speak, we are not speaking [about] some bogey-man we have never of. We have seen this movie before. And we have seen the same players involved with this movie before. You cannot put out a remake saying the same script and the same nonsense that we have had to put up with—

**An Hon. Member:** Same scriptwriters.

**Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons:** Same scriptwriters.

Now, when I came to this House, I did not come here to speak for real estate agents who cannot sell houses because they are overpriced. I did not come here for retailers who were complaining about the market not being big enough for them to exploit. I came here because I saw what my contemporaries

saw, how so many of us had to train lesser qualified expatriates to be our bosses.

**Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo:** Yes.

**Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons:** To sit in a department where every single Bermudian in the department is more qualified than the person they brought in on a work permit. We have had to sit and see the job descriptions manipulated. We have had to see people inside businesses being told, *Oh, do not apply for that job because we like you where you are.* So they can bring in one of their friends.

We have seen the games played with immigration. We have seen it. And so, we need to have an honest conversation about growing the country. And I agree that as we grow it has to be sustainable. We have to be able to look at the . . . have as much passion to bringing our people who are born here and lived here all their lives and were forced to be displaced because of the economy home, as you do for bringing in new people. You listen to the releases by the One Bermuda Alliance. Go back and count them. How many releases have you put out? How many interviews? How many statements saying we want to bring people back? And compare it to all the talk about getting status.

Priorities matter. And Mr. Speaker, I am going to tell you something right now. I was not elected by people who want status. I was not elected by people who want to see Bermudians discriminated and displaced. And I pledge to my constituents, the people who voted for me, I will never support it. And I will fight it. Whether we are Government, Opposition or whatever. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** MP King, would you like to make a contribution at this time?

#### GRANTING OF BERMUDIAN STATUS

**Mr. Robert King:** I feel compelled to Mr. Speaker.

*[Laughter and crosstalk]*

**Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva:** Are you cleaning up?

**Mr. Robert King:** Well, remember who is the current Administration who has created that mess.

**Some Hon. Members:** Ooh!

**Mr. Robert King:** When we are looking at the mass exodus of persons leaving Bermuda, you won the election way back in 2017 until this day,—

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Robert King:** —more people in the ground, increased—

**The Speaker:** Members, let him have his say. Members!

**Mr. Robert King:** —knife and gun crime—that lays at your feet.

People leaving this country because of the cost of living, you created that. And also, when you are talking about persons who are working for the Bermuda Government and foreigners . . . when we are looking at professional services and consultants, how many millions of dollars are being spent on consultants under the current Administration?

We ask for the numbers, but I am sure that will not be provided. When we were discussing the budget, what we saw is that there was an overreliance on professional consultants at the expense of training local Bermudians.

**Hon. E. David Burt:** Point of order Mr. Speaker. Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Point of order.

#### POINT OF ORDER

*[Misleading]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** The Honourable Member, as every single time he gets on his feet in this House, is misleading the House. I will point the Honourable Member to the Budget Book which lists precisely what the Honourable Member just asked.

**The Speaker:** Continue Member. Just be mindful of the comments.

**Mr. Robert King:** Well, he makes, the Honourable Premier, makes the point. Professional services versus training for persons in various departments. Professional consultants, monies for that, millions and millions of dollars. Training budget, hundreds of thousands of dollars. So, there is a difference, and we also see—

**Hon. E. David Burt:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker

**The Speaker:** Point of order.

#### POINT OF ORDER

*[Misleading]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He knows full well that the training budget for the Government of Bermuda, as stated in the Budget Statement, is not hundreds of thousands of dollars. He must retract that statement and speak facts in this House.

**An Hon. Member:** He doesn't know because he can't read.

**The Speaker:** Member, just be mindful—

**Mr. Robert King:** He does know, and he can read.

**The Speaker:** Member, just be mindful of the fact—

**Mr. Robert King:** —No, no.—

**The Speaker:** —that we just came out of a Budget Statement—

**Mr. Robert King:** Absolutely, absolutely.

**The Speaker:** The Budget Statement would have all the numbers that are factual. Continue.

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

The fact is that statements are being made about floodgates and immigration—

**Hon. E. David Burt:** Yes.

**Mr. Robert King:** —which are attributed only to the One Bermuda Alliance, because it is convenient. However, when you have the Chamber of Commerce which has used data and analysis from all sources to include Government's figures, the message is clear that the population needs to increase. It needs to be strategic as my colleague said here. Not a floodgate approach.

However, it could be argued that if we are in a state of crisis something other than what is being done now needs to happen because people are still leaving. The cost of living is still increasing. People are still dying based on the policies that are implemented right now. So, what is being done now is not working.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Robert King:** The point is we need to do things differently.

When we ask for data and what is driving the policy decisions that are being made in this country, we are basically told, *We will get to that*. Or, *I do not have the numbers on that*. So, we are making decisions based on how we think people feel. We know how people feel.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Robert King:** Well, good—

**The Speaker:** Let the Member speak.

**Mr. Robert King:** —good because I am representing the people—

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**The Speaker:** —Let the Member speak.—

**Mr. Robert King:** —of constituency 10 and they feel like this. They have talked about this, the ones that still remain.

If we are serious about making change, what we will accept is that the Opposition's role is to uphold the Government and hold it accountable to do what is in the best interests of the country. It may not be convenient.

**An Hon. Member:** That is not correct.

**Mr. Robert King:** However, it is necessary. You talk about collaboration, but the moment we have a differing opinion it is a problem for you.

**Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo:** It is not a problem for us.

*[Inaudible interjections and laughter]*

**The Speaker:** Members.

**Mr. Robert King:** Well, what could be said is that you used every means at your disposal to make sure that you stayed in power. So . . .

*[Laughter and inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Robert King:** We need to do things a different way in the interest of the people of this country. It needs to be based on facts and evidence and what subject matter experts say we ought to do for the people that we represent.

Let us be honest about it. If we are saying that what the Chamber has reported on is not accurate, that is a problem. If you are suggesting that what we are presenting is inaccurate when it is based on the figures and documents that you guys have provided, that is also a problem. We have to find a different way of actually collaborating and working together to solve the ills of this country. Thank you.

*[Laughter and crosstalk]*

**The Speaker:** Thank you, MP.

Does any other Member—MP Simmons . . . MP Swan.

#### GRANTING OF BERMUDIAN STATUS

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

Mr. Speaker in retort to the speaker who just took his seat from constituency 10. Earlier this year

we had a General Election of which we are all aware. And there is one thing that I learned sitting in another place which I went there in 1998 and I represented a different organisation at that particular time that no longer exists. But its files and stuff went to where the Opposition sits today. So, you can pick the bones out of that.

But I will say this, the Progressive Labour Party and Colonel Burch, who sat in this House very admirably as Minister of Public Works, used to go down lunchtime after we had had a heated session and come back and then he would open up the page of the Progressive Labour Party Platform. And he would go through, and he would say, *En train—done; en train—done; en train—done*. Because one thing that it was difficult to argue against was that for many years going back to 1968, and I learnt this in Opposition when we had a library—I have spoken to that many times before and I look for the day when we have [the library] again in a revamped House of Parliament up on the hill—always came with a platform.

And it was not one that was based on what current opinion was or what current feeling was or a pamphlet that we saw in the last election by the One Bermuda Alliance, who remains in Opposition. It was some carefully thought-out solutions and a way forward based on an ethos, and a way of thinking. All right? Put together by some people you know far better than I, Mr. Speaker. And I know some of them very well as well, even before I became a member of the Progressive Labour Party.

And so, right now, six months are passed January when the election was called. Having presented a platform and a Throne Speech in November and a platform initiative from 2020 that some are still a work in progress, the Progressive Labour Party is working according to a plan. Is it the plan that the OBA wants? No! Because the OBA's pamphlet plan got rejected in 2017, 2020 and 2025.

*[Inaudible interjections and laughter]*

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** And until Members on that side appreciate that we are elected based on trust. Not trust in people believing in what they are trying to resell and repackage and get consultants to put in a fancy way. It is based on people. Ordinary people on Slip Road, ordinary people on Hog Bay Level, ordinary people on . . . what?—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** No, no. Field View Lane. All right? Field View Lane.

*[Laughter]*

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** I didn't know there was a Field View Lane. I said to a Member from Pembroke, I said, *Where is Field View Lane?*

He said, *You are walking in my constituency.*

I said, *Where is the view of the field?*

He said, *That is because you are not a pond dog.*

*[Laughter]*

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** But I can tell you where White Hill Field is. And I can tell him where the field is that cricket is going to be won [on] this year by St. George's Cricket Club is on. Wellington Oval.

*[Laughter]*

**The Speaker:** No, no, no. You just lost it.

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** But I am here to say is that until . . . But I want to give kudos to the Shadow Minister responsible that speaks [for] Tourism. I saw a recent article that had some solutions listed. And I want to give credit to that. Because that is what I learned from the Member celebrating the very historic birthday. I learned that from her brother Brutus, when I was in Opposition. Your friends tell you what? Not what you want to hear; what you need to hear. And Brutus says, *Stop going up there criticising every week. Take a page out of our book. Come with some solutions.* And that Honourable Member has put forward some solutions. One of which was delivered the very same day, today. So, he was on time.

But a solution does not come today unless there is some work that has been done well ahead of time. So, kudos to our Minister responsible for Tourism and responsible for Sport and Culture for looking at what is required in this space.

And if we are going to get some good service out of an Opposition, you know you just cannot come here and say what you think . . . what you would like people to think.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** What you would like people to think. Yes, I remember somebody saying to me, *You know, we need change.* You know what change to them meant? Change meant people change in the way they viewed them. And they kept being the same.

Bob Marley said, *You can run away, you can run, you can run, you can run.* But who can't you run from?

**An Hon. Member:** Yourself.

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** You cannot run from yourself. And yourself is a problem for this country. Because you are elected to be responsible.

You know someone told me when I was in Opposition, he said, *Swan, you know, you can say anything because you have the luxury of being irresponsible*. But that was not what I studied of the PLP for 30 years in Opposition. For 30 years in Opposition coming with solutions that the then Government took up, which prolonged their time in Opposition, but they were irresponsible. But when they came in that mindset did not stop. We are still looking at ways in which we can better this country.

And I welcome too solutions being offered by Members opposite. So, I will encourage others to take the vein of Member Richardson [*sic*] who came with . . . Robinson, sorry, I apologise. There is nothing worse in my profession [than] getting someone's name wrong. I did not do it intentionally. I did it by mistake. They came with some solutions.

Now, on the subject of solutions, the Opposition continued week in and week out, led by the Member who speaks opposite of a very good young Minister, my good friend, Minister Hayward, talking about increasing the population. And Member Famous spoke to it very well.

That narrative was a playbook in the 1970s when the electoral roll used to be re-established every year. Why? Because it would disenfranchise persons who did not register to vote. The Progressive Labour Party was one of the first to change (when the Progressive Labour came into power) into perpetuating rolls so persons would not be disenfranchised.

**Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo:** [INAUDIBLE]

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** And that is important. And that came on the heels of . . . Hey, look, I ran in 1983 and I ran in 1998 on the dual-seat constituencies. I think there are only one or two Members still around who may have done that. Maybe, one, two, three.

**Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo:** Four.

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Who ran on the dual-seat constituencies in the 1980s and 1990s and up until 1998. And that did not work in favour of the wider population. Because you had persons who came here . . . and back then in the 1970s, if you came from certain countries, particularly the United Kingdom, you could be on the electoral roll within a couple of months. And you could be guaranteed status within a couple of years. And that did not benefit the country. And it was wrong! [It was] in the midst of the country having commissions [of] inquiries, Pitt Report (right?), Tumin Report, and all types of reports that led to major disruption in this country, you know?

[Do] you know what? One of the major things that bothers me about our current constitutional status is that even back in the day when you had persons coming here who represented the crown, you had governors come to this country who were political. So,

they had an understanding of what it was like to represent a constituency. You had governors like [the] pictures down at Blue Waters Anglers Club.

My young uncle, who is 94 today, was the youngest member of Blue Waters Anglers Club when it was founded in 1958 being presented his prize by Martonmere. Or my uncle, who was the pro at Ocean View in 1955, being presented a prize with Sir Julian Gascoigne because they had a social conscience and recognised there was a social climate that was necessary to be mindful of and participated in bringing communities together.

Today we have (and no disrespect to anybody who works for the Foreign, Commonwealth [and Development] Office) career diplomats serving us there, so the politics of what exists in this country is lost on them. It does not work in the same fashion it is supposed to work—for the people of this country.

And just the irony . . . you know, I always said the good Lord has a wicked sense of humour. But when you are under the colonial system, it has the worst sense of humour. [The irony] is that we are paying for it! [If] anyone asks me why I would have voted in 1995 for independence, [it is] because it is the best thing for this country to realise its true potential, a country that competes against its own mother, Britain, for its survival against the major OECDS.

The solutions will come from people who represent this country and who stand on both sides of the political divide, hold hands and look at solutions on how to come out of the pandemic, how to move forward through economic crises throughout decades, [and] have the ability to figure out how to stand on our own. It is not something that just happened; it is something we have been doing for a long time. But it benefits persons who have it all who do not want to surrender it.

**An Hon. Member:** Hmmm.

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** I was trained in a profession whose hallmark is fairness. And this system remains unfair. We did not create it. And it benefits those who turn a blind eye.

On my final few minutes, I want to go here again.

**An Hon. Member:** Take your time. Take your time.

[Inaudible interjections]

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** I cannot help it.

[Inaudible interjections]

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** You know, in 1993, Mr. Speaker, you were in the House at that particular time. I think the Honourable Member Furbert was in the House at that particular time as well. We had an

exodus of the United States' military forces. Sam Donaldson's exposé caused the US bases that were looking to wind down around the world . . . [They] probably would have stayed in Bermuda had it not been for those (golf again) guys being caught on the golf course, probably some at Tucker's Point, some at Castle Harbour, and many of the working-class military in St. George's. The military provided housing in the eastern parishes and in the western parishes because there was a US presence up there too. [There was a] Canadian presence up there as well. [It] provided housing. It provided economic activity because they did not all live on the base. And it was transient. So, people were coming in and out.

No one gets up and says, *What was the economic impact on that presence in this country?* [From] Canadian bases up in Dockyard, Malabar up in Dockyard, two US bases in Southampton in my community and in St. George's my adopted community. A dead exodus. And persons are coming here wanting to replace that dearth with what this country . . . And the Honourable Member Jamahl Simmons (that speech needs to be played and played again) wants to go back in time there. He cannot go back there. No, we cannot go back there. We must go forward.

You know, we had over 12,000 beds. Today we are probably around 3,500 beds or thereabouts. Right? One thing the figures do show—we had a great number of hotels back 20 years ago, and we have very little today. Right?

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** And let me say that. Those persons—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Those persons took those hotels and made them condominiums.

*[Crosstalk and desk thumping]*

**An Hon. Member:** There you go.

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Now he's . . . Yes, yes, yes, yes! You . . . You . . . You just talk long enough, and you have been . . . Those hotels went into the private sector.

What I am saying is this. I did not expect . . . And thankfully, we see Elbow Beach being sold in the future. We see the Princess being developed. Right? We see the remnants of other interests percolating around the country. But you got to dare to think. Well, Luther . . . Here and now, I promise to serve you faithfully.

*[Laughter]*

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** Here and now, we have an opportunity to increase the population. How? Visit . . . a population in Bermuda can stay in hotels that are undersold between November 1 and May. Someone join the chorus and convince people that we need to move our focus towards getting more business here in the winter.

You know, last year when I was laid up in bed because of medical things, I did a little reading (more so) and historical research. In [the] 1890s and so forth, Bermuda was well-established as a tourism destination with persons sailing here—sailing, not flying—and staying in St. George's—the SS *Victoria* and the like. And St. Georgians like Louis Rafael (Kid) Corbin taking his first travel out of Bermuda in 1921 to go teach golf up in the United States, and the like. But you know, between 1922 and 1931, Bermuda had seven golf courses built. In the 1890s, you had the future President Woodrow Wilson. You had Samuel Clemens. In 1912, you had William Taft, President of the United States, around that time coming to Bermuda—shakers and movers influencing their people in high value.

Just this week . . . I did not mention on congrats, but I will.

Pan Am [was] flying in here. I declare my interest. The principals of Pan Am in Bermuda, Bermuda Properties, sponsored me in Europe playing golf (I might add) to play on the European Tour. Mr. Juan Trippe, he owned Pan Am. He owned Castle Harbour. When the Pan Am flight used to fly out of Bermuda at seven o'clock, do you think he took all types of red tape to figure it out? The congressman from Scranton, Pennsylvania that was on the board, that was his responsibility maybe to make a call or two to people in high places to make some things happen for the betterment of the country and maybe for the private individual interest. So, I have had some appreciation for what the private sector brings to the equation. And I am not wedded to the fact, you know, Mr. Speaker, that—Let me just take a little drink of water.

**The Speaker:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** I am going to close my few minutes with this, that in the spirit of solutions that a young Member came with and in the spirit of a speech of which Honourable Member Simmons spoke of and articulated that another Member had spoken to, I would urge the Opposition to look for solutions right across the board. Stop looking at anyone who is PLP as not having any ability [or] intellect to be able to navigate this country forward. But during the pandemic when the balanced budget was predicted, this country and its former Finance Minister had to make serious decision[s] to help people. And it did. And it had to wait a couple of years to be able to recalibrate and get back on that track of Throne Speech initiatives that

had been promised and delayed because of a pandemic.

[It was] not too different [from] 2007 or 2005 when the country was in buoyancy and persons opposite were blaming the PLP for the global recession. That is what was done.

**An Hon. Member:** Yes.

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** That is what was done. The PLP were blamed for the global . . . The PLP was the reason why XL went down, shares went down to two, why AIG changed their name to Chartis, while Madoff and Stanford tore the hearts out of persons who put their hard-earned insurance money into gas tubes to be collected by my cousin, Mr. Powell, up there in Southampton, while persons who had their pensions and their retirements in places like British American could not realise it. The PLP were paying for that because that is what the Opposition does, be irresponsible, blame the Government for everything, and sometimes it sticks because the great unwashed that followed the narrative. But I am encouraging folks there to be more responsible in their leadership. Look for the solutions and stop looking at us as not caring about the country. I am prepared to accept that you care about Bermuda, but the people have already told you three times over—three or four—that the way you want to do it does not cut it.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan:** I will deal with that comment on another day when it is appropriate, but I know from whence I came. And I know a little bit from whence he came, too. So be careful what you ask for. You just might get it.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, MP.

Does any—MP Ben . . . Opposition Deputy Leader, you have your 20 minutes.

### GRANTING OF BERMUDIAN STATUS

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

Mr. Speaker, I think today MP Famous opened a door to some dialogue that I think is actually important for this House and for the country to have.

**The Speaker:** Mm-hmm.

**Mr. Ben Smith:** We have a population crisis—ageing population. Everybody here is agreed because we have said it multiple ways. The statistics have shown us—ageing population, low birth rate, emigration—all of these factors. Bermuda is not the only country in the world that is dealing with these factors, and multi-

ple countries in the world are trying to find ways to solve this problem.

So, Mr. Speaker, when the word *status* is brought up, it automatically is then used in a way that only has negative connotations. But I am going to ask if there are any Members in here who do not have family members who got to Bermuda as non-Bermudians and received status so that they could be here today.

*[Crosstalk]*

**Mr. Ben Smith:** We also know that we have people who are gold medal winners for this country, status Bermudians. We have heroes who came here from other countries. So, we cannot paint the brush that status only leads to a certain group of people. But this is the part that you actually have to look at—twenty years of being in a country.

Right now, we have an economy that is being held together by international business. Everything we do seems to be about making sure that that group has what they need so that they can support everything else in our community. That is where the reports are coming from; our ratings are coming from the influx of finances that are coming from that industry. We used to be majority tourism. We have moved to almost full support coming from international business.

But, Mr. Speaker, the majority of those people and their finances come from somewhere else. And we are moving into a CIT, which will mean we will be even more connected to how their resources take care of our country. And there are multiple countries that want to have those same people move to their shores. And they will incentivise them to get them to move to their shores.

So, when you hear us say, “stop floodgates,” I will unpack that for you, because I sat on the Immigration Reform Committee in 2017 and 2018 when we discussed the different ways of how we could move things forward. And when we looked at the statistics, there were no floodgates. The number was not so big as the boogiemessage that everybody would like to think was the issue. It is not it. Because thousands of people actually left when the six-year rule came in place. So, what you actually have is people who have been able to stay in Bermuda for an extended period of time because they had multiple work permits that were approved under both of these administrations. That is how they ended up being here that long, paying into our charities, paying into our grocery stores, hiring Bermudians. Those are the actual people we are talking about when we make these blanket statements. They are also part of the country.

When we have emigration, we have to make sure that we understand that, yes, Bermudians who for multiple generations have been in this country are leaving. But if you are the child of a PRC holder . . . PRC is the alternative that has been pushed a lot by

this present Government, and I know that MP Famous was not somebody who wanted to increase the amount of PRCs when we were sitting on that committee.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Ben Smith:** But where we are is this. The children of those PRCs born in Bermuda, growing up in Bermuda, participating in our sports, they are thinking to themselves, *Am I really part of this country?* And they are part of that group that is emigrating and not coming back, educated in Bermuda, part of our community.

So, when we are having this conversation about immigration, let's make sure that we are having a full conversation, both sides. This is not a simple issue. And there is nobody on this side that is talking about floodgates. If somebody has been in this country for 20 years, is that not enough giving back? Is that not enough of being part of our community? Is that the message that you are telling them? You are telling them, *Here we want you to be part of our charities. We want you to pay. We want you to create jobs. We want you to do all these things.* But understand the issue is our competitors are saying, *Come over here. We are going to show you what we can give you.* [It is] still not about floodgates, but we cannot have a closed-mind, closed-door idea and tell our population that everything that is foreign is bad while we are using that finance and these people to support everything that we are doing in our community.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Ben Smith:** The issue—

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Ben Smith:** The issue is—

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Ben Smith:** —when the Government puts forward—

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

**The Speaker:** Point of order.

**POINT OF ORDER**  
*[Misleading]*

**Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva:** The Honourable Member is misleading this House and the people of the country. We have never said that foreign people in this country are bad. Never. That needs to be withdrawn.

**The Speaker:** Okay. Just be more mindful of how you present that piece.

**Mr. Ben Smith:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have people that are coming into this country presently. We have a major project that is happening where there are multiple foreign workers who are coming in to be part of that project. That is the reality. And the argument that comes out (right?), because we are not being open and honest about the fact that we are going to need these workers in order for us to move forward, there are people here who are not speaking English.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** Those are two different things.

**The Speaker:** Let him speak to the Chair now.

**Mr. Ben Smith:** But the issue is,—

**The Speaker:** —Let him speak to the Chair.—

**Mr. Ben Smith:** —Mr. Speaker, when you are talking about just letting in anybody who has been here for three or four years, the way past speakers have talked about this issue, that is not what anybody has been referring to.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Ben Smith:** It is targeted. So, the solution piece—you have to at least be honest that having that open opportunity needs to be part of the discussion.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Ben Smith:** Well, we have had multiple speakers make it seem like this is specifically a race issue, that it only—

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell:** Point of—

**Mr. Ben Smith:** Multiples.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**POINT OF ORDER**  
*[Misleading]*

**Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell:** Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. Whether deliberately or intentionally, I do not know. But at no time have we talked about race at this time. Not at . . .

**The Speaker:** The point centres on the number of people coming in. I did not think it was tied to race.

**Mr. Ben Smith:** So, Mr. Speaker, when we start throwing terms around—*gentrification* and . . . Listen, the issue is this. Race is always connected with this. Historically, this has always been an issue. So, if you do not get up and actually clarify what it is you are referring to when you tie the history to the present, this is where this problem comes. So, it is about actually having conversations openly—

#### POINT OF ORDER

*[Misleading]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker. Point of order, Mr. Speaker. Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Honourable Member is misleading the House because I cannot understand how he has gotten up here, built a strawman saying we are saying things, asking for clarification from the Government when the point is that the One Bermuda Alliance has now nailed its colours to the mast with one of its Shadow Ministers coming out again in support of granting status to PRC holders which is something that they have repeatedly denied during successive election campaigns. And you cannot be asking us to clarify our position; our position is clear. Clarify yours.

**The Speaker:** Mm-hmm.  
Minister.

**Mr. Ben Smith:** I will make it clear. I will make it clear because I am pretty sure I said it a couple of times.

If you have allowed people to stay in the country and given them work permits so that they are here for 20 years, and now you have allowed them PRCs . . . Because just understand, they are already purchasing property. All those pieces are already happening. Their children are now being able to work here because they are going out and getting their [be-longer status]. So, all of those pieces are already there. What I am talking about right now is 20-plus years.

The way this happens is now you have multiple generations of people who now do not have the ability to call themselves Bermudian when generations of people who are in this country right now got here from another country. They are now able to say, *I am a Bermudian*, and point to somebody who will [have been] here for 20 years—multiple generations—and they still cannot have it. That is the conversation that I think is important that we do have.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**An Hon. Member:** Okay, what happens?

**Mr. Ben Smith:** And that is the reason I am bringing it up.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Ben Smith:** When I am talking about status, that is what I am referring to—

**An Hon. Member:** —20 years. It's 2025 and it is just now . . . You all denied that.

**Mr. Ben Smith:** I am not denying anything.

**The Speaker:** Let the . . . Let the Member speak.

**Mr. Ben Smith:** This is me on my feet telling you what the position is.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Let the Member speak.

**Mr. Ben Smith:** This is the position I gave when I was in that committee.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Ben Smith:** So, unless you did not read the minutes, you would now.

**An Hon. Member:** I'm happy you have one now.

**Mr. Ben Smith:** So, the situation for us is clear. We have to look at every lever for how we can make sure, one, part of increasing the population means you have to stop the hole in the bucket where we are losing population—the emigration of Bermudians and the children of the people who you do not want to give status to saying, *You educated me, but you told me that I was not actually a part of you. So, I am going to find another jurisdiction to move to.*

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Ben Smith:** That is part of it. That is the conversation that you actually have to have because remember—

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**An Hon. Member:** I hope you know that. We will survive.

**Mr. Ben Smith:** And the Minister is saying that we will survive.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Ben Smith:** But look at this, because the population decreases . . . We are talking about cost of living. Look at health care numbers. Mr. Speaker, that alone—

**The Speaker:** Mm-hmm.

**Mr. Ben Smith:** —as the population gets older and shrinks, and the working population says, *I am not going to continue to pay into that*, and leaves, the price of that health care will continue to go up. So, if we are not going to be serious and look at every lever that has to be pulled in order for us to make sure we are increasing that population by making ourselves more attractive to bring those people here, then we are doing a disservice to our country.

It is not about floodgates; it is about saying we know that this is a major problem. And [it is] the same as other countries in the world that are having to change based off of *You know what? This is the way we have been doing things up until now, but we have to target the way that we are going to move forward.*

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Ben Smith:** You have an opportunity to get to your feet, and you also have an opportunity to go on Google and look at all the countries that are dealing with the exact same situation as Bermuda.

We cannot continue to put our heads in the sand and blame things on just what has happened way in the past. This Government has the ability to move forward in a direction because they have been in control.

Listen, they have been here since 1998. We keep going back to 2017, but they have to take credit for a lot of where we are today because it has been an extended period of time that they have been in charge of this.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Ben Smith:** So, for us, this is not just an immigration issue. But it is important that we start to actually have a proper dialogue about what this means. We cannot continue to let our population think that this is just a boogiemán that we cannot move forward. If we continue to make the group of people who are supporting this country feel that . . . You know what? We will give them everything, but they actually cannot be Bermudian for the next three generations. At some point, they start to look at the attraction of our competitors and say, *They want us. Bermuda does not want us—*

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Ben Smith:** —*Bermuda is now going to tax us. So maybe we should go somewhere else.*

We need to at least start to have that conversation because if we do not, we are going to find ourselves in a completely different situation 10 years from now with a population that cannot sustain itself even further than the situation that we are in today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, MP.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** Premier, would you like your 20 minutes on the clock?

## GRANTING OF BERMUDIAN STATUS

**Hon. E. David Burt:** Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will promise you that I will not take 20 minutes, but let me say this.

I am happy that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has finally nailed the One Bermuda Alliance's colours to the mast. And I say that because, Mr. Speaker, in 2017 after their disastrous attempt at immigration reform, after rebuffing multiple attempts from the Progressive Labour Party to have a bipartisan process, they removed the Shadow Minister who raised this particular issue when he was a Minister, moved him away, put someone else in charge and said, *We have changed. We are not doing that anymore.*

[In] 2017, [there was] never a mention in their platform about Pathways to Status, a policy of which they promoted. In 2020, [you] could not even find a mention of status in any of the particular documents of which they raised. And in 2025, in their platform and their pamphlets, whatever they put out, [there was] never a mention of status grants to PRC holders. Not one!

**Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva:** Why? Why?

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva:** Why?

**Hon. E. David Burt:** Not one!

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** But now, all of a sudden, in a Cost of Living Summit and [with] the comments from the Shadow Minister who is now back in Home Affairs dealing with matters related to cost of living, he now sets the policy for the One Bermuda Alliance that their leader was afraid to put inside of their platform that they would never mention. That they would deny. I even remember the Honourable Member for constituency 30 writing op-eds saying, *No, that is not our plan.*

**An Hon. Member:** That's right. He did.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Dwayne Robinson:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker. Point of order.

**The Speaker:** Go ahead.

**Mr. Dwayne Robinson:** The One Bermuda Alliance has always—

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**An Hon. Member:** What's your point of order?

**POINT OF ORDER**  
*[Misleading]*

**Mr. Dwayne Robinson:** The point of order is that the Honourable Premier is misleading the House. So that the Ministers can hear very clearly—he is misleading the House. I have not written op-eds of any sort. I have always said that the One Bermuda Alliance has stood on comprehensive immigration reform. That is the quote. He can always pull it up on Google.

**The Speaker:** Mm-hmm.

**Hon. E. David Burt:** Oh, Mr. Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member, because he just made the exact point of which I have said.

**An Hon. Member:** Correct!

**Hon. E. David Burt:** When we have said their word for comprehensive reform is a smokescreen for their plan to extend status to PRC holders, they come back and say, *No that is not what we mean. We mean comprehensive immigration reform. Not the only thing.*

Well, guess what. We had a bipartisan committee on immigration reform. We were the first party to introduce PRCs back in 1999 when the United Bermuda Party, of which your Member for constituency 10 has tied yourself to. Let's be clear on that one. Number one.

Number two—

**POINT OF ORDER**  
*[Misleading]*

**Mr. Robert King:** Point of order. He is misleading the House. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The point I was making was that it was not the PLP Government, and it was not us, and things were prospering under a former administration. That was the point I was making.

**Hon. E. David Burt:** Mr. Speaker, can I continue?

**The Speaker:** Yes.

**Hon. E. David Burt:** Mr. Speaker, let me go on because this will be a little bit fun.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** So, Mr. Speaker, we then . . . We then . . . Now here today that . . . As I said, they have finally now nailed their colours to the mast. But the Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition just got up and said that we need to have a proper conversation, an honest dialogue on this issue. Mr. Speaker, I put it to you. How on earth can you have a proper conversation and dialogue if you refuse to actually state what your position is?

The first time this position has been a part of any statement from any Member of the frontbench of the One Bermuda Alliance is today, 2025. It has taken you eight years to come back to the position that we know that you have always held.

**Some Hon. Members:** Correct. Correct. Correct.

**Hon. E. David Burt:** So, thank you for saying—

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

I just want to make sure that this is clear because you cannot have an honest conversation if you are afraid, unable, and will not have the courage of your convictions to state your position. So now, Mr. Speaker, it is important that the One Bermuda—

*[Crosstalk]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** —that the One Bermuda Alliance has now stated their position.

*[Crosstalk]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** So, I am now happy that they have decided.

*[Crosstalk]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** I think it is now great that they have decided to be honest about their position. Now here is what I will say, Mr. Speaker, because I think that it is particularly important—

*[Crosstalk]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** —and this, Mr. Speaker, is the comment that I will make.

The Honourable Shadow Minister from constituency 20, the Learned Member Michael Fahy, in

his discussion in the second arm of the combined opposition, *The Royal Gazette*, has decided to make this around matters related to population. And his view is that the granting of status to persons with PRC will increase the population of the country. That is his argument. Mr. Speaker, with your permission I would like to read into the record a Statement that I gave in this Honourable House in 2016.

**An Hon. Member:** Oh-oh.

**The Speaker:** Okay.

**Hon. E. David Burt:** And I quote—

**The Speaker:** Go ahead.

**Hon. E. David Burt:** “The OBA has proposed *Pathways to Status*. It is important that, when we discuss this program, we are talking about individuals who are already here on the Island and, in most cases, working. What is not clear to Bermudians is how granting existing residents PRC or Bermudian status helps with the Government’s stated objective of (and I quote) ‘increasing the size of Bermuda’s working population.’ They are already a part of the working population. Allowing them to stay indefinitely does not mean there are more people on the Island; it just means that it is one less job or position that is free from work permit controls.”

So, Mr. Speaker, if . . . *if . . . if* the view is that granting status to PRC holders will increase the population of the country, I will only ask the One Bermuda Alliance to take their time to explain to the people of this country how.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**An Hon. Member:** Their children.

**Hon. E. David Burt:** How? Oh, that is fine. You can go ahead put out your position papers. Your MP has already said that you are going to review your policy on this. Go ahead. I am happy that you have decided to come clean, say what you are going to do. Go right on ahead.

But here is the thing, Mr. Speaker. Here is what I will give the Opposition today.

**An Hon. Member:** More emigration.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** See, Mr. Speaker? This is a serious topic, but it seems as though they are over here laughing because policy has to make sense.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** Policy has to make sense. And see, here is the thing, Mr. Speaker. They now are all excited having their thing.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** Mr. Speaker, there is a whole lot of noise coming out here.

**The Speaker:** Yes. Members. Members! Let’s allow us to get to the end.

**Hon. E. David Burt:** Mr. Speaker, there is a whole lot of noise going on on this side, all over there. But there are two things. Number one, the One Bermuda Alliance’s immigration policy was rejected by the voters of this country.

**An Hon. Member:** Correct.

**Hon. E. David Burt:** If the One Bermuda Alliance wants the Government to support their policies, then they need to become the Government.

*[Inaudible interjections and laughter]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** Now, Mr. Speaker, when they say, *It has taken you eight years. Get on with it*, it forgets the fact, Mr. Speaker, that in their four years in office, they were unable to make any progress on immigration reform after being invited to collaborate to advance it.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** But, Mr. Speaker . . . But, Mr. Speaker . . . So, let’s be clear. When we came into office, we kept our promise to have bipartisan consultation and advance the most significant immigration reforms the country had seen since 1999, Mr. Speaker. That is what you are able to do when you have principled leadership, cooperative leadership, consultative leadership, and bipartisan leadership on this issue. So, I look forward to them putting forward their plan. Maybe they might even bring a motion here for debate in the House explaining to people how granting status to PRC holders will increase the population.

But now, Mr. Speaker. Let me, with your permission, please read into the record a Statement that I made in this Honourable House in 2013. It was on the occasion of the first Budget Reply that I was honoured to offer on behalf of the Progressive Labour Party in which we spoke about immigration and offered an olive branch to the then Government to work collaboratively on these issues. Now here is the thing, Mr. Speaker. I want to read it.

<sup>1</sup> [Official Hansard Report](#), 26 February 2016, page 710

And I quote. We will however, Mr. Speaker, lay down this marker that,<sup>2</sup> “It has been the long standing position of the Bermuda Progressive Labour Party that we will not support the introduction of granting of Bermudian Status outside of our current laws prior to Bermuda becoming an independent nation.

“We support immigration reform, as foreign labour and talent is vital to our economy and our future, but we will not support such reforms to be used as a pretext to extend status to PRC holders. That, Mr. Speaker, is our red line.”

Mr. Speaker, allow me to state as the Leader of the Bermuda Progressive Labour Party that red line still stands. However, Mr. Speaker, I will say this. I will happily engage [with] the Opposition if they want to meet us halfway. If status is so important, then let’s have a real conversation so that we can extend not Bermuda *status* to PRC holders but Bermuda *citizenship* to PRC holders.

*[Desk thumping]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** If you are really serious, I will make the time and place available to sit down so we can come here to this House and say, *Yes, we want to move forward in granting Bermudian citizenship.* And I will happily grant and support the extension of Bermuda citizenship to any PRC holder upon this country becoming a nation, Mr. Speaker.

So, if we want to talk about having a serious, real, and honest conversation, I will put that down right now. I go back to 2013, Mr. Speaker, 12 years ago. If we want to be serious, let’s have the conversation. All the persons. But that is the position of the Progressive Labour Party. And as long as I am the Leader of this party, that position will not change. So, Mr. Speaker, the ball is now in their court. If they—

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** Do not worry. We understand where we are; we are clear where we are. *We are clear where we are.*

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** Hold on a second. He keeps on speaking. He keeps on speaking.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** *Bermuda is broken. Cannot fix it. Bermuda is broken. Cannot fix it.*

**The Speaker:** All right. Let’s . . . remember where we are.

**Hon. E. David Burt:** It does not matter how many independent agencies—

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** —how many record employment records we have, how many things keep going on. That is their particular position. But here is the thing, Mr. Speaker—

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Hon. E. David Burt:** Here is the thing, Mr. Speaker. I will say it one more time. The Bermuda Government will happily confer Bermuda citizenship to PRC holders if the Opposition wants to meet us to advance it to the space where we are not giving Bermuda *status* but we are giving *citizenship* of a sovereign Bermuda.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Premier.

Members, with those comments, the House now stands adjourned until July 11. Members, enjoy your time away. Relax and be safe. And think of your family and friends during this period.

See you on July 11.

*[Gavel]*

**The Speaker:** The House now stands adjourned.

*[At 1:42 pm the House stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Friday, 11 July 2025.]*

<sup>2</sup> *Official Hansard Report*, 1 March 2013, page 156

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