



*Government of Bermuda*  
**Ministry of Labour, Community Affairs and Sports**

**Ministerial Statement**

By

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Minister of Labour, Community Affairs and Sports

**Themes for Heritage Month and Bermuda Day**

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**Mr. Speaker,** Heritage Month is a celebratory time when all Bermudians have the opportunity to reflect on our commonalities, rather than our differences; on what unites rather than divides us as a people. It is a time to think about what it means to be Bermudian, and what makes our cultural identity unique.

**Mr. Speaker,** The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs has long advocated for Bermuda's cultural heritage to be something celebrated all year long, rather than solely within the confines of a single month; and the quality and quantity of their programming has consistently reflected this goal. With this in mind, I am pleased to announce that the Heritage Month theme for 2020 is: "We are Bermudian". This will also be the theme for the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs for the entire 2020 calendar year. **Mr. Speaker,** this will allow the Department to organize their programming around issues relating to national pride. Especially given the strong emotions surrounding cultural identity, this theme provides our citizenry with the opportunity to give consideration to what it truly means anytime that anyone makes the proud declaration, "We are Bermudian".

**Mr. Speaker,** I think most will agree that the jewel in the crown of Heritage Month is Bermuda Day and the Bermuda Day Parade. On occasion, **Mr. Speaker,** the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs has set a parade theme that is different and distinct from the overall Heritage Month theme; this is such a year. As the Department uses the theme for the year to explore what it means to be a Bermudian, the theme of the parade will focus on one of the “root” cultures that form the base of our Bermudian identity. So, **Mr. Speaker,** I am pleased to announce the Bermuda Day theme: “Celebrating our Caribbean Connections”.

**Mr. Speaker,** Bermuda’s connections with the Caribbean are profound on a number of levels: historic, familial, and cultural. In fact **Mr. Speaker,** as was made evident in a talk by honorary consul for St. Kitts and Nevis Mrs. Louise Tannock, hosted last month by the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, there are an astonishing number of Bermudians who can trace their recent lineage to St. Kitts and Nevis. If one examines Bermudian surnames in relation to those commonly found in particular Caribbean islands, as one can see at an exhibit at the National Museum of Bermuda for example, you will see the connections to Saba, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Dominica, Bahamas, Turks and Caicos, Trinidad, as well as a host of other Caribbean nations.

**Mr. Speaker,** one of the commonalities that we share with our Caribbean cousins is a culture which reflects a wealth of diversity. Like Bermuda, the islands of the Caribbean have never been homogenous; and one has only to look, for example, at our traditions of celebration, architecture, food, music, art, and family customs, passed along from generation to generation, to appreciate the various racial and ethnic pools from which our culture is composed.

**Mr. Speaker**, Bermuda is indeed, as we described with our Heritage Month theme from a previous year, ‘a tapestry of cultures’. We are a melting pot, and many of our past Heritage Month themes have explored this concept since it is so intrinsic to our understanding of who we are as Bermudians. Some of our previous Heritage Month themes include “Unity Through Diversity”; “What We Share”; and “Bermuda Roots: Who We Are Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow”. As the Government, we appreciate that our diversity is also our strength; something that we can all celebrate as Bermudians. This is why, **Mr. Speaker**, we have looked to emphasize the history and contributions of the communities from which we are comprised; most recently in last year’s celebration of 170 years of Portuguese presence in Bermuda; and, looking forward, we are delighted to be able to participate as the primary sponsor for the St. David’s Islander and Native Community’s biennial pow wow taking place in June of this year.

**Mr. Speaker**, we are excited to see what kind of ingenuity and creativity parade participants will bring to bear on the entries for this year’s parade. We hope to see examples of the colour and flare that is part of the legacy gifted to Bermuda from the rich culture and history of our Caribbean ancestors. And it is my hope, **Mr. Speaker**, that in exploring this theme, it will provide us with an opportunity to more fully appreciate who we are and where we come from. Particularly this year, as we celebrate 400 years of the first sitting of Parliament, our shared history is a touchstone that all Bermudians can claim and utilize as a means to better know each other and ourselves.

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker**.