



PARLIAMENT OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

Special Meeting of the 2021/2022 Session
Second Sitting

Tuesday
5 October 2021
(Pages 1- 41)

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, OBE, JP, MP,
Speaker

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PRESENT WERE:

MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

Hon. G. Wayne Panton, JP, MP	<i>Premier</i> , Minister for Cabinet Office <i>and</i> Sustainability and Climate Resiliency —“MSCR”
Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, MP	<i>Deputy Premier</i> , Minister for Finance and Economic Development <i>and</i> Border Control and Labour — “FEDBCL”
Hon. Juliana Y. O’Connor-Connolly, JP, MP	Minister for Education <i>and</i> District Administration and Lands — “EDAL”
Hon. Bernie A. Bush, MP	Minister for Home Affairs, Youth, Sports, Culture and Heritage — “HAYSCH”
Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, MP	Minister for Tourism and Transport — “T and T”
Hon. André M. Ebanks, MP	Minister for Financial Services and Commerce — “FSC” <i>and</i> Investment, Innovation and Social Development — “IISD”
Hon. Sabrina T. Turner, MP	Minister for Health and Wellness — “MOH”
Hon. Johany S “Jay” Ebanks, MP	Minister for Planning, Agriculture, Housing, and Infrastructure — “PAHI”

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

Hon. Franz I. Manderson, MBE, Cert Hon, JP	<i>Deputy Governor</i> , ex officio Member responsible for the Portfolio of the Civil Service
Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin, QC, JP	<i>Attorney General</i> , ex officio Member responsible for the Portfolio of Legal Affairs

ELECTED MEMBERS
GOVERNMENT BACKBENCHERS

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, MP	<i>Deputy Speaker</i> , Parliamentary Secretary to FSC and EDAL
Ms. Heather D. Bodden, JP, MP	Parliamentary Secretary to T&T and IISD, Elected Member for Savannah
Mr. Isaac D. Rankine, MP	Parliamentary Secretary to HAYSCH and PAHI, Elected Member for East End

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, JP, MP	<i>Leader of the Opposition</i> , Elected Member for George Town East
Mr. Joseph X. Hew, MP	<i>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</i> , Elected Member for George Town North
Hon. Alden McLaughlin, MBE, JP, MP	Elected Member for Red Bay
Mr. Moses I. Kirkconnell, JP, MP	Elected Member for Cayman Brac West and Little Cayman
Ms. Barbara E. Conolly, JP, MP	Elected Member for George Town South
Mr. David C. Wight, JP, MP	Elected Member for George Town West

INDEPENDENT MEMBER

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour, JP, MP	Elected Member for Bodden Town East
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OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
SPECIAL MEETING 2021/22 SESSION
TUESDAY
5 OCTOBER 2021
10:24am
Second Sitting

[Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Speaker, presiding]

The Speaker: Good morning.

I ask the Honourable Minister of Tourism to lead us in prayers.

PRAYERS

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Minister of Tourism and Transport, Elected Member for George Town Central: Let us pray.

Almighty God, from whom all wisdom and power are derived: We beseech Thee so to direct and prosper the deliberations of the Parliament now assembled, that all things may be ordered upon the best and surest foundations for the glory of Thy Name and for the safety, honour and welfare of the people of these Islands.

Bless our Sovereign Lady, Queen Elizabeth II; Charles, Prince of Wales; and all the Royal Family. Give grace to all who exercise authority in our Commonwealth, that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety may be established among us. Especially we pray for the Governor of our Islands, the Premier; the Speaker of the Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition, Ministers of the Cabinet, ex-officio Members, and Members of the Parliament, the Chief Justice and members of the Judiciary, that we may be enabled faithfully to perform the responsible duties of our high office. All this we ask for Thy great Name's sake.

Let us say The Lord's Prayer together: *Our Father, who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.*

The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make His face shine upon us and be gracious unto us. The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon us and give us peace, now and always.

Amen.

The Speaker: Please be seated. The proceedings of this honourable House are now resumed.

READING BY THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER OF MESSAGES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Speaker: None.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

The Speaker: None.

BILLS SECOND READINGS

[Continuation of debate thereon]

IMMIGRATION (TRANSITION) (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2021

The Speaker: Last night the Deputy Leader of the Opposition cut short his speech, he said, and completed his speech therefore. The question is: Is there any other Member wishing to speak? *[Pause]* Does any other Member wish to speak?

The Honourable Minister of Health.

Hon. Sabrina S. Turner, Minister of Health and Wellness, Elected Member for Prospect: Good morning.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to speak and show my support of the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment) Bill, 2021. It falls directly into my remit as the country's Minister of Health and Wellness. With that noble calling and responsibility falling directly under my remit—the true understanding of the Public Health Department—I feel it warrants showing my support for the importance Public Health plays in the welfare and health of our society, and in the best interest of all people.

The temperature, in 24 hours, is different today, thank God. There is nothing wrong with people demonstrating, voicing their concerns and definitely reaching out to their elected representative when there are Bills such as this that comes with a climate that questions.

The elephant in the room is that we are in the middle of a pandemic. The elephant in the room is that there is no place for politics when it comes to the health and safety of our people. If that is what it is all about and one can articulate the novel *Alice in Wonderland* that is exactly what our people were doing before this

Government was elected. Wandering as lost sheep trying to find their very own place in their own country; wondering unknowingly whether this place is theirs; wondering unknowingly if their net worth is good enough; wondering unknowingly whether or not my surname is good enough.

We are the People's Government that have spoken. We have been ridiculed by some in the shadows for making sure that our children are fed, because we put that at the priority. It is even being questioned why the lion's share of the budget is going to Education, yet we say our people need to be educated. What else can we do that is good enough?

This Floor is for standing up for our people. This honourable House is for showing that the people of our country are first; and when it comes to health care and public health, that is stepping on my parade and I will not allow politics to intervene when it comes to the best interest of our people.

I too have been affected. There are questions surrounding the efficacies of this, but I do not understand where my colleague is coming from when one questions efficacy, but out the other side of their mouth, they are dying for the booster. Where is the wonderland there? You need to stop confusing your people. You need to be able to relate to your people because you cannot want the booster and then question efficacy.

I am all about facts; I am not about popularity. I am all about doing what the people have elected me to do, and I stand firm, to know, that with team of the PACT Government, that is what we will do. From the words of our Attorney General, QC: we are not infringing on people's human rights. And we must understand that our people, in their own country, are the only ones who are entitled to human and other rights, because we have nowhere else to go.

It has almost been [like] playing Russian roulette. How do you answer your phone? How do you look at the messages on your phone? How do you remain objective? I am stronger than they think. I am also wiser than they think, but do I know it all? No, I do not and that is why under the guidance and leadership of my colleagues who sit here and those who have guided my predecessors in the past, we respect what they bring to the table.

The battle that is on right now, and not political battle, is that every day we stand here to defend why we support this Bill. Yes, COVID is in our community, but one thing my predecessors have failed to do was to sensitise our people. Sensitise our people who at some point in time, anytime soon, we cannot and we will not from science and data, eradicate this.

We can no longer continue to pull funds out of the air. People do not want to be placed in the welfare state; people want to get back their independence. As inexperienced, and as some may have referred to us "uneducated" Government as we are, we have good old common sense to know one thing: that it is not sustainable. Do not misunderstand what I am about to say,

because money is not at the forefront here. We are all about making sure that this is done strategically, that we have a system that will work, and at least, this "*in-experienced Government*" provided a plan. A plan that continues to be developed even as we fight this fight, and go down uncharted territory but we will win.

We have reached numbers that we were told could not be reached and we will continue to go there. It is in the public's domain: why could Sabrina, the Honourable Minister of Health, support such a Bill when there is a family that has questioned, that has been affected by the vaccine? Let me put for the record and with full authority, to not make this into us and them, or me. Yes, the second dose was taken. No mandate but what that has done was to confirm something that we had an idea of, that there were hormonal issues. It is not the vaccine. So let us dispel that. Let us dispel that.

They went into ground zero. I had family who just returned from the States and actually, I felt as though we were living in a cave. They experienced safely what it is like to live with COVID and they are back, and they are fine. We now have a clear path and can dispel that it is the vaccine.

What I am saying is that we have failed our people as well. Failing to educate them and sensitising them to the truth as to exactly where we are right now: coming to grips with the reality that this is something we will have to live with, but being the caring Government that we are, we want to do it safely.

What I would love to see out there are demonstrations; placards saying, "*Government, please do Bills so that we Caymanians can have a fair chance at accessing land and affordable healthcare*"; and for those Civil Servants who have worked tirelessly over the years, but can barely make ends meet on what little pension they get—that is what we should be marching for, not when it comes to this level of health care. That is what I want to see my Caymanians out there [doing]; and I task our churches to do this, as you have preached to your congregants: faith and trust those who are here to lead.

I stand here to let you know that I am not here for popularity but I will do good for all of my people; I will do good for all of my people and never assent to anything that would put my people at greater risk. We are here deliberating a Bill that I will show support for, so that I can tell the people of this country that we hear your cries. We know your pleas. As a small-business owner myself, I know what it is like and trust me, we get it. We understand.

We know our Caymanians' pride. They do not want to be in the position where they have to come to their elected leaders for a hand out. That is not who our people are; but we also identify that by what is being created right now, people are left as though they are looking for welfare. I can assure you that you will get a decision sometime this week. What assistance this Government is putting forward to assist those persons who are not seeking welfare but need that gap filler

where, for whatever reason, our corporates (their employers) cannot help them because they are placed in isolation based on what strategies are in place right now.

We understand that the dials will have to change as we navigate our way through this. Thank God none of our children, no one, has ended up in the intensive care on life support; that tells me, based on the science, based on the high vaccination uptake that we are having, that there is some form of a protective shield to help our people.

I must implore everyone to continue to trust, continue to educate yourself as we will do the same; and as your Minister of Health, I can assure you that communications from Public Health and cross-ministry collaboration in order to get this working, will continue. What I do not want to be misunderstood here, is the fact that we—at least this side of the aisle—are not here playing politics.

You cannot jump from side to side—sit on the fence, as it has been alluded to—and when it feels as though it is working your way, then anything this Government does is *our* idea. This is not an “I”. This is not a “them”; this is *all of us* and this is why there is no political room when it comes to health care, public health and the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

When you even go putting nationality into it, you hit me to the core. I am happily married to a Jamaican. My biological father is a Jamaican. I have true friends who are Jamaicans and in my previous life and my business, many of those Jamaicans were given the right to remain and reside; they remain upstanding citizens and continue to contribute to this country.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Sabrina S. Turner: Don't you put that into this; and for emphasis, please look at who was the Captain of the ship when we introduced visas for Jamaicans.

So do not get on this good train when it is convenient to you; that style of playing politics is done.

I am here, confident, able, and to many people who failed us before we were even sworn in, I hope what has been demonstrated in less than six months will prove that all we need is a chance. Give us a chance. None of us on either side are experts when it comes to this COVID disease, even scientists are baffled, but what I am telling we are about is not about who can make money from this, either, not at the expense of our most vulnerable. We are here to be fair and balanced. Your name, net worth, or the colour of your skin have no place when it comes to our COVID fight.

I implore each and every one to understand and respect the role that we play as your elected leaders, and respect us.

We hear you—we feel you. I know the parents right now who are in isolation; some have had two bouts, and they honestly do not know where their next

income is coming from. We hear you, but we are working hand in hand with the civil service who also has to adjust their settings, the holes in their belts, in order to be our facilitators and our supporters; but until we hold hands, stop playing politics, the campaign is over! That is the only way we will get through this.

To those who are reaching out from the utilities companies: we understand your workers are in isolation. We understand and hope that no natural disasters pass our way because I can tell you there are going to have to be shifts in our behaviours, and we are trying our best to get ahead of that. This is why it is important to just give us a chance.

It was actually comical at some points last night and sad. There were mixed emotions when I heard the exchange in support and non-support of, and dissecting what was convenient for one's political campaign, still wandering in the wilderness. We are getting our people back on track. We are getting them to reciprocate and work along with their elected Government, and with time we will prove that we are a Government that is inclusive and true to its word.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and God bless these beloved Cayman Islands.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

[Pause] Does any other Member wish to speak?

[Pause]

The Honourable Deputy Governor.

Hon. Franz I. Manderson, Deputy Governor: Mr. Speaker, I want to spend a few minutes to set out clearly what the thoughts of the Civil Service are in relation to the matter that has been debated over the last two days.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Red Bay read out an article which I think captures my views on civil service and how we will play our part in reducing the spread of COVID-19 in our community. I had a Zoom call with the entire civil service; hundreds of civil servants were there and I made two important things that were under consideration very clear.

One was to join the elected Government and to look at mirror provisions in the Public Service Management Act that would require new non-Caymanian civil servants to be vaccinated. That also would apply to persons renewing their contracts as well. I promised the civil service that we would consult with them as to how we would make that happen, and I intend to do so.

However, it is my view, Mr. Speaker, that we should not have two separate systems in our country where persons in the private sector are treated one way and persons in the civil service treated a different way. My view is that the entire public service should be under the same rules. In other words, the rules that apply to the civil service should also apply to the wider public service.

Mr. Speaker, to recap: The view of the Civil Service is that we should follow the elected Government and put similar provisions in the Public Service Management Act, and I believe the Public Service Management Law, that would require non-Caymanians coming into the service to have the COVID vaccine upon joining, and those already in the service on renewal of their contracts. Again, we will consult and I will hear what the concerns of the civil servants are.

Secondly, and listening to what the Members said today I think it is a moot point now, there were considerations for requiring our frontline workers to be vaccinated and Mr. Speaker, it is a real concern. In terms of vaccination, the numbers are low for some of our frontline agents who that deal with travellers every day, such as CBC and Travel Cayman. However, I listened to the elected leaders here say that they do not support forcing Caymanians to be vaccinated and, while the terms and conditions of Civil Service is a matter for His Excellency and myself, we certainly are not going to push forward legislation on something as serious as this, without the support of my colleagues in Cabinet. I want to make that very clear.

However, Mr. Speaker, while we may not go down that road it does not mean that we—and when I say we I mean the entire government and, I think, all Members of this House—do not have a concern for Caymanians and all front line workers, that they are putting themselves, their families, and their colleagues at serious risk when they are not vaccinated.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to repeat what was said by the Member for Red Bay, and I beg your indulgence. He repeated what I said and I want to reiterate it: Mr. Speaker, one of my greatest fears since March of last year when we shut down, and I was in the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) every day with civil servants sending them out to deal with COVID-positive persons, some of whom were not compliant, and today, as Head of the Civil Service, knowing that a large number of civil servants are also being exposed to COVID-positive persons, is that they get sick because they are not vaccinated and God forbid they die. I do not want to go to a funeral of a civil servant. I really, really, really, do not; but Mr. Speaker, I believe that if we do not see a change in some persons' stance and attitudes, it could happen.

I know there are persons who are dogmatic and saying, '*I will never take the vaccine.*' Okay, Mr. Speaker, I will respect that; but what I also asked civil servants to do on the Zoom call, is to really think through what they are doing when they send a YouTube video from unknown persons or send information that they read on some obscure website that says *do not take the vaccine*, or just give information that I believe is not true about the vaccine, to their colleagues and their friends and their families. They are not only deciding that they should not take it, but they are also influencing other persons not to take it. Think that through Mr. Speaker. If I have encouraged

one of my colleagues not to take the vaccine and they get sick and God forbid, die, how am I going to feel about that? What am I going to say to their families? What am I going to say to their colleagues? Are you going to admit that, '*I sent them information that turned out to not be true and now they are dead; I am sorry?*' That is not going to help. So Mr. Speaker, I again implore, encourage, and *beg* civil servants, especially those on the frontline, to do the right thing and get vaccinated. Protect yourself and your families and, Mr. Speaker, the public! Because dealing with COVID-positive persons coming in at the airport, if a civil servant contracts COVID, they can pass it on to another traveller or someone in Foster's or one of their colleagues or their family, so we have to be responsible.

Mr. Speaker, I think the Civil Service should lead in this area. We should lead in this area. Except those who cannot be vaccinated because of medical grounds, the Civil Service should be 100 per cent vaccinated. Seventy per cent is not good enough; 75, 80? Why not be 100 per cent? We strive for 100 per cent in everything else that we do, so why not this Mr. Speaker? It is life-saving! Life-saving.

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: Say it again, sir.

Hon. Franz I. Manderson, Deputy Governor: Life-saving.

Mr. Speaker, these are serious times in our Islands. The Minister for Health said it very eloquently earlier: we are facing new challenges in the Civil Service and the wider public service. I just got off a call with a number of civil servants, including the team from has, in terms of, how we are responding to what is happening in our community now? How are we dealing with persons who have been told at a moment's notice, "*You need to isolate?*"

We are working overtime to ensure that we provide those persons with help and assistance. We are setting up a wellness team. We are bringing on a Wellness Manager to be in a position where we get ahead of this issue and no one is calling the Premier or anyone in this Chamber and saying, '*I need help*'; and that we in the Civil Service and the wider public service are on top of this so that we are checking on people on a daily basis, we are answering your calls and we are providing you with all of the assistance that you need. That is our mandate in the public service.

In the Civil Service we say that our purpose is to make the lives of those we serve better and we have to take that very seriously and there are people right now, as the Minister said, who are hurting; who are not being properly communicated with; who are having to call and not getting a response. We have to fix that; and we will Mr. Speaker. We are working overtime to make it happen.

I want to first of all apologise to all the people who have not received the kind of service that they deserve and that we expect, and we will get this right Mr. Speaker. We will get this right. This is not a nationality thing. This is a CaymanKind thing. We want to treat everyone with courtesy and respect and make sure that we can deliver on our mandates. No Member of the Government's phone should ring about this. No Member of the Opposition's. No Member of Parliament's phone should ring, to say, '*I am in Government isolation and nobody has called me for days.*' That should not happen, Mr. Speaker, and we will make sure that we silence those critics.

Mr. Speaker, I want to wind up how I started: I care about every civil servant. I do not want to attend any funerals. I am encouraging every civil servant, especially those on the frontline, to get vaccinated. To not share information that is not credible or verifiable with your colleagues, because you need to think through the ramifications of your decisions; and let us do everything possible to have the Civil Service at 100 per cent vaccinated, if we possibly can.

Mr. Speaker, as Head of Civil Service, I will continue to engage with civil servants, listen to their concerns and do my best to address said concerns, but we will be moving forward with this legislation—it will come to Cabinet again very soon. I would have consulted with the team on this, but I do not see how we can have two separate systems in our country.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you and I thank all the Members of this House for the care and concern they have shown for the people of these Islands. It is so important that we unify and come together to ensure that when we do open, we do it in a way that no other country has been able to do.

The Deputy Premier said yesterday; the Minister of Tourism said it yesterday: We have this amazing opportunity to achieve something that no other country in the world has been able to achieve—to open safely without having to go into another lockdown, and to not have our people becoming seriously sick and dying. The way to do that, is vaccinations.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: The Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour, Elected Member for Bodden Town East: Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Since you called on me, I'll stand.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: I really did not want to get up and speak because there has been so much contri-

bution in this honourable House that covered, and covers almost everything and I really did not want to be repetitive in this honourable House.

I think we need to pause for a moment and recognise both sides—the Government and the Opposition—for the wonderful job that we have done over the last 18 months to get ourselves to this point.

We are envied and admired by the world. I am told by Eastern Caribbean islands and some of our neighbouring islands, that they would wait until we had a Press Conference and emulate what we did. We ought to be proud as Caymanians and we need to be proud for each other. It is not about *us* or *them*.

When I came into this honourable House, I think when I got up Mr. Speaker, I said that I did not want to be on the Opposition side. This is my first time being on the Opposition side—I really do not like it.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: I see myself as a problem-solver and I like to be working; I get very bored very quickly, and I really do not want to be a person who opposes for opposing sake. I do not want to be that type of person, and that is why I really was not going to get up and speak. However, I think that, being a former Minister of Health—for what that is worth—my constituents and Cayman—

[Laughter]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Yeah; I did not get an OBE—boy, that still hurts.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: I do not know who put out the list. They say it was some from this side. I do not know.

However, I must pause and say that I thank the Honourable Deputy Premier for his sentiments yesterday; it meant a lot to me. I hope you meant it. You know, I thank you very much. It was the first time that someone orated publicly in that fashion how much they appreciated it. I did a lot that people do not appreciate, but if you think that getting up and speaking some 70 languages—

[Laughter and applause]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: —or more, some days I did two languages!

The Speaker: Well, Member, I like you being blunt in the bluntest way possible.

[Laughter and cross-talk]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Trust me, I got calls from South Africa and all over the place, and as silly as it may have seemed to some, we were communicating with our people. I remember getting in the elevator and the security guards from Philippines and other places in Asia, would say, '*can you say our language*', you know, and people would call and message from all over the world. I say that to say, we all have something to offer. I do not mind taking the menial jobs and the jobs that everyone else is going to laugh at. I lost all my shame long time ago.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: So I applaud the Government, because the Government is doing what we would be trying to do if we were on that side—open up and open up safely.

There was a little error made and I will touch on that, but that is how it is when you are running a Government, you are not going to get it all right; there is no perfect Government. Sometimes it is trial and error, you know. We get new advice and move forward but I just want to say, Mr. Speaker in terms of advice, a Minister mentioned to me that one thing in which he thinks they made mistakes, is that they took the advice being given for Bible.

I want to say that I do not want you all to fail. I have a lot of children. I have a 4-year-old and a 6-year-old who are not vaccinated and I worry about that every day and we will get to that.

Mr. Speaker, these are our Cayman Islands and we need to respect the fraternity. All 19 of us were duly elected and I think that we have something to offer here too. Shutting down the country was not easy, I can tell you that. It was not easy. Many people kicking and screaming, many lawsuits. Same thing—but we still did what we had to do.

The thing about it is, the type of person I am, I am very respectful. That is how I was trained and how I grew up, so I can tell you all that my mantra as former Minister of Health, what I would always say was, '*you need to respect science, but do not forget common sense*'. Sometimes we lean so hard on science that we forget that we have our own thought process. There were many times, when we the former Government were in Caucus, that we asked certain pointed questions and they realised that they had to change course, so I can tell you all that we had much input into what was put into regulations or law back then, and I tell you all to do the same.

Why am I here sounding like I am praising the Government? Well I am, you know. I thank the Honourable Speaker for giving me the opportunity to get up and speak. I must start with saying I am fully vaccinated. I was one of the first persons to get vaccinated. In fact, I was the third person to be vaccinated; the Honourable Minister came uninvited, snuck in and got stuck.

Let me tell you about getting vaccinated and you are not really sure and something of this magnitude is happening in the world. No one knows what is happening around the world. Everybody is confused, everybody is trying to figure it out and a vaccine becomes available and Donald Trump commands the vaccine and Joe Biden was the first person to take it. Look at that. It is very funny. The Republicans commandeered and the Democrats were the first to put their arm out. Warp speed.

We have to applaud the Republican president for pushing that forward, but none of us knew what this vaccine was going to do to us. Not one of us knew whether we would fall down in three months. I am just happy to be still going, and you know it was Pfizer, I like Pfizer, I like that brand.

[Laughter and applause]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: I will not say anymore, but you know when you go to war, you do not know whether you are going to be killed or not. You go to war and you do not know whether you are coming back home or not. It is something similar. We took the vaccine for this country and we did not know whether we were going to fall down in a month's time, because this went at warp speed as the Deputy Premier said, and we did not know.

All I am saying is, I am not here to belittle or to put down the Government. That is not my style. I do not think that any of you over there wakes up in the morning and say, '*I want to do something bad to the Cayman Islands*.' None of you. I know your hearts are in the right place and sometimes we get it wrong or we do not get it as right as we deemed, you know.

My presentation should be short. Should not be any more than two hours.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: I lean on the words of the Honourable Premier when he was asked at the press conference: *Does it have to be 80 per cent?* The Honourable Premier said: *It doesn't really have to be 80 per cent, but near enough.* He can correct me if I am wrong, but I think we are there.

In my humble opinion, sitting on this Opposition side, for what it is worth, I think that we need to stop talking about vaccinations. The vaccinations will fall in to place. People will see that we are up and running for almost a year and nothing has happened to us. We are still here being productive citizens and when they recognise that, even if we catch COVID we are more than likely not going to die, people will automatically fall in line.

I mean, we are talking about putting mandates for work permit workers and all kinds of other persons and I am saying to myself, what is the percentage?

Does anyone know what the percentage is of work permit workers who have or have not been vaccinated? Maybe 90 per cent have already been vaccinated, you know. So I am saying that sometimes it is much to do about nothing.

I think in some respects, the Government is on the right track, because there is lots of pressure—the pipe nah bust yet—and it will be on the Government's finances. I think people are just getting weary now of our borders being closed. People want to open up. I know plenty Caymanians are saying, *'look, do not open that border; do not open up that border'* and then we are saying, *'but you are selfish; we have 4,000 people out of work.'* As the Bible says about the 99 sheep—if one goes missing, it is just as important.

I think we need to open our minds and have confidence. I wish that we could have done it as a group—Opposition and Government together—so that the country would have seen that we are working together for the good of everybody and all 19 constituencies are being represented. That is not exactly the case, but I think we can still work to get there, right?

What am I saying here? Obviously I got up for a reason. I guess everybody understands that I am fully vaccinated so I am not anti-vaccination. The Bill is before us and we are talking about mandating and in some sense giving people the choice to either get it or not come, et cetera.

What I want to say is that when the vaccine came out first in January, man, I was so excited. I was a little hesitant in Caucus when they said that I had to be one of the first ones to take it. The Honourable Minister of Education can tell you, I said, *'I am not being the first one to take this.'*

[Laughter]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: I said that and then we started getting some information from Public Health England and from some of the local doctors who I respect and who I think meant well, because you know there is a lot of mistrust for that fraternity, in terms of what the endgame is, so I decided that I was going to take it.

The UK was the first country on the 2nd December 2020 to approve a COVID vaccine that was tested in a large clinical trial. Tested on more than 43,000 people, it showed that the Pfizer vaccine was 95 per cent effective at preventing the disease when it was measured a week after participants were given a second dose.

Mr. Speaker, fast forward to date. What we have learned, is that the Pfizer and Moderna [vaccines] rely on RNA encased in a lipid particle that ferries it into cells, where it is used as a template to generate a viral protein that stimulates the immune system. The AstraZeneca vaccine uses DNA that is shuttled into cells inside a harmless virus unrelated to the coronavirus.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, when we heard 95 per cent in January it felt very good; I was jumping up saying, *if I get this vaccine, I cannot get COVID*, so after I got it, I was all over the place. I was at Sea-Inn...

The Speaker: You went to Sea-Inn too?

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: A couple other places. I am just saying that we had the vaccine, so we felt we could not catch COVID.

Afterwards we learned that you could possibly get COVID after you took the vaccine, and then we learned that you could possibly die after you got the vaccine—we started learning all kinds of stuff. I mean, at this point you cannot just sit down and not take note of what is going on; you have to pay attention.

I do not think it will ever get to the point where I will be anti-vaccine but we have to pay attention, because the way this was put together was very fast. We need to pay attention because there are still many unknowns. So I say to you all, let us not put a lot of emphasis on vaccines. Let vaccines take their course. Let persons educate themselves. Let their doctors educate them. In fact, I am all for more vaccines being brought in and the doctors being able to talk directly with their patients. I think we would probably see uptake in vaccines once the doctors are able to deal directly with their patients.

I wanted to mention something, Mr. Speaker. We need to be careful of what we are doing, because we say we are trying to do things to ensure that Caymanians have an edge on this situation. We had a situation with Triple-C School—a person who was double vaccinated, whose child was in the class where a child tested positive. When it broke out, obviously everybody needed to be tested. They tested and they were negative, right? They told them, *you need to do 14 days' isolation, even though you tested negative.* You with me?

Now, in the Cayman Islands we have one of the best-managed COVID systems in the world. We have one of the highest vaccination rates. Now hear what we are doing: We are telling people whose children are in class with someone who tested positive that they need to isolate for 14 days, even if they are double vaccinated. You with me? Yet we are saying that if you are double vaccinated and you come off a flight from Miami or Jamaica, where the disease is more prevalent, you just need to do seven days. You see what I am saying? There is a problem there and Caymanians are up in arms about it. You see why I am saying that all 19 of us, everyone in this House, can offer some contribution because we all have constituents—I have the largest constituency in the country.

Now, Public Health said the incubation period is 14 days. We throw that 14 days on persons who were tested by George Town Primary, Prospect Primary, Triple C School—most of them Caymanians; but you tell people who are coming off the flight, *just get double jabbed and all you have to do is spend 7 days.* That is

a point that I think we need to address. Public Health needs to address that, because if we are saying that we should give the edge to persons who come off the flight, then I think we need to have the same trust in our system. We have managed COVID better here than most countries connected or around us, so we need to trust ourselves more.

We are saying that we trust the US and Jamaica, which have higher mortality cases of COVID, more than we trust our own country. I hope that the point was made, because I got a call from a small businessman and Mr. Speaker, these are the things that hurt because there were times when we were the Government that we did not have the answer for everything and as these things come up, you need to try to make policies.

This is a message that I got from somebody on 28th September: *“Good afternoon, John John. Hope all is well. Checking you about the government assistance I heard the Government talking about. I’m in quarantine now because my stepdaughter was in the class with the child that tested positive today. I need to know what kind of assistance do self-employed people get to sustain themselves for 14 days without working.”* [UNVERIFIED]

Big problem.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: No, no, no, no. I am saying that we probably have many people in that situation. I had a George Town Primary School teacher who lives in Bodden Town called to say that she lives alone and does not have anybody to help her and could we please go. I had to send the office assistant to Foster’s, get on the phone with her, shop, and take groceries [to her] and so forth. I am just saying that these things need to be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, my thing is, if we think that we had a rising out there yesterday, which we need to respect what the people are able to do, you wait till the vaccine for children comes. That is a very sensitive thing, you know! We are talking about children under 12—a whole generation; and we are not sure about the vaccine, and you know people already had that rumour about not being able to have children, will not be able to reproduce, and all kinds of stuff.

These are questions that no one really has all the answers to, you know. These children are going to go another 20 years before they even think about having children, and we do not know what the effects are going to be, so we need to pay attention. We need to pay attention and ensure that we get the right advice and do not get it just from one person. You all try to get trusted people to come in and try to make sense of what has been given to you, doctors that you have known over 25 years. I say that because I care about the Cayman Islands and about the Government achieving. I

have very good friends and family members over there, and I do not want the Government to fail.

Mr. Speaker, I think that there needs to be emphasis placed on other things. I mean, this is only my personal opinion Mr. Speaker, but I think we need to build up our immune systems. Let us get persons from Public Health or otherwise out in the community; Nurses, doctors, out in the 19 constituencies giving lectures and giving out packets with things that you can do to build up your immune system, like I have seen in other places in the world.

Let us put some money into our clinics in each district and give out vitamins or elements, whether that is vitamin C, vitamin E, calcium, magnesium, zinc. I mean, the doctors will be able to tell us what we need to do, as I am sure everybody’s body is different. These are the things that I think that we should be working on.

My wife said to me, *‘you need to be careful out there because you are a public figure. People come up to you and want to hug you, shake your hand.’* And I am sure our spouses, friends and family are saying the same thing to all of us—*be careful with that coronavirus*; so I said to her, *I am double vaccinated, I take vitamin C every morning, I take magnesium, I take zinc—*

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: I do not take the Pfizer every day, I take it every three days.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: However, Mr. Speaker, I feel that I am protected, so I feel good about taking my mask off.

I will tell you the story about masks as we talk about trying to get back to some normalcy. I mentioned it to the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) publically—the Deputy Premier said he watched all the press conferences. I was the first person in the Cayman Islands to talk about masks and the CMO told me *‘no’*—and the Honourable Minister will remember—that the masks were for the health care workers and there were not enough in the world and Donald Trump had started stopping shipments coming to Cayman and anywhere else in the world so, without the Premier’s and Caucus’ knowledge, I had some friends in Miami who did some things for me through a businessman here. They said that they could get around the system and before you knew it I had 20,000 masks in Cayman and I did not play politics with it. I gave every constituency and even my good friend and cousin benefitted from that behind the scenes, but he must have put it up on Facebook and Ezzard found out.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: And what a mess that was. He called me and gave me a good lashing. What I did then was call him and give him more.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: I am just saying that to say that we also need to do things. Nobody advised me to do that, you know. When we are in Government we still need to use our own common sense.

I will draw conclusion with a situation that we had in Caucus with the Mental Health Facility. I say this to draw some context, Mr. Speaker, and I hope you allow me to.

We had the Mental Health Facility, which we found out that there was only one person bidding for the Mental Health Facility—one bid; and I am saying something is wrong, so I said, *let me see the outline business case*.

The Speaker: You mean to build?

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Yes, to build the Mental Health Facility.

I said something is wrong, but they did not know my background. If I think that you do not care, you are not going to know what I know, but I said, *let me see the Outline Business Case*, because that is the first thing you do, and I recognised that we had a problem so I went to the Governor. I discussed it. I said, *do we do this in the UK? We did not do that*.

I will not get into the minutiae of all that we did but I am just telling you that there were some things that were not policy, they were not law and they were not regulation. I am saying this to you all for the reason that you all still have to use your good common sense to get things right for these Cayman Islands.

We had a high, high, bid which was 25 per cent over the Request for Proposal (RFP) in the Outline Business Case and I said, *Dwayne Seymour, John John Butcher from Gun Square not doing that*. I understand that we are not going over 10 per cent of any Outline Business Case under my watch. So I said, what we need to do is remove this clause. When I asked why these policies were in place, they said they were just rule of thumb. You understand what I'm saying? Where you have to put \$2 million up front and you got to take \$2 million off the back. I said, *the Governor said it is not done in the UK*.

I am saying to you all that I asked questions—we have to ask questions. People think that if you are from Gun Square, you no got no sense. I know that is what they think, but I said let us chop this up into five pieces. Rather than one, let us have five packages; and Mr. Speaker, when we put that bid back out we got 11 bids. House of Parliament, you hear what I'm saying? We got 11 bids because I am a fair man, and I want opportunity for all.

In essence, what we were doing was secretly single-sourcing, alright. They think I do not know. Anyhow, we saved \$2 million, I did not overrun in what they said I was going to with the first bid, and three or four contractors got opportunities from the different packages. You see, how we spread things around?

I mentioned that not trying to tout myself, but to say that we all have our own questions to ask and do not be scared to do so. You are the person in charge; you are the Ministers, and I want everything, the best, for the Cayman Islands.

Mr. Speaker, as I wrap up my small contribution, highlighting and trying to encourage the Government to ensure that whatever is put out there, they have their hand on it, and that their print is also all over that. I have a lot of respect for the Programme Board. I have a lot of respect—well, the Deputy Governor knows how much respect I have for him, and the Attorney General and the team; Dharlene and everybody—sorry to single you out, Dharlene.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Trust me, you have a lot more leverage than you think.

As former Minister of Health, for what that is worth, the little mistake that was made with the five-day quarantine, all we had to do, somebody changed the regulations in terms of when you had to do a PCR test in the US. Now I hear that you have one foot on the plane and they stick something up your nose just as you get on the plane. That was not how it was intended.

If you look at the science of this coronavirus, five to seven days is when this shows up. So, if you try to cover that—if we had, in my opinion, 72 hours before the flight, then when they arrive in Cayman we test them again. Why are we testing them in Cayman? And I know the CMO wanted to get rid of the testing on arrival long time ago, and I would not allow him to move it because I said, *I trust my own people; I am not trusting Walmart and Walgreen's*. Test on arrival, because we are saying that when we test you on arrival and you are negative, we know that you are negative, right? We know that you did not come in this country with anything, even if you develop it seven days after.

Now, if you do it three days before, and you still have the five-day quarantine, you would be testing on day nine and if you even want to go a little further, even after you released them on two negative PCR tests, you could go a little further within the 9 to 14 days and said we can do rapid testing at the hotels. There are some good rapid tests coming out on the market and so forth that should have been recommended a long time ago. So, there are ways that this thing can be done, you know, that I think narrows—because you are not going to completely eliminate the risk, but we can narrow it down because we need to find a way to live with COVID in the Cayman Islands, but we need to do it safely.

I am all for you in your journey to try to open this country back up. I am not for mandatory vaccination because there are some concerns now. You are asking people to be mandatorily vaccinated and join the mandate bandwagon. That is different from what we thought the vaccine would be so we need to respect people's choice. In my opinion, they will see those of us who are vaccinated moving around and going about our lives and feel restricted staying home because they do not want to go; they are not vaccinated so they cannot go. They cannot go out anymore and enjoy themselves because they are not vaccinated and the risk of contracting COVID and dying is higher for them. There are a many cases where people said they wished they got vaccinated, only able to call their families with one hour's notice to say their final goodbyes.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to make this long. I just wanted to mention a couple of points and give the Government some encouragement that they are going down the right road in what they are trying to do. There will be some little mistakes, but I am not for mandatory vaccination because of all the things that I mentioned. I think that we need to spend time on other things like I said, building up the immune system. That is our fire-wall. Let everybody be proud because of that and during this time, even if you are going to open sometime in November or December or whenever it is the Premier will announce, our immune systems will be built up. We will be ready and persons will feel secure.

I have about 12 pages here, but I am not going to use them because I feel that enough has been said and it is hard to say any more. I just want to leave with you all again, what I used to make decisions. Well, I wanted to ask the Honourable Attorney General if the mandatory vaccination for certain categories was going to have a sunset clause or if it is going to be in Public Health forever? I do not know what the intentions are, but I wanted to ask that.

I think when we say going to 200 people, let us just live. Let us live. Open up. No restrictions. We have enough. You did your work. We did our work. Some people water, some people plant, some people prune. We did our work. We got 78 per cent in some respects. We did our work. Let us open up. Let us open up safely. Let us help our people protect themselves from this virus. For those who do not want to get vaccinated right now, let us help them to get information. Have sessions in different constituencies with information about taking the vaccine. Constantly. Do not stop. Do not think that people have enough information already, you know. We do not know who is talking to them. Maybe it is some doctor, too.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I heard people getting up about Dr. Linda McField. I wanted to send my public condolences also. She is my family member; our grandmothers are sisters. I just wanted to put that out there.

To the Government I say to you all: respect science, but do not forget common sense.

I thank you all. I am against mandatory vaccination not because I do not believe in vaccines, but because of the unique situation that we are in, having 78 per cent. Plus, with the vaccine now showing different signs and weaknesses in terms of how it was intended to protect you, I think we should put our energy on immune systems and let us open up.

I thank you all, and God bless these Cayman Islands.

That was much about nothing Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you for bringing some levity into a very serious situation.

Does any other Member wish to speak?

[Pause] Does any other Member wish to speak?

[Pause]

The Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to hear anybody get up in this House again and say they did not intend to speak, when they end up saying they had 16 more pages to go but they weren't going to use it.

[Laughter]

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Those two things do not go together, sir. Somewhere along the way there was intention—a lot of it, too.

Mr. Speaker, I want to first thank all of my colleagues on this side who have spoken. I want to thank the Honourable Deputy Premier and Minister for Border Control and Labour for his presentation on this Bill and of course on the earlier, companion Bill.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot of conjecture, a lot of comment and a lot of disappointing things coming from the other side which I will touch on for a bit, but I want to start off by asking how did we get here? We have had statements indicating that we ended up with community spread because of something this Government did, right? That was effectively where the Member for Red Bay ended up yesterday; and there have been other indications.

Mr. Speaker, the comments that have been made suggest that had we maintained a 14-day quarantine, we would be okay. Interesting, Mr. Speaker, when in March of this year the former Premier supported shortening the quarantine period to 10 days for vaccinated people, presumably on the basis of advice or a proposal which he suggests, was illogical and did not follow the science.

Subsequently this Government, again on the basis of advice, lowered the quarantine period to five days for vaccinated travellers on the basis that there would be a pre-flight PCR test three days ahead. Now, circumstances change over time. What we discovered was that people were able to get rapid tests PCR tests an hour before the flight which shortened the time

frame but, be that as it may, what we have learned through our investigations of quarantine breaches—and what we have learned up until yesterday morning Mr. Speaker—is that there is no evidence that any of the positives that we have had in terms of community spread are connected to any persons who have a travel history. That suggests very strongly, Mr. Speaker that our current issue with community spread is not as a result of the policy of having five days' quarantine set out in the Regulations.

Mr. Speaker, there was also a suggestion that it was because of the tags not being included. All of the investigations that were conducted by the police indicate that the quarantine breaches that were suspected or reported involved people going in, not the quarantine person coming out of the protective envelope. The reality is that while we do not know, we have not been able to tell how it happened, it has happened and that is very likely how it happened. It is very likely because of people breaching the quarantine requirements with someone going into the quarantine envelope and then going back out, not the traveller. I just wanted to clarify that to begin with, Mr. Speaker.

We are where we are and we have had this outbreak. We have had community spread and the initial aspect of that, involving the George Town Primary School, was what resulted in the Government putting a pause on its reopening plan. Paused it on Phase Three. We realised very quickly Mr. Speaker that the country was not ready.

In fact, to be perfectly honest, we also needed to address issues with the services that we need to provide to the people to be able to manage public health and all of the human related issues connected to isolation and further quarantine, but Mr. Speaker, we are going to address those issues. They are being worked on now. The Deputy Governor talked quite a bit about those earlier, and we will be making a lot of progress there.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill that we are talking about right now and the Bill that we have voted on previously, the companion Bill, are an attempt to push every button and pull every level that we can find to increase the level of vaccination in this country because we are certain that vaccinations reduce people getting sick and reduce death. We are not like bigger countries. We've had two deaths in this country. One, a traveller who we did not know. The other, a person who came back in, who had connections here but was not a Caymanian, but the first time we have a Caymanian who dies Mr. Speaker—or somebody that we all know and love, whether they are Caymanian or not—in this community, it is going to be painful. It is going to be something that wears on us.

We are not in a country where the death of one person or two people or whatever become just mere statistics. These are going to be real people who we all know. In bigger countries there is an understandably broader perspective, where it becomes about statistics;

where it becomes about managing it, keeping the deaths down and this type of thing; for us, it is going to make it all too real.

While there is a lot of criticism about pushing vaccinations and about requiring changes to the laws that mean that somebody who is coming in to the country on a work permit has to be vaccinated, or somebody who is here or someone who is even a permanent resident, I do not think that we should be apologising for trying our utmost to try to get the vaccinations as high as possible in this country.

Mr. Speaker, let me put it in a different context. I think we have gotten to this point where we have community spread because people got tired of complying. People got tired of a year and a half of basically having to adhere, having to do this, having to do that and they got complacent. I do not want us to get complacent Mr. Speaker, about the need to have vaccinations in this country.

I heard the Member for Bodden Town East saying earlier that we should not be focused on vaccinations, we should be focused on vitamins. Now, he said many nice things and much of what he said I agreed with, but Mr. Speaker one thing that I do not agree with, is that it is just about vitamins. This Mr. Speaker is an unprecedented situation for this country and the last ten governments. We have not had any problems like this. We have not had to deal with a situation like this. This is real life. This is not some allegory that starts off as confused as it was, talking about Alice in Wonderland. This is real life, Mr. Speaker.

These are real people, and as much as people seem to think that there will not be deaths in the country, if we do not continue to push for the level of protections that we need... I ask them to stop being myopic and look at the countries around us—look at Bermuda! If I got on the phone with David Burt today, I am sure he would give anything to avoid the deaths that they have had.

We all heard the comments and the pain from our colleagues in the British Virgin Islands when they had that significant outbreak in July and many deaths. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are in an enviable position in terms of vaccinations; we are. We have one of the highest rates in the world. The question is, is it enough to prevent us having to look, instead of a statistic, at a real-life situation with people who we know, dying? I do not want to be in that situation, sir.

I have to say that I am disappointed with some of the comments I have heard about vaccinations.

I heard the Member for Red Bay yesterday adopting this narrative—and I am assuming it is for the sake of political expediency—that the vaccines are experimental but yet, as the Minister for Health pointed out earlier, he also said he could not wait for the booster. You cannot mix messages on things that are this critically important, Mr. Speaker. When it means life or death.

Whatever the statistics are for people and the survivability of COVID, we know that it can get very painful. We have seen our sister overseas territories, countries or other countries around the Caribbean who have been in that situation. As has been stated by many of my colleagues, we are trying to do something here that is unprecedented certainly in the Caribbean, probably in most of the world, to be able to reopen successfully without having significant sickness and death; without overwhelming our healthcare system.

Mr. Speaker, when I talk about that, I am not just talking about having people with COVID in the hospital and those numbers overwhelming our hospital system—all the hospitals, public and private. I am also talking about the resources that get removed from others who are sick for other reasons and who need assistance and lifesaving support for other reasons. Those things go on every day, Mr. Speaker. They happen all the time. Life goes on. Lockdown or no lockdown. Life goes on, right? People get sick. People die in lockdown, we have scenarios where from a physical sense we can have additional sickness, but certainly in a mental sense it is not good for us either.

Whatever you want to say about the vaccine in terms of—and I do not think we can argue with the comments that have been made that the vaccine is not a block to infection. That is not arguable, but what is certain is that it significantly reduces sickness and it reduces death even further. The science also says that the vaccines do reduce transmissibility. They do reduce your ability to get infected. You may question how much, but the truth is they do. The more important thing is that it prevents us from getting very sick.

I am really disappointed to hear statements with the narrative that it is an experimental thing and the fear-mongering about the Bills requiring people to be held and having this experimental thing injected into their arms. Nothing of the sort, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, the premise or suggestion that it is experimental is clearly wrong. There was a time when you might have said that, but at least the vaccine that we utilise, the Pfizer vaccine, has full FDA approval. It has now been injected into billions of people, so let's dismiss this suggestion, this fear mongering [and] adding to this narrative which is undermining confidence.

Mr. Speaker, just as people are tired or were tired and were complacent about all the rules and having to comply with the quarantines. Yes, I know people are tired of hearing about vaccines. That is the way it is with medicine. People are tired of it, I know that; but I do not believe that means we should stop trying to maximise vaccinations in this country.

Mr. Speaker, the Delta variant has been the biggest factor. *The* biggest factor in changing our perspective on that, because that is far more infectious than the original Alpha variant, and any others so far. I hope there are none that come along that are more infectious or worse, but that variant, which has become ubiquitous pretty much around the world now, is a very

good reason why we need to push for the maximum distribution of vaccinations.

Mr. Speaker, the science says more recently, that the Delta variant is as infectious as the measles or chickenpox. That is pretty significant. The suggestions are that, in the context of measles and studies in the last couple of years, because this is not the first time that we have had controversy around vaccines. It has existed for a long time. Imagine how different the world might be today if we had not put our faith in vaccines. A third of our families might not be around if the smallpox vaccine was not—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Yeah, I mightn't be here and I would disappear if that reality changed back in time. The smallpox vaccine was a lifesaver for generations and generations of people; and it was not until it was actually mandated that it made a difference. It eliminated smallpox, which had a fatality rate of somewhere around 30 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) virus that existed, I do not remember the timing on it but let us say safely sometime in the last decade, probably 5, 6, 7 years ago. That had a fatality rate of 36 per cent. Imagine if you combined that fatality rate with the Delta transmissibility rate. Thank God Delta has no fatality rate like that, but whatever the fatality rate is specifically, Mr. Speaker, it is too high for us to take a chance with.

In doing what we have to do because we have to reopen, we have to move forward, but we have to do it in the safest possible way and to me and to this Government Mr. Speaker, maximising vaccinations is the safest way to do that. That is why we have taken the steps [that] we have in relation to this Bill. It is not that we have an issue with people here on work permits or people who are permanent residents. That is not Cayman, Mr. Speaker.

We value and respect the people who have come to this country and contributed and helped to build this country into the great country that it is today, Mr. Speaker. I am really, really, offended by comments uttered yesterday describing this as "Us, against them." As my colleague, the Minister for Health said in her contribution earlier today, this is not about us against them. They are respected. They are valued. Even those people out there yesterday, who were pounding pots and pans saying they wanted choice, which really meant we do not want the vaccine.

I respect even the young Caymanian lady who posted on Facebook saying that she is tired of hearing me talk about vaccines and she wants somebody with COVID to come and cough in my face, you know? Mr. Speaker, I respect her. I understand the frustrations. I understand it. I would not advise her to come and try to do it herself because I am not going to be that receptive to it, but I understand. I understand, Mr. Speaker but I

want the people of this country—I want anybody who may have an issue with these two bills—to understand that this has nothing to do with disrespecting them. This comes from a position of care. This comes from a place of wanting the best for this country. That is where it comes from, Mr. Speaker.

My colleagues, my Government and I want the best for this country, and we are pushing very hard to try to achieve that, Mr. Speaker. So all this promotion of us against them on the basis that what we are doing is divisive. Well, pursuing that narrative, adopting that narrative, promoting that narrative, that is divisive. *That* is divisive, Mr. Speaker because we do not come from that position. I want the people of this country to understand that we are doing this for the benefit of this country; for our people, for our future, our ability to reopen and move forward, Mr. Speaker.

Many of my colleagues and some across the other side, have talked about the real impacts on people who are happening every day and getting worse, more complicated. We have families who have been in isolation, been tested out of isolation and then within a couple of days they end up back in isolation again because they have other family connections. That is an issue that we have been looking at, Mr. Speaker.

We then have employers in the private sector who, and I understand this, small businesses have a challenge at the best of times, really, but those challenges are exacerbated by the circumstances. I understand where they are coming from, but I want them to work with us. I want them to find a way to contact us before they tell their employees, ‘*you are on your own.*’ Mr. Speaker that is a difficult situation for people who may have one bread winner in the house; it is difficult enough with two! It is an impossible situation with one.

I know there are Members in this Parliament Mr. Speaker who have personally gone and bought groceries and taken them to peoples’ doors. Put them down on the step and knock on the door and walk away so they can pick them up, because every one of us cares that much about our constituents; and let me tell you Mr. Speaker: your constituents in West Bay West, they all are our people too!

The Speaker: Oh yes! True enough!

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: The Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you, sir.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Thank you.

Yeah, no, no. I am not saying I am going to give you groceries; I believe you are okay. You okay, but I’m saying, your people who you have to help like that are our people too, so we have got to find a solution and these are some of the challenges that we are presented with immediately.

We did not walk in to the Government to find a plan for this. There are issues that we find as we move along and you said so yourself in your contribution, Member for Bodden Town East. You said these situations arise and you have to find policy solutions or otherwise to resolve them. Certainly, if they are widespread issues you have to find policy solutions and implement those policies. These are issues that we have to deal with right now.

There are a plethora of interwoven issues that exist and I do not want anybody who may have an issue with these Bills, to feel that we are just exercising power because we have the power. We are not doing that. We are not doing that at all. We have thought about these issues, Mr. Speaker. In other circumstances we would prefer not to have to think about having to do something like this, but the truth is as high as our vaccination rate is, it needs to be maintained and it needs to be improved.

The studies around measles Mr. Speaker suggested that a 90 per cent vaccination rate in the community was what was needed to quell an outbreak of measles. When it dropped down to 87 or 88 per cent, they started having outbreaks of measles. As commonplace as measles used to be when we were growing up—and all the other things too, measles, mumps, rubella, all that—I do not remember people dying from it, but people do die. People get complications and they do die from things like measles and if Delta is as contagious as measles or chickenpox and you need a vaccination distribution of around 90 per cent to quell a measles outbreak, then what does that say for Delta? Does that not suggest the same thing, Mr. Speaker?

I do not think we can take solace in the fact that we have a world-leading vaccination rate, because not any other countries that have tried to reopen with high vaccination rates have succeeded. We have a higher vaccination rate than the rest of them, but so what? We may just be that country that ends up being part of the statistic that failed. This is why we are trying so hard, Mr. Speaker. This is why we annoy people on press conferences telling them, begging them, pleading with them, to get vaccinated because there is no question that the vaccine prevents people from getting very sick.

Mr. Speaker, I have had quite a number of emails and WhatsApp messages and the like and I have responded to quite a few of them. I have even responded to some of those that were the sort of form letters. I humorously had one from someone that left all the square brackets. Where it said “Insert your name here”, below that they put their name and left in the square brackets with the “[Insert your name here]”

[Laughter]

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: And where it said, choose [1], [2] or [3] in the square brackets and the [or] was left in there. Where it had the address, it

had square brackets [Address] and they put their address below that.

Anyway, that is a campaign. I understand that and that is fine. That is how democracy works, Mr. Speaker. As bad as it is. What do they say? It is the least-worst system of government

[Inaudible interjection]

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: After you have tried everything else.

The folks who were out there yesterday? I have been where they were, Mr. Speaker! I have been where they were.

The Speaker: I remember.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: You remember too? I know you remember.

I have been there with other people in this House, let me just say. I am not going to say anything else other than that. I had company, Mr. Speaker, so I know what it is like. I know they have the right to do it and we have to accept that—and we respect that. I bear no malice to them. I have no issue with their rights to protest and express their view. I have, as I said, interacted with quite a few of them.

It starts off very good you know Mr. Speaker. They ask good questions and for those that take the time, they go into some of the science and then it sort of drifts. You can sort of see it happening as your reading along, Mr. Speaker. It drifts into... well, instead of focusing on vaccines which are experimental and which do not work and which do not prevent infection, the Government should be focusing on therapies. Okay.

Mr. Speaker, very recently we have had some good news. We have had announcements about pills from Merck which they say cuts the rate of death in half. That is good news and Mr. Speaker, these types of things are going to develop over time. The question is, what time do we have? Mr. Speaker, my crystal ball disappeared a long time ago and I cannot tell you where it is or who has it. I know they cannot be using it, either that or it does not work anymore, but when we as a Government have sat down and talked about these issues and try to look forward—because that is what we do.

I created a Ministry of Sustainability specifically for that purpose, Mr. Speaker, so that we could make decisions today, which were in the best interest of the people two years from now; five years from now; 10 years from now, because that is how sustainability works. We have to be taking that kind of approach. However, try as we might, we know we can't. There is no answer. There is nobody who can tell you when the optimal time is. If we all knew that COVID would disappear in six months' time, I guarantee you every one of us would be in favour of staying locked down until six

months from now, and we would eke it out and manage and then reopen. Boom! Everything will be fine, but it ain't happening. Not likely. Not unless you believe in fairy tales.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: We have to deal with the reality Mr. Speaker and we have to plan how we are going to successfully reopen this country and how we are going to move forward with vaccines as a central part. Then, as things come up, whether it is that Merck pill or something new that gets announced next month or the month after that; the better they are, the more promise they will have, but we do not have the time to sit around and wait and hope with our fingers crossed.

We have thousands of people in this country who are terribly impacted; who have lost the ability to earn a living. We have. I do not know where they are coming from sir, but I have not left this Island since February 18th of 2020, but I have had lots of emails from people in the last five months complaining about this thing or that. About the quarantine process and all that, and then they are telling me, sir, *listen, this is the fifth time I have had to quarantine under these circumstances and I am not taking it anymore.*

So they are travelling; people are travelling. Business people are travelling and people are travelling for vacations. I have not felt the need to do that, sir, other than go to those two gems that are to the east there; Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

Before all of this, even before I got elected in 2013 for the first time, I was a proponent of domestic tourism. That gentleman in the corner over there, he used to be the former Minister for Tourism. I used to try to go visit him all the time or at least contribute—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: No, that has not stopped; but we have a lot of people who are wanting to travel.

The Speaker: Honourable Premier, I am wondering whether you would countenance a break at this time.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Yes, sir; I would be happy to do so.

The Speaker: Let us take our luncheon break and be back for 1:30pm as we want to complete business including Committee Stage today.

Proceedings suspended at 12:31 p.m.

Proceedings resumed at 1:38 p.m.

The Speaker: Please be seated. Proceedings are resumed. The Honourable Premier continuing.

The Premier, Hon. G Wayne Panton: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, I think at the lunch break I was saying that I have not travelled at all outside of our three Islands since February last year, but the fact is there is obviously a significant tourism market still going on. As a jurisdiction that has a very significant and valuable tourism product, with many people who rely on being able to participate in it, we need to get to that point where the country reopens.

I was saying that to say, Mr. Speaker that we absolutely need to continue to improve our vaccination levels [in order] to give ourselves the best chance to reopen and stay open; and there are some realities we have to face, sir. As much as we have local community spread now, we will have more COVID coming in through the borders once the quarantine envelope is dropped. We need to shift from relying on our quarantine envelope to protect us and shift our reliance much more onto the vaccine protection. That is a fact, sir.

We also have to shift into other areas. We need to do much more surveillance testing, and I will come to that. That will involve significant deployment of Lateral Flow Tests by both the public and private sectors so that we can test people much more rapidly and get results in 15 minutes, and if we find people who are positive, then we confirm that with a PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) test.

As I said, we are going to shift into a heavy reliance on our vaccines for our health, our safety and our lives. We are not the only country or the only jurisdiction that has had to face that reality, albeit, very often and, unfortunately for them, with a much lower vaccine rate which we hope will make the difference for us and minimise our risk going forward while we continue to try to push vaccination distribution rates.

Even in our region there are many others. I think it was mentioned yesterday that Turks and Caicos made it a condition for those who are on work permits. I think the difference with them was that they made it an immediate requirement so that work permits would be terminated if the vaccine was not taken up, which in our view is very clearly a step too far.

Mr. Speaker, the reality for us in Cayman is not just a question of vaccines being required as a condition for working or changing your immigration status within the country. I would say that unless you are a Caymanian, virtually every single person who lives and works in the Cayman Islands travels through the United States at some point; and Mr. Speaker we have the very clear indication from the Biden Administration—both directly as reported by the Press in the US as well as from US Embassies in the region—that they are implementing a requirement that you have to be vaccinated with an approved vaccine prior to visiting the US. So as much as there is a view that these two Bills

cause an issue, there is a reality that eventually, the vast majority of people will have to be vaccinated in order to move around the world. That is just the direction of travel, pardon the pun. That is the way it is going.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to make it very clear that this Bill and this approach is not “us and them” at all. This is about all of us surviving, thriving, and working together, protecting Cayman and those people who are vulnerable. It also provides for circumstances for medical certificates; for people who are certified by a doctor in their own country or a doctor here that they cannot have it for a legitimate medical reason. There is also a provision for exemptions. So, this is not a cold, uncaring, calculated approach, Mr. Speaker. This very well reflects a level of care and understanding of certain realities.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to make clear that this discussion around vaccines will have to continue. As much as people may find it tiring, we will have to continue to encourage our own people to get vaccinated, sir; and, we heard the Honourable Deputy Governor earlier in his contribution speak to that in terms of our frontline workers in the Civil Service in particular.

Sir, this Government respects the contribution and the work that civil servants and frontline workers do, but I absolutely agree and we support the Deputy Governor’s perspective, that in as much as there is this absolute aspiration for the Civil Service to be World-Class, we need to be leading, in terms of protecting the people who we work with and protecting ourselves and our families as well. Now, as I said before, we fully understand that this is not an absolute protection, but it is something that absolutely does help. There is no doubt about it.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to just update Members, in terms of border reopening discussions and work that have been undertaken insofar as it relates to the rationale behind this Bill.

Our vision, sir, is to get the country to a point where we can continue our reopening programme and remain open in a responsible way; not just trying to stay open, not just fighting against the odds to stay open, but doing it in a responsible and safe way where people are not suffering to any large extent. Sir, we have to do that by being prepared for and being able to manage the inevitable increase in COVID-19 cases to come with the reopening of the border.

To begin with, I mentioned the outbreak of the George Town Primary School and the community spread that started with North Side Primary, I guess, but that was more contained. We can definitely make many more connections to the George Town Primary School outbreak and as a result, as I said, we paused Phase Three of the reopening plan so that we would not reopen on October 14.

Now Mr. Speaker, as we continue to have community spread, we have been in a fortunate position so far. We have not had anybody getting particularly sick,

we have had seemingly equal numbers of asymptomatic as well as mildly symptomatic people, and we have continued to test, contact trace, isolate and manage the impacts. Mr. Speaker, that has provided the country in general, and this Government—and when I say this government I am including not just the political side but the civil servants as well—with a very useful test of our systems, giving us a gauge of our level of preparedness. How prepared are we? How ready are we to manage reopening? Because as much as this may present a challenge right now, reopening is going to present a bigger challenge if we continue to do things the same way.

The school-based community spread demonstrated that there is more work to be done to be ready. It identified where additional resources are needed and highlighted that there are still parts of the plan to be filled in, articulated, tested and communicated to the wider community. Many lessons were learned Mr. Speaker, and the Government is working through, taking stock of the systems and improving our state of preparedness every hour, every day. My elected colleagues and I have reassured the Deputy Governor and the Programme Board that the collective public, including us, Mr. Speaker, is willing to work together to itemise the lessons learned and incorporate the findings into an updated reopening plan designed to further enhance the country's readiness and response capabilities.

An important lesson is that as a community we have had to, and must continue to, shift rapidly from a position, a model and policy that seeks to eradicate COVID-19; that represents the past, Mr. Speaker. That is what had to be done at a time when we did not have vaccines and in reality, there was not much choice to keep the country and our people safe. The reality now, is that we do have community transmission and that has forced us to rethink many of the approaches. Currently we do this with a far better understanding of the disease and its treatments, and of course, we now have the strength of our vaccinations, which we need to continue to build on for the reasons I noted previously.

Mr. Speaker, we have to move on to living with COVID. The reality is that we cannot continue to close all schools; we cannot continue to ban all indoor activities and exercise; we cannot continue to have the borders closed for much longer. We cannot expect to lockdown for months to get rid of COVID, to get back to zero. That makes no sense. We have COVID in the community. We have to go forward and manage it. We have to live with it and we have to rely, as I said, not on the quarantine envelope but on the support provided by vaccinations.

Mr. Speaker, the Government, the public service, the business community, our children, our citizens and residents of Cayman now have to join together in taking the first collective steps of reimagining and then living our lives in a way that allows us to safely travel and participate in daily activities; to have our children

continue to receive in-class learning and yes, to welcome visitors to our shores so that that essential part of our economy can be revitalised.

Mr. Speaker, the important factor in getting the balance right as we continue to ensure that businesses and activities remain open, is that we do so in a way that promotes safety and does not overwhelm our healthcare system. So, for the not too distant future the key will be to quickly and efficiently identify COVID-positive people so they can remove themselves from the scenarios in which they are and into isolation. However, we cannot do that on the necessary scale with the current PCR testing as it would prove to be too much of a strain on those testing centres that we have right now, but we can quickly identify and isolate positive cases by introducing Lateral Flow Rapid Antigen Tests. Many of these tests can be self-administered and have the potential to eliminate many of the challenges presently faced by employers, patrons, customers, students and those wanting to go to the gym. Lateral flow tests can be taken multiple times per week and within 15 or 20 minutes, will be able to identify if an individual is potentially positive and then that individual can get a PCR test to verify the result.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, as a proper part of living with COVID and the model that involves, we will need to re-examine isolation periods for vaccinated individuals. Where there is potential exposure in a family and the entire household is vaccinated, Public Health is going to be reducing the isolation period from 14 to 10 days. As time goes on we may have to reduce this even further, and perhaps even remove isolation, if it is matched with a daily Lateral Flow Test for the period of potential infection.

Living with COVID means that we will try to keep our unvaccinated children in school using regular lateral flow testing and the isolation of those who are positive, rather than the whole class. If one person in a class is positive, that class will move to daily testing until those who might be incubating the virus are isolated. We would be acting on evidence rather than a more risk-based approach at the moment.

This is the proposal now, Mr. Speaker. This is imagining how we do this. Fundamentally, our ability to do this depends on our authorisation of these Lateral Flow Tests and I have been promised that these tests will be approved by tomorrow so that there will be clarity around what tests can be brought in and the procedures around their use. There is no point in doing tests without having reporting, so we have to have a clear process around that.

This proposal, this model of living with this, would be a lesson learned from shutting down entire schools which we know, can prove very challenging for all involved, not least the parents, employers and our children.

The Ministry of Education has done a great job Mr. Speaker, in developing multiple plans for dealing with various scenarios, but we can and must appreciate

that we must also operate our schools safely. If we have large numbers of teachers and students who are ill, and untenable levels of absence because parents are unwilling to send their children to school, then we will have to make some adjustments. There is no one-size-fits-all on this, sir. We will have to make adjustments as we move along. That is absolutely the reality. We have to make adjustments until we find the right balance. That is a reality.

Employers will have to do their part too, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned before, if we are to safely control and manage COVID, we cannot have employees feeling as if they have to choose between their job, and their health or that of their children. So while we look to make practical adjustments to quarantine periods for those who are vaccinated, we cannot allow COVID positive employees to simply continue to work without isolating. That is not safe, healthy or wise. These are but a few examples of what we can do in the not too distant future, Mr. Speaker. The fact is we are living with COVID now. We are seeing the consequences and we are learning the lessons from a practical perspective. Thankfully, we have not had any significant degree of sickness, but we are doing it and we are going to do it successfully, sir. In the coming weeks, we will need to re-engage in the discussion around reopening our borders.

As a Government, Mr. Speaker, we know the challenge is to balance the imperative to keep our community safe with the imperative of reopening responsibly. That is a balancing act. Our goal is to safely and responsibly reopen the country to vaccinated visitors with systems in place that would not require isolation upon arrival, and to safely and responsibly reopen in a manner that both minimises the number of COVID-19 hospitalisations and aims to maintain the number of COVID-related deaths to zero, or effectively, to the two that we have now. That is our Moon shot. That is us trying to do something that is very, very difficult, but try we must Mr. Speaker, and it is the realities of all the risks that are facing us which is driving us to the position where we are in today, where we want to maximise our vaccinations.

If we can develop a plan that contemplates both reopening and how to live with COVID after reopening, we will have the best chance of avoiding any subsequent closing of borders or God forbid, lockdown.

When we say we rely on the science, it means we are relying on the combined advice of experts across a number of disciplines and we are applying that to our local fact pattern. Not much different from comments that I heard from the other side today and yesterday, in terms of take the advice but make good decisions. That is what we have to do, sir and we have been doing that. We have been pushing and where things do not make sense or seem to create more problems than they solve, we push back. Hopefully that leads to a decision, and I expect the other side to push back too. I expect the advisors to push back.

If we are going down the wrong path, that we are leaning into, I expect them to tell us it is wrong and why, so that we have a very clear idea of how we are going to get there, sir.

What we will do in the coming weeks is to give the country an effective, implementable and resource-identified plan that Cabinet has decided on, before reopening. A plan that provides predictability, accountability, and transparency, which we can share with everyone; the stakeholders, the public, all of Government, because we must have everyone in this country sharing in that confidence. I also include the Members on the other side; we look forward to engaging with them and bringing them in to have discussions about how we are proposing to move forward with this.

Mr. Speaker, in brief, the broad areas involved with the plan will deal with the public health system, social practices, testing and reporting, isolation regimes, vaccinations, immigration and entry requirements, employment and labour matters, education-related matters, travel, data and analytics, law-enforcement, of course, emergency response, information sharing and communications. Broadly, these are the types of areas that will be included.

In terms of moving forward, we have been feeding a lot of information to the Programme Board; we will wait for their next round of updates, work together on finalising that plan, and then have the discussions with other stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, for those who want us to pick a date and just run with it: we cannot. At this point that is probably not the smart thing to do. We do not want to just pick a date and run with it and cross our fingers and hope for the best. When we say we rely on science, it means we rely on the advice and recommendations in an updated plan which has had the input of experts in the public service and Public Health, so that we can evaluate the country's readiness to not only open but, very importantly, remain open safely without having lockdown scenarios or having to contemplate shutting down.

Mr. Speaker, I will finish up very quickly.

The fear of getting COVID is understandably distressing to many. The uncertainty of not having a reopening date is equally distressing to others. These are not just difficult and uncharted circumstances to navigate, sir. They are scary to some people and we have to get the country ready and I think we have had a rapid shift in that mind-set over the past weeks; in that which has scared people. Our level of vaccinations, I think, has worn out our confidence in continuing to rely on vaccinations as the level of protection that we will have, including any other public health and safety measures. That is why we have a focus on vaccination, sir.

What feels devastating to us Mr. Speaker, is something that is left to balance, but that is still better than what our neighbours in the Bay Islands had to deal with on Sunday, when the fire ripped through their community and damaged between 150 and 200 homes—I

do not remember the exact number. Many lives were impacted there; I think not many deaths, thankfully, but lives were impacted nevertheless.

However scary it is right now sir, we are still in a far, far better position than many other countries, many other communities, and we have the benefit of having achieved a vaccination rate which is one of the highest in the world but that is no guarantee for us that we will be as successful as we want to be and we must continue to push that. The challenges we face, and the hurdles we have to overcome, are all manageable if we all focus together on working with mutual respect, reason, logic and teamwork.

As I said at the outset, Mr. Speaker, it is our vision to get the country to a point where we can continue with our reopening programme and responsibly remain open. We feel we need to give the country at least a month's notice. So after all of the assessments we make and determinations as to our readiness, we will be seeking to give the country at least a month's notice before we effectively propose to press on to Phase Four and drop the quarantine requirements. To do that requires the input and cooperation of our stakeholders, our citizens—all our residents. That is why I want to give those who have an issue with these Bills, the clarity and assurance that this is not about us and them. This is about us looking at them as being a part of us. This is about us as a country with all of our guests, all of our friends who are here with whatever immigration status, working along with us and helping us, sir.

Mr. Speaker, I will leave it there except to say thank you to all of those people who have been in touch and who have communicated. We look forward to working with everyone to continue to make Cayman a safe, strong, and prosperous country in the years to come.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?
The Member for George Town West.

Mr. David C. Wight, Elected Member for George Town West: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment) Bill, and I thank you for allowing me to do so. Hopefully I am going to be brief; I have a doctor's appointment which I spoke to you about, so I will try to cut this two-hour speech down to a little while.

Mr. Speaker, Governments are elected to represent people with two of the highest responsibilities, being the health and safety of its people and providing an economic environment that allows its people to live a satisfying and fulfilling life. I believe the health and safety of our people is the most important responsibility government has.

Part of being an elected Member of Parliament is that we have to make very difficult decisions which

may not necessarily be the most popular at the time. These decisions in most cases affect the lives of our people. I was part of the Government of Unity which did a great job of providing stable and responsible economic policies that gave confidence to investors and residents and put Government in a very healthy financial position—little did anyone know what was to come.

Mr. Speaker, about a year and nine months ago, the world suddenly became aware of the spread and danger of COVID-19. We had to make very difficult decisions, including closing our borders and ultimately imposing a period of strict lockdown, in our successful effort to protect our people from the spread of COVID-19. It is easy to forget the fear and uncertainty everyone experienced and to explain the difficult discussions and decisions involved in making the tough decisions we did. We took the best advice available and after extensive research and with prayer, we had many deep and thoughtful discussions which lead to decisions we believed to be the best for our people. I am proud of what our Government achieved and I have said it before: I could not be prouder of our Premier at the time, the Honourable Alden McLaughlin.

Mr. Speaker, many of our decisions were not popular at the time but our Honourable Premier, with his team and his Government, undertook an unprecedented campaign to inform our people of what decisions were made and the reasoning behind those decisions. Daily press briefings with our former Health Minister, the Honourable Dwayne Seymour, were watched by the majority of the people followed by long sessions of questions and answers.

While some people may not have liked or agreed with some of the policies and answers, it became very obvious that the Premier was directly involved in the detailed planning and discussions which led to these decisions. He was in a position to answer all questions because he had the deep understanding of why decisions had been made. He instilled confidence in the population and whether some agreed or disagreed with the decisions, they could tell he had an intimate knowledge of how and why those decisions were made. That can only come from doing the hard work and putting in the long hours that he and we, as the Government, did.

Mr. Speaker, the response from the Caymanian people was amazing. The Government of Unity is so proud of the way our people took the tough decisions and changed their lives to adapt to the new reality of COVID. The thoughtful understanding and discipline displayed by our people is what allowed us as a country to become one of the most successful countries in the world in dealing with the COVID pandemic; but Mr. Speaker, those were the first steps in the long term fight against COVID.

Having contained and stopped the disease in our country, we knew we could not continue with our borders closed indefinitely, isolated from the rest of the world. Our Government had a comprehensive plan for

moving forward and were in the process of developing plans to safely reopen our borders as soon as possible. Unfortunately, we were not given the chance to continue our fight against COVID and keep Cayman safe while we reopened our borders to contact with the rest of the world.

Mr. Speaker, we have to reopen our borders as soon as we are safely able to. It has been a tough couple of years for most local businesses and although Government was in a good position and therefore able to help, we all know this situation cannot continue indefinitely. I am in favour of reopening our borders, but only when we are ready and fully prepared to protect and treat our population. Recent events have shown that COVID will spread very easily and quickly when it enters the community. The fact is that when we reopen our borders, there will be community spread of COVID and some of our population will get sick as a result.

Mr. Speaker, when the pandemic started, our primary goal was to stop it. We knew we did not have the resources to treat all who would get seriously ill with COVID and as a responsible Government, we did everything in our power to make sure we did not get into a situation where we could not treat all our population that became ill. We were successful in achieving that goal. We then did everything possible to get whatever we needed to keep our people safe. With the help of the British Government and extraordinary efforts by members of our community, we were able to source enough PPE resources to keep our people safe.

Mr. Speaker, an important part of this fight to keep our people safe was in getting access to vaccinations against COVID. We owe a great debt of thanks to Britain for the tremendous efforts to supply us with the vaccinations, among other resources. At a time when they were deeply concerned with providing for residents of the UK, they were instrumental in supplying us with enough vaccines to treat all of our population who wished to be vaccinated.

Mr. Speaker, I am pro-vaccine. At first I was hesitant, but I prayed about it and did as much research as I could and then made the decision early on to get my shots. I would encourage everyone to get vaccinated and from the numbers, Cayman has one of the highest percentages of vaccinated population in the world. I believe this will help us to combat the spread and illness from COVID when we reopen our borders, but Mr. Speaker: I am against making it mandatory to be vaccinated at this time.

COVID has only been known about for less than two years and the vaccine, which was rightly rushed to market, has only been in existence for less than a year. There is no way we will know everything about COVID and the best ways to fight it; there is no way we [can] fully know the effectiveness or side-effects of taking the vaccine. This is obvious, as every day we are getting new information about it. I am sure over the coming months and years, as information and experience grows, there will continue to be

changes in recommendations and advice on the best way to treat COVID and the effects of the vaccine.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that until there is enough experience and information on the possible side effects of the vaccine, we cannot make it mandatory. I would encourage everyone to get the vaccine, but I will not support making it mandatory. There are reported cases throughout the world and even here in Cayman, of serious health issues which are believed to be linked to the vaccine. It may eventually be found that some of these serious health issues were not directly linked to the vaccine, but only time and studies will tell. Until we are completely sure of possible side effects and risks, we cannot impose mandatory vaccinations on our people.

Mr. Speaker, some may feel this Bill only targets work permit holders and applicants for residency for various reasons, so why oppose it?

First of all, it is not right to discriminate between one segment of the population and another. If it is the right thing to do then we should be doing it for all. It is very telling that they are not putting the requirements on Caymanians at this time, because I am sure they know the backlash that will happen if they try to impose mandatory vaccination on all Caymanians. If the vaccination is so good and important, why are they excluding Caymanians from being forced to take it at this time? The truth is, if we continue to require effective quarantine and tests for those that enter our country, we will stop COVID from entering our community. This way they will not bring the disease into our country. We proved this for over a year, but that policy is unsustainable over the long-term.

If the worry is that these people entering Cayman might get COVID once they are here and if not vaccinated they would be a burden on our resources, then why is this Government not concerned about Caymanians getting sick and not being able to get whatever treatment they need? This tells me that this Bill is the thin edge of the wedge. They are hoping that by only targeting those coming to stay in our country, Caymanians will be fooled into thinking that it will not affect them. I believe Caymanians will not be that easily fooled.

Mandating the vaccination may be against the Cayman Bill of Rights, our Medical Law and international human rights treaties that we are bound to. We can be sure this will be tested through the courts over the coming years and then maybe that is when it will be forced onto Caymanians, but to introduce mandatory vaccinations to only a small segment of the population, will certainly lead to charges of discrimination. This will be challenged in the courts of law and may eventually be overturned but in the meantime, one way of dealing with it will be to make it mandatory for all the population.

In recent correspondence, I have seen the comment that it is possible that additional measures will be introduced—

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Tourism, are you rising on a point of order?

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

As per the Standing Orders of this honourable House, Members are not allowed to read from statements unless they are Ministers bringing a statement from the Ministry.

Now, granted, until the Member started talking stuff that I do not necessarily agree with, I cannot give him that leverage. Considering the fact that this is his second term and he knows the rules, he better add some ad-libbing to that speech that only God knows who wrote it for him. There is a reason why those rules are there. I do not know if somebody else wrote that statement for him, but the Standing Orders say you cannot be reading from a script.

The Speaker: Minister of Tourism, I am sure you have more patience than that.

Mr. David C. Wight: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I must say that I think I have the latitude to allow such matters, but when it is drawn to my attention I have to take note, honourable Member.

Mr. David C. Wight: Mr. Speaker, this is what I wrote. I gave it to my brother to go over it because sometimes I would be a little rough, and say some things that I should not say and he takes them out. That is why I make him look over, but I am just reading what I wrote.

The Speaker: It is always good to have someone looking over your shoulder, I always believed that. Carry on; carry on, honourable Member, carry on. Carry on. From what I observed, I thought you had copious notes.

Mr. David C. Wight: This leads me to believe that they know they will not be able to maintain mandatory vaccinations for only incoming residents without eventually having to impose them on all of the population. As I said, I am for reopening our borders as soon as possible but in order to reopen safely, we must be fully prepared to deal with the inevitable spread of COVID through our community.

I mentioned the tremendous work and effort the Government of Unity undertook to stop the spread of COVID in our community. We were very aware that we could not allow ourselves to get into a position where we did not have enough medical supplies, enough ventilators, enough doctors and nurses, or hospital beds to treat the number of people who would become ill. We had to stop the spread immediately.

With hard work and planning and then communicating these plans to our people, we accomplished this goal; a similar effort is needed to take the next step.

While I am on the topic of reopening the borders, I would like to make it known that I think it is very irresponsible for any Member of Parliament—on either side—to think that they can reopen the borders just for travel perks. Let me tell you something, lives are far more important than any personal gain or pleasure. That is my personal feeling.

Government must take a hard look at what our next step should be. They cannot just pluck figures and dates out of the air and hope for the best. They must consider, among other things, the number of people who are vaccinated and the number of these that will likely still become ill from COVID. We should be careful about using a percentage figure—and I heard this yesterday—because as an example, we cannot use the number of vaccinations given as a percentage of the population.

We know that there are many people who came to Cayman during the pandemic because we were a safe haven and offered a great quality of life, took the vaccine and returned to their homes. I personally experienced that. When I was taking my vaccine, a family was here for a wedding and they were leaving within two weeks. They should not be counted as part of our vaccinated full term residents.

We should then look at the number of people who are not vaccinated and what number of those people would likely become ill. Add this to the number of children likely to become ill. When we have researched and considered the real number of people likely to become ill from COVID on reopening, we need to make sure we have the necessary supplies in hand to treat that number of people. This should include the resources I mentioned before and also enough supplies of the drugs which have been shown to be effective in treating those that have become ill with COVID.

When we have done this exercise and thoroughly researched the real consequences of reopening, and we are convinced we have all the supplies and resources that we need to protect our people, we then need to communicate this to our population in an honest and clear way. When these things are all done, then we can begin to set a plan for reopening. If Government is effective in doing this, there will be far less opposition to the reopening.

Mr. Speaker, with our hands-on experience of successfully stopping the spread of COVID in our community, the Opposition offered our help and assistance in any way possible. To this date, Government has not taken us up on this offer. While we cannot understand why this Government would take this position, if they do everything necessary to ensure we are prepared to provide whatever health care is needed by all people when the borders reopen, then we cannot complain. We know from experience if they have done the hard work, have thought through detailed plans and they

communicate this to the Caymanian population, our people will do whatever is necessary; but if they do not have the confidence in how prepared our Government is, we also know Caymanians will not accept the decisions.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to ask whether the changes in the Bills being debated make vaccination mandatory for foreigners for COVID-19 *only* or do the new requirements apply to all notifiable diseases? In other words, do foreigners who are caught by the vaccination net have to show proof of vaccination only against COVID or will they be required to show vaccination against all notifiable diseases?

Mr. Speaker, I received an email which I would just like to mention. A Caymanian who applied for a job as a civil servant and was accepted, and received this reply—I will only read this little part:

“The offer is conditional upon receipt of the following:

- 1) *Satisfactory Medical Report (letter of requests attached)*
- 2) *Birth certificate*
- 3) *Marriage certificate*
- 4) *Passport index page*
- 5) *Proof of qualifications*
- 6) *Proof of vaccination, Health Services Authority Card”*

[UNVERIFIED]

This morning the Deputy Governor stated that no Caymanian civil servant would be mandated to take the vaccine, Mr. Speaker. I just want clarification, if this is the case. It says, “6—*this offer is conditional upon receipt of the following: Proof of vaccination.*”.

[Crosstalk]

Mr. David C. Wight: Mr. Speaker, I have to apologise; as I advised you before, I have to run to do a little surgery on my shoulder. I might miss the vote, but if I was here, I just want to let you, and the Cayman people and whoever is listening know, that I voted “no” against the first Bill and I would be voting “no” against this Bill.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? Does any other Member wish to speak? If not, I will call on the mover for his right of reply.

Before we do that, I will ask for a very short suspension. I will ask Members to stay in their seats.

Proceedings suspended at 2:42 pm

Proceedings resumed at 2:44 pm.

The Speaker: Please be seated. The Honourable Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance.

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, I want to start out by thanking everyone who contributed to this debate on both sides of the aisle, all Parliamentarians.

Mr. Speaker, there is an old Japanese proverb entitled: *For Want of a Nail*, that says:

**“For want of a nail, the shoe was lost.
For want of a shoe, the horse was lost.
For want of a horse, the rider was lost.
For want of a rider, the message was lost.
For want of a message, the battle was lost.
For want of a battle, the kingdom was lost.
All for the want of a horseshoe nail.”**

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Honourable Leader of the Opposition spoke about the law of unintended consequences, and I completely agree with him in that regard.

Something I have always been mindful of from the moment I got elected to this honourable House, is to be mindful of legislative impact; the impact that legislation can have. Thus the reason I said from very early on, that this decision by this Government was not taken lightly. As a matter of fact, we, ourselves, had many disputes on this side in terms of where we started, where we should reach, and the whole nine yards.

However, Mr. Speaker, the good thing with democracy, if you look at the democratic process, it says that we will have differences, we will have disagreement, we will have discord, we will have dissent but what it also requires, is that we have debate, discussion, dialogue and find consensus and come to a decision.

I also want to thank the Honourable Member for Red Bay. He pointed out some things and I can say is that he is right. I mean, the more eyes you can have looking at something—and I was glad he used his legal eyes on some aspects of the Bill. I can even say that as a result of that, we even had more Committee Stage amendments which were actually filed earlier today and that is how our system works. We pass laws and the good thing about Parliamentary supremacy is that no current Parliament can bind a future Parliament, which in essence means that barring the Constitution, any law passed in this House can also be reversed in this House. As information changes, as things change, laws change. That is the beauty of our system.

I say all of that to say Mr. Speaker that yesterday the Honourable Leader of the Opposition said that this issue would define this Government and to a certain extent he is right, but the question is: how does it define us as a Government? I can tell you: it defines us as one that is doing what we need to do to make sure that our people are protected. It defines us as one of action, one that is people-driven, and more importantly Mr. Speaker, one that demonstrates that we are not afraid to make the hard decisions. Government is not

easy. Every Member of the Opposition and every Member on this side, whether just joining us as a first term or not, is also aware of that.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition Mr. Speaker, also said that if we had just put this law in for first-time work permit holders, it would have put us on firmer grounds. I would have loved to have seen where that legal opinion would have come from and I definitely would have loved for that to have been shared with us as with other legal opinion that was shared. The Government, the Parliament, and I take advice from the Honourable Attorney General Samuel Bulgin, QC.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Attorney General gave a masterful presentation yesterday with regards to the law. If there is one person in this honourable House that I have seen many things from different aspects, starting out as a young Criminal Prosecutor. I remember seeing him many times as a Crown Prosecutor pulling his briefcase, going to court to defend our people from criminals to where he is today; and I must say, the Honourable Attorney General is one that truly demonstrates what being CaymanKind is about, as well as what Cayman's story is about.

Everyone knows he hails from Jamaica but through hard work, dedication and commitment, he has integrated well within Caymanian society and has become part of the Caymanian fabric. Thus, I have said over and over again that Cayman's success was not based on immigration but rather integration, and I want to thank you, Mr. Bulgin, for all you have done for my country.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition also said that we should trust people to manage their own risk. People should decide if they want their specialist caregiver to be vaccinated. I want to thank the Honourable Member for Red Bay, the former Premier, for actually supporting that at least specialist caregivers should be vaccinated. I think that was the responsible thing for him to do.

However, Mr. Speaker, it begs the question: if we are to leave people to manage their own risk, why are we even here? Why do we have a Government? Should we ask people to manage their own risk when it comes to inspecting meats, food? Should we just close down the police station, the fire station? Let them manage their own risks in their homes? You see Mr. Speaker, it does not work like that.

As a Government, as a people, that changed when we became more civilised. There was a time in human history where we managed our own risks. We refer to that as the Caveman days or the Wild, Wild West. We no longer live in those days. We have speed limits. We set standards. We have inspections. We make sure houses are built right. If not, people would just go and put up any little piece of concrete 2x4 and say that is a house.

Everyone cussed Planning for the longest time, Mr. Speaker, for asking too much. Last year we had the earthquake and everybody could not stop thanking

Planning saying, "*Boy, thank God you guys made it so hard for us to do this*"; we had an earthquake that, in like many other places, we should have had more damages. We did not. *Why?* Because of a Planning Department that manages peoples' risk when they are building. Thank you to the honourable Member for Bodden Town East reminding us of that, too.

This is what we are about. This is not about going out and telling people to manage their own risk. As a community and as a people, that is what we do; and if that is the mind-set, the good news Mr. Speaker is that the Constitution also provides protection to share that view and I can say that on this side, we do not share that view. We believe that the risk has to be managed and it has to be managed for the greater good.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition also said this Legislation is like using a sledgehammer to crack a nut. I want to say it to him again: 4.8 million people dead globally, is not a nut. It is a sledgehammer. We are trying to manage a sledgehammer and this is what this legislation is trying to do. This is not a nut, Mr. Speaker. Two people on this Island have died and I can guarantee you that their family does not think that the COVID virus is a nut; and for many countries that are battling with it, it is not a nut, so again, I disagree with him in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition also said that the community spread was introduced because we reduced the quarantine days to five.

Well, Mr. Speaker, before the Member for George Town West departed, he said that the Opposition offered to help the Government and we did not take up the offer.

Well, Mr. Speaker again, the statement read in this honourable House by the former Premier when he was announcing the Christmas gift of the vaccine arriving on Island says:

"The following restrictions would apply for people arriving from overseas:

- a. **"All travellers entering the Islands with evidence of having received an approved vaccine course against SARS-CoV-2, which should have been completed before arrival (as according to Public Health recommendation) and a negative PCR test upon arrival, will be exempted from quarantine as per Section 5 of the Control of COVID-19 (No. 3) Regulations, 2020, if living in accommodations where the other residents eligible for vaccinations have also received the vaccine."**

In essence, Mr. Speaker, going by this it appears that once you arrived here with a negative test, vaccinated and staying with people who were [also] vaccinated, you did not need to be quarantined. I think, based on what we have seen and heard since, that the previous Government would have departed from that position. At least I hope they have.

Again, Mr. Speaker, if that is a reflection of the quality of advice, then I think it is safe to say that we prefer to stick to the medical experts giving us advice.
[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier:
Thank you sir.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition also said to give the people choice. Well, there was a time when the people had to shop by name days, who said they wanted Wednesday versus Thursday? Some people could not go to the beach at different curfew hours. Again, I ask: Where was the choice at that time? The people were not given any choice in that situation, Mr. Speaker.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition went on to say permit holders who invested here want to leave—what is the impact? Well, Mr. Speaker, talk about the law of unintended consequences. I do not know what the impact may be if they want to leave, but I can tell you what the impact is when they want to stay. We need look no further Mr. Speaker, than going back to one of the first major items that the previous Government had to deal with when they took Office in 2013: The Term Limit Exemption Permits (TLEPs).

I heard the Member for West Bay North grunt, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if you go back and look at what happened, where we allowed an increase in demand—and we spoke about it many times; people buying land [because they] want to stay, et cetera. When you have something that is in limited supply and is not growing [such as] land, and you increase the demand for it, Economics 101 tells you, if supply is steady and the demand goes up, price will go up. The law of unintended consequences.

I can tell you this much, Mr. Speaker, even during your time Mr. Speaker—when you were the first Premier of these beloved Islands—you had to deal with the 2008 Global Financial Crisis. We did not see Caymanians losing their homes during that period of time, but the law of unintended consequences tells us that when you increase the demand, automatically what do you find? People go out looking to buy property and one if the first place they looked was where? Distressed properties; and then it was found that many people lost their homes to foreclosure during a time when everywhere else in the world was different. Again, the law of unintended consequences.

So, I agree with the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, in that decisions that we make do come back to haunt us; and I know the Honourable Member for West Bay North and Minister of Home Affairs was one who opposed the whole TLEPs issue because I guess he was clairvoyant enough to see what would happen. Today we have land and property prices through the roof because the demand has gone up. So I do not know what the effect may be

if they leave, but I know what the effect is if they choose to stay.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition also read the support letter from the Christian Association. I smiled on that one. The same association that wrote to him on the same-sex marriage. I tell you one thing they are right about: politics do make strange bedfellows. They listen to them on one side, but they ignored them on the other, so...

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier:
The Honourable Leader of the Opposition also spoke about how lawyers from HSM would challenge the law.

Mr. Speaker, I think the former Member for East End made perfectly clear the damages that the HSM law firm has done in finding just about every loophole in our Immigration Law; so much so that the employees were basically being able to get 25-year work permits, and in many cases depriving much-qualified Caymanians from promotion because they were able to manipulate the law and find different loopholes. All I can say is, if HSM wants to challenge, challenge away. I have my faith on the Attorney General.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition also said *the country is agitated*. I will ask him as a political leader, a constitutionally recognised political leader who holds the Office of Leader of the Opposition in this country, what did he do to try to decrease or reduce the agitation? That is a responsibility that every single one of us in this House has and—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Do not worry, Honourable Member for Red Bay, I got this in sections and I will get to yours soon, do not worry. I am on the Leader of the Opposition—you are next.

As a matter of fact, let me just double check. Yep! You are next.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier:
Yep.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition also asked, "*why the rush?*" Well, I can say because we need to safely re-open our borders and re-join the global community. I think everyone can agree that it is time for us now to move to the next level. He finished his section by reciting a prayer quoted by Margaret Thatcher which, I think, said:

***"Where there is discord, may we bring harmony.
Where there is error, may we bring truth.
Where there is doubt, may we bring faith; and
where there is despair, may we bring hope."***

Mr. Speaker, Margaret Thatcher had another quote which I would like to read to the Members of this honourable House:

“Disciplining yourself to do what you know is right and important, although difficult, is the high road to pride, self-esteem and personal satisfaction.”

Disciplining yourself to do what you know is right and important, although difficult, must be done.

In his contribution the Honourable Member for Red Bay went through the 12 categories of foreigners that were caught in the net. He went through the list, and I can say I enjoyed his presentation because I did learn and picked up something from it that also needed to be addressed which had slipped through the net, in terms of what we intend, so I want to publicly thank the Honourable Member for Red Bay.

Mr. Speaker, while listening to him it occurred to me that that is a part of the problem in this country: we have 12 categories of foreigners, but only one category of Caymanians, and then we wonder why Caymanians feel the way that they do sometimes.

Mr. Speaker, I campaigned on the “One Cayman” slogan because it is important for us to recognise that we have too many classes in this country. We are too segregated and, whether we want to accept it or not, bad mind has found its way into our community. That needs to be addressed, and we in this House need to bear some level of responsibility for it. That is why I think it is important for every one of us in this House to recognise that this is One Cayman.

This Bill, despite what people want to say and I want to thank the Premier for expanding on it, was never meant to be us and them. Every one of us in this House has an automatic responsibility as to which side we should be on because that is what we are charged for, but we also do recognise, Mr. Speaker, the magic of what Cayman is and that is why I alluded earlier to the Honourable Attorney General; he is one of thousands who over the years have represented what Cayman is. People who came from overseas, joined us, worked with us, abided by our laws, integrated into our community and are now part of the Caymanian fabric.

Mr. Speaker, back in 1973 when I was born you could not tell Caymanian people who curried goat or curried chicken were a part of their diet. Now, you cannot tell them otherwise, because that is part of our secret—the integration. That is what makes us who we are.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for Red Bay gave an example of a Jamaican marrying a Jamaican. They both work and are coming up to 8 years and need to buy land to apply for PR; their children were born here—one in Primary School, one in High School. Firstly, I would like to know which eight-year-old is in high school. That one got me a little bit, but that is fine.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Oh, that is the one who was born before. Okay, thank you for clarifying that one.

The point is Mr. Speaker, I understand where he is coming from and I want to thank the Member for Prospect and the Honourable Minister for Health for a wonderful presentation this morning, explaining Cayman’s strong relationship with Jamaica; and if there is one person in this House who cannot be accused of being anti-Jamaican, it is me. It is the one thing, I think, I have been branded more on that side than anything else; and my love for Jamaica is also well known Mr. Speaker, like yourself and many others in this House too. The Honourable Minister of Education, the Member for Cayman Brac East also has Jamaican blood. Every one of us, Mr. Speaker has some roots.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: The honourable Member for Bodden Town East reminded me that he had to defend me many times because people forget that my navel string was cut right here. Mr. Speaker, only because—to this day Mr. Speaker, and it is the one thing I have not figured out yet—being the only boy of five, my father decided he wanted to send me to school in Jamaica because he did not want me to grow up around four girls and become too soft.

To this day, Mr. Speaker, it is the one thing that I have not figured out; the one thing that never occurred to me to ask him before he passed: what behaviour I displayed that made him say, ‘*Rose, this boy needs to go to school in Jamaica. He cannot stay here.*’ I do not know what I did. I do not know if I was playing with my sisters, I do not know; but something I did triggered it and I am talking immediately, you know! I am not talking like this will happen when he starts the school term. I was literally yanked out in the middle of a school term and he said, *you going to Jamaica*—which was fine. To be honest, I actually enjoyed it. I had some of the best years of my life. I had the most fun, but I will tell you what it also did, Mr. Speaker: it made me appreciate Cayman more. It made me appreciate what we have here more. My time going to school in New York made me appreciate Cayman more. Simple things that we take for granted, like the weather.

Last year during lockdown, you did not realise how much people like the beach. When people could not walk and they got let out, everybody was on the streets walking. Now you do not even see them, but just to go out. It shows you the effect that a lockdown has on people and what they do because everybody became an exerciser during that time, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Honourable Member for Red Bay for agreeing that at least specialist caregivers should be vaccinated and I will ask him to have a discussion with the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and convince him also. We, on this side, are already convinced, so you need to convince your own Opposition Leader.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition read out a letter from KSG and again, I want to thank the Honourable Attorney General for his masterful presentation clearing that up. Neither I nor the Caymanian people knew that the dissenting opinion used to generate the letter was actually from the losing side. So, Honourable Attorney General, on behalf of the Government and the people of the Cayman Islands, I thank you for that clarification. If the case to be made was a letter from the dissenting opinion, aka the losing side, the question is—why even bring that information here?

The best one, Mr. Speaker, which I really enjoyed, was the suggestion to increase the payments to \$2500 for Christmas or \$3500 for the displaced tourism stipend.

Mr. Speaker, maybe a month or so ago, the Leader of the Opposition criticised the Minister of Tourism for not budgeting the full year's costs for displaced workers; called him a Grinch! And I will admit Mr. Speaker, I am still about the truth, that in our Strategic Policy Statement (SPS) forecast we did include half a month's stipend for November and half a month's stipend for December. I will admit that. I can also admit that the Minister has prepared a Cabinet Paper to ensure that the full stipend payments will be made for the month of November and December.

The point I want to make is that during our SPS forecast for the year, the Minister and the Government included displaced tourism workers being paid half the stipend for November and half in December, and we are looking to correct that in the next Finance Committee. However, what I would like clarified Mr. Speaker, is that the previous Administration, during the pre-election forecast budgeted, I think, \$911- \$912 million in costs for 2021. Do you know what was not included in that \$911 - \$912? The month of June 2021. How much was budgeted for stipend? Zero. The month of July 2021; what was budgeted for stipend? Zero. The month of August 2021; what was budgeted for stipend? Zero. The month of September 2021; what was budgeted? Zero. October, November and December, the same thing: zero.

It is very nice when you can be generous, and I can tell you Mr. Speaker, in Opposition, the many times that we brought motions, they asked for the Government *'to consider'*, because ultimately, it is the Government that controls the purse strings and many of the things that go with it. I say all of that to say Mr. Speaker, that when the Honourable Member was going down the list of different categories, he kept using the term 'go

'long'—I hope I caught it right; that that is what I was telling people, that they should just 'go *'long'*.

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: Go *'long'*.

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: It was not 'go *'long'*? Oh. The only thing I have to say Mr. Speaker is that for June, July, August, September, October, November and December I guess those people were expected to 'go *'long'* too.

[Laughter]

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, I want to take this time to thank the Minister of Health for reminding everyone about who implemented the different policies that affected the different communities over the years but you know what, I will not go into too much detail about that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to move to the Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition. He went through a long list of what the rest of the world is doing and I beg to say Mr. Speaker, he was actually missing the point we were trying to make and I want to repeat it, just so everyone is clear.

What we are trying to do here is something that no other country has done successfully: re-open our borders safely without going back into lockdown so Mr. Speaker, when they are giving us lists of what this country and that country are doing, et cetera, let me repeat: *If you want something you never had, you have to do something you never did.*

Equally, if the Cayman Islands want something no country has, we have to do something no country has done, so coming here and telling us what all of these countries are doing, other than to learn from their mistakes to make sure it does not happen... If that was the point he was trying to make Mr. Speaker, he did not make it, but I am going to give him the benefit of the doubt that that is what he was trying to do but then, as I extended the benefit of the doubt Mr. Speaker, I went into the list he read of all that the UK is doing now.

The Honourable Member for Red Bay told him point blank—and I was here when he said it—you *cannot use the UK as an example*; and I must say to some extent, if you look at the UK statistics Mr. Speaker, the UK population is little over 68 million people. They had 7.9 million cases and 137,000 deaths. There were people in the United Kingdom that believed the virus should just run its course on Darwin's type of approach—survival of the fittest; 137,000 deaths later, of course you can open up any way you want because as far as you are concerned, is there anybody left for the virus to kill in the UK? 137,000?

Mr. Speaker, I give credit where credit is due. Facing much opposition and much upset in the business community, the previous Premier made some

hard decisions and no one can take that from him or his Government. As a matter of fact, this Government is on record thanking them many times for making the hard decisions; and you know how we always had a good test of what those decisions were, Mr. Speaker? Every single time the Government said or did something that ticked them off, they used to run to us in the Opposition but again, I want to give credit to the former Leader of the Opposition, Arden Mclean, who took the approach, *One Voice; for this crisis, for this pandemic, one voice—that of the Premier at the time.*

We did not want to play politics with this issue. It was too important and this is why I say, and maybe it was a little bit foolish and naïve of me, as we make these hard decisions, to expect people who have sat in these seats and know what comes with it, to say, *you know what, those guys work with information that we do not have. Let us extend to them the same courtesy that was extended to us;* but politics being what it is, like I said, a little bit naïve.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition spoke about people uprooting themselves after six and seven years living here. Is he now saying that he is against any kind of roll-over policy? Mr. Speaker, while just about every country on this planet, including the Cayman Islands, have laws on how people can remain and integrate into the society, the Immigration laws of every country, not just the Cayman islands, are designed for non-nationals to uproot themselves and make way for the local citizens.

I had a Student Visa Mr. Speaker, to go to school in the US. When my studies were just about finished that Visa expired, I was gone too. Even when I was going to school in Jamaica there was a time I had to be going to Immigration for time, I know how that feels; because my daddy was Jamaican, I was able to get what they call “Unconditional landing” so I could go to school without any problems but I know what it is like, to be getting time in passports. Caymanians know what it is like when you to have to go off and apply for a visa too, we know; and because of some policies, they even have to apply for a visa to go to Jamaica to get a visa but, it is what it is.

The point I am making Mr. Speaker, is that our Immigration laws are designed for people to uproot themselves after six or seven years because we have kids coming back from school who may possibly want those jobs. We have Caymanians who have spent money, invested in their children and the children want to come back and get good jobs. That is what the Immigration laws are there for. That is why it is also protected in our Constitution that it is not discriminatory. Now, if it is a situation where they are saying that people uprooting themselves after six or seven years is a problem, then I would suggest to them that they bring a motion when we bring the changes to the Immigration Bill, and we can deal with it then.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition spoke about many countries mandating

frontline workers to be vaccinated. I did not understand where he was going with that and why the examples came up. I do not know if he wants to tell us that we should be looking to mandate frontline workers. All I can say is that we are not supporting mandatory vaccination for any Caymanian, period. Frontline workers or not. We have made that perfectly clear already. He also said that this debate took us far away from the subject; you cannot get any further than Alice in Wonderland, Mr. Speaker. That is all I can say. Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Member for Bodden Town East for his contribution. He brought a lot of levity to the House; he reminded us just how much fun it can be inside here and that when we are not arguing or debating we actually get along very well—and I can say that for my good friend, the Honourable Member for Red Bay—but he did raise two valuable points that I want to touch on.

He spoke about the speed of the vaccine. I know many people are concerned about the speed in which the vaccine was [produced] and I can tell you I did my own research because, like anyone else, I had my own hesitations before taking the vaccine and—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: I was too busy to lecture. I campaigned against you; you too set everyone against me and it did not work.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things I want to note is my research. I mean, SARS has been around since 2002 and while we have had different things along the way—Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)—all different kinds of stuff. This issue is not new, it is just different variations. When we started out, it was the Alpha variant. We had the Delta variant and now we have the Mu. You got different variants. We will always have these issues, so it is naturally right for people to question these things because once you are going to inject anything into your body, anyone would have pause and I think that is a genuine concern.

If anything, what I would ask the medical community to do is see what more they can do with the Government to run more public awareness campaigns with regards to the vaccine, the vaccination, et cetera because at the end of the day, the Bible says it best: *my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.* The Bible also says that those of us who have information have a responsibility to share it. So I want to say to the Member for Bodden Town East, that in terms of an education outreach, it is something that I think we should be looking at to see what we can do to increase the vaccine uptake.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Yeah, no, no, it's a valid thing.

He also raised the issue, Mr. Speaker, about assisting self-employed people in quarantine and I can also say to him that that is something that the Honourable Premier asked me to look into. I spoke to my Chief Officer, Mr. Wesley Howell, about it, and we are looking at a process to help people specifically without them going through the NAU process, but at the same time, making sure that we have the proper checks and balances in place because we are still spending the public's money. I want to thank you for raising those things. I did take that from the debate.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to take the time to thank the Member for West Bay Central for her contribution. I can say that I was quite pleased when I heard that she, and others, wanted to debate but because of time and so forth... she wanted to push a little bit more so I want to say to her that it was a very good presentation. I enjoyed listening to it; it was very passionate, and I think the people of West Bay Central are well served by your contribution so thank you very much for that, Member for West Bay Central.

Mr. Speaker, I really want to once again, thank the Honourable Attorney General Samuel Bulgin, QC, for his very strong presentation. He made the case that the mandatory vaccination reduces possible strain on the healthcare system. Again, Mr. Speaker, if you look at the statement that was read back in December in this honourable House by the former Premier, he actually also mentioned doing what is necessary to reduce the strain on the health care system so there are parts of his statement where I think we can definitely give credit where credit is due.

What is important for the people to understand, Mr. Speaker, is that just as we are asking vaccinated tourists to come here, people need to recognise that when this crisis started there was a time everyone became an expert almost overnight on certain terminology used in the health care profession. "Flattening the curve"—I do not know if anybody remembers that—was important. How many ICU beds had ventilators? All of that.

These are questions that people are asking because everyone, naturally, [when] you do not understand something, you are very fearful of it and part of the whole idea behind that, was to make sure that our healthcare system did not develop a strain from it. We cannot then expect, Mr. Speaker, that as we re-open and re-join the global community and start with stay-over tourism—where thousands of people are coming on island—we cannot be this ridiculous as to say that we are bringing 3, 4, 5, even 10,000 people, if cruise ships come in, and there is an outbreak or something goes wrong, that we are going to flood our island. One plane-load alone, Mr. Speaker, can literally take out every ICU bed in this country. We cannot. It would be irresponsible of us to say to people, *come here unvaccinated* and run the risk of putting a strain on our healthcare system. The knock-on effect of that, which the Attorney General again made a masterful presentation of Mr. Speaker, is

that the minute that happens, you are directing much-needed limited public resources to deal with that problem. The minute you do that, Mr. Speaker, you have to start taking services from other places.

Where are we going to take the money from when things are already tight? So it is almost irresponsible for us to say to people, *be in this position to put a strain on our healthcare system*. We have it today, right now, where there are some people in this country who the minute they have a major medical problem... Just earlier this year, many of us had to deal with something similar, where we had non-Caymanians getting really sick, and they did not have adequate insurance coverage. The first thing, basically, is that they need to find their way home because of the insurance costs and so forth. These are real problems, Mr. Speaker.

Asking people who stay here to at least protect themselves against something that can probably lead to their death or at least put a strain on our healthcare system is the right thing to do. We cannot sit down and expose our country to this. Listen, I remember the Member for East End and I were dealing with a Stage-four cancer case, where the person genuinely needed and could not get health insurance coverage and we were trying to see what we could move around and still came back to the point where this person had to return home to get that care.

We also recognise Mr. Speaker, that there are nationalities right here, right now, that cannot make their way back home. We have many Cuban nationals right here, right now that need help and because the borders in Cuba are closed, they cannot. These are responsibilities that we have as human beings, to do the right thing from a humanitarian standpoint. We cannot sit down and expose our healthcare system to this level of strain with thousands of people, and the Attorney General was right in making that case, Mr. Speaker.

In fairness, like I said, the former Premier recognised that also, when he made his statement in this House in December last year. The Attorney General did point out that the European Court of Human Rights found that the mandatory vaccines did not violate human rights and that the wider the net, the less the chances of discrimination. So this whole thing about us limiting it just to the first-timers, that we should have limited it to only people applying for a work permit for the first time—we would have been chased out of court. We had to widen the net and I can tell you, as you widen the net we realised, you know what, there are some people inside the net that we did not want to be in the net.

We debated it, we went through it and that is why we have these committee amendments; because in our view Mr. Speaker, once you are a Caymanian you have a right to be in this country, there are certain rights that you have, that the Government cannot take from you. If you want to marry an anti-vaxxer, that is your right. We said, *you know what, this cannot stand because that is not the intention of that* and if we have

to go to court to make a case for that, then that we will do; that one we are prepared to fight for if they say that it is an issue, because that is what we are. That is what we are about.

The point I am making, Mr. Speaker, is that every single person who comes here, that has made their own unique contribution, I can tell you is part of where the success of our country comes from; and I use my own grandmothers as an example. They arrived over 70 years ago and I give credit to my aunts and uncles. Even my uncle, George McCarthy, who spent much time in this House, also.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank the Honourable Deputy Governor for recognising that the same rules should apply in government as in the private sector. I agree, but I will also say, Mr. Speaker, and this may be a debate for a different time but I am throwing it out into the universe too.

There are two things that also came to mind when I was listening to him with regards to having the Public Sector aligned with the Private Sector and that is the roll-over policy and maternity leave. Those two things need to be addressed because we cannot have one country, one economy, one sector, but yet two different sets of rules. That is something we can look at a different time, a different moment.

Mr. Speaker, I started out talking about the law of unintended consequences and while we do recognise that there are challenges, one thing the Premier was clear about in his contribution to this debate, is that we have to trust the science. Many of us are alive today because of science. We are living longer today because of science. Every day we put pills in our body; we do not even know what is inside them but the doctor say to take them so we take them and we trust the doctor. And just how you trust the doctor and the doctor trusts the science or he would not have been a doctor unless he is a bush doctor or something. That is a different story.

The bottom line is, this is what has made the difference. We are living longer and smarter. I mean 50 is now the new 40, and it may be a time—Mr. Speaker look at you. You are 85 and you look, what? 40? Science.

[Laughter]

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: I am just checking if you were awake, Mr. Speaker. That is fine.

The point I am making Mr. Speaker, is what the Premier is saying. Do I know exactly how the messenger RNA or all of that works? No. I go and I watch my YouTube videos and get my comfort level. You look at the people who are making the presentations and you say, you know what, you do a little research and watch a couple of videos on the same thing, you listen to different people and you get an idea. Do I fully understand it? No, but what I can say to you is that global warming

is real and science is real. That is why we are here as a civilised country today. It has been the evolution of science.

Now, look at the mortality rate. For women, its 85. For men, it's 79. There was a time when if you lived past 65 or 60, you were an elder. This is where we have come. I think the average mortality rate was 45 or 50 a hundred years ago. Look at it today. Science. You know, better food, better water, people are not eating green meat. People are managing their own risks. We came together as a community and manage the risks together. We live longer. That is how it works.

Mr. Speaker, I do recognise that this issue is emotive. I do understand that it is one that has caused a lot of discomfort with some people. I get that. We get that. We all get that. None of us wanted to be in this situation but Mr. Speaker, we cannot be responsible to the Caymanian people and everyone that calls the Cayman Islands home and run the risk of putting our healthcare system at risk. We cannot reopen, Mr. Speaker and have the possibility of having just one bad flight wipe our entire ICU beds and there goes our flattened curve that became popular last year that no one speaks about.

It is not the responsible thing to do. The Member for George Town West before he left, spoke about government responsibility. Mr. Speaker, eons ago, when people created government, they created government with three primary purposes:

- To protect their life;
- To protect their liberties and freedoms; and
- To protect their property.

The right to life was always first, and we help defend the right to life by enacting laws that discourage criminal behaviour (people taking peoples' lives or causing bodily harm) but we also go a step further, Mr. Speaker. We build hospitals. We build roads for you to get to those hospitals. We build schools to educate people to say, you should not eat this, [you] should not do that, you should not do different things, it is unhealthy. This is what a community does. This is what civilisation looks like, Mr. Speaker.

This is not about freedom to manage your own risk because for those who are unable to manage their own risk, what should happen to them? Survival of the fittest? Darwinism? Is that what we are going back to? That is not how we move a country forward, Mr. Speaker.

I started out by thanking everyone for their contribution and I want to end by thanking everyone for their contribution. This is our system of government. This is how it works. We will have disagreements. We will have discord. We will have dissent, but later on, all of us inside here are going to have dinner. We are going right in the back there and we are going to have dinner and we are going to laugh and we are going to check and see how everybody is doing, but when we come here and we sit here, we have a job to do.

I respect the Leader of the Opposition and the Members of the Opposition, but they have a job to do and their job is to make sure that we are at least making the right decisions. That is how it works and I look forward to it. As I said before, from listening to the presentation of the Member for Red Bay, with his keen legal eye, we did also pick up something that we missed. That is what democracy is about. That is why we have Committee Stage amendments and that is why we have rules in place to allow these things.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank everyone again for their debate and for the many people out there that are divided on this issue, just remember: like the same-sex issues and the Port, et cetera, this too shall pass and Cayman will be better and stronger for it. Thank you very much.

God bless.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: The question is that a Bill shortly entitled the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment) Bill, 2021 be given a second reading.

All those in favour please say, Aye. Those against, No.

Ayes and Noes.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Mr. Speaker, I call for a division, please.

The Speaker: Madam Clerk, can we divide?

Division No. 2-2021

Ayes: 11

Hon. G. Wayne Panton
Hon. Christopher Saunders
Hon. Kenneth Bryan
Hon. Sabrina Turner
Hon. Johany Ebanks
Hon. André Ebanks
Hon. Bernie Bush
Hon. Juliana O'Connor-Connolly
Ms. Heather Bodden
Mr. Isaac Rankine
Hon. Katherine Ebanks-Wilks

Noes: 6

Hon. Roy McTaggart
Mr. Joseph Hew
Mr. Dwayne Seymour
Mr. Moses Kirkconnell
Ms. Barbara Conolly
Hon. Alden McLaughlin

Absentee: 1

The Speaker: The results of the Division are: 11 Ayes, 6 Noes, 1 absentee.

Agreed: The Immigration (Transition) (Amendment) Bill, 2021 was given a second reading.

The Speaker: The House will now go into Committee to consider the Bills.

House in Committee at 3:42 pm

COMMITTEE ON BILLS

The Chairman: Please be seated. The House is now in Committee and with the leave of the House we will assume that, as usual, we will authorise the Attorney General to correct minor errors and such the like in these Bills.

Hon. Alden McLaughlin: Mr. Chairman, before you commence, Minister Saunders spoke about various Committee Stage amendments. Could we check to ensure that we have all of those that are to be debated before we start the process?

[Crosstalk]

The Chairman: I think you have two on the Customs and Border Control.

[Crosstalk]

The Chairman: On the Coast Guard Bill, you should have one document which contains four short amendments.

[Crosstalk]

The Chairman: And the Immigration (Transition) has four separate amendments, I think.

[Crosstalk]

[Long pause]

The Chairman: Honourable Members, I think we are ready to proceed. Would the Clerk please state the Bill and read the clauses.

CUSTOMS AND BORDER CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2021

The Clerk:

Clause 1 Short title and commencement

The Chairman: The question is that clause one stand part of the Bill.

All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 1 passed.

AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 2**The Clerk:**

Clause 2 Amendment of section 2 of the Customs and Border Control Act (2021 Revision) – interpretation

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment.

The Chairman: The amendment.

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Mr. Chairman, in accordance with Standing Order 52, I beg to move a motion for the Bill to be amended in clause 2 by deleting the definition of the words, “approved vaccine course” and substituting the following definition – “ “approved vaccine course” means a vaccination course which –

- (a) prevents or suppresses any notifiable disease under Part 6 of the *Public Health Act (2021 Revision)*;
- (b) has been approved for the purpose of this Act by Cabinet, acting on the advice of the Medical Officer of Health; and
- (c) has been notified in the *Gazette* or in any other official Government website or in any other official means of communication;”.

The Chairman: Any questions on the Clause?

Hon. Alden McLaughlin: Mr. Chairman, just so we get the procedure right, because I want to make sure I am debating the right thing.

The Minister has moved an amendment to the Bill. I believe we now have to vote that the Bill be amended as the Minister is now proposing and then, if necessary, we can debate the amended clause. Otherwise, if I speak now—

The Chairman: I thought that was where we were, but let us make sure. The amendment has been moved by the Minister.

Hon. Alden McLaughlin: Right, but that is an amendment to the clause. If it succeeds, then you would have to say, *the next motion is that the clause as amended, stand part of the Bill.*

The Chairman: Stand part of the Bill, yes.

Hon. Alden McLaughlin: Correct. I do not want to have a double debate because I want to ask some questions about this but I want to deal with what the Minister is proposing as part of the clause not have two debates.

[Crosstalk]

The Chairman: The question is that the amendments stand part of the clause.

All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The amendment stands part of the clause.

The Chairman: The clause has been amended. Does any Member wish to speak on it?

Hon. Alden McLaughlin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, my concern is the point raised by Mr. David Wight.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Alden McLaughlin: In Committee you do not speak of the people as... you use their name; yeah, in Committee.

Mr. Chairman, we are asking for the effect of this clause to be made clear to us and the broader public. The clause, as amended, provides that an “ “approved vaccine course” means a vaccination course which -

- (a) prevents or suppresses any notifiable disease under Part 6 of the *Public Health Act (2021 Revision)*;
- (b) has been approved for the purpose of this Act by Cabinet, acting on the advice of the Medical Officer of Health; and
- (c) has been notified in the *Gazette* or in any other official Government website or in any other official means of communication;”.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I gather a few things from that. One: that all of the categories of persons—I hate to use this word but I do not know another one—all foreigners who are caught or who will be caught by the vaccination net set out in this Act—or this Bill for the moment, the Customs and Border Control—will be required to provide proof that they have:

- Been vaccinated against any notifiable disease that is set out in Part 6 of the Public Health Act; or
- been approved for that purpose, by the Cabinet acting on the advice of the Medical Officer of Health; and
- subsequently been notified in the *Gazette* or any other official government website.

What I am asking the Minister to confirm, Mr. Chairman, is that those persons who are caught by the vaccination net will now not just have to provide, as we had understood previously, a vaccination certificate that they have been vaccinated against COVID-19, but

that in fact they have been vaccinated against “*all notifiable diseases*” that are either listed in Part 6 or have been subsequently added to that list by Cabinet on the advice of the CMO.

The Chairman: Honourable Attorney General.

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr Chairman, first of all, “approved course of vaccine” means a vaccination course which prevents or suppresses any notifiable disease under Part 6 of The Public Health Act (2021 Revision), but it does not say “or”, really; it is “and”. So b) is all cumulative—

Hon. Alden McLaughlin: Mr. Chairman. Sorry; the learned Attorney General has just lost me.

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: I thought after you read after a) you said “or”, but there is no “or” there.

Hon. Alden McLaughlin: My error. Okay; but that still does not answer my question.

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: So it is “and”; and then, the only one that they will be required to declare is the one that is gazetted from time to time so it is not the whole menu of notifiable diseases; it is just the one that is gazetted that will be required to declare.

What is happening here, is that the Act has been written in such a way that if you have another disease sometime down the road, you do not have to go back and amend the Act to deal with that again. You can basically just gazette the disease of the day and they will have to declare that they are vaccinated against that.

Hon. Alden McLaughlin: Mr. Chairman, I thank the learned Attorney General.

I just want to make sure that we all understand what this means then; so hitherto the passage of this Bill, there was no requirement for any foreigner coming to live here on a long-term basis to have to—

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: Declare.

Hon. Alden McLaughlin: —provide proof of vaccination and what is being proposed now, at least for the time being, is that the Law will be amended so that Cabinet can approve—

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: Under this Act.

Hon. Alden McLaughlin: —under this Act, yes; Cabinet can mandate that the foreigner who is coming here

under those circumstances is required to provide proof of vaccination [against] that particular disease or those notifiable diseases which are set out in Part 6 of the Public Health Act.

Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin, Attorney General: Thank you; and for present purposes, the one that would be specified would be COVID-19. That is the one that would be specified.

Hon. Alden McLaughlin: That is the intent of Cabinet. Thank you, sir.

The Chairman: Does any other Member wish to speak on this amendment? If not, the question is that clause 2, as amended, stands part of the Bill.

All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 2, as amended, stands part of the Bill.

The Clerk:

Clause 3 Insertion of sections 110A and 110B - requirement for mandatory vaccinations for persons under this part; exemptions by the Medical Officer of Health.

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Honourable Minister.

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: In accordance with Standing Order 52, I beg to move a motion for the Bill to be amended in clause 3, in the proposed section 110A(2), by deleting paragraphs (b) and (c).

The Chairman: Did you say 108 or 110?

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders: 110A.

The Chairman: 110A.

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders: Sub-section (2).

The Chairman: The question is that the amendment stand part of the clause.

All those in favour, please say, Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The amendment stands part of the Clause.

The Chairman: Does anyone wish to speak on the clause as amended? If not, the question is that clause 3, as amended, stand part of the Bill.

All those in favour, please say, Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 3, as amended, stands part of the Bill.

The Clerk:

Clause 4 Amendment of section 133 - general regulations

The Chairman: Honourable Minister.

[Pause]

The Chairman: I thought I asked if there were any questions, but nobody moved. The question is that clause 4 stands part of the Bill.

All those in favour, please say, Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 4 stands part of the Bill.

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Honourable Minister.

NEW CLAUSE 2A

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Yes thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In accordance with Standing Order 52, I beg to move a motion for the Bill to be amended by inserting after clause 2, the following clause-

“Amendment of section 94 - entry by persons other than Caymanians or persons legally and ordinarily resident

“2A. The principal Act is amended in section 94(2) by inserting after the words, “in the Islands” the words “and shall not require a student visa”.

The Chairman: With the new clause having been read a first time, the question is that the clause be read a second time.

All those in favour, please say, Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The clause is deemed to be read a second time.

The Chairman: Does any Member wish to speak on this new clause? If there is no debate, the question is now that the new clause 2A be added to the Bill.

All those in favour, please say, aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The new clause stands part of the Bill.

The Clerk: A Bill for an Act to amend the Customs and Border Control Act (2021 Revision) in order to provide in certain circumstances for mandatory vaccination; and for incidental and connected purposes.

The Chairman: The question is that the title stands part of the Bill.

All those in favour, please say, Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The title stands part of the Bill.

CAYMAN ISLANDS COAST GUARD BILL, 2021

The Clerk:

Clause 1 Short title
Clause 2 Interpretation

The Chairman: Are there any questions on clauses 1 and 2? If not, the question is that clauses 1 and 2 stand part of the Bill.

All in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clauses 1 and 2 stand part of the Bill.

AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 3**The Clerk:**

Clause 3 Establishment of the Coast Guard

The Chairman: The Premier.**The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In accordance with Standing Order 52, I beg to move a motion for the Bill to be amended in clause 3 by deleting subclause (3) and substituting the following subclause –

“(3) Nothing contained in this Act shall be construed so as to permit the Coast Guard to be organized as a military establishment or a military organization, or to function as a military establishment or a military organization.”.

The Chairman: The amendment has been duly moved. Does any Member wish to speak? If not, the question is that the amendment do stand part of the Bill.

All in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.**The Chairman:** The Ayes have it.**Agreed: The amendment stands part of the Bill.****The Clerk:**

Clause 4 Constitution of the Coast Guard
 Clause 5 Financial provision for the Coast Guard
 Clause 6 Command and administration of the Coast Guard
 Clause 7 Delegation of Governor’s functions

The Chairman: The question is that clauses 4 through 7 stand part of the Bill.

All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.**The Chairman:** The Ayes have it.**Agreed: Clauses 4 through 7 stand part of the Bill.****AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 8****The Clerk:**

Clause 8 General Powers of the Commandant

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Mr. Chairman.**The Chairman:** Honourable Premier.**The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, thank you. In accordance with Standing Order 52, I beg to move a motion for the Bill to be amended in clause 8 as follows:

(a) by inserting after subclause (7) the following subclause –

“(7A) Where –

- (a) a temporary maritime exclusion zone or a temporary maritime restricted zone is established in accordance with subsection (3); or
- (b) the period of the temporary maritime exclusion zone or the temporary maritime restricted zone is extended in accordance with subsection (4),

the Commandant shall cause an administrative notice to that effect to be published in an official Government website or in any other official means of communication within twenty-four hours after the Cabinet is notified.”;

(b) subclause (9), by deleting the words “vessels or certain types or classes of vessels are” wherever they appear and substituting the words “persons, unless authorized by a commissioned officer, are”; and

(c) By inserting after subclause (9) the following subclauses -

“(10) For the purposes of the definitions under subsection (9), the authorization by the commissioned officer shall be in writing unless exceptional circumstances exist, in which case, the commissioned officer may give the authorization verbally, but shall, within twenty-four hours after the verbal authorization is given, confirm the authorization in writing.

(11) Where a person, other than a person authorized by a commissioned officer, enters into a temporary maritime exclusion zone or temporary maritime restricted zone during a period in which entry is excluded or restricted, as applicable, the person commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of three thousand dollars or to imprisonment for a term of one year, or to both.

(12) Where a person is convicted of an offence under subsection (11), the court may order that any goods or money in respect of which the offence was committed and is in that person’s possession, be forfeited to the Crown or otherwise disposed of.”.

The Chairman: The amendment has been duly moved. Is there anyone wishing to speak thereto? If

not, the question is that the amendment stands part of the clause.

All those in favour, please say, Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The amendment stand part of the clause.

The Chairman: The clause has been amended. Does anyone wish to speak thereto?

The question is that clause 8, as amended, stands part of the Bill.

All those in favour, please say, Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 8 as amended stands part of the Bill.

The Clerk:

Clause 9	Duties of the Coast Guard
Clause 10	Coast Guard Power of Arrest
Clause 11	General Powers of the Coast Guard

The Chairman: The question is that clauses 9 through 11 stand part of the Bill.

All those in favour, please say, Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clauses 9 through 11 stand part of the Bill.

AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 12

The Clerk:

Clause 12	Seizure, custody and disposal of a vessel believed to have been used in the commission of an offence.
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The Chairman: The Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. G Wayne Panton: Mr. Chairman, thank you.

In accordance with Standing Order 52, I beg to move a motion for the Bill to be amended in clause 12 by inserting after subclause (3), the following sub-clauses –

“(4) If proceedings are instituted against a person for an offence relating to a vessel or structure seized under section 11(1) (g) and –

(a) The proceedings do not result in the person’s conviction for the offence; or

(b) Where the person is convicted of the offence –

(i) the conviction concerned is quashed without a conviction for any other offence relating to a vessel or structure seized under section 11(1)(g) being substituted; or

(ii) Her Majesty has granted pardon in respect of the conviction,

the Grand Court may, on an application by the person (“the applicant”), order compensation to be paid by the Government to the applicant.

(5) The Grand Court shall not order compensation to be paid in any case unless it is satisfied –

(a) that there has been some serious default on the part of a person involved in the investigation or prosecution of the offence concerned and that, but for that default, the proceedings would not have been instituted or continued; and

(b) that the applicant has suffered substantial loss in consequence of anything done in relation to the vessel or structure, by or in pursuance of an order of the Grand Court under this section.

(6) The amount of compensation to be paid under this section shall be such as the Grand Court thinks just in all the circumstances of the case.”.

The Chairman: The question is that clause 12 as amended stands part of the Bill.

All those in favour Please say, Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 12 as amended stands part of the Bill.

The Clerk:

Clause 13	Fees in respect of vessels or structures taken into custody or stored by the Coast Guard
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The Chairman: The question is that clause 13 stand part of the Bill.

All those in favour please say, Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

I understand that there should be an amendment coming from the Minister of Home Affairs. Can you read that amendment? Use your mic, please.

AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 12

Hon. Bernie Bush, Minister of Home Affairs and Youth, Sports, Culture and Heritage, Elected Member for West Bay North: Mr. Chairman, in accordance with Standing Order 52, I beg to move a motion that clause 14, subclause (2) be deleted and the following substituted –

“(2) The Governor shall appoint –
 (a) a Commandant and a Deputy Commandant; and
 (b) a Coast Guard Medical Officer,
 and these officers should be Caymanian as defined in the *Immigration (Transition) Act (2021 Revision)*.”.

Hon. Alden McLaughlin: Mr. Chairman, has that amendment been circulated?

The Chairman: No. If Members recall, the Minister did rise to speak and gave notice in his speech that he was going to move this amendment and so I allowed it to be raised from the Floor of the House.

Hon. Alden McLaughlin: Without the Opposition having even a courtesy copy of what is being proposed?

The Chairman: The Opposition Leader was sitting where he is sitting right now.

Hon. Alden McLaughlin: Mr. Chairman, I am saying...

The Chairman: Honourable Member, if after the Member gave notice, Members want to take this House's time to get a written one so be it, we will allow that, but he did give notice. I have allowed it because it was a simple amendment, but if Members on the opposite side want it, let us stop right now and get it done.

An Hon. Member: Show it to Alden, please.
 [Pause]

The Chairman: If you got a copy, make sufficient copies [and] send them on.

[Crosstalk]

The Chairman: The amendment has been duly moved.

Does any Member wish to speak to it? For best practice, I will ask the Clerk to read the title of Cause 14.

The Clerk:

Clause 14 Appointment of officers to the Coast Guard.

The Chairman: That is what we are waiting on, to see if the Opposition has any questions. Any Member? The Minister of Tourism.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to thank the Honourable Minister Bernie Bush, for bringing this amendment.

It is a long-standing position he has been taking, about promoting and positioning Caymanians in the high-ranking positions of many of these security [entities] like Fire, Police, and now the Coast Guard and I commend him for keeping his footing and his commitment to that.

I support this motion, obviously on behalf of the Government, but I just thought it would be appropriate that we commend Minister Bush for bringing this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairman: Would the Minister read that amendment again, please?

Hon. Bernie Bush: Okay.

, in accordance with Standing Order 52, I beg to move a motion that clause 14, subclause (2) be deleted and the following substituted –

“(2) The Governor shall appoint –
 (a) a Commandant and a Deputy Commandant; and
 (b) a Coast Guard Medical Officer,
 and these officers should be Caymanian as defined in the *Immigration (Transition) Act (2021 Revision)*.”.

I just want to make sure that at all times our people, who are willing and able to do these things, are given the chance. Make sure that they are there.

[Crosstalk]

The Chairman: The amendment has been duly moved. Does any Member wish to speak? Otherwise, we will move on.

If no Member wishes to speak, the question is that the amendment stands part of the clause.

All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The amendment stands part of the clause.

The Chairman: The question is now if anyone wants to speak on the amendment to clause 14?

If not, the question is that clause 14 as amended stands part of the Bill. All those in favour Please say, Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 14 as amended stands part of the Bill.

The Clerk:

Clause 15	Appointment of civilian support staff of the Coast Guard
Clause 16	Secondment to the Coast Guard
Clause 17	Identity Card
Clause 18	Resignations
Clause 19	Termination of appointment and discharge
Clause 20	Retirement and pensions
Clause 21	Medical privileges
Clause 22	Discrimination based on becoming a member of the Coast Guard Reserve
Clause 23	Obligatory Annual Service

The Chairman: The question is that clauses 15 to 23 stand part of the Bill.

All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, no.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clauses 15 through to 23 stand part of the Bill.

AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 24

The Clerk:

Clause 24	Resisting or obstructing an arrest
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The Chairman: The Premier. I think you have an amendment?

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In accordance with Standing Order 52, I beg to move a motion for the Bill to be amended in clause 24(1) by deleting the words "to a fine or to imprisonment for a term of ten years or to both" substituting the words, "to a fine of five thousand dollars or to imprisonment for a term of two years, or to both."

The Chairman: The amendment has been moved.

Does any Member wish to speak thereto?

If not, the question is that the amendment stands part of the clause.

All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The amendment stands part of the clause.

The Chairman: Does anyone wish to speak to the clause as amended? Then I will put the question. The question is that clause 24 as amended stands part of the Bill.

All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 24 as amended stands part of the Bill.

The Clerk:

Clause 25	Unauthorized use of uniform and decorations
Clause 26	Application of the Traffic Act (2021 Revision) to Coast Guard vehicles
Clause 27	ICT Licensee's duties in respect of the Coast Guard
Clause 28	Regulations
Clause 29	Amendment of Schedules
Clause 30	Appeals
Clause 31	Coast Guard Legal Protection Fund and Coastguard Legal Protection Fund Committee
Clause 32	Information may be recorded and sent by electronic means
Clause 33	Vesting of property
Clause 34	Transition of officers of the Joint Marine Unit to the Coast Guard
Clause 35	Transitional provisions in respect of appointments to the Coast Guard prior to the date of commencement of this Act

The Chairman: The question is that clauses 25 through 35 stand part of the Bill.

All those in favour please say, Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 25 through 35 stands part of the Bill.

The Clerk:

Schedule 1	Ranks of Officers of the Coast Guard
Schedule 2	Form of commission conferring rank upon an officer of the Coast Guard
Schedule 3	Identity Card
Schedule 4	Fees for vessels or structures in the custody of, or stored by, the Coast Guard

The Chairman: The question is that Schedules 1, 2, 3 and 4 stand part of the Bill.

All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Schedules 1 through 4 now stand part of the Bill.

The Clerk: A Bill for an Act to provide for the establishment of the Cayman Islands Coast Guard; to specify the duties and powers of the Cayman Islands Coast Guard; and for incidental and connected purposes.

The Chairman: The question is that the title stands part of the Bill.

All those in favour please say, Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The title stands part of the Bill.
IMMIGRATION (TRANSITION)
(AMENDMENT) BILL, 2021

Clause 1 Short title and commencement.

The question is that the clause stands part of the Bill.

All those in favour please say, Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 1 stands part of the Bill.

The Clerk:

Clause 2 Amendment of section 2 of the Immigration (Transition) Act, 2021 Revision - interpretation

AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 2

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: The Honourable Minister.

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Mr. Chairman, in accordance with Standing Order 52, I beg to move a motion for the Bill to be amended in clause 2 by deleting the definition of the words “**approved vaccine course**” and substituting the following definition – “**approved vaccine course**” means a vaccination course which –

- prevents or suppresses any notifiable disease under Part 6 of the *Public Health Act (2021 Revision)*;
- has been approved for the purposes of this Act by Cabinet, acting on the advice of the Medical Officer of Health; and
- has been notified in the *Gazette* or in any other official Government website or in any other official means of communication;”.

Thank you.

The Chairman: The amendment has been duly moved.

Does any Member wish to speak? If not, the question is that the amendment stands part of the clause.

All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The amendment stands part of the clause.

The Chairman: Does anyone wish to speak on the clause as amended? If not, I will put the question. The question is that clause 2 as amended stand part of the Bill.

All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 2 as amended stands part of the Bill.

The Clerk:

Clause 3 Insertion of sections 52A and 52B - mandatory vaccinations for persons specified under Part 6 and exemptions by the Medical Officer of Health

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders: Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Minister.

AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 3

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Mr. Chairman. And according to Standing Order 52, I beg to move a motion for the Bill to be amended in clause 3 in the proposed new section 52A (2) by deleting paragraph (b) and (c).

[Crosstalk]

The Chairman: You want to take them one time, or separately?

[Inaudible interjections]

The Chairman: Yes, one time.

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Okay, Mr. Chairman.

In accordance with Standing Order 52, I beg to move a motion for the Bill to be amended in clause 3 in the proposed new section 52A (2) by deleting paragraph (b), (c) and (d).

Also, Mr. Chairman,

(a) in subsection (2)(a), by inserting before for the word "37" the words "subject to subsection (2A)"; and

(b) by inserting after subsection (2) the following subsection –

"(2A) Subsection (1) does not apply to a variation of a Residency and Employment Rights Certificate under section 37(5)."

Thank you.

The Chairman: The amendments have been duly moved.

Does any Member wish to speak to those amendments? The question is that the amendments stand part of the clause.

All those in favour please say, Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The amendments stand part of the clause.

The Chairman: Does any Member wish to speak on the clause as amended?

The question is that clause 3 as amended, stand part of the Bill.

All those in favour, please say, Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 3 part as amended stands part of the Bill.

The Clerk:

Clause 4 Amendment of section 53 - persons exempted

Clause 5 Insertion of section 53A - mandatory vaccinations for persons under section 53(1) (b)

Clause 6 Amendment of section 56 - applications for work permits

Clause 7 Amendment of section 63 - grant or refusal of work permit

Clause 8 Amendment of section 66 - term limits

Clause 9 Amendment of section 72 - regulations

The Chairman: The question is that clauses 4 through 9 stand part of the Bill.

All those in favour please say, Aye. Those against, No.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clauses 4 through 9 stand part of the Bill.

The Clerk: A Bill for an act to amend the Immigration (Transition) Act (2021 Revision) in order to provide in certain circumstances for mandatory vaccination; and for incidental and connected purposes.

The Chairman: The question is that the title do stand part of the Bill.

All those in favour please say, Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The title stands of the Bill.

The Chairman: The question now is that the Bills be reported to the honourable House.

All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Bills be reported to the House.

Proceedings resumed at 4.52pm

The Speaker: Honourable Members, the House now resumes. Please be seated.

Honourable Premier, can you please move the suspension of Standing Order 10(2) in order for the House to conduct business.

Suspension of Standing Order 10(2)

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I move the suspension of Standing Order 10(2) so that the business of the House may continue beyond the hour of interruption.

The Chairman: The question is that Standing Order 10(2) be suspended in order for business to be conducted at this time.

All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Standing Order 10(2) suspended.

REPORTS ON BILLS

CUSTOMS AND BORDER CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2021

The Speaker: The Deputy Premier.

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am to report that the Customs and Border Control (Amendment) Bill, 2021 was considered by a Committee of the whole House and was passed with amendments.

The Speaker: The Bill has been duly reported and is set down for a third reading.

CAYMAN ISLANDS COAST GUARD BILL, 2021

The Speaker: The Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am to report that a Bill shortly entitled the Cayman Islands Coast Guard Bill, 2021 was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed with amendments.

The Chairman: The Bill has been duly reported and is set down for a third reading.

IMMIGRATION (TRANSITION) (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2021

The Speaker: The Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment) Bill, 2021 as amended during the Committee Stage consideration of the Bill, be given a third reading and passed.

The Speaker: The Bill has been duly reported and is set down for a third reading.

THIRD READINGS

CUSTOMS AND BORDER CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2021

The Speaker: The Honourable Deputy Premier, Minister responsible for Customs and Border Control.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: Third reading.

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Customs and Border Control (Amendment) Bill, 2021 as amended during the Committee Stage consideration of the Bill, be given a third reading and passed.

The Speaker: The question is that the Customs and Border Control (Amendment) Bill, 2021 be given a third reading and passed.

All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Customs and Border Control (Amendment) Bill, 2021 was given a third reading and passed.

CAYMAN ISLANDS COAST GUARD BILL, 2021

The Speaker: The Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I beg to move that a Bill shortly entitled the Cayman Islands Coast Guard Bill, 2021 be given a third reading and passed.

The Speaker: The question is that the Cayman Islands Coast Guard Bill, 2021 be given a third reading and passed.

All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Cayman Islands Coast Guard Bill, 2021 was read a third time and passed.

**IMMIGRATION (TRANSITION)
(AMENDMENT) BILL, 2021**

The Speaker: The Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment) Bill, 2021 as amended during the Committee Stage consideration of the Bill, be given a third reading and passed.

The Speaker: The question is that a Bill shortly entitled the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment) Bill, 2021 be given a third reading and passed.

All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Immigration (Transition) (Amendment) Bill 2021 given a third reading and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Speaker: The Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all Members for their contributions and cooperation.

Having completed the business of this Special Meeting, I move the adjournment of this honourable House sine die.

The Speaker: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, may I ask if the Premier could give this side of the House some indication as to when next he expects to convene the House for regular business?

I know that we are coming up towards the end of the year budget session and any other business that we may need to conclude.

The Speaker: Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank the Honourable Leader of the Opposition for the question at this point.

I understand that he is asking for an indication of when we may next be in Parliament. That is difficult to say immediately, sir; I will endeavour to get some clarity around that and give him an indication in the next couple of days because I know that Members have plans and they have lives to organise so I will try to be clear about that.

Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: The question is that this House do now stand adjourn.

All those in favour, please say Aye; those Against, No.

AYES.

At 4:59 pm the House adjourned sine die.