



OFFICE OF THE
PREMIER
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE PREMIER

UPDATE ON THE ORDER OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

30TH OCTOBER 2020

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to provide this Legislative Assembly with an update on a matter of national identity and pride.

At the beginning of this Government's term, we embarked on a journey to revive and relaunch the Order of the Cayman Islands society of Honours.

Mr. Speaker, I previously noted during the debate on the National Honours and Awards (Amendment) Law, 2018, that the granting of Honours is a lasting and tangible way for a Country to pay tribute to those who exemplify the greatest qualities of citizenship and whose contributions enrich the lives of their community.

Nor is this anything new or unprecedented because of the 195 countries in the world, I am told that only about five do not possess an Honours System. Among our fellow British Overseas Territories, Turks & Caicos and Bermuda are known to operate their own National Honours system alongside the UK Honours system.

Mr. Speaker, therefore it was in keeping with this established practice that in 2010, legislation titled the National Honours and Awards Law was introduced by the administration that you Mr. Speaker were leading. This original legislation created an honours scheme known as the Order of the Cayman Islands. While a number of Honours under this system were awarded, regrettably the honours scheme did not fully take root and no other ceremony was held.

In acknowledging the importance of recognizing our own people and after much research and consultation including with experts in the United Kingdom, my Government revisited and revived the Order of the Cayman Islands with a fresh approach. It was within this context that the National Honours and Awards (Amendment) Law 2018 was passed in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I can now confirm that the Nomination period for the Order of the Cayman Islands is open through 27th November, 2020, and that these nominations shall be reviewed by the newly appointed Council for the Order of the Cayman Islands in accordance with the National Honours and Awards (Amendment) Law 2018.

Mr. Speaker, The Council is chaired by His Lordship, the Chief Justice Hon. Anthony Smellie and he is joined by former Chief Secretary, Mr. James Ryan, former Member of Executive Council, Mr. Norman Bodden (both of whom were nominated by me as Premier as prescribed by law).

Furthermore, Mr. Malcolm Eden, was nominated to serve on the Council by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, and Mrs. Celene Crance was nominated to serve by your good self - Mr. Speaker. The Council has already started to meet, determine its procedures and to prepare for this initial nominations process. I wish to record my gratitude to His Lordship the Chief Justice, Hon. Anthony Smellie, and each member of the Council for accepting this very challenging yet

important endeavour with tremendous energy and for helping to re-establish what it is hoped will become a greatly revered and highly respected system of National Honours. I also wish to thank you Mr. Speaker and the Hon. Leader of the Opposition for your support in the successful relaunch of the Order.

I was deeply gratified to know that each of these distinguished and highly respected individuals have agreed to serve as members of the Council for the Order. Above all else, it is essential that this new system enjoys the confidence of the public and I believe the important work of the Council could not have been placed in better hands.

The Cabinet Secretary serves as Secretary to the Council. I as Premier, by virtue of this office, serve as Chancellor of the Order and the Principal Companion of the Order. However all of the very difficult work of vetting and deliberating nominees falls squarely within the remit of the Council.

In opening this Nomination Period, it is hoped that names of worthy and fitting individuals will be put forward to the Council's consideration and if all goes as planned, the first investiture ceremony under this new law will occur during the National Heroes Day Ceremony on January 2021.

Mr. Speaker, please allow me just a few more minutes to offer a brief overview of some of the key changes to our newly relaunched system of Honours.

Fixed Annual Quotas for Membership

The initial 2010 Honours System was a very good and important first step in the establishment of a local Honours System. However Mr. Speaker, given the advice that we have received from experts in the UK, we have determined that necessary improvements were needed to enhance the Honours Scheme.

Therefore Mr. Speaker we now have only three levels of membership: Companion, Officer and Member. To further ensure exclusivity of membership of the Order, an annual quota is also set within the amendment Law. In other words, the Council can award no more than 2 persons as Companions, no more than 3 persons as Officers and no more than 5 persons as Members of the Order in any given year.

Chancellor's Special Nomination

Mr. Speaker under the amended law, the Chancellor of the Order also has the authority to make appointments defined as "Special Nominations" to the various classes of the Order separate and apart from the Council of the Order. However, the number of special nominations are also restricted and kept within an annual quota of only one awardee under each of the three levels of Companion, Officer and Member.

This provision was included in order to make accommodation for unique situations such as when an individual deemed worthy of an Honour, may be terminally ill, or in the event it is deemed impractical to wait until the official nomination period overseen by the Council.

Design of the Order of the Cayman Islands

We have redesigned the insignia and ribbon of the order for each of the three levels of membership and they are now compatible with BOTC UK insignia and their production quality is more lasting.

No conflict with UK Honours

Mr. Speaker, I wish to also confirm that receiving the Order of the Cayman Island would not impinge on a person's eligibility for recognition, at some later stage, for an award in the UK.

There are many advantages to continuing with our very own Honours System. First, it affords the Government greater opportunities to give recognition to worthy citizens. Also, running in parallel with the UK Honours system gives greater scope to those who are charged with ensuring that achievement and service is recognised whenever possible.

Message to Previous Recipients

Mr. Speaker, this week during a press briefing on this subject, I have sought to assuage any concerns from previous recipients of an Award under the first iteration of the scheme. Section 10A of the amendment legislation includes a provision that confirms that any awards previously issued before the amendment law came into force are to be considered valid under the new law.

Therefore the option is open to current holders at the level of Commander, Officer and Member should they wish to re-classify their individual awards and receive the appropriate new

class in exchange. No nomination will be required for this; however, the Council will only embark on this re-classification after the first investiture ceremony occurs under the new regime.

There are many precedents internationally for this course of action, not least in the UK. When the George Cross was established in 1940, recipients of the old Albert Medal and the Edward Medal were allowed to exchange their medals for the new Cross. Some did but equally many chose to retain their original medal and we expect that many will wish to do the same, given that their original insignia and award is a unique part of Cayman's history and will never again be offered.

So Mr. Speaker, I trust that Hon. Members of this house will encourage people in their constituencies to download the nomination form from www.gov.ky/order-of-the-cayman-islands and encourage their communities to put forward the names of those who have made outstanding contributions to our community and indeed our world. I am grateful for your support on this endeavour dear sir and that of my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly.

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