



**CAYMAN ISLANDS  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT  
ELECTRONIC VERSION**

**2016/17 SESSION**

**2 June 2016**

*Third Sitting of the First Meeting  
(Pages 79-116)*

**Hon Juliana Y O'Connor-Connolly, JP, MLA,  
Speaker**

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PRESENT WERE:

**SPEAKER**

Hon Juliana Y O'Connor- Connolly, JP, MLA  
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

**MINISTERS OF THE CABINET**

Hon Alden McLaughlin, MBE, JP, MLA	<i>The Premier</i> , Minister of Home Affairs, Health and Culture
Hon Moses I Kirkconnell, JP, MLA	<i>Deputy Premier</i> , Minister of District Administration, Tourism and Transport
Hon D Kurt Tibbetts, OBE, JP, MLA	Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure
Hon Marco S Archer, MLA	Minister of Finance and Economic Development
Hon Osbourne V Bodden, MLA	Minister of Community Affairs, Youth and Sports
Hon G Wayne Panton, MLA	Financial Services, Commerce and Environment
Hon Tara A Rivers, MLA	Minister of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs

**EX OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET**

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

**ELECTED MEMBERS**

**GOVERNMENT BACKBENCHERS**

Mr Roy M McTaggart, MLA	Second Elected Member for George Town
Mr Joseph X Hew, MLA	Sixth Elected Member for George Town

**OPPOSITION MEMBERS**

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, OBE, JP, MLA	<i>Leader of the Opposition</i> , First Elected Member for West Bay
Mr Bernie A Bush, MLA	Third Elected Member for West Bay
Capt A Eugene Ebanks, JP, MLA	Fourth Elected Member for West Bay

**INDEPENDENT MEMBERS**

Mr Anthony S Eden, OBE, JP, MLA	<i>Deputy Speaker</i> , First Elected Member for Bodden Town
Mr Alva H Suckoo, MLA	Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town
Mr Winston C Connolly, Jr, MLA	Fifth Elected Member for George Town
Mr D Ezzard Miller, MLA	Elected Member for North Side
Mr V Arden McLean, JP, MLA	Elected Member for East End

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT  
THRONE SPEECH AND BUDGET ADDRESS  
FIRST MEETING OF THE 2016/17 SESSION  
THURSDAY  
2 JUNE 2016  
Third Sitting**

[Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly, Speaker, presiding]

**The Speaker:** Good morning.

I will invite the First Elected Member for the district of West Bay, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to say prayers.

### PRAYERS

**Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition:**  
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 Legislative Assembly 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; Philip, Duke of Edinburgh; 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 Legislative Assembly, the Leader of the Opposition, Ministers of the Cabinet, ex-officio Members and Members of the Legislative Assembly, 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.

### ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS OR AFFIRMATIONS

**The Speaker:** None.

### READING BY THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER OF MESSAGES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

**The Speaker:** None.

### PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

**The Speaker:** None.

### PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND OF REPORTS

**Report of the Standing Business Committee of the Fifth Meeting of the 2015/2016 Session of the Legislative Assembly**

**The Speaker:** I recognise the Honourable Premier.

**The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of this Honourable House the Report of the Standing Business Committee of the Fifth Meeting of the 2105/16 Session of the Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker:** So ordered.

Does the Honourable Premier wish to speak to this Report?

**The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin:** No thank you, Madam Speaker.

### QUESTIONS TO HONOURABLE MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

**The Speaker:** None.

## STATEMENTS BY HONOURABLE MEMBERS AND MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

The Speaker: None.

### PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

The Speaker: None.

### OBITUARY AND OTHER CEREMONIAL SPEECHES

The Speaker: None.

### RAISING OF MATTERS OF PRIVILEGES

The Speaker: None.

### OTHER BUSINESS

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Premier.

#### SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 14(3)

**The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, following consultation with the other side of this House, I beg to move a motion to suspend Standing Order 14(3) in order that Government Business may take precedence over Private Members' Business on today, Thursday, being Private Members' day.

**The Speaker:** The question is that Standing Order 14(3) be suspended to allow Government Business to take precedence over Private Members' Business.

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

**AYES.**

**The Speaker:** The Ayes have it.

Accordingly, Standing Order 14(3) is hereby suspended.

**Agreed: Standing Order 14(3) suspended.**

## GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

### BILLS

#### SECOND READING

## APPROPRIATION (JULY 2016 TO DECEMBER 2017) BILL, 2016

### DEBATE ON THE BUDGET ADDRESS AND THE THRONE SPEECH TOGETHER WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY STATEMENT

*[Continuation of debate thereon]*

**The Speaker:** I recognise the Honourable Fifth Elected Member for the district of George Town to continue his debate.

**Mr. Winston C. Connolly, Jr., Fifth Elected Member for George Town:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, last night when we left off, I had just spoken to the Budget Statement, the Throne Speech and the Policy Statement. Madam Speaker, I thanked Her Excellency the Governor, the Honourable Premier and the Honourable Minister of Finance for delivering those speeches and I applauded the Government for not spending and getting us within the FFR requirements.

I also highlighted, Madam Speaker, there was no real development in investment plan and that in my view, one was desperately needed for this country and that without it we would just be stop-starting every four years as governments change. I also highlighted that most of the areas that are contributed to the reported GDP growth figures had actually started in the previous Administration.

Madam Speaker, I saw the body language and the smirks and the made up faces and the movement on that side, and I hope to continue to show why, in my view, GDP per capita should be what we are looking at so that there is incontrovertible truth.

Madam Speaker, as I continue I will show the lack of a plan, a lack of transparency and conditions for development as something that will actually hurt the country in the long run because it is not sustainable doing what it is that we are doing. Madam Speaker, why I say that is because we have been in office for some three years now. We just got a report on the day that we started that the revised NRA agreement had finally been signed. Madam Speaker, this was a hot topic in the last election leading up to the election.

**The Speaker:** Member, just so that you can put your debate in time and perspective, you have an hour and 15 minutes remaining. I should have said it prior to your commencing. Sorry.

**Mr. Winston C. Connolly, Jr.:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It should not have taken three years, Madam Speaker, to go through that agreement—something which a dedicated negotiation team should have been able to go through and negotiate in no longer than a month or two. But again, Madam Speaker, it shows

that without a plan successive governments are handcuffed to a certain degree by previous governments and if they want to change something because of contractual obligations because of jurisprudence, because of a number of things, it is hard to unravel decisions. So, again, this goes back to the plan, Madam Speaker. If we could sit down as a country, as a Government, and come up with a national development and investment plan, we would not be waiting three years to negotiate agreements and not having development start—we would not be doing them in backrooms and we would be giving investors surety, we would be giving our people surety and we would show them exactly where the opportunities are in the country. Because, if we had a long-term development plan and we showed where we wanted the country to be in 5, 10, 15 and 20 years and the infrastructure that we needed—both local investors and international investors could see whether or not projects that they had in mind would fit in with that plan and exactly what the incentives are.

We could as a country, Madam Speaker, like I said last night, put local and external investors together because we would know the expertise and we could really maximise the peoples' money because, again, we take this money from each and every citizen by way of fees and other things and then we spend it. But do we spend it as wisely as we could and making sure that some of that money goes directly to our Caymanian investors, those that could bring projects? We have to be more strategic, Madam Speaker. Status quo is not acceptable. And the only beneficiary of how this is done now, are the gatekeepers. You will hear about trickle-down economics. We have to get further than that, Madam Speaker. We are small enough to do it.

Madam Speaker, again, just in case I get accused of bringing these things out of my—I guess I will use the word imagination, this is not Winston Connolly sitting up and going this is something novel, this is something that we should take on board, et cetera. First world countries do it every day.

Madam Speaker, a few years ago when I was on the backbench I raised some parallels and one of them is [www.startup.ny.gov](http://www.startup.ny.gov). The reason why I raised that, Madam Speaker, was exactly to my point today. New York—Start-up New York—grow your business. A new opportunity, welcome to New York, blah, blah, blah. There is a website dedicated based on the different sections of that State that shows what the State wants in terms of expansion—factories, schools, commercial properties, et cetera, and exactly where they want them—because, again, it is an overall plan that allows investments to be spread across the State so that not just one area is concentrated on. If I want (as an investor) to look at it, everything that I need to know is on that page. And, of course, these are broad strokes because you know what they are looking for, you know what you can bring to the table, and you

know what the incentives are. But, of course, you would need to go and speak to somebody, Madam Speaker. I have also long advocated for a proper investment authority here—red carpet, white gloves—and you have heard me say it time and time again over three years.

Madam Speaker, if we do not start getting more sophisticated we are going to open ourselves up to continued claims of backdoor deals—the big “C”, the small “c”—all these things that we do not have to do if we are just transparent. On that page, Madam Speaker, they talk about learning about their incentive programmes and what they need—retail and wholesale businesses—restaurants, law and accounting firms, medical and dental practises, real estate management companies and brokers, hospitality, retail banking, utilities and energy production. They have decided what they want for their state and they are inviting investors to come in and invest and they are making it very transparent what the incentives are.

Madam Speaker, to plan our country and not just have it done ad hoc and investor driven—as a country, we need to take stock and I daresay we also need to take the negotiations out of individual Ministers hands and put together proper negotiating teams that can match up against the high paid lawyers and accountants and economists and everybody else that comes with that investor to the table. We need to have our own so that we can ensure that the country and the people of this country are getting the best deal possible and all along the way everybody knows including the local investors who might be able to step up to the plate and take advantages of some of these opportunities.

Madam Speaker, status quo—the way we used to do things—is long gone. I have heard too much of the negotiations starts with *I want what the other person got and what the last Government gave* to know that if you are starting from that position it is going to be a long protracted position. Whereas if you told them upfront what it was, they can make up their minds so when they come to table you are just talking about how much, how big and if you go bigger then maybe we can talk about some added incentives, but, at the same time, holding them responsible for employing Caymanians, for looking for Caymanian participation and giving a sliding scale on that. We have to be more sophisticated. That is what a plan does. It is clear, it is transparent and it gives investors surety. It does not paint the Government into a corner and handcuff deliberations and negotiations.

George Town redevelopment—I touched on this last night, Madam Speaker, but I wanted to elucidate on that. I do not want to tie this in to, again, how we do business and how we could do business. We want George Town revitalised. I am an Independent Member for George Town. I want George Town revitalised. We are three years in and I pointed out what exactly we have done to date.

Madam Speaker, if we sat down as a group and said together, after consultation with our constituents—not just in George Town but the whole Island—*What do you want to see in George Town? What do you need in George Town? What do you not want that is already in George Town?* And we then said, *Investors—worldwide, locally—here is what we need. What can you bring in? If you bring multi-level parking lots, if you bring schools, if you bring all this, here is your incentive package and here is how we think you can make back your money on your investments.*

Madam Speaker, we would have George Town redeveloped in no time. We need to show people what it is we want and not have it driven about what they want. Government does not have to do it all. Let us step out of the box and regulate and not have to be the ones that are producing all these things because we also know that we do not have the capital budget to do so. It does not mean that we have lost control. It does not mean that because we do not own assets we are not in control. The Government is always in control. It sets the tone. It sets the policies. It sets the laws. Our children and our people would be better off in many instances if we did this because development would come faster. Have we forgotten to rule and regulate, Madam Speaker?

Let us look at yet another plan or another report, the EY Report, Madam Speaker. Before that was even hot off the press, we went down to a Chamber of Commerce lunch and we said *These things are off the table*. We had not even looked at the document. Again, Madam Speaker, political statements that have not taken into account the population and the needs of the people. If we do not look at divesting central Government, we are going to keep needing a huge budget. We are going to need to keep taxing our people. Privatisation can build entrepreneurial activity. We can take the same people that are doing the work now and empower them in their own jobs and support them by giving them the first contract through Government—letting them get legs and go out and compete for work.

Madam Speaker, we cannot be afraid of doing that. Imagine the opportunities, if we had taken some of these things in earnest and put them in place where our people would be—or if we were even considering them. But yet we have to continue feeding the machine. When in feeding the machine, we feed it with cash—the cash that you and I pay as citizens of this country. We should have money in our pockets because of Government policies, not be out of pocket because of it.

Then, there was Bo Miller, Madam Speaker, another political opponent, someone who came up with an idea. But, again, in Cayman we cannot let other people get credit. We cannot take on ideas if they are going to come back to haunt us in elections because they were good ideas.

Madam Speaker, he had a major law firm in Cayman backing him. They said it was a good idea. He had directors who were all successful businessmen who said it was a good idea. He had international investment managers, bankers saying it's a good idea. In fact, one of the local newspapers did an online on Friday 13 March, 2015, and half the people said they would consider investing in an infrastructure fund.

Madam Speaker, some of the things were based on national pride and I am quoting from this and, Madam Speaker, I can give you this if you want, but I am just going to quote, with your indulgence, and then I will lay it on the Table.

**The Speaker:** So ordered.

**Mr. Winston C. Connolly, Jr.:** Thank you.

"I want to participate in building a stronger Cayman,' said one person. 'I have no problem once the fund is initiated by reputable person/entity,' said another person. 'Caymanians need to start investing in the infrastructure of their own country. Let's keep the wealth in the country. It doesn't need to leave. We need to start . . .'" (Madam Speaker, this is a typo because it says, "We need to starting believe in ourselves at a local level", but we get what it says.) [UNVERIFIED QUOTES]

Madam Speaker, again it is not our idea. I am not saying that this infrastructure fund was perfect. We have heard about legislation in the last sitting where, you know, it is not perfect but it is an improvement. Well, why do we not take the same approach to some of the other people's ideas? Why do we dismiss them categorically when other people are clamouring to do it? Why don't we talk about negotiating fees and other things rather than discounting it in its entirety because of who is bringing it? We are all Caymanians at the end of the day, Madam Speaker. Right? I should not be looking at someone who can make millions of dollars and say, *Well, boy, I have the power to stop him from doing that or doing that so I will stop it* but then let somebody come from overseas and give him the same package.

Madam Speaker, we need to start thinking about our future, our people, and empowering them economically because that money is staying here. That money is going to be circulating here. We talk about pensions and not being able to save enough to support ourselves. Those same pension funds could be buying into our infrastructure. Those same Caymanians could be buying in to their future and getting annuities and dividends for the rest of their life that they can pass on to their children. That is empowerment, Madam Speaker. That is nation building. But because it was someone else's idea we cannot give them the credit because, guess what? In four years somebody might think *Hmmm. . . that was a good*

*idea. Why didn't you come up with that and give them a vote?*

Madam Speaker, we need to be better at what we do and how we do it. I am not going to go into all the stuff that Bo Miller spouted in the campaign and his documents, but what I will go into, Madam Speaker, is that he addressed in the infrastructure projects that we need that are not in place, the ones that are deteriorating that we need to replace or fix, and also things about—talking about schools, and other things that, again, we know as a country that we do not have the money to do it. So why not come up with an inventive way and latch on to an inventive way that we can all own the infrastructure, but we can get it because getting it is the important part. Putting people in schools that are not falling down is the important part.

We just had three days ago a petition in Savannah Primary because people have had enough—but, Madam Speaker, they are looking at us for answers. They are looking for us to govern the country in a fair manner and to get pettiness out of politics; ownership in our country by Caymanians—righting the socioeconomic wrongs on our people committed by past political decisions to finally allow them to fully participate in this Caymanian economy. That was what that fund was doing. Again, it would have freed up Government to regulate rather than to own. It would have freed up money to go in and enhance and improve on our infrastructure.

Madam Speaker, lest the listening and viewing audience, again, think that I am attacking the other side, I am not. This is me showing solutions, Madam Speaker, because it is my job as an elected Member by the people of the country. I have a right to bring solutions that benefit them and I have done so for three years, Madam Speaker. But, Madam Speaker, here again, let us talk about politics for a while and the overall politics. We have a coalition Government. We bring ideas as backbenchers in the form of Private Members' Motions. Every single Private Member Motion that I have brought here, Madam Speaker, has been unanimously passed. You would think that is a good thing, right? But let us look at what the rhetoric is. Private Members' Motions are moral victories only. They are not going to go anywhere.

Madam Speaker, do I show up here every day and should I just come in and say, *Well, you know what? The Government of the day—they have got all the answers. I might as well put it in park. Let me take my \$100,000 a year and show up and vote everything in that they bring to pass.* Constructive criticism, solutions—everybody is capable of a good idea once in a while, even us lowly Opposition.

Madam Speaker, we have to start thinking collegiately. We have to get away from this *We are a Westminster adversarial system, so anything coming from the other side is the wrong thing.* Or even when we accept it, we accept it because we feel that the people will come down on us in the next election if we

do not accept it. But once we accept it we know that with one hand we are accepting it and we get up and we laud it and we say all these platitudes and with the other hand we are throwing it in the bin. The country deserves better. If it is a good idea let us talk about putting it in place. Politics will sort itself out down the road.

Let us then, Madam Speaker, look at the investments that were frustrated or ignored that people might never see the light of day because they did not even know that they were there in the first place. Again, this goes back to transparency, Madam Speaker. But for bad political decisions, without any input from the people after we get elected, the same decisions that in some instances give away too much and continue to do so years after they are made—some of those same decisions because we have not taken in all the arguments and all the ramifications, handcuff our people for generations and yet, Madam Speaker, we still have not learned and we still want to do things the same way because *When I was in Opposition, I had to be subjected to this. So when I am in Government, I am going to make sure that the other side gets subjected to that.* Who are we hurting, Madam Speaker? It is the same people that put us here.

I was told, Madam Speaker, that the only way that I could be successful in Government is to be with those that had the numbers so I could pass laws and get things passed—my ideas out there. Madam Speaker, I said then and I will say this until the people remove me or until I remove myself from this process. Success is defined in many ways. When you raise the people's awareness and you educate the people and they take ownership, woe be on to anyone in this House that goes against the people.

Madam Speaker, I refuse to join a party and in the last couple of weeks I realised why I consider myself right in that—and I am not beating up the party system per se—but let everybody be persuaded by their own minds. When we do these fancy fundraisers and other things, the people that show up to buy those tables, they are not showing up out of the goodness of their heart, Madam Speaker. It is an exchange and we need to be wary when that calling comes. In other countries they call them lobbyists. And when we start answering to lobbyists we start forgetting the people.

Let us go back to the people, Madam Speaker. The ones that we know are suffering. The same ones we said at campaign time that we would find jobs for, reduce crime, that we would make them prosper if they voted for us—and, Madam Speaker, that was every single one of us in this House. Some of us, even though we are in opposition, got very similar mandates in terms of votes from our people. In fact, the one group got all the votes from all the people because we had to go to a coalition government . . . sorry, a progressive's led Government—incontrovertible truths. My Learned friend from North Side says a rose by another name.

Madam Speaker, how have we done that with our policies for those people? How have we ensured that they have gotten jobs, that they have risen with the tide of economic fruition or whatever we like to claim in platitudes? Or, how are they benefitting from the spoils of all our efforts? Have we stipulated to outside investors and local investors that they must hire our unemployed—especially for those jobs that we haven't upskilled them for yet? Have we then, in the last three years, when we talk about all these projects coming on board, sat down with the developers and said we have X amount of Caymanians that are unemployed. Show us what you need—what areas of work that you need—so that in the interim three years that is taken to negotiate these deals that we have people being skilled up to take those jobs—for specific jobs, Madam Speaker. Right?

When we go to the schools in CIFEC [Cayman Islands Further Education Centre] and we say the Kimpton is coming online and it needs 350 people. Now we are still working on a plan, Madam Speaker, three years in. Common sense, Madam Speaker, if you are negotiating these deals, would be to ask what are your employment needs and then to go back and start changing hearts, minds, and behaviours and offering them in the school system. You need 350 staff—have we in the last three years trained 25 bartenders? Or 100 housekeepers, 100 wait staff, 25 HR people, 10 accountants, 25 beach attendants, 50 groundskeepers; 5 concierge persons, 10 doormen? No, Madam Speaker, because we are waiting for trickle-down economics and we are waiting for these projects to start and then we will start training our people.

**Mr. D. Ezzard Miller, Elected Member for North Side:** And the qualified Caymanians can't get jobs.

**Mr. Winston C. Connolly, Jr.:** Madam Speaker, we like to say that we have 20-something people in hospitality—we should have 350 that are going to be earmarked over the next three years for the Kimpton project when it comes online. We need to get that sophisticated, Madam Speaker. If we do it and the people do not want it; that is fine. But we need to educate them as to why these jobs mean economic security for them and then go out to fill gaps because we have been filling them for three years.

Madam Speaker, I am going to get to some of those gaps and some of those periods where we lose time and we actually hurt our people.

Madam Speaker, it has not been so long ago that I was on the other side and, in fact, I guess the papers made a field day of it when some of us left. But, Madam Speaker, I do know this—we do not have the money. We have constraints on how we spend the money that we have so we need to start thinking outside of the box. We have Savannah and Bodden Town growing—well, from Spotts all the way up to Breakers, basically, is the fastest growing area in the

country. You have heard the Member for Bodden Town talk about schools in Bodden Town. You have heard other PTAs and things bring stories about plant and upgrades—Madam Speaker, we have the statistics. We know we cannot build the schools because we do not have the money. Why wouldn't we go out there and court people to come in and build schools for us and say that when you take our students in, then both of us win and you can do whatever you want after that.

Madam Speaker, it will also desegregate schools that again came about because of Government policy. We need to think outside the box and we also need to stop saying what I heard in the last session. We know the devil that we know so let us not go after some of these things that might bring in cash. Madam Speaker, the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over but expecting different results. We cannot stick with status quo. We cannot embrace it because it is comfortable like an old blanket. That is like saying I am staying with somebody who does not love me just because I do not want to go and get rejected from somebody outside. It is not a healthy relationship or status. To be paralysed when you are in a leadership role is also not something that we should aspire to.

I think in some cases we do not create opportunities for our people because we cannot free ourselves from our own mental shackles because we do not know any better and we do not accept that we do not know any better.

Shouldn't the goal be meaningful employment for our people rather than balancing the budget through the fees that we already know and that we can collect? We look at it from this perspective, Madam Speaker. Let us get the money into Government so that we can build up the social services budget so that we can line up our people at the NAU when instead we could have mandated jobs for them, trained them, and set them up in good paying jobs through privatisation, through the decreased size in Government so that we will not continue to need as much revenue. Then we regulate the businesses in our community and our economy so that there is equity and fairness in how they deal with our Caymanian people and we provide investment opportunities that are transparent and open for all investors both internal and external. Let them provide for their families, Madam Speaker.

This does not happen overnight. I am not that naïve. But we need to start thinking about it. We need to know what our overall plan is and I would daresay rather than getting revenue, it should be putting our people in meaningful employment with liveable wages. I will not start on minimum wage, Madam Speaker, and who that actually helped. Campaign promises, party manifestos are heads in the sand. Political utterances, Madam Speaker, and what they do for parties to get into power. But what they do not do for the peo-



ple outside of where you made those political promises.

Madam Speaker, let us look at the ‘no dump in Bodden Town’—those four little words and what they mean for the people in the rest of the country. When you do not take the effort to really sit down and educate your people and you spread fear for your own purposes, what is the opportunity cost, Madam Speaker? And again, lest I be misinterpreted, we all are guilty of this, Madam Speaker, because if we are just looking at what is in our best interest at a particular time and not looking down the road, the people pay the price. Who does these types of utterances help?—The parties, not the people. I am not going to go through a history lesson, Madam Speaker, of good politics that resulted in bad results for our people. The list is there for everybody to see. But, Madam Speaker, we should learn from the past. We should not keep making the same mistakes.

Madam Speaker, can I ask you how much time I have left?

**The Speaker:** Thirty-three minutes.

**Mr. Winston C. Connolly, Jr.:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I talked about preparing our people for opportunities—all of these opportunities which we claim that we have had great hands in and we are bringing for the people. But have we actually prepared them in the time that it takes to negotiate and all of these things? Over the last three years can we hand on heart say that we have prepared our people to take advantage of all the opportunities that we say that we are bringing for them? And if we cannot say that hand on heart who is going to be the beneficiaries? Who are going to be the beneficiaries of all this investment? Government will make its revenue and we will have trickle-down economics and we will have longer lines in the NAU [Needs Assessment Unit].

Our objective should be stimulating new business and supporting entrepreneurship. It should be creating a talented workforce and we need to ask ourselves how. A lot of this comes down to political will, Madam Speaker, and a plan. What do we want Cayman to be known for? What do we want when investors think *Cayman Islands* for them to automatically come to their minds? Iconic Caribbean architecture comes to mind—that goes well with George Town revitalisation. Highly competent, multi-skilled and trainable people who are ebullient, easy going, courteous and hospitable, dedicated to the job and hardworking and honest—these are things that we sat down a long time ago and came up with in Vision 2008 and yet, again, we put it on a shelf never to see the light of day.

Madam Speaker, we have to define ourselves rather than letting individual investors from abroad

come in and define us. We need to be known as a Government with great fiscal policy and like I said I congratulated the Government in doing what it has done so far. But it needs to get more strategic. It needs to get more long-term. We need to price properly the cost of living. We need bilingual workforces. We need a high number of tertiary graduates in the areas that the jobs are in—finance, accounting, business and IT and, of course, we need to grow the other side in terms of tourism. But we need to show the people what the benefits are for them. We need strong customer service. We need loyalty. We need a strong telecommunications network. We need competitive labour costs.

Madam Speaker, these are all just things—like I said, I would love people when we say the words *Cayman Islands* to roll out on their tongues because that is what they identify the Cayman Islands with. We need to do better by our people. We need to say to them we have international schools and we have rest and recreation areas, and we have diverse tourism products, we have renewable energy to keep down the cost of living and to do our part in terms of global warming and carbon footprints. We need high saturation of ICT and these are things that should not be hard to do, Madam Speaker, again, if we put in the proper incentives and we have a plan. We can ensure that the Cayman Islands is built to our specifications that benefit our people and be done in a sustainable way. We have to be bold in some areas, Madam Speaker. We have to raise the bar in a lot of areas to ensure that our people are world class. But I would not be here today, Madam Speaker, if I did not think that we could be. . . I just wish that all 18 of us sat down and had the same belief in our people because we would set the bar high and we would be surprised by the results. We would be surprised by what they can accomplish in these Islands rather than always looking outside.

Madam Speaker, we need to be more strategic. It is not enough to just simply not spend money. When we are having surpluses we need to start thinking about sovereign funds and how we grow our money and how we put in place something for a rainy day. The Government recently said it could not come down here to debate police governance and management because we were under threat in the financial services arena. We need to have a backup plan and we need to have a war chest to do that, Madam Speaker. We cannot do that by penny pinching every single thing. We have to be more strategic. We have to use the minds that we have here and sometimes we need to go outside and get brighter minds if we do not have them here. But we need to do it all for the betterment of our people, the next generation and generations after that. We need that right combination of fiscal and monetary policies. We need to keep ensuring that we have a high standard of corporate governance. We need succession planning for our people so that they

can get to the highest point that they are able to achieve rather than putting ceilings above them. Madam Speaker, if we keep waiting for the plan to materialise we will wait a bit too long.

Madam Speaker, I spoke earlier as well about proactive management of our resources and our people. We need to start ensuring that investment which comes in, seeks to partner with investors already here because that is how we are going to keep money circulating in our economy and our policies and the way that we incentivise will dictate that. Build, operate and transfer—I have not seen that in any of these statements, Madam Speaker. That is something that we could be looking at. Encouraging diversification, talking about things like reinsurance, a board of investments that goes out and actively seeks investors and marries them with local investors—these are the gifts that we can give our people. This is the nation building. This is what they are paying us to do.

We need to raise the bar. We need our educational curriculum on par with leading countries and hold our students to high results. In my mind, Madam Speaker, we need to let them know along the way where they stand in terms of the world stage and we cannot be afraid of the results. We need to put them out there in a transparent manner and have people compete and let them know what they are competing for and let them know that if they compete and they excel what they are going to get because we have also ensured that the prosperity is theirs to have and to own if they are capable. And we need to also push in a number of areas to have those with the aptitude for the skills get skilled up as quickly as possible.

Madam Speaker, when those things get put in the bin because they are moral victories for politicians the opportunity cost is for our people.

**The Speaker:** Member, you have 20 minutes remaining.

**Mr. Winston C. Connolly, Jr.:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We need to realise what ultra-high net worth individuals need and want in a jurisdiction. We need to bring in the international schools that follow some foreign curriculum. We need beacon schools. We need schools that follow international best practise—private and public. We need specialist schools. Madam Speaker, these are all the things that we need to be engaging with those who would come here, and ask them what is missing and then, incentivise others to bring them and put them in place. Where do we want Cayman to be in 5, 10, 15 and 20 years, not four years?

We need to accelerate growth in certain areas. We need to look at what our people are good in or should be good and competent in, and if it is not here already, Madam Speaker, we need to put it in place. A comprehensive set of incentives for local and foreign

enterprises engaged in activities considered by the Government and the country as high priority for national development—a plan, Madam Speaker. And to qualify for the incentives, investors must be engaged in the areas of activities that we list and that is part of that investment priority plan. If not, we are shooting bullets at a wall and then going in and putting in the circles afterwards and saying that we are hitting bullseyes, Madam Speaker.

Net value added, job generation, multiplier effects, measured capacity—these should all be buzzwords when we are talking about incentives. Madam Speaker, it is the peoples' money. Let us use it wisely for their maximum benefit because when we do that the whole country prospers.

Madam Speaker, I am not going to go in to any of those things and I am happy, like I have said in the past, to speak to the Government at any time and share ideas and give them the credit. But let us stop the adversarial aspects or taking it to the nth degree because it only hurts the people. So, what, we can go home at night and say *I told them?* Who is that helping, Madam Speaker?

We need to ensure that our professionals get the training that they are entitled to, so that they can take up the highest reigns in their organisations. We need to ensure that work permit applications and grants help dictate where the skills gaps are in our country and strategically look to fill them. We need to get anti-competitive policies out of the way, especially if they are not working. Madam Speaker, I intend before I leave this honourable House to bring yet another Private Members' Motion on anti-competitive legislation where as a country if we see it is not working, we are not handcuffed for generations.

Madam Speaker, we all have a principle duty to keep our promises to our constituents, not just the Government. When I was on the other side, none of the Private Members' Motions I brought since January, were things that I did not articulate. I was intent on keeping my promises to the people because my promise to the people was that I would stay Independent and that I would bring ideas that benefitted them and that I would support ideas from anybody that benefitted them and the Island. And that is what I intend to do for as long as I am here, Madam Speaker—keep my promises.

Madam Speaker, I am sure that other speakers will say other things, which is their right. But, Madam Speaker, I was not going to do this—at least not before the beginning of this session but I was partially blamed for some of the delay for the budget and other things because of me leaving—the good thing is it made the ones that stayed stronger.

Madam Speaker, when I left the Coalition Government, one of the nails in the coffin after bringing some of these ideas forward and being told that if I joined I could be successful, was something that was presented as an Achilles heel to the Government—

something that we had all campaigned about—"employment". We all promised the people that we would put things in place that would increase employment. I was asked to spearhead this and I turned it down and some people were shocked. *Why would he turn it down? Why would he leave?* Some of the press said I was immature and I should have worked with the Government. I am sure other people said a lot of other things. But, Madam Speaker, I lay on the Table an email that I am going to read to you to elucidate on what some of those reasons were because, Madam Speaker, I have always brought my suggestions for the betterment of our people. Not for me. Not because of some politics. I am going to read this date, Madam Speaker, on the top of the—

**The Speaker:** Honourable Fifth Elected Member for George Town, is it a Government email or a private email?

**Mr. Winston C. Connolly, Jr.:** It is a private email—not through Government emails. It is—

**The Speaker:** Please proceed.

**Mr. Winston C. Connolly, Jr.:** Madam Speaker, I will ask the Serjeant to give you a copy and to pass it around after I have finished.

**The Speaker:** So ordered.

**Mr. Winston C. Connolly, Jr.:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

*29 August 2013 5:35 AM*—As I am known, Madam Speaker, I do not sleep a lot, so I tend to send out emails at all hours of the night and morning.

**"Here is a pilot programme idea given the \$1 million we discussed. I actually added \$.5 million and you will see why. This can be expanded exponentially and still has to be fleshed out but I wanted to see initial framework and have something to speak with Moses on today for him to give me thoughts as well:**

**"The Government will pay \$5,000 to any eligible business that hires an unemployed Caymanian in a role in which they will receive training, after three months of employment. If they are still employed after one year, the Government will give a further \$10,000. Initial pilot programme of up to 100 participants.**

**"Eligible businesses: Must be a Trade & Business Licence holder, (i.e., majority Caymanian owned so that the bulk of the subsidy goes back to Caymanian pockets). Thought about restricting to small businesses (so that the subsidy also acts as a boost for small business) but that would only limit the firms coming forward. What you could do is say that small businesses will receive priority if it is oversubscribed. Businesses would also need**

**to provide a letter of good standing from Pensions Administrator and Health Insurance provider.**

**"Eligible Caymanians: must have been unemployed for three months or more and registered with the NWDA for at least one month (this creates some incentive to register and helps prevent fraud). No Age Restriction. (There would need to be additional checks to guard against fraud). As it would take a month to launch, this would mean anyone that has been unemployed for two months would be eligible, provided they registered with the NWDA right away.**

**Madam Speaker, I am just going to point out, again, 29th of August 2013.**

**"I am tempted to add that they should also have attended some kind of condensed version of the Passport2Success programme to enhance the chances of staying in the role. We could try the Wellness Centre—do a one or two week version or ask for industry volunteers—have an idea below on that as well. That would weed out unemployables who would otherwise poison the well for people who actually wanted to work, i.e., give the programme a bad rep among employers.**

**"Eligible Positions: Salary must be above \$10/hour, full time basis or annual salary over \$19,500 (equivalent to CI\$10 x 37.5 hours x 52 weeks) and must include training programme, subject to approval by NWDA (written training programme must be submitted by end of third month to receive first \$5,000; employee must certify completion after 12 months to release \$10k payment). Almost any training programme should be acceptable in reality, although there should be some discussion with NWDA. Position need not necessarily be permanent after one year. The important thing is the training. If a business can afford to employ without the subsidy, then fine, the Caymanian still got the benefit of a year's work experience, salary and training.**

**"Having said that, this would scope out hospitality jobs, so, you could also add a minimum \$5.00 per hour for a gratuity-earning position with a correspondingly reduced subsidy (say \$3,000 and \$7,000)."**

**The Speaker:** Member, you have four minutes remaining.

**Mr. Winston C. Connolly, Jr.:** "Total financial exposure is theoretically \$1.5 million. However, not every person will last 12 months but at least the programme gave them a job. If after three months people drop out, then we can look for a new cohort."

Madam Speaker, it is here for people to read in this House. I will not go through it. But what I wanted to point out is that these ideas did not come about in December 2015 and, in fact, had they been taken

on board because it was somebody else's idea and we could have had Caymanians being trained from September 2013 and it would not have to be an Achilles heel for anyone, and it would not have to be a knee jerk reaction. Madam Speaker, I do this to prove my point that anyone is capable of a good idea once in a blue moon. But to sit on it for two years and then regurgitate it and then to add insult to injury, wanting the author to head it, Madam Speaker, these are some of the reasons why I am where I am at right now because we could have been doing things a number of years ago rather than having them become Achilles heels. We need to listen to each other's ideas and if they are with merit then we support them. If they are not, then we do not. No harm, no foul, no bad feelings. But do not go in with blinders on and say it is not a party initiative so I am going to sit on it until it becomes one.

Madam Speaker, we have to do better for our people. We have to stop playing lip service. We have to dust off some of these Private Members' Motions that have been brought up in the last three years and salvage some of them because we owe it to the people of this country to work together for their betterment, not for our individual betterment. If you are someplace where your ideas can only be accepted if you join the majority, then, that is someplace that I do not want to be.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** Does any other Member wish to speak? Does any other Member wish to speak? Does any other Member wish to speak? Final call—does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Second Elected Member for the district of George Town.

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart, Second Elected Member for George Town:** Madam Speaker, thank you.

I noted that the Leader of the Opposition also stood but I am happy to give way.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** Okay. Fair enough.

**The Speaker:** Sorry, I did not see.

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** That is fine, Madam Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Please proceed, honourable Member for George Town.

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to give my contribution to the budget debate and to the policy statement and Throne Speech that were delivered earlier this week

by Her Excellency, the Premier and by the Minister of Finance. I would like to congratulate the three on their presentations and I am grateful now for the opportunity to be able to offer my contribution.

Madam Speaker, I do so from the standpoint that this now is the second year I have had the privilege to sit within the Ministry of Health to—the best way I can put it—keep an eye on things for the Premier to help assist him in his work as Minister of Health. I would like to share a lot of what has been going on with this House within the Ministry of Health and Culture over the past year and to discuss at some length the plans that we have for the coming 18-month budget period.

Madam Speaker, as I review the 2015/16 Budget year, the Ministry of Health and Culture and the agencies under it have been working diligently over the past year to provide the highest standards of service and deliver on the policies that we are working so hard to put into place. As we have all had to adhere to the fiscal restraints while focusing on excellence, this has presented many challenges. But I am pleased to say that due to the hard work of everyone in the Ministry, we have been able to achieve much of what we set out to do over this past financial year. I take the opportunity to thank the team at the Ministry and our agencies for all of their efforts. Each role, whether it be administrative staff to the Chief Officer, is extremely important and it is a team effort that moves our country and the Ministry forward. I have to say, Madam Speaker, they are a cohesive group that works together to achieve the objectives that we have set.

If I look now at the topic of health, Madam Speaker, let me outline the work that we have been doing. No matter the good economic fortunes that this country is blessed with, we must never forget that without our health we have very little. While it is the responsibility of each and every resident to ensure that they lead a healthy lifestyle, it is the responsibility of Government to ensure that healthcare services are in place when they are needed. The Ministry of Health therefore plays a crucial role in the wellbeing of the people of the Cayman Islands.

Madam Speaker, let me speak first about mental health for this is an issue that continues to be of paramount importance and is a priority for this administration. We are acutely aware that we fall short in this area of healthcare provision and we are actively engaged in moving towards treatment and facilities that suit our community needs.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to report that the steering committee that was set up some time ago to create the long-term residential mental health facility is making extremely good progress. The steering committee along with their professional advisors including the consulting firm of KPMG has now produced the outlined business case which is expected to be shared with the public shortly. A long-term residen-

tial mental health facility will allow individuals suffering from a mental illness to receive treatment and care from a multidisciplinary team of experts. Patients will engage in various activities and structured programmes depending on their needs in an effort to achieve recovery and long term sustained wellness.

Madam Speaker, I remind this House that there is currently no long-term residential mental health facility in the Cayman Islands; yet, the number of patients needing this type of care currently ranges between 30 and 40 persons. Approximately half of these patients, Madam Speaker, must be treated abroad—usually in Jamaica and the United States. The problem is further confounded by the fact that many who require treatment cannot go overseas to access healthcare because of a criminal history that prohibits them from travelling.

The provision of a long-term residential mental health facility will remove many of these barriers that our patients presently face. Importantly, they will receive treatment in our community which is only fitting. And whether we are physically or mentally ill, we all deserve the best treatment that is available in a safe and secured environment. I commend the steering committee for their work on moving this much needed project forward over the past year.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Health has also made great strides in other areas of national importance, including amendments to laws and regulations. For example, the Health Insurance Law and Regulations were amended. Section 12 of the Health Services Law was amended in the previous sitting. Amendments to the Pharmacy Law—in fact a new Pharmacy Law—are well under way. It is hoped that we will be able to bring those to this House for consideration later this year. Amendments to the Tobacco Regulations are also under way. Our first laboratory policy for the Cayman Islands was developed and the HIV/STD Policy was substantially revised.

Madam Speaker, in 2015 the Annual Healthcare Conference chaired by Ministry of Health's Chief Officer, Jennifer Ahearn, was a great success. It attracted some of the most eminent medical professionals from overseas to our shores and there were over 800 delegates who attended sessions over the course of the Conference. Not only is this encouraging for our own healthcare providers and their patients, but it helps put the Cayman Islands on the map in terms of being a centre of excellence in the field of healthcare. We are looking forward to an equally exciting and enlightening conference in October of this year as word spreads here and abroad about the calibre of professionals attending and the importance of the subjects being discussed.

On a further note closer to home, Madam Speaker, I must offer my personal congratulations to Deputy Governor Franz Manderson for leading the annual DG's 5K Challenge. Madam Speaker, this walk/run in which my wife and I also took part this

year raises money for a good cause and unites the public and private sector in the shared goal of personal fitness, while at the same time giving back to the community. Once again, as this is an important health related event, the Ministry's Chief Officer co-chaired the organising committee while the Deputy Chief Officer led the fundraising efforts. Mr. Manderson is to be commended for leading by example. As Head of the civil service, he is an inspiration for us all and literally he walks the talk. As well as overseeing the day to day business of running the machinery of Government and often undertaking matters of State, he still finds time to exercise after work. At weekends, he regularly participates in other charity 5K events. This year, I am delighted that the beneficiary is to be the Cayman Heart Fund which is raising \$150,000 for a new ambulance for the Health Services Authority. The gift of this vehicle means that Government's funds can be freed up for other vital medical equipment and services. At the same time all of us who took part or donated in some way, know that as a community we have come together to buy an ambulance that one day may save our own lives as well as the life of a loved one.

Madam Speaker, I attended a reception just this past Tuesday at Government House whereby those who participated and contributed in so many ways were honoured and thanked for their work and their contributions. As a result of the DG's 5K Challenge, \$60,000 was given to the Cayman Heart Fund. That contribution alone meant that the Heart Fund had now exceeded and reached their target of \$150,000; an amazing accomplishment and congratulations to everyone.

Madam Speaker, let me now turn to Environmental Health. It has also been an extremely busy year with many issues to tackle. Let me discuss first MRCU and the Oxitec project that is ongoing. One of the most exciting developments in terms of Environmental Health has been the recent announcement by Premier McLaughlin of new mosquito control measures that we are launching in Cayman. The MRCU which has for many years sought to control the scourge of mosquitoes in these Islands has partnered with international biotechnology company Oxitec to fight the *Aedes aegypti*. This is an invasive breed of mosquito that is becoming increasingly resistant to conventional insecticide controls and carries dangerous diseases such as the Zika, Dengue, Yellow Fever and Chikungunya which pose a very real threat to the health of the people of this country.

Using cutting edge science, Oxitec has developed a technique to control this mosquito by means of genetic engineering. The method has undergone vigorous testing and is now recommended by the World Health Organisation to combat the current outbreak of Zika in the Americas and across the world. I will touch more on the work being done by MRCU and Oxitec later but I wanted to say how pleased I am that we are

leading the fight against the *Aedes aegypti* which is causing havoc to the health of citizens in countries which surround us and is a threat for which we in the Cayman Islands must be prepared.

New scientific methods to overcome diseases are often alarming when initially introduced but I want to assure the Members of this Honourable House and the residents of the Cayman Islands that we have given thorough consideration to the Oxitec method, including the safety of the technique and we are confident that this is going to be a safe and effective tool to help the people and protect the health of the nation.

One of the other top items on the national environmental health agenda this past year has been and continues to be the ongoing procurement of the integrated solid waste management system. In late 2014, multinational engineering firm Amec Foster Wheeler Environment and Infrastructure was awarded the contract to prepare a national policy and strategy to determine the direction of solid waste management in the Cayman Islands for the next 50 years. In this agreement, Amec was also tasked with preparing an outline business case and providing procurement support for an integrated solid waste management system that will be based on that strategy. Together with KPMG, Amec (which has operations in 40 countries and extensive experience in waste management planning) commenced work on assisting the Ministry on this strategic engagement to create a financially feasible and sustainable plan to enhance environmental health of the country.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to report that following the work of the steering committee and other key stakeholders along with Amec, this strategy has now been drawn up. The Cayman Islands now has its first solid waste management policy and a national solid waste strategy which includes a reference project for the ISWMS [Integrated Solid Waste Management System] is also being released to the public this month. Extensive consultation with experts, including KPMG and Amec, as well as the public, has seen the required project outline business case for the ISWMS reference project completed. We now look forward to receiving the final report and moving this project to the next stage and ultimately to have a waste management system that we can be proud of in the Cayman Islands.

Madam Speaker, remaining with the topic of waste management, the Government is now offering an expanded public recycling programme. Following private sector withdrawal from the recycling at the grocery stores, the Department of Health has stepped up with minimum notice and taken over this service as of the 1st of June.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to say that the service has also been improved with the inclusion of steel cans amongst the items that can now be recycled. Drop off points now allow for the proper separation of recyclables—not mixed as they previously

were. DEH will continue to build upon this service for a two-year interim period until the Integrated Solid Waste Management System is in place.

Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to commend the team at the Department of Environmental Health (DEH) for their sterling efforts to ensure the Cayman Islands maintain the momentum in regards to recycling. The team at the Department of Environmental Health jumped in at short notice and, Madam Speaker, they got the job done. I congratulate them and thank them for their efforts. We are all very grateful.

Madam Speaker, I had the occasion to visit the landfill this morning. I went there primarily in the company of the Chief Officer and the Deputy Governor to simply thank the team for the work they had done in order to get this up. Madam Speaker, I am truly impressed with what they have accomplished to allow that the momentum with recycling could continue until this matter can go out to tender once again as part of the overall solid waste management project.

The interesting thing, Madam Speaker, is that the Department right now has a shredder that is actually functioning and they were actually shredding tyres this morning. Now, Madam Speaker, notwithstanding the tender that is about to be signed with a local company for the recycling of—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** the contract, a correction, thank you, Premier. The contract that will shortly be signed with the local company for the recycling of the tyres that are there, this machine that is currently in operation cannot cope with that amount of tyres. But what we are assured it will do and what we are actually doing right now is recycling—able to deal with the amount of stuff (tyres) that are coming in to the landfill so that the numbers no longer will continue to grow and what we have left then to deal with is the pile that remains there—to have that dealt with.

Madam Speaker, it is imperative for disposal to be the very end of the line with waste management and this is a responsibility that falls to each and every one of us. We must all make individual and collective efforts to first reduce our consumption, reuse items, recycle once they cannot be reused any longer and recover any energy or further use from them and only when all of these steps have been taken, seek to dispose.

Madam Speaker, I touched on it briefly but another pressing issue on the subject of waste management is, of course, the ever increasing pile of used tyres that we have at the George Town landfill. There has been no easy solution on this mounting issue over the years and we acknowledge that the old tyres continue to pose an environmental threat. I am happy to report, as I stated previously, Madam Speaker, that following our RFP a successful tenderer was identified

and a conditional award has been made. But the contract remains to be signed and will be done so shortly. Funding has been identified by Cabinet and the eyesore of these tyres should soon be eradicated over the course of the next financial year.

Madam Speaker, turning now to Culture: Firstly, talking briefly about culture and heritage policy. I am delighted to tell this honourable House that work is underway to develop the first culture and heritage policy and strategic plan for the Cayman Islands. This is being done in conjunction with UNESCO endorsed expertise and we have set up a steering committee with six subcommittees, also known as focus groups, to explore each aspect of this proposed policy.

Madam Speaker, it is all too easy to take our culture and heritage for granted but we simply cannot let this happen. As our society becomes more and more culturally diverse and as development continues apace, we need to have a proper framework to protect our precious built and natural heritage and encourage our culture to flourish. The arts—only one part of culture—in all of its forms is an expression of who we are as a people and who we are as an intrinsic part of our society. Culture is, of course, much more than the arts. It is how we think, act and interact.

Madam Speaker, I am very pleased that this facet of our country's life is finally being addressed and we hope that soon culture and heritage will no longer be on the fringes of our consciousness but will be a part of our mainstream thinking.

National Heroes Day: The Ministry of Culture chaired the 2016 event, Madam Speaker, which focused on agriculture. As Members of this Honourable House will be aware the theme for National Heroes Day changes from year to year. In 2016, we honoured our early farmers and pioneers for their work in the field of agriculture. We also recognised outstanding present-day farmers who ensure that we have the finest fresh fruit and vegetables as well as top quality local meat and dairy products. In addition, the Honourable Premier also announced the ninth National Hero of the Cayman Islands, the late Dr. Roy Edison McTaggart, who joins the ranks of our distinguished forefathers who played such an important role in helping to shape this country.

Turning now to the Ministry of Health and Culture and specifics: I now take this opportunity, Madam Speaker, to outline some of the specific achievements of the departments and agencies under the ambit of the Ministry of Health and Culture.

Turning first to the Health Services Authority: Madam Speaker, the Health Services Authority will continue the implementation of their strategic plan, with the aim of continuing to improve the quality of patient care, empowering staff, and improving financial sustainability. In 2015/16, the HSA achieved the following:

Clinical: The acute care clinic pilot project started in 2015. This initiative reduced the waiting time

for acute care patients without an appointment at the Accident and Emergency or the General Practice Clinics. Three new physicians were hired for the pilot. It has been noted that the amount of patients waiting to be seen at the A&E has decreased significantly. The data for the period from 7 July to 30 September, 2015, showed that the waiting time for walk-in patients was an average of 53 minutes from registration through to being seen and dealt with by a doctor. There was also an operating room restructuring to improve the efficiency, productivity and also the communication by all involved in seeing to the safe operation of that facility. The ambulatory care unit revised its opening hours to start at 6 AM as of 1 September to support early surgery in the operating rooms.

The tobacco cessation programmes continue throughout the year and expansion of the forensic department space by creating a new examination and archive room was undertaken. There was also a hiring of a returning Caymanian dentist in September 2015. She is a young graduate who studied in the United Kingdom. With the help of a patient, a patient guide titled "People Living with HIV Resource Guide" has been developed for newly diagnosed persons in order to assist with steps forward and for long-term patients reminding them of their care and treatment.

In collaboration with the Seafarer's Association and the Education Council, the Health Services Authority helped send three physicians overseas to obtain their specialisation credentials.

Turning now to the pharmacy, Madam Speaker: Pharmacy identified alternative sources for procurement of drugs; an affordable equivalent formulary based on the World Health Organisation (WHO) essential list has been developed and implemented. There has been a revised pharmacy pricing policy. There has been a pharmacy restructuring to enhance the pharmacy system through greater dispensing accountability, financial diligence, profitability and accountability, and medication error prevention.

Madam Speaker, the HSA and the Ministry are also well aware that there is still some way to go in dealing with the oftentimes backlog and backup of patients waiting to have their prescriptions filled in a timely and effective and efficient manner. But it is an issue that everyone is well aware of and an issue that they are working diligently to try and relieve and deal with once and for all. On the IT front, there were also improvements to the HSA's IT system including the launch of a patient portal online registration which went live in August 2015.

Looking at the Sister Islands, work is being done on a helipad at Faith Hospital. The area for this facility has been cleared. The paving is completed and special paint is on order for the striping that is needed in order to have it properly marked and identified as a helipad. But, despite this, it has already been used—and put to good use as over this past weekend when

a patient experienced a cardiac emergency, was airlifted to Health City here in Grand Cayman.

A number of upgrades to the morgue have also been undertaken. In the year, six Caymanians trained as EMTs. The training course and examinations was conducted at the Faith Hospital. Four are currently employed in the HSA Emergency Medical Services Department.

Upgrade to the Faith Hospital Laboratory which allows acute medical conditions like heart attacks and clots to the lung to be diagnosed on site. This has reduced the amount of blood samples that need to be sent to Grand Cayman for testing, thereby improving patient care and ultimately successful patient outcomes. There has also been the hiring of a speech therapist as there are now approximately 15 to 17 children living on the Brac who require the services of such a therapist. Until now, only two of these children have been seen by the Cayman Islands Hospital speech therapist and the Education Department's visiting speech therapist has not been able to keep up with the workload demand for the others.

New air conditioning has also been installed at the Little Cayman Clinic. There has also been the implementation of a revised payment policy, the second phase. The new backup generator, Madam Speaker, for the main hospital is nearing completion. This will carry everything in the hospital—including radiology equipment which was not previously accessible when CUC power was down. The installation of backup generators has also been installed at all district health centres and renovation of the old Lighthouse School building to house IT services has been completed. Also, for access control, a swipe card system has been installed at the hospital for the security of both staff and patients.

Madam Speaker, turning now to the Department of Health Regulatory Services: In 2015/16, the Department of Health Regulatory Services achieved the following:

All registered health care practitioners, health care facilities and approved insurers were advised on 18 September, 2015 that the Ministry of Health in consultation with the Department of Health Regulatory Services, had determined that it was necessary to introduce implementation of the International Classification of Diseases 10th Revision—or the ICD10 codes—in the Cayman Islands, no later than 1 October 2016. The approved insurers and health care providers are all making good progress with the transition to the ICD10 codes.

The standard health insurance fees were reviewed by actuarial consulting firms and recommendations are now under consideration. The inspectorate teams completed audits and site visits to all approved insurers were completed during the year. An administrative fine system to process some health insurance offences was successfully introduced and utilised by the Commission to enhance enforcement

efforts. Many thousands of dollars in fines have been successfully processed including a procedural fine of \$5,000 that was recently issued against an approved insurer.

In consultation with the Department of Commerce and Investment, a certificate of compliance for health insurance was introduced to ensure that employers are providing valid information relating to health insurance when applying for Trade & Business Licences. It is anticipated that this initiative will be extended to other Government departments and statutory authorities that issue various licences to enable and support a culture of compliance with various legislation.

Madam Speaker, the total number of insured persons as reported by the approved insurers as of May 2016 is 58,438 persons. The total number of registered health care facilities as of April 2016 is 126. The total number of registered health care practitioners as of April 2016 is 1,171 and the number of practitioners by council are: for the Council of Professions Allied with Medicine 283; the Medical and Dental Council 440; Nursing and Midwifery Council 380; and the Pharmacy Council 68.

Turning next now, Madam Speaker, to the Mosquito Research and Control Unit: In 2015/16, MRCU achieved the following:

Negotiated and signed a contract with biotech company Oxitec to embark on a collaborative project using genetically engineered mosquitoes to suppress populations of the disease vector *Aedes aegypti*. This is a major new development in mosquito control and it will address the public health imperative and threat of Dengue, Yellow Fever, Chikungunya and Zika viruses in the Cayman Islands and it will keep MRCU at the forefront of innovative scientific methodology both in research and control.

MRCU have procured a custom built specially designed aircraft loader manufactured to load the aircraft with larvacide pellets in order to greatly improve the health and safety of ground crews and to maximise the efficiency of time consuming loading operations. The MRCU successfully completed three large scale aerial larvaciding operations treating approximately 16,000 acres on all three Islands with specially designed pellets to prevent swamp as well as pasture land nuisance mosquitoes from emerging.

They also made the technical transition in terms of aerial operations from a traditional larvacide product which had lost its continued US Environmental Protection Agency approval to a newly developed product with enhanced environmental features and is a winner of the Presidential Green Chemistry of Challenge Award to ensure continuity of mosquito control measures and to address issues of chemical resistance. Unfortunately, the loss of this larvacide from its approval by the US EPA and the adoption of new larvacides have come at a cost as the new larvacide is substantially more expensive to acquire.



MRCU also upgraded a range of equipment including computer control systems on ground fogging machines and various improvements in aircraft instrumentation to maintain the advantages and advances in equipment technology. It is interesting to note and gratifying to note that due to the collaboration between Oxitec and MRCU, Oxitec Cayman, Ltd. has employed four young local people—three Caymanians and one the spouse of a Caymanian—to work on the exciting project that is to be undertaken with a joint effort to combat the *Aedes aegypti* and the disease threat that it represents.

Turning next, Madam Speaker, to the Department of Environmental Health: In 2015/16, and going forward with the Integrated Solid Waste Management Project, the DEH continued to carry out important work to maintain and bolster the health of the environment.

Cayman Brac was under the watchful eye of DEH officers for two of its resorts that have been closed for many years—the Divi Tiara Hotel and the Alexandria Hotel. In the past, DEH had served a notice on Divi Tiara but had little results with compliance and the notices were returned to DEH's offices. On 14 January 2014, a new notice was served on the property to abate the nuisances including clearing the property of the overgrowth in vegetation and the removal of debris from the buildings.

Madam Speaker, no further action was taken by the owners of the property. The extended deadline for compliance of the notice expired in May 2014 and the request for abatement order was made to the courts via the Attorney General's chambers in December 2014. Thankfully, the Divi Tiara site has been cleaned in 2016 in compliance with the DEH's outstanding abatement notice and the Sister Islands Development and Planning notice served on the property.

Turning now, Madam Speaker, to Culture and the three main national cultural programmes under the remit of this Ministry—the National Gallery, the National Museum and the Cayman National Cultural Foundation. Madam Speaker, all three of these cultural entities have ongoing programmes and events that showcase our cultural heritage. They make us proud of our past, celebrate the present and let us look forward to a diverse and vibrant future. Examples include the library's lecture series, tours, courses and workshops, apprenticeships, internships and scholarships. These natural cultural organisations are a delight to locals and visitors alike.

Madam Speaker, turning first to the National Gallery: In the past fiscal year, the National Gallery has first connected to 6,328 local students through programming, school tours and festivals and recorded approximately 18,000 visitors. They have executed 25 monthly and sometimes weekly educational programmes for the Cayman community—in Grand Cayman and in Cayman Brac. They have hosted 15 art

exhibitions on and off site with related series of educational workshops, screenings and lectures for each. These have also helped to establish local and international partnerships including collaborations with the National Art Gallery of the Bahamas, the Independent Curators International of New York and Contemporary Art Center of New Orleans; established a National Gallery of the Cayman Islands Art fund to help secure future acquisitions for our national collection. They have also maintained the Gallery's top employer award for 2015/16.

Finally, the Gallery has expanded career development opportunities for young creative Caymanians by formalising the Creative Careers Programme—a career development, work experience and summer internship programme. The Gallery welcomed 30 students at these programmes, not including students volunteering for special events like family fun day festivals and other types of activities.

**The Speaker:** Honourable Member, is this a convenient time for the luncheon break, or are you almost ready to wrap up?

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** Madam Speaker, it is perfect to take a break.

**The Speaker:** We will now suspend for the luncheon break and reconvene at 2:15 pm.

**Proceedings suspended at 12:43 pm**

**Proceedings resumed at 2:27 pm**

**The Speaker:** Please be seated. Proceedings are resumed.

I will invite the honourable Second Elected Member for George Town to continue his debate.

#### **APPROPRIATION (JULY 2016 TO DECEMBER 2017) BILL, 2016**

*[Continuation of debate thereon]*

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Honourable Member, you have one hour and twenty minutes remaining.

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** Madam Speaker, when we took the break, I was discussing the achievements of the Ministry for the 2015/16 financial year and I would like to spend a little bit more time doing that and recounting the achievements, and to also focus at the very end here on what our plans are for the coming year.

Madam Speaker, turning our attention to the Cayman National Cultural Foundation: That organisation has been extremely busy promoting national art in

Cayman. Some of their achievements during the past year include: attendance at CARIFESTA XII, the Caribbean Festival of the Arts. That festival was held on the Island of Haiti and we did send a contingent to it with a number of our people and a number of pieces of art for display which was quite well received from all accounts. The host Haiti chose the theme- **“Our Roots, Our Culture, Our Common Future.”**

We were represented by a captivating exhibition of paintings and sculptures from the national collections from the national collection, as well as from the National Gallery and the National Museum. We featured five Caymanian artists—Miss Lassie, Gladwyn Bush; Harvey Ebanks, Harold Banks, Luelan Bodden and Edney McLean. All of their works were displayed at this CARIFESTA in Haiti. More than 2,000 individuals visited our exhibit and by all accounts it was a very successful festival of arts.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, the Grammy awardees were featured at CAYFEST prominently in 2016, the Cayman Islands National Festival of Arts, and the two features were our own Jason ‘JG’ Gilbert, and electro-jazz cellist/trombonist/composer Dana Leong from the United States.

The two, along with our own musicians Samuel Rose of the Swanky Kitchen Band and Charles Gregory of Hopscotch Productions, produced an original track of music inspired by the work of the late great musician and cultural icon ‘Aunt’ Julia [Hydes], and they performed live at the Red Sky at Night, this year’s event, to standing ovations. The piece that they produced was extremely well received, Madam Speaker and welcomed.

Leong also appeared at the National Arts and Culture Awards, which I attended and participated in a panel discussion on the arts with Ministry of Culture Deputy [Chief] Officer. Among the other major CAYFEST components this year included: The National Arts & Culture Awards Show, earlier this year. It was aired in full on CIG TV. Heritage Cross, Star for Creativity in the Arts and other awards and certificates were presented to more than 20 recipients representing a wide cross-section of arts and culture animation in the Cayman Islands.

There was also the Cayman Islands Folk Singers’ Home & Away Concert. Much like the Folk Singers’ performances in the past, these were very enthusiastically received by the public, very well attended. A lot of people in this country do not get to hear a lot of what we call Caymanian traditional songs, and traditional music. This group, the Cayman Islands Folk Singers bring that back and help to preserve that aspect of our heritage and life. We are very grateful for them.

They were formed in 2009 by CNCF [Cayman National Cultural Foundation]. They are a group of amateur singers and musicians primarily dedicated to preserving, celebrating and propagating the musical traditions of Caymanians.

There was also the Red Sky at Night festival. Some 2,000 people attended and participated in this event which offered virtually every performing arts genre represented in the Cayman Islands, from classical dance, to Cayman folk, hip hop, reggae, and jazz, you name it, it was present at the Red Sky at Night.

Artisans crowded along Thatch Walk at the cultural centre displaying and selling their creations. There was poetry reading, steel pan music and the Cayman Islands Folk Singers added to the lively atmosphere.

And then this year, Madam Speaker, is also a very important year for the Harquail Theatre. They celebrated their 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. To mark that event, 30 events at the cultural centre have been billed as anniversary events. Some of the more important ones that are going to be taking place are: *Pantomime* by Nobel laureate Derek Walcott; *Sizwe Banzi is Dead* by Athol Fugard, with John Kani and Winston Ntshona.

And there are also a number of local productions: The drama, *The Fallen Angel and the Devil Concubine*, a collective creation by Groundwork Theatre Company of Jamaica; the ever popular comedy, *Rundown 2016* (if you didn’t see it this past weekend you missed your opportunity). It was also a very—

[Inaudible interjection]

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** Oh, is it? I apologise. I understand that there may be another opportunity this coming weekend. But I think they have also gone to the Brac this week. So Rundown is always ever popular and a fun event to attend. Also, there is Patricia Bent’s National Playwriting Competition winning musical, *Isabel*, planned for presentation by the Young at Arts Summer Intensive students. So a number of events are being planned to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Harquail Theatre.

And other events, including the unveiling of the Young at Arts Collective, featuring 30 students’ depictions of 30 seminal moments and personalities in the history of the Harquail Theatre. I attended the opening of that a few weeks ago and it is really gratifying to see the level of talent amongst our young people in the creations that they have come up with, with these 30 images, and did a very outstanding job with it in creating it. Also finally, the *Foundation Arts and Culture Journal* of the Cayman Islands was published, Volume IV (four) of the literary journal, released in February, focuses on heritage preservation through reminiscences of individuals from Cayman Brac and Little Cayman being the focus with this journal.

Turning now to the Cayman Islands National Museum: This past year has been very special for our museum, as it celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. It is housed in one of our most iconic and splendid heritage buildings overlooking the George Town Harbour, the waterfront. There will also be a cornerstone in the

plans to revitalise George Town as we cast our gaze towards the next quarter century and beyond for the Museum.

Their accomplishments for the 2015/16 fiscal year include: a significant fundraising drive for the Museum's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition and Building Preservation Plans programme; the adoption of a strategic plan for 2015-20, and the beginning of an operational plan for the vision-alignment of the Ministry, Museum board, management and staff.

This strategic plan will address policy development, staffing, curation, collections, conservation, exhibitions, all aspects of the operations of the museum.

The Museum collection and support facility: It has been reported numerous times that they have some 9,300 artefacts and new acquisitions that continue to need to be preserved, conserved, managed and entered into a digital register with ongoing research, photographs, and condition reports.

In addition to an exceptional audio-visual experience, the museum provided five changing exhibitions through the year, and a series of 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and traditional "Looky Ya!" events. The museum also continued to operate the Old Gaol Café under private management. And they have also provided complimentary school and special partner tours, a speaker series, a monthly radio programme, and launched a new 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Publication called *Twenty-Five Years: Piece by Piece*. If you don't have a copy, Madam Speaker, Members, they are available at the museum offices.

I would like to turn my attention now to looking forward to 2016/17: While much has been achieved over the past year, there is still a great deal to be done. I will now briefly outline some of the Ministry and agencies' plans for the forthcoming fiscal year, some of them I have already mentioned and won't necessarily repeat them here.

The proposed Long Term Residential Mental Health Facility will feature quite prominently. That is supported by the World Health Organization Assessment Instrument for Mental Health Services report, and the outline business case prepared and submitted by KPMG (which will be released to the public shortly). The Ministry will continue to work with the steering committee for this important project to move the procurement forward. At this time I know we do have funds contained in the budget to take things through to the planning and procurement phase, hopefully to identify the proper location to develop the plans for this facility. So we hope to at least get through the design stages during this next budget period.

A registry will be established for, and active surveillance will be undertaken of, non-communicable diseases to enable the collection and analysis of data that will allow for the planning and allocation of resources. This will have a number of benefits, including:

- Providing statistics to compare to global trends in non-communicable diseases.
- Access and more accurate projections of health care costs for the population.
- Programmes and services aimed at primary and secondary prevention of non-communicable diseases.
- Facilitating more accurate predictions of the impact.

The registration process for healthcare practitioners will be reviewed by the Department of Health Regulatory Services, with a view to introducing an electronic system to file applications, which will be a welcome improvement. They will also work with the Health Insurance Commission to investigate the feasibility of a health insurance plan for retirees and senior citizens.

The Ministry will also continue its work with another top priority, and that is the procurement of the Integrated Solid Waste Management System for Cayman. This project has reached the draft outline business case [stage], which we are currently reviewing and discussing the way forward. It is expected that an RFP for this project will be issued in late 2016, with a view to a contract award in early 2017.

The Department of Environmental Health will continue to improve the solid waste operations and efficiency on all three Islands, and will introduce their new "zero litter" campaign. A review of the Environmental Health Laws and associated regulations will also be undertaken to more effectively regulate all of the environmental health and waste management functions. This is all done in anticipation of the solid waste management system and the procurement of it coming into realisation in the months and years ahead.

The Ministry, in conjunction the National Gallery, the [Cayman] National Cultural Foundation and the [National] Museum and other culture and heritage organisations, will continue its work on the first-ever National Culture and Heritage Policy and Strategic Plan, with a policy being presented to the public for their review and comment in late 2016. The goal—we continue to push the committee to complete its work to have the policy and strategic plan ready for the Government's consideration and approval before the end of this calendar year.

Some of the other specific department and agency plans for 2016/17, Madam Speaker, are as follows:

Mosquito Research & Control Unit: First of all, they will continue with their efforts at disease prevention, to reduce populations of the disease vector mosquito, such as the *Aedes aegypti*, through an integrated programme utilising as many control methods as may be viable, that are also approved and recommended by the World Health Organization, to mitigate the risk of spread of these diseases.

Madam Speaker, I must stop and commend the efforts that have been made thus far, certainly up until Monday there had been no reported cases of the Zika virus in Cayman. That, despite so many other countries round about us who are known to have the virus enter into their country and who are now battling with trying to eradicate it, through the efforts of our Public Health Department, Health Services and the Mosquito Research & Control Unit, we have, thus far, been able to keep this disease at bay. I give God thanks every day when I wake up and I hear that there is still no evidence, no confirmed cases of Zika virus in Cayman. It is a credit to them and to the great work they have done. MRCU in particular, Madam Speaker, has visited every home, every building, every piece of property in this country with a view to trying to identify places, breeding grounds for the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito. And where they have identified them, they have treated them or at least spoken to the landowners and property owners, homeowners, and given instructions and guidance as to how they can take steps to keep this mosquito at bay and limit its ability to spread disease.

Madam Speaker, I have always said with this type of mosquito, really, the power to limit it is in the hands of every citizen. We need to play our role in seeing to it that we do all that we can to make sure our homes and businesses are free of potential breeding grounds for these mosquitoes. What they like are pans and barrels. And they don't need much water in which to breed.

Aerial Larviciding, they will conduct at least three, and possibly four, large-scale aerial larviciding operations, covering the three Cayman Islands, treating all of the known mosquito-breeding sites and hopefully preventing or limiting the re-emergence of the swamp or biting mosquitoes. But, like many things, we now know that while the larviciding and spraying efforts are adequate at this point in time, we know that over time mosquitoes become impervious and immune to the chemicals being used. MRCU has to fight a constant battle of researching new chemicals and new larvicides in order to continue the battle. It is ongoing and never ending.

They will also continue with the ground programmes further developing a range of ground as distinct from aerial control measures. This will include the treatment of storm drains, septic systems around schools, business premises and homes, applying barrier treatments to protect outdoor events; to treat small and semi-permanent breeding sites, and to continue to research novel methods to improve the overall programme of treating and fighting mosquitoes.

They will also continue with their well-known scientific research, which is respected throughout this region. Quite often we don't realise it, but they are called on to lend resources to other countries. Given the limited resources that they do have, quite often we see things going, instead of sending resources over-

seas, they are invited into Cayman to come and observe and to learn from the professionals at MRCU.

The CNCF [Cayman National Cultural Foundation] plans a busy year also.

The Mind's Eye, the Visionary World of Gladwyn K. Bush Site Development will continue.

An architect has been engaged to draft up concept drawings for renovations to the education centre to include a gift shop, tea room and additional outdoor gathering areas for visitors to the property, in anticipation of the cultural heritage centre being added to the Department of Tourism's roster of tourism sites in 2016/17.

Partnership with the University of South Florida School of Theatre & Dance: This involves exchanges and artists' residencies which began some 20 years ago. The first formal memorandum of agreement between the parties was signed in 2010 to encourage opportunities for international artistic collaboration workshops, classes, cultural exchanges, internships and artist residencies.

The Cayman Islands National Museum plans on taking a strategic assessment followed by an outline business case to look at the construction of a permanent home for the museum collection can be housed. That is very critical for the museum. I am aware that they have, for some time, been trying to identify and we know it is a project that needs to be looked at, that they need a permanent home from which the museums artefacts can be stored properly. The existing site in anyone's mind is not completely fit for purpose. So it is absolutely essential that this be addressed. So they are going to start that process in this fiscal year.

However, they will continue to preserve and conserve all of the artefacts, manage and continue the registration of them in the digital Collections Management Programme.

The National Gallery plans the following work in the coming year:

- The National Gallery of the Cayman Islands All Access Community Art Project will be launched in September 2016. This is a one-year project and will include educational visits to every Key Stage 2 schoolroom, a tri-island public art project; a schools art competition; and community festivals in each district.
- Publication in September 2016 of the first comprehensive book exploring the history of Caymanian Art [History] and the NGCI National Collection (with images and bios by 75 artists). In conjunction with that there is also an accompanying school guide that will go out to all of the schools in the Cayman Islands.
- The National Gallery will also launch a new user-friendly website that includes a 360 degree virtual tour of the National Collection, which will also be linked to all of our tourism partners to help promote Caymanian arts.

- The continued regional growth strategy has resulted in NGCI being selected to host the Museum Association of the Caribbean annual conference in October 2016 and Tilting Axis, which is a strategic regional group designed to create alliances for the further development of infrastructure, production and markets for the Caribbean's visual arts sector.
- The Gallery is also working in conjunction with UCCI on the development of an associate degree-level arts programme which it is hoped they will be able to introduce into the local market for the Caymanian population very shortly.

Finally, Madam Speaker, National Heroes Day 2017. The theme for National Heroes Day 2017 is "tourism" and we look forward to working closely with the Ministry of Tourism and the Protocol Office, to ensure the entire process leading up to and including the National Heroes Day is another successful one that we can be proud of.

That, Madam Speaker, concludes the presentation with regard to the aims and objectives of the Ministry and all of the departments under its remit and oversight. I am very fortunate to have had the opportunity to be seated in and work with the Ministry to help them achieve the goals and objectives which they have set. It is a very small team that I work with, but they are all very committed, they are all very able. And they are all keen to see that the plans and objectives and the policies that have been established are achieved and they work diligently to help us to do that.

I am also very happy to be a part of a Government that has accomplished much in the three years in which we have been in control. Madam Speaker, I did that first off and worked for almost two and a half years with the Government as an Independent Member, but took the step to join the party in December of 2015, a decision that I felt was the right one, and one which I am confident and have no regrets about and I am very happy to be a part of the team and the people I work with.

Madam Speaker, over the past three years this Government has successfully turned around both the country and the Government itself from the mess we inherited in 2013. The first task was to restore the nation's public finances. And, Madam Speaker, that has taken a lot of time and it has taken a lot of determination and commitment. But it is a credit to this Government that that has been achieved. Madam Speaker, we must all realise that for the first three budgets we were faced with cuts in the overall spending as a result of the compliance with the FFR. Each year we had to deal with all of our demands, with all of the bans that were placed on us and all of the cries for resources with less and less each year. And this is the first year, this Budget that is before us, is the first one where we have been able to take the step of increas-

ing our spending to deal with some of the issues where demands have been placed on us, but we have not been able to address on an ongoing basis.

But, Madam Speaker, there is one thing I know, and that is that we have restored that confidence, confidence of the people and of the business has increased in Government. Talk to business people in this country and they will tell you business is doing better. And it is getting better. And if you think back to 2013, what was the biggest concern that the people had? And I remember this because it was done in a survey by the Chamber. It was a lack of confidence in Government. And that is indisputable and is something that we can take pride in. Increased business confidence has led to increased investment; it has led to increased employment. And while every one of us would wish and hope, our goal ought to be, that there ought to be not one Caymanian unemployed. We recognise that the number of people who are unemployed is a lot less than it was just a few short years ago.

Government has supported business growth further by facilitating private sector investment and investing directly in infrastructure, working to support financial services and tourism, including, Madam Speaker, the recent visit to the UK where we had the opportunity to speak at the Anti-Corruption Summit. Madam Speaker, I said to a number of my colleagues that that speech made by our Premier was a shot that was heard around the world.

Government has focused on ensuring that economic success brings benefits to Caymanians directly by working with the private sector on job creation and indirectly by utilising the revenues that growth brings to consistently but sustainably cut duties and benefit consumers and businesses. Find me a Government in living memory, Madam Speaker, that has never raised taxes in its four-year term. Let's put them all in our hands. We are the only one. Find me a Government that has ever reduced taxes! We are the only ones.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** You can't take it away! I've got more memory than you!

*[Inaudible interjections and laughter]*

**The Speaker:** Members, please keep comments for the Chair.

Order!

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** Yes, Madam Speaker, sorry; my apologies, Madam Speaker.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** The truth of the matter now, Madam Speaker, is that Government, having done what we have done and accomplished from our position of sound finances, stable financial, stable economy, one that is growing, we can now act and now look in terms of the long-term interests of the Island and progress a lot of the changes that are needed to benefit the people in the future. We listed some of the things which can be looked at and dealt with very aggressively and very decisively: the cruise ship dock, solid waste management, education changes, public sector reform and also Project Future.

This year's budget is about seeing through the changes that started in 2013 and doing so with the same determination that has characterised the spirit of getting things done as we have in the past three years. It is about putting in place the platform for continued success, continued growth for Cayman beyond the next election.

I believe that our Government is one for the long term, pursuing a long-term plan. Thus, while there are measures in the budget that will bring real benefits to people, it is not a short-term pre-election give away—

**Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Leader of the Opposition:** Sure it is.

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** That would be to repeat the mistakes of the past.

I believe sincerely that our Government is about integrity, honesty and governing in the long-term interests of the people it serves. Madam Speaker, I believe that the budget that we will continue to debate and ultimately vote on will be perceived to be one that promotes continued development, one that promotes continued growth and one that will continue to see us deal with some of the longer term issues that have needed our development. Some will allow us to continue to deal with a number of the issues that require a solution in the long term that we finally get around to try and deal with some of these things.

I am proud to be a part of this Government and look forward to a very successful year as we move forward with this Budget.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to share my thoughts and to speak on behalf for the Ministry of Health and Culture.

**The Speaker:** Does any other Member wish to speak? Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Honourable Deputy Speaker, the First Elected Member from the district of Bodden Town.

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden, Deputy Speaker, First Elected Member for Bodden Town:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

It is not an easy act to follow the cheer leader from across the way but, Madam Speaker, as I said when I left over there I wasn't coming here to be disruptive or tear down; I would support what needs to be supported and I will not stop that for anything.

Madam Speaker, as I rise this afternoon in what could be my last Budget Throne Speech and Budget Policy Statement—my 24<sup>th</sup>—and I will say it *could* be . . . I will watch to see what happens and I will be guided by my Heavenly Father and the people that I represent. I want to thank them for 24 consecutive years to represent them in this House on both sides . . . almost 12 of those years as a Cabinet Minister, the other 12 on the backbench. I would not be telling the truth if I didn't say we came a long way.

It was interesting to listen to the different points of view as presented by the Fifth Elected Member for George Town, and I will wait to hear how it is counteracted, the perspective from the Government and what can go forward. But I must say, Madam Speaker, when we took over in 2013, things were not well. Things still aren't well, Madam Speaker, as we look to the north of us and that precious place, the European Union. If you think things are bad around here, you just keep an eye on them. Their moral compass, Madam Speaker, is gone and they are trying to bring it here. But I will just deal with that briefly later on.

Madam Speaker, I was touched to know that my departure from the Progressives caused such a small ripple.

**An Hon. Member:** A big wave.

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Not a big wave—because you see if it was a big wave, Madam Speaker, I can't swim. I can only go where I can stand. So I am here . . . not a whisper.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** I must take my hat off to my colleagues, the Minister of Finance . . . the way in which the budget has been presented and his economics and statistics background which I knew him when I was a Minister next door when he was in . . .

**An Hon Member:** ESO [Economics and Statistics Office].

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** ESO.

I want to thank my colleagues, Minister Bodden, Minister Panton, with the assistance of Minister for Agriculture in so greatly assisting us with the [Cayman Islands [National] Cultural Centre, Nurse Josie's Senior Centre. My wife and I call Ozzie the little pit bull (using that loosely), because he was very aggressive working along with the powers that be and with the support of the Minister of Agriculture. After

many years, we have been able to get that facility in a condition that will soon be a prime location that our Minister of Tourism can divert some of his people up there.

And I must say, sir, before I forget, the incremental changes that you have made at the Owen Roberts International Airport, small as they are, they have made a big difference. I wish you luck in the furtherance of that Airport and also of your cruise pier. We have been waiting too long. There are too many naysayers out there.

I want to specifically, since I was touching on the topic of the Nurse Josie's Senior Centre, thank the members of the Bodden Town Senior Heritage Committee who have given hundreds and hundreds of hours of their time to clean up in the now renovated house where when we were in the last time, Minister Clifford at that time, bought for us.

I want to say a big thank you to Public Works also. Just to call some of the names and I hope I don't leave any out, the Chairman led by Mrs. Mary Lawrence, Mrs. Betty Wood, Mrs. Agnes McCoy, Ms. Claudette Eden, Edith Webb, Sevy [PHONETIC] Solomon, her daughter, Miss Caroline has joined us recently, Mr. and Mrs. King Bush, Mr. Clinton and Gary Whittaker, and several other ones, Madam Speaker, have really made a difference up there.

**An Hon. Member:** What about your wife?

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Thank you, Minister.

My dear wife—she would probably pelt me if she knew that I called her name down here. But she enjoys it. It is good therapy for those ladies, Madam Speaker, and the gentlemen that work there, to help preserve the heritage and culture of these Islands.

I hinted to the last speaker, that the Culture Committee he was talking about, you know, I misunderstood. But the representative from the Bodden Town district may not have been notified of some of these early meetings and I would encourage him—because there is no one, bare, no one in the Cayman Islands who knows more about our culture and heritage than former Speaker, Honourable Mary Lawrence. I encourage them to bring her on board.

Madam Speaker, it was interesting to read Her Excellency's dissertation and it was good to note that she said this would be the last one (budget) that we would require the approval of the FCO [Foreign and Commonwealth Office] in the UK. I am pleased to note that the surplus which has allowed Government to reduce import duties and fees as well as to continue addressing the problems of civil service pay stagnation . . . I welcome to see that. I have preached and begged and pleaded for our teachers, especially, Madam Speaker, and our nurses and other hospital staff. I just hope that those on the lower pay scale will get something. But my main topic I am begging for now is the teachers.

Our Minister of Education, I trust, she will not get upset with me, but my theme, Madam Speaker, brief as it may be, is going to be the revitalisation of the two Bodden Town primary schools and, specifically, the Savannah Primary School.

Madam Speaker, I must declare my interest, as most of you know it is my alma mater. I went there, my wife went there, my two sons went there, my daughter-in-law is a teacher there and my grandchildren are going there. So if I speak partially, Madam Speaker, it is from that 60-something years of being attached to that school.

The Savannah Primary School has moved from one of the top primary schools to where in the recent past the Baseline Inspection Report says that the overall effectiveness of the Savannah Primary School is unsatisfactory. Madam Speaker, that is painful for me to digest. Can we imagine how difficult it must be for those parents who have children going there?

With your permission, Madam Speaker, I will read a few excerpts from the newspaper and from the parents as they have petitioned the Government, and I do know that the Ministry has been responding. But my whole plea this evening is to the Government that I look across at, that I work with, in that I am begging and beseeching that when the time comes and we come to look at things in Finance Committee that we will consider appropriating some more funds to facilitate what is going on.

Parents have now petitioned Government to do something urgently, when around three-fifths of the parents—that is, 300 of the 500 students that are going there—have signed the request. Madam Speaker, with your permission, and it is public knowledge as it was tabled in the Legislative Assembly, I just want again to highlight a few of the topics in the Baseline Inspection Report on the Savannah Primary School.

**The Speaker:** Please proceed.

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Thank you.

As I said earlier, the Report found that overall effectiveness of the school is unsatisfactory. Achievement is unsatisfactory overall because students do not achieve as well as they should and could for their age.

It said that students are not making enough **“progress from their . . . starting points and expectations are too low. As a result, the gap between what they are achieving and what they should be achieving widens rather than closes as students move through the school.”**

They mention seven points where improvement is needed, Madam Speaker, and I refer to them:

**"[1.] The quality of teaching.**

**"[2.] Use of time in lessons to speed the pace of learning.**

- "[3.] Recognising gaps in students' learning and addressing these to prevent the achievement gap widening further as students' progress through the school.
- "[4.] Practice of basic skills in literacy and numeracy.
- "[5.] The level of expectation for all students, and particularly the most able.
- "[6.] The volume of work that students complete in lessons.
- "[7.] Use of data to find gaps in learning and to guide teaching."

I must say, Madam Speaker, the baseline reports that they gave, did give some credit to the school and its leadership. It mentioned that the leadership team at the school **"have a strong vision"** and have **"a detailed and specific school improvement plan. They regularly analyse assessment data with particular note of special education needs and/or disabilities . . ."**

Madam Speaker, this has been identified by Mr. Bryan who, as we all know, is moving on to Light-house School. This is what I am imploring the Government on, Madam Speaker. The four of us Bodden Town colleagues last year met with the executives of the Savannah School and they shared with us their concern: almost 25 per cent of children going there need a certain degree of help.

Folks, let's get the money for that.

It says that there is **"Clear direction by principal and vice-principal."** The principal and management team have developed a strong plan for the school improvements. The school desperately needs more resources to address the issues identified in the Baseline Report. The biggest issue is the widening in the achievement gap.

Madam Speaker, not only is the gap widening for individual students in terms of what they are actually achieving versus what they should be achieving, it is also widened between students that are in the high academic achievers and those that are at the lower end of that academic spectrum.

The additional resources—teaching support assistance, occupational therapists, speech therapists—will help to directly address the achievement gap and other issues referred to in the Report. It was commendable of the Ministry and the Minister to carry out the Baseline Report but without adequate resources to address the problems, there cannot be any sustained improvements.

Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Mark Scotland and Ms. Ashley Watler who works with the PTA for bringing some of these points of information to us as Representatives. And just to read the concerns as expressed by these parents, Madam Speaker, on Tuesday, 31 May, the *Cayman Compass* (just to read briefly as I alluded to),

stated: "[Savannah Primary PTA Petitions for More Resources.](#)"

**"The Savannah Primary School Parent Teacher Association is set to deliver a petition to the Ministry of Education Tuesday asking the government to allocate more money to the school, which they say is struggling due to inadequate resources."**

In less than a short time, **"More than 300 people signed the petition, which has been circulating in hard copy and online since the PTA Executive Council meeting on May 20."**

It briefly says, **"We, the parents of Savannah Primary School students are gravely concerned at the unsatisfactory level of academic achievement and the increased behavioural related issues within the school,"** the petition states."

Madam Speaker, **"The petition calls for the Ministry of Education to increase resources allocated to Savannah Primary, especially the number of teachers, support assistants and specialists."**

Some of these classrooms, Madam Speaker, I am made to understand, have between 27 and 30 students—sometimes with three and four lines going through that same class.

**"Without the appropriate resources being allocated, there can be no sustained improvement"** as was alluded to earlier at the school.

**"Savannah Primary PTA executive treasurer, Ashley Watler, said there is a "dire need" for more resources at the school and that teachers there, are 'overwhelmed.'"**

Madam Speaker, I go there frequently and I can attest at the time to the pandemonium that seems to be going on in some of the classrooms.

At this stage, Madam Speaker, this is the formative stage of these children as they prepare to go on to the two high schools, in this instance, the Clifton Hunter High School. Some of the stories I hear coming from there are also very unsettling. But I will leave that to the Minister when it comes for her to talk about what is going to be done up there. We cannot allow these children at this age, Madam Speaker, to be left behind, because there is nothing, Madam Speaker, as you well know, rougher than a frustrated young child.

Madam Speaker, I contemplated reading today's editorial, "[Standing with the Parents at Savannah Primary](#)" but, as my colleague from East End just said . . . it is a hard one for me to swallow knowing how the editor in this paper . . . and I am not going to read it, Madam Speaker. We have all said it and we know that we need to deal with these things. The person who has tried his best to humiliate us Caymanians here to make us look as incompetent, and so on and so forth, while praising up the now departed Commissioner of Police.

Madam Speaker, just to leave with my colleagues, and we have heard it many, many times—



*The mind is a terrible thing to waste.* As I said, I am begging and pleading that we do what is necessary to put not only Savannah and Bodden Town, Madam Speaker . . . I don't hear hardly any complaints coming out of West Bay, thank God.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Okay. But I do know the concerns of Savannah and Bodden Town and I know what the Member for North Side went through and is finally coming to some closure, and the struggles that the Member for East End has had. But it is not to the clamour where the deterioration of the children mentally (to put it bluntly) is happening.

Madam Speaker, back to Her Excellency's Throne Speech, it says we have seen the average price of goods fall. I don't know where she is shopping, Madam Speaker, whoever wrote this for her, because so help my goodness, I can remember when "Believe it or Not, It's Not Butter" *[sic]* used to be 90-something cents, a dollar, and now you are paying \$4 and change for one little bit of margarine. They might be getting the breaks; but I am concerned if these savings are passed on to the people. Electricity costs are also lower because of falling oil prices, but also because of the lowering of import duty on the diesel and that was a good move we made way back then.

Madam Speaker, my concern is the continued . . . and they just put it up again, the fuel cost a few days ago. I was so hopeful, Madam Speaker, that the efforts that the Minister for Works looked at the legislation, that those people would take pity on us. When you see and I know it is a US gallon as compared to the Imperial gallon, less than \$2.50 most places. In the Midwest it is \$2. And they are just grinding us into that sandy red mould depending on where you live for the cost of fuel.

All things come to an end, Madam Speaker. All things will come to an end. And our Heavenly Father, as you know, Madam Speaker, neither sleeps nor slumber. There will be a time of judgment.

One of the uplifting things that I saw in here, Madam Speaker, by the Minister of Health, was to continue to make a long-term residential mental health facility for Caymanians a reality. Well done! I need not tell you how desperately we need that, Madam Speaker. There are so many of our people out there—at different levels. When I was in the Ministry it was estimated that around 1,700 to 1,800 of us Caymanians had some varying form of mental incapacity; I guess, all like myself who cannot remember sometimes. There will be more of us that will be joining that group. But it is important and I can tell you, Madam Speaker, under the leadership of Dr. Lockhart and others that work with him, there will be a difference. We need to bring them back. I do know that when they were in Jamaica, most of them quite good care but it is nothing like having them around their families.

As was alluded to earlier, it was interesting and uplifting to see that when the two Ministers—the Premier and the Minister of Financial Services—went to the UK when they were getting ready to beat us half to death that they stood up. They stood up. And this is what we need to continue to do. When you got great countries around you slam dunking you and wanting to do their nastiness and then when we adhere and do everything that is being set out from Timbuctoo on down and they don't want to comply themselves . . . keep the pressure on them.

I see that the Minister of Education, Employment and Gender Affairs will launch a second action plan focusing on targets for improvement in schools. Madam Speaker, I welcome that and I see that they have appropriated I think it's \$4-point-something million and I hope a big portion of this will go overall. I am asking you now to beg on your left-hand side there, Madam Speaker, that each one of them chip in a couple of hundred thousand and let's get these primary schools straightened out.

It is good to see the introduction of a national policy for older people by my Bodden Town colleague.

This morning, listening to Ms. Georgette speaking on the radio, what an inspirational lady; it is hard to believe her age and how fluid she is. We need to preserve those kinds of people, their memories and the information that they have.

This next paragraph, Madam Speaker, kind of took me aback when Her Excellency says, "**I will be asking the new Commissioner of Police to review the operations of the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service and to put forward recommendations for improvements.**" Madam Speaker, this was a rejection of a motion passed down here unanimously.

I am a bit sceptical, Madam Speaker, because if the chosen one comes from the UK, we have been through that for 25, 30, 40 years. That style of policing does not work here in the Cayman Islands! It does not work, and this nonsense about a police service—we need a police *force* and I said that several years ago. If you need a *service*, go to church or somewhere or get the Boy Scouts or a Cadet Corps. We need to portray that enough is enough.

When I see, in the next paragraph, "**the Ministry of Home Affairs will develop interdisciplinary approaches to crime reduction and child protection between the agencies responsible for criminal justice, public safety and national security.**" Please, Mr. Premier, let's deal with these paedophiles. I know you are in the human rights situation, but this time you need to get out of that cat-o-nine tails.

Mr. Tibbetts, I don't know if you remember when you used to do it out by the old Courthouse.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** This is ridiculous, Madam Speaker. Ruining children, infants, literally, some of

these are. It is unacceptable and we are letting our people down if we allow this kind of nonsense, with foreigners coming in here and telling us what to do and how to do it and taking advantage of situations. And, yes, Madam Speaker, some of these people that are breaking the law are Caymanians. Sad!

I see we are preparing . . . less than a year now for the next election. Madam Speaker, one of the things which will lead me into my next topic—I would ask the powers that be—there has been so much commentary and I have taken so many licks . . . let us hear what the people say. Let us do a referendum on same-sex unions or marriages.

*[Desk thumping]*

**Hon. Anthony S. Eden:** Madam Speaker, in my 24 years, I have never seen a shorter Throne Speech. It touched some good highlights and I know it was expanded on by the Premier and Minister of Finance. I am trusting that the Ministers will tell us what is going to happen—a continued good story as was portrayed by the Second Elected Member for George Town in his contribution.

As I indicated, in glancing through the Finance Minister's speech, I saw where they put \$50 million in reserve. I would ask the Mr. Minister to grab a little million out of that and put toward education. And Minister of Works, \$6.9 million for revitalisation of George Town, if he can throw us a few dollars in there also. What a difference that will make, Madam Speaker! What a difference! We plan to work on the John Gray High School and get that going. But, Madam Speaker, Madam Minister, it's no good of doing these bigger schools if we don't get it right down at the primary level. We are not going to get it right. We must do it. We have no choice! We must get it right for these babies.

Madam Speaker, I now move on . . . and this is just a question I am asking the powers that be, and I must once again declare my interest as being a shareholder of Cayman National. This was in the [Cayman Reporter](#) back in March when we all found out that—and it is written—Madam Speaker, with your permission, if you want me to table it, but it is in the paper.

“According to a US Department of Justice press release, **“Cayman National Securities Ltd. (CNS) and Cayman National Trust Co. Ltd. (CNT), two Cayman Island affiliates of Cayman National Corporation, which provided investment brokerage and trust management services to individuals and entities within and outside the Cayman Islands, including citizens and residents of the United States . . . conspired with many of their US taxpayer-clients to hide more than \$130 million in offshore accounts . . .”**

All I am querying, Madam Speaker, if the Monetary Authority—what happens in an instance when a local corporation, what discussions it has had

with them, any warnings—if the Minister would comment on this when he gets up to speak at some stage.

As I said, Madam Speaker, I will close on my favourite subject and I will totally stunned and it just tears my heart out and I beg those that don't see the way that I do, I am really coming from a Biblical perspective, Madam Speaker. When I saw in the paper that . . . that . . . that—I sound like poor President Obama the other day when he was trying to talk in Chicago—can't get it out! Stammering—that now flying in the face and the high amount of debate that went on when I was chastised by some of these foreigners and written to from Argentina, UK . . . that for the first time in history they are bringing this conference here. I figure they could soon have the whole alphabet in it. LGBT-I-Q.

What saddened me, Madam Speaker, conference organiser [Olivia Connolly](#) says, **“‘The Caribbean in particular is quite far behind’ in terms of meeting human rights obligations. She said she hopes the conference will ‘bring attention to the legal deficiencies in the region.’”**

**“Ms. Connolly added that the conference is ‘a good way to continue to build on the momentum’”** . . . I do not know which momentum she is building on, Madam Speaker, because I can tell you, Madam Speaker . . . and I wanted to say it the other day when I was recognised.

The eight of us, Madam Speaker, on this side met with the executive of the Cayman Islands Ministers Association because we cannot do this alone. Maybe it is my emotion, maybe it is my colleagues' emotions on these things, and we all can talk about human rights, that that is human rights. There is only one right, Madam Speaker, and He reigns on high. So whether you are worrying about what is going to happen with the European Union, He incinerated Sodom and Gomorrah. He will fry the rest of us when he's ready if you don't go by what He says.

To go on with what I'm saying, Madam Speaker, we met with the executive of the Cayman Islands Ministers' Association and a week later we met with the 16 or 17 Pastors of the Seventh Day Adventists Faith to express our concerns of foreign elements seeming to want us to change our marriage law and Constitution to allow same sex marriage or unions (or whatever they want to call it). As my colleague for East End says, *A rose is a rose by any name.*

Madam Speaker, I must say they have indicated their strong objection, and, that they will actively resist any change to our culture and lifestyle that we have lived for over the last 500 years. Madam Speaker, it is estimated that the total people that the Cayman Islands Ministers' Association and the other churches—the other 16 churches or 17 churches—are estimated at parishioners between 6,000 and 7,000 people.

So, when I stand up here and beat my gums and I stand here with a faith and knowledge of the

support of a vast, vast majority of Caymanians, in my six terms, Madam Speaker, in my 24<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, I have never had the support that I am experiencing now. As my Heavenly Father leads and guides me, I will talk.

Everywhere I go people come up to me and say I am one of a kind; different. That doesn't go to my head because I don't have much hair up there to protect it. But I know what my Bible says, Madam Speaker. But the real thing that flattened me was when I saw that they are having a special dinner for the people and our Governor is going to be the guest of honour. If you have \$100 to give them, pass it on to me so I can help some of our other children that are in need—people that don't have food. There is not a lot and I know that the Minister of Social Services is going to get that sorted out. It sends everything back, Madam Speaker, and I am going from this to where I was there.

When I look around and all of us look around and I know that my colleague for Bodden Town took some licks for it and I agree with him. The billions and billions of dollars that people have come here, made and taken out of these Islands . . . one little pittance, one little pittance, Madam Speaker, to help in our schools, to help our elderly, our veterans, our seamen, our seniors, the people that built and created these Islands to one of the most successful countries in the world. The Caymanians that have laid the groundwork—people just pass them on the street. So sad, so unfortunate that this kind of thing can happen and help is not coming from those that have all the fancy houses and cars all over the place.

I am begging and pleading again. I will soon be a good beggar, Madam Speaker. Please help us with our people, those that are in need. There is not a lot. There is not a lot when you look at what we have to spend on the inmates in Northward. Let us consider, Madam Speaker, let us consider trying to take care of our brothers.

To close, Madam Speaker, a little poem—I may have read it before. This really reflects on the great United States. It is entitled, “Mary had a Little Lamb.”

***Mary had a little lamb,  
His fleece was white as snow,  
And everywhere that Mary went,  
The lamb was sure to go.***

***He followed her to school each day,  
'Twasn't even in the rule,  
He made the children laugh and play  
To see a lamb at school.***

***And then the rules all changed one day,  
Illegal it became;  
To bring the Lamb of God to school,  
Or even to speak His Name.***

Madam Speaker, can you believe this is happening in the great United States?

***Every day got worse and worse,  
And days turned into years.  
Instead of hearing children laugh,  
We heard gun shots and tears.  
What must we do to stop the crime*** (and this can apply in Cayman, Madam Speaker)  
***That's in our schools today?  
Let's let the Lamb come back to school,  
And teach our kids to pray!***  
Thank you for your time, Madam Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

**The Speaker:** Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the Fourth Elected Member for the district of Bodden Town.

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr., Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I am also rising to give my contribution to the Budget Debate and the Throne Speech and I want to begin, Madam Speaker, before it escapes my mind, by thanking the First Elected Member for Bodden Town for what could potentially be his last address to this honourable House. I hope and pray every day that it is not, but, as I have told him privately, whatever decision he makes I will respect and support. But if it is his last budget address, Madam Speaker, he will leave some huge shoes to be filled and I just want to thank him for his 24 years come November of working for this country.

I cannot imagine, Madam Speaker, 24 years . . . it has only been three for me. I can't imagine how he's had the energy to do this for so long—

**Mr. V. Arden McLean:** What about that one that has 32? McKeeva Has 32.

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr., Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town:** Well, he's not going anywhere just yet, so . . .

[Laughter and inaudible interjection]

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** I think that is a testimony to his commitment to his country and his love for this country and I just wanted to thank him.

I would also, Madam Speaker, like to congratulate the Government on producing another surplus budget and for also meeting the commitments of the FFR. I especially want to congratulate the Minister of Finance. I know that that has not been an easy accomplishment and I would want to acknowledge the hard work that I know has gone into meeting those

obligations and for producing, as I said, yet another surplus budget. It is something to be commended.

Madam Speaker, I, like the First Elected Member for Bodden Town, didn't traverse over to this side of this honourable House to be disruptive. And, to use his words, I will continue to support what is right and what is good for this country, regardless from whom it emanates. My commitment and desire to help the people of this country wouldn't allow me to do otherwise.

I know I did take some criticism when I actually made the move and came across here as an Independent Member of this honourable House, but if you listen carefully to the words of the First Elected Member from Bodden Town, I think even those who criticise me will begin to understand. In the words of the Honourable Premier, I "may have made a critical mistake in leaving the Government", Madam Speaker. I know that the road ahead for me is not going to be easy. But I do believe that my presence here in this honourable House was not determined by any man.

Madam Speaker, I was one of the most unlikely people to be elected into this Parliament. And when I think about what it took for me to get here, I certainly do have a keen understanding of things being decided by a higher power. And as long as I remain in favour with my Creator, I think I will be okay.

Madam Speaker, the Opposition Members had one day (technically) to prepare for this debate. And I thought it was a bit unfair that we were at such a disadvantage knowing that the members of the Government would have had the information before them for as much as maybe six months or more, starting with the Strategic Policy Statement. It was a challenge to prepare ourselves and to get here today to be able to produce meaningful debates and suggestions. And I want to congratulate everybody on this side of the House for putting in that extra effort and showing up here today to do our jobs.

I know that this is the house of politics, Madam Speaker, and I know I shouldn't complain about that because that is just how politics is. When you have the majority you take advantage of that. But regardless of what hurdles and obstacles have been placed in our way, one thing remains. And I will use the quote that the Honourable Premier used in his address to make that point: **"The truth is incontrovertible. Malice may attack it, ignorance may deride it, but in the end, there it is."**

So, regardless of what disadvantage we are placed at over here, we cannot escape the truth. I take comfort in that.

Madam Speaker, there is also a recurring theme in the district of Bodden Town that was alluded to by the Member for North Side when he talked about the rumours running around that he was not contesting the next election. I have had quite a few people come to me with the same thing. I don't know if this is a campaign strategy—maybe *out of sight, out of mind*,

or something, but just to make my position very clear, Madam Speaker, it is not my time to step away from politics yet and I do plan to run and contest the next election. If God and the people of Bodden Town are prepared to support me for another term, I will humbly accept that. If not, it simply means God has other plans for me and someone else will get the opportunity. But I just wanted to make my position clear because I have heard it so many times I am starting to wonder if people thought I had resigned entirely rather than just moving across the aisle.

I am not alone, Madam Speaker. I do have a lot of support on this side of the House and you only have to look behind me and to my left to see that there are individuals here who are working together now and in ways that probably would have not been possible before. But I think it is all out of love of country and I am proud to still stand here as a representative of the people of Bodden Town.

I also want to address, Madam Speaker, the notion that my leaving the Government somehow disrupted the budget process. Again, I won't spend too much time addressing these things, Madam Speaker, but just to set the record straight. As a councillor, Madam Speaker, I did have some responsibility to two Ministers, and yes, I would have worked with them in preparing their budgets and so forth especially as it related to the areas that I was responsible for. But, Madam Speaker, I think the whole country understands that the budget is prepared by the civil servants.

The civil servants that I have had to work with, Madam Speaker, are quite capable, and do an excellent job in preparing their budgets and getting them in on time and within limits. When they have to go back and chop and cut, they do it and they come back. That approval process, Madam Speaker, goes through Cabinet. I was not a Cabinet Minister, so I really don't understand how my leaving would have thrown things in such turmoil that the budget may have possibly been late. But, again, Madam Speaker, this is politics and I understand. I have to take some licks, and I will.

Madam Speaker, what does the average Caymanian look for in a budget? At the very least, I think the average Caymanian is looking for the Government to produce more revenue and lower costs and produce a surplus. Ideally, I think the average Caymanian is looking for policies that will increase employment, reduce the cost of living, and increase opportunities. What would an economist look for in a budget? Again, policies that create growth, improved goods and services, economic stability, reduced inflation, again, a Government surplus, or, at least in the case of countries where there may be a deficit, trying to reduce the deficit. And politicians, Madam Speaker, we look to make achievements and accomplishments that will continue to inspire confidence from the voters so that at the end of the day we can continue doing our jobs.

Madam Speaker, I think that this budget (and I will be careful how I say this because later on I think it will become clear why I am saying what I am saying) will disappoint the average Caymanian in terms of employment, the cost of living and opportunities. I don't think that this budget, Madam Speaker, would overly impress an economist and I think at this point it is a hard sell for any politician. But, Madam Speaker, I am not taking away from the efforts of the Finance Ministry and the Minister.

The Minister is tasked, Madam Speaker, with a number of responsibilities all geared towards compliance with the FFR and the PMFL and producing a surplus budget—or at the very least a balanced budget. I know, Madam Speaker, this Finance Minister works in a very disciplined, methodical, prudent and responsible fashion. But this budget, Madam Speaker, seems to focus more on the operations of Government and Government's finances.

Madam Speaker, any good budget, I think, should achieve at the very least, again, strong financial results, addressing unemployment, reducing the cost of living and providing real opportunities for Caymanians. A good budget would promote industry growth; reduce inflation and the cost of living. Our Consumer Price Index, Madam Speaker, is still increasing and it is forecast to increase. But we seem to be more accepting of that fact and I see very little in this budget that is going to offset that.

I have seen one development that I know will help, Madam Speaker, and that is the expansion of the Airport. I know how critical that is. But I am disappointed that we haven't made further progress with cruise berthing. In my mind, I thought this country would be much further ahead. This Government, Madam Speaker, cannot manipulate interest rates in order to extract economic benefits. So things have to be done to manipulate the money supply and this is where I am not seeing anything in this budget that gives me any confidence that that is going to happen. Any good budget, Madam Speaker, will encourage local and foreign investment. But, again, I am not seeing evidence that we are going to get that level of investment to make the economic miracle that we are all hoping for.

The Fifth Elected Member for George Town talked about having a properly structured incentive plan—not just for foreign investors but for everyone. A tiered approach where incentives are rewarded based on the goals set by the Government. I understand that, you know, there have been a number of cases where we have had to sit and negotiate with the developers and investors, but I think that we paid a price for doing it in that sort of random fashion because the expectations seem to rise and rise and rise.

I have been part of the Government, Madam Speaker, and I have seen these discussions and I have seen developers come and ask for the world. You almost feel a sense of obligation, Madam Speak-

er, that if you don't give them what they are asking for they may walk away. But having this structured plan, structured scheme, in place would avoid a lot of the guess work, a lot of the back and forth in negotiating. It would set the Government's position out quite clearly and developers, investors could then negotiate in terms of what it is they are giving back to this country in exchange for incentives.

So, Madam Speaker, I think this budget being presented here is a highly politicised budget. I think it has more to do with the upcoming elections than with the people. It is good that we are going into the election cycle with a surplus and with, what I would say, is a seal of approval from the FCO, but I do think that this budget is too focused on gaining efficiencies and effectiveness within the civil service and not focused enough on providing benefits for the people.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to see that One Person, One Vote and Single Member Constituencies is moving ahead and I am making it my life goal, Madam Speaker, to convince the Leader of the Opposition that this is a good plan and something that he should embrace. But everyone knows, and it would be hypocritical of me to not congratulate the Government for doing this, it was one of the things that I asked for when I joined Government. It was one of the things that I was known for. I think no one in Bodden Town really knew what I was about or who I was—not everyone, but a large majority—until I started campaigning for that electoral change.

Everyone has heard the story of, you know, how I walked the streets of Bodden Town asking people to accept that it was the right thing to do. The only thing that concerns me now, Madam Speaker, is that there is still a lot of misinformation left on the table after such an intense campaign and both sides of the issue campaigned very hard. I still do get an occasional person coming up to me asking me questions that I would have assumed that they already knew the answer to. But there is still some misinformation out there and some misunderstanding of what this all means and I am pleased to see that there is an education effort underway.

I think at the end of the day that we are doing the right thing. I want to also thank the First Elected Member from Bodden Town for supporting me, supporting our stand to make sure that this happened—and all the Members of this honourable House, all those who supported it. I think many years from now the country will be grateful that we did it.

I am also pleased, Madam Speaker, to see that the Government's e-Government efforts have continued. Previously, I was the councillor for e-Government and worked along with the team in the Cabinet office to continue what was already in place. We didn't invent the wheel. But, Madam Speaker, e-Government will provide greater efficiencies for Government and in time it will provide huge cost savings through those efficiencies and I am very confident,

Madam Speaker, that the framework that is now in place, that I was a part of creating, will continue to serve this Government well. I have every confidence in the individuals who are involved now in working on the e-Government initiative.

My only concern, Madam Speaker, is that I am not sure that the initiative is getting the funding it needs to really deliver the benefits that I know it can. But we have made a start and I am proud to say that I was a part of that and I now understand that what has started off as the e-Government steering committee, Madam Speaker, has now become I think the technology steering committee. That, again, is another positive development because that steering group now looks at the entire technology requirements of Government and not just e-Government in isolation. That was the plan from the beginning. I am pleased to hear that it has actually come to fruition now.

Madam Speaker, the economy is growing at an average of, I think, it is 2 per cent per year. But I disagree with the reports that this is all due to Government policy. I think globally, economic conditions have improved. Madam Speaker, I think that the majority of our economic activity has been fuelled by private investors and private projects. Some of them are going it alone and could well do with the assistance of incentives. And I am referring to some of our small businesses, medium sized businesses, Madam Speaker, that may not even be aware that there are incentives that could be asked for and negotiated but still go ahead and do their best to build their businesses and support the economy.

I note that the Minister for Tourism is engaging with the tourism sector and trying to ensure that Caymanians are employed and are getting jobs in that industry. There is no secret that I called out the Tourism Association for not, in my opinion, doing that, and back then, received their commitment. But I think more still needs to be done, Madam Speaker, because when you ask the unemployed what sector they worked in prior to becoming unemployed, 14 per cent of them cited tourism.

Another industry that concerns me, Madam Speaker, is construction. There seems to be a huge number of construction projects on the horizon now. And I remember the Honourable Premier saying he was concerned that if all of these kicked off at the same time, we may overheat the economy. But, Madam Speaker, if you ask the same question to the unemployed, 17 per cent say that their last industry worked in was construction. So it is no secret, Madam Speaker. The statistics that I am using are coming from the ESO.

More needs to be done to address unemployment in this country. More needs to be done to prepare Caymanians to take these jobs and more needs to be done to ensure that employers are hiring Caymanians. I have heard this story too many times now, Madam Speaker, that I am getting it wrong.

There obviously still is an issue. I am not blaming the Government for that but something has to be done. We can't just sit back and hope that it corrects itself.

Madam Speaker, this budget promises to continue reducing the costs of doing business so that those costs can be passed on to the electorate, to the citizens of this country so that they can also benefit. But it is my opinion, Madam Speaker, that that is not happening and I will come back to this shortly. But to congratulate the Minister for Tourism, the redevelopment of the Airport is definitely needed. The boost to our stayover tourism which is essential to sustaining and growing our tourism industry cannot be overstated in importance. Of course, the improvements to visitor experiences going through our airports, I have already heard reports that it has improved tremendously. Of course, you cannot deny what a lift it will be to our economy in increasing the number of arriving passengers here will be—especially stayover passengers. I wish that there were a higher number of success stories being played out in this budget, Madam Speaker, but I think this budget overall is failing to provide the economic opportunities that so many Caymanians desperately have been waiting on. It fails to guarantee the educational and employment opportunities that the Government campaigned so strongly to deliver.

Madam Speaker, the sad reality today is that robberies and crimes are still impacting our people, businesses and individuals alike. Many businesses are still struggling to stay afloat with the high level of operating a business, meeting pension requirements—and I am not advocating not paying pensions—but many businesses are now making the case that the process has become a bit more bureaucratic and they are having difficulty dealing with it. I think all it takes is an effort to educate and assist.

Madam Speaker, employees are still making wages that are not in tune with the rising cost of living despite having now implemented a minimum wage. For the time being, I know that many young Caymanians are still competing with the high level of cheap labour that has been imported here. Until the Government's compliance enforcement efforts kick in, there are going to be those—

**The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin:** Madam Speaker—

**The Speaker:** I recognise the Honourable Premier.

**The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin:** A point of order—

**The Speaker:** Please state your point of order.

**The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin:** Or maybe it is a point of clarification. I have heard the Fourth Member for Bodden Town—

**The Speaker:** Honourable Premier, just to ensure the distinction between the two, which I am sure you are more than well aware, if it is a point of elucidation, the Member has to give way. If it is a point of order, then he doesn't have to give way.

#### POINT OF ELUCIDATION

**The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin:** I can use either, Madam Speaker, but I will tell you what the situation is and then you can direct me.

The Member has repeatedly said, as did a previous Member, that the cost of living is continuously rising. Now, that flies in the face of the statistics. Either I would like the Member to clarify that and to point to the basis for it—because it is one thing to argue opinion, but if you are going to state something which is contrary to official records, you need to have a basis for it. It is simply not true that the cost of living is steadily rising. In fact it has been consistently falling since we took office.

**The Speaker:** Honourable Member for Bodden Town, I would take it to be a point of elucidation. Do you have your substantiated evidence to show that the cost of living is rising under this Government and, if you do, please proceed to explain it to the honourable House. Or if you need time to get further information, if it is close by, we can give you some time. Otherwise, I would ask if you could steer from around that particular point.

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** Madam Speaker, I actually was coming to that.

**The Speaker:** Okay, please proceed.

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** I do have data that I can use.

**The Speaker:** Please proceed.

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** Thank you.

Madam Speaker, there are still major issues as heard from the First Elected Member for Bodden Town with resourcing in our schools and there are some facilities issues as well. I won't belabour the point anymore. I think he did an excellent job of explaining our concerns for all schools and, in particular, the schools in Bodden Town. I think it is a bit sad that the PTA actually had to come to the point of producing a petition to try to get our attention on this matter.

I know I have been aware, Madam Speaker, for a number of years now of growing concerns in the schools and have been engaged in communications back and forth with individuals at the schools in trying to assist. All four of the Bodden Town representatives, Madam Speaker, from time to time personally make contributions to those schools. I know that for a fact

because we have all done it together and not just for Christmas parties but donations to the libraries and so forth. So we do know from personal experience, Madam Speaker, that there are issues.

Madam Speaker, the middle class are still struggling. There are still issues with foreclosures—still a problem with families being unable to make ends meet. Madam Speaker, I am personally aware that on average there are 50 students at the Bodden Town Primary School (on average) who come to school on a daily basis with no lunch. Some, Madam Speaker, I am told even choose to stay home out of shame, and I think that—Madam Speaker, this is not the evidence I was going to provide, but when I talk about cost of living this is where I am going with this.

Madam Speaker, insurance rates (health insurance) has not come down. The cost of food has not fallen. The cost of clothing has not fallen. Some of our people are still suffering, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I have always been concerned about the plight of our young people.

**The Speaker:** Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town . . . just a minute . . . I am trying to hear what you say while others are discussing the correctness or inappropriateness of the Chair and it is difficult to listen to two conversations at the same time.

Please proceed.

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the Government is talking about introducing copyright legislation, and I just want to use this as an example of how we can become a bit more creative and innovative in staying in touch with issues that are directly related to our young people. I know the Sixth Elected Member for George Town is heavily involved in film commission and the upcoming, I think, the Expo, and he should be in agreement with what I am about to say, Madam Speaker.

I have had approaches from numerous young Caymanian artists now and I am talking individuals who want to produce their own music, individuals who want to produce films. I was a bit shocked, Madam Speaker, that they were paying such close attention to what was going on in terms of something like copyright legislation. But it was quickly explained to me that that is one of the main concerns that they have as artists and individuals who produce media and content, because they currently have no way of protecting their intellectual property. But they go even further than that, Madam Speaker, in that they explain to me and describe how this one piece of legislation can pave the way for a whole new industry—an industry that now hundreds of young people are involved in but are not seeing the financial benefits.

Madam Speaker, just about every other country in the world has a royalty system set up and I will give you an example. One of our local artists here,

and I know some of them don't like to be called "local" because it puts them in a box, but one of our home-grown artists, Stuart Wilson, now has a number one hit in Jamaica. His latest song is now number one. Every time his music is played in Jamaica, be it at a bar, a nightclub, any venue where entertainment is sold, he gets a cheque. Now, there is a whole royalty system built up around copyright that allows artists to produce their music and if they are aware that their music is being played at any venue, there is a portal that they log into and they report it. Within time, they receive a cheque.

Madam Speaker, this is something that I think needs to be considered in tandem with our copyright legislation because it opens so many doors for our young people. I am aware of so many Caymanians who are extremely gifted and talented, who have produced songs and posted them, uploaded them, to the Internet and others have downloaded them. They are running the real risk of someone actually rising to fame and stardom on their intellectual property.

So, I am pleased to see that this is moving forward in this budget. But I think we need to go a step further and we need to create some sort of consultation group that will meet with Government and explain how this process would work and allow the young people to come forward and put forward their ideas and teach us how we can innovate and create new industries. It is just a matter of time, Madam Speaker, before one of our own is the next Michael Jackson or Beyoncé. The talent is here, Madam Speaker, and I am blown away by the level of music and the quality that our young people are producing with very few resources.

There is a young man, Madam Speaker, who rides around my neighbourhood selling his CDs for \$5 a CD, called Capo Fitz. He arrived at my front door and asked me if I would purchase a couple of his CDs and I actually told him I would come and pick them up from him. When I did, I stuck it in my CD player, Madam Speaker, and I drove to town and forgot about it until I got to town and I hit play. I was shocked and amazed, Madam Speaker, at what was coming through that CD player. It didn't sound like anything produced in a home studio. This young man is extremely gifted, so much so that I made my way to his next performance.

I am now told that he will be performing with Beenie Man this summer. He is just one example, Madam Speaker. We have Cotterell and so many others. I am not going to try and name them all because I know I will forget someone. But individuals like Dean Ramoon and John Watler—everyone calls him Renegade—are working with these young people and they are encouraging them but they are also getting frustrated because there is no future here for those young people in terms of getting their music out and making a living from their music.

Madam Speaker, the same can be said for our young athletes. We have so many gifted athletes, Madam Speaker, and I know the Minister for Sports is well aware of the tremendous talent that we have here on this Island. But what is lacking here as well, Madam Speaker, is the potential for yet another industry because we do not have a professional body that regulates professional sports. What we need here, Madam Speaker, is, a proper professional sports commission. And because I am familiar with boxing and I am not a footballer like the Minister for Sports, I won't talk too much about football, Madam Speaker, but I will talk about boxing. It is a bit of a painful subject for him right now.

Madam Speaker, there are two very gifted young men—Tafari Ebanks and Hopkins Ebanks—who I know, because I have not only watched them fight, I have had the unfortunate experience of sparring with them.

*[Laughter]*

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** Maybe that is what is wrong with me now, but . . .

*[Laughter and inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. V. Arden McLean:** Painful for you too.

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** Very painful for me.

Madam Speaker, these two young men are born professional fighters. They are destined to become pros. But what we do not have here that we could use to support them—because if you look at the story of Charles Whittaker, his career has started late and he missed a lot of opportunities. Charles was another extremely talented boxer who could have gone a lot further, but we didn't have the support system here for him to fight at home, train at home, and have his home team advantage. But creating a professional sports commission, Madam Speaker, goes a long way to assisting our athletes who want to become professionals. It would create standards to make sure that they are adhering to global standards in their sport. It will ensure that everyone involved in their sport is licensed and their credentials are verified and it brings credibility to their sport and will attract some of the top participants from other countries when events happen here.

As the Councillor for the Minister for Sports, when I was his councillor, Madam Speaker, I was involved in discussing some of these issues with the fighters and we do run the potential of, if we don't do this of someone getting seriously hurt, especially when it comes to boxing. I know that there was a professional fight held here recently where I got calls about the potential for one of the fighters to have been seriously hurt or worse because there were concerns



that they were not adhering to the international body rules and regulations. There was—

**The Speaker:** Honourable Member for Bodden Town, we have reached the hour of interruption.

I recognise the Honourable Deputy Premier to move the suspension of Standing Order 10(2).

### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 10(2)**

**The Deputy Premier, Hon. Moses I. Kirkconnell:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I beg to move the suspension of Standing Order 10(2) that this honourable House may work past the hour of interruption. All said, Madam Speaker, the intention is to work until 7:00 tonight.

**The Speaker:** The question is that Standing Order 10(2) be suspended to allow the business of the House to continue beyond the hour interruption until the hour of 7:00 pm this afternoon.

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

**Ayes.**

**The Speaker:** The Ayes have it.

**Agreed: Standing Order 10(2) suspended.**

**The Speaker:** Please continue honourable Member for Bodden Town.

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, could you give me an indication of how much time I have left because I have lost track.

**The Speaker:** Madam Clerk?

One hour and 15 minutes.

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Yes, Madam Speaker, I am very concerned because without the safety standards in place—even the equipment standards—there is no guarantee that someone is not going to have an unfair advantage in a boxing match or someone is not going to go through the right medical pre-checks before a fight or even after a fight. No, it doesn't have to be a Government body. It could just be something that is sanctioned by the Government. But the ultimate benefit, Madam Speaker, is that it helps to create the environment for professional boxing here or any other professional sport where you could actually have major headline fights occurring right here in the Cayman Islands. But we have to create that infrastructure around it.

The two young men that I mentioned previously, Madam Speaker, have already made up their mind that they are turning pro. But what they are faced with now is a decision to leave their home and leave here for a very long time to train and work their way up, and fight their way up, because they are not going to get the quality fights here in this current environment.

So, Madam Speaker, if the Government is so minded—again, this is another sports tourism opportunity for this country and, again, not my idea, Madam Speaker. I just listened to these young people.

Madam Speaker, back to the schools: I am very concerned with the findings of the 2015 Baseline Inspection Report and I am also concerned that we are not committing in this budget to the level of expenditure that I think is needed to address the concerns with not just education but youth issues as well. I am looking at the budget and I see we are spending \$610,665 towards the development of agricultural services which includes educational activities for the youth. We are also budgeting \$627,860 for youth services—programmes which are designed to help our youth to develop a more international focus. We are budgeting \$9,025 towards the Mentoring Cayman Programme; a programme which was designed to assist high school students to become the next generation of business leaders. And that one stands out, Madam Speaker, because any person who is familiar with what is required to becoming the next generation of business leaders knows that you need a little more than \$9,000.

Madam Speaker, we are spending \$290,150 on youth development programmes—programmes which are offered to develop character, creative, spiritual and social values of our young people and to also implement a national youth policy. All these initiatives are great, Madam Speaker; \$135,000 for the teaching of tertiary education courses via UCCI—but I do not think that we are spending the appropriate amount to be effective and to make a difference, Madam Speaker. If we are going to be serious about developing and educating our young people, then let's be realistic. I think it is just a matter, again, of priorities. We need to make sure that these are the priority.

Madam Speaker, Northward Prison is full. Ninety per cent of the inmates of Northward Prison are Caymanian. Over the next 18 months, Madam Speaker, this Government will have to spend \$17 million on operating the prison and I think there is about a further \$10 million on aftercare for prisoners.

Over the next 18 months, Madam Speaker, this country will spend \$50 million on police but we will only spend \$150,000 on psychological trauma diagnosis and treatment for children of child abuse. Again, when you look at those numbers, Madam Speaker, yes, you can't shut down the prison. You can't shut down the police. But increasing in those areas that are severely underfunded will, over time, pay benefits that

will decrease the others. But we have to make the commitment and we have to believe that we can create policies that are going to make a difference and we can spend wisely in a way that is going to make a difference.

Another area, Madam Speaker, where I see increasing concern with is that of battered women. I have had conversations with a number of young women now who are in bad relationships and who have called their MLA—one called me last weekend very concerned because her husband had actually physically assaulted her. She went to the police but didn't press charges for whatever reason, I won't say too much, but she was sent to the family support unit and she decided she was going to try and get a restraining order. I think to this day she probably hasn't been successful because of the circuitous route she had to make through the different departments, in giving the same information to different people, and then being told she needed to go to Legal Aid. Legal Aid telling her one story, you need to go back to Family Services, it is just—Madam Speaker, we need to do something to protect these women because when this young lady called me I actually said, *What can I do? Call a police officer.* But she had already gone down that road. I was her last resort. All I could do, Madam Speaker, was to give her encouragement and advice and tell her where she could go to seek refuge if it came down to it. But to this day, I don't know if that young lady has been helped. So, I think we need to really look into making that process a bit easier for women who actually need to get help.

Again, Madam Speaker, and I will start off by saying that I am not accusing the Government of not caring about our elderly but I think this is a priority area that has not received the attention it needs. Madam Speaker, many of our seniors are suffering in silence. Many of them come from that generation of proud Caymanians who don't want to ask for help and don't want to be a burden on their children. So they do without. But I think it is high time that we completed that law for the elderly. I know it is something that when I was counsellor to the Minister for Community Services it was something that was being worked on for a number of years and it has to be done now. We will be judged by the way we look after our elderly, Madam Speaker, and the less fortunate. This is something that I don't understand; maybe there is something that I'm missing, but I don't understand why we haven't pushed forward with this. I am not blaming the Minister because I know he is trying.

It is the same thing, Madam Speaker, with looking at national health insurance plan for our elderly. We all know—every single one of us—get the phone calls. People who have medical conditions and are faced with huge medical bills—elderly people who have no income other than a small pension; that is no quality of life for someone who has spent their entire life raising children, contributing to this country. So let

us make that a priority, Madam Speaker. We can't leave these issues for later on because in the case of young children and our elderly, later on is going to be too late.

Madam Speaker, I got some information from Northward Prison and I just wanted to use this to support the point that I was making earlier about employment. Sixty-five per cent of the male prisoners at Northward Prison are between the ages of 20 and 39 years old. Compare that to the unemployment rate for individuals 15 to 24 years old—that is 13.8 per cent. I don't think, Madam Speaker, I need to say much more to make that point. There is, in my opinion, a serious concern with unemployment of our young people. There are many reasons why they are not getting employment, but, Madam Speaker, they are ending up in Northward Prison.

Madam Speaker, this trend explains what is happening to our young men and why crime is increasing. The unemployment rate for individuals who only have a high school education, Madam Speaker, is 6 per cent . . . 4 to 8 per cent of our unemployed Caymanians have been seeking work for more than 12 months. There is clearly, Madam Speaker, not enough time and effort being spent strategically fighting the issue of unemployment. Madam Speaker, only 33 per cent of our unemployed use the NWDA {National Workforce Development Agency}.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** As the former Chairman of the NWDA task force, I have to defend the NWDA to some extent because I know that efforts were made to improve the operations of the NWDA and I know that changes were made. But what hasn't changed is the confidence in the NWDA. Madam Speaker, I won't talk too much about my motion, but that is why I filed a motion—to ask for it to be made mandatory for every vacancy to be registered with the NWDA because there are oftentimes that individuals are just not aware that there are employment opportunities out there and there are other times that Immigration are unaware that there is a Caymanian available.

Now, Madam Speaker, among the unemployed, the top four areas where I think there is an issue that needs some serious attention is when you look at the industries they worked in prior to becoming unemployed, which are construction, wholesale and retail, accommodation and food service, and then financial services. I wouldn't say that financial services are buying into this cheap labour issue but I would say that to some extent the other three definitely would be. I have seen that. I have seen evidence of that.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** I am being told that it does happen in financial services as well, Madam Speaker.

But cheap labour continues to be an issue. Madam Speaker, I wrote articles about that before I got elected and sometimes I feel like a broken record. But these are all areas where this Government needs to focus its attention. These are areas which I see are not getting the attention of this budget. And that is why I say that this budget is not delivering.

Where is the technical and vocational training, Madam Speaker? I have talked about that until—it even gets difficult to say the words anymore. We need technical and vocational training for our young people. They are not all coming out of high school as academics who are going on to university and who are coming back and becoming lawyers and accountants and managers. A lot of our young people, Madam Speaker, are not academically inclined but they are skilled. They have the ability to learn a skill, learn a trade, learn a vocation and apply that, become productive law-abiding citizens.

Without that, Madam Speaker, and I will quote Dr. Lockhart once again, as he told us when he met with us to discuss a different issue. He brought this up and said that we wouldn't have so many young men in the graveyard right now if we had a technical and vocational institute here in the Cayman Islands. That, Madam Speaker, needs to become the second stream of education here almost immediately. We are missing the boat. We are doing our young people an injustice and I will lump myself in with that because I not so long ago left the Government, Madam Speaker, but I have been—and I think that no one can disagree with this—I have been asking for it and advocating for it since I first arrived here.

Madam Speaker, if we want to reduce crime, if we want to reduce our reliance on social services, if we want to tackle our social issues, if we want to get rid of our addiction to cheap labour, that is where we start. Caymanians are not too proud to work, Madam Speaker. I go to fast food restaurants occasionally, I go more than occasionally to other establishments and I see Caymanians doing jobs that you traditionally you didn't see Caymanians doing. I see young people cooking burgers, working the cash register, pumping gas. I see a young lady, I think she's 18 years old who went to school with my daughter and she just recently filled up my truck with gas for me. Now that is something. It is unusual. But they are doing it. They want to work. And she's doing it with pride—with pride.

Madam Speaker, I recall when the Fifth Elected Member for George Town sent me an email asking me what I thought about the idea he conceived which is now become ready to work and that is a start. That is a temporary measure I think, though, because I think we need to make a more concerted effort at providing ongoing training for individuals leaving high school and also individuals who need retraining and refocusing. What you are finding is that individuals come out of high school and they may get an entry level job but in a few short years they haven't up-

skilled and they are pushed out. They are made redundant. They cannot perform in that job anymore because the job requirements have changed or they haven't moved up. They are still at the entry level salary and that is what is chipping away at our middle class, Madam Speaker. We need something that will result in a professional certification for our young people that they can take to an employer and say, *Look, this is what I can do. This is what I can do for you.*

Madam Speaker, the Director of the Prison has actually started looking at offering technical and vocational training at the Prison. He wants to certify inmates, Madam Speaker, so that when they leave the Prison they have a skill that is certified on a piece of paper so they can come to you and you are not feeling (as a business owner) that you are simply doing someone a favour; you actually feel as if you are getting a valued employee—someone who has put in the commitment and time. They may have made a mistake but they have made the effort to improve themselves and I have to applaud him for that effort. But I think what we need to do as soon as he starts that programme is to let us find ways to shut it down because we don't want our young people to have to go to Northward to get that sort of education. So if we offer it prior to it becoming a Northward situation, I am sure he would be more than happy to shut it down because his Prison would be empty.

Madam Speaker, I understand that John Gray has to be completed. I just question why we are starting with the gym and not focusing on the classrooms and the teaching. I know that there are sporting facilities close by and I know that logistically it might make sense to start with the gym, but the greatest need is not the gym. I think if you want a better value for money and achieve better results and make a dent in what is going on with our education system, put the money where you extract the highest benefit for our young people.

I understand from the Minister that she is bringing an education plan of action in September. I don't have any details on that so I remain optimistic that a lot of these things I have talked about here today will be addressed. And I hope that technical and vocational training will be a main feature. At this stage we should have an entire framework, working to deliver technical and vocational training.

Again, Madam Speaker, the NWDA is still underfunded and unable to offer the level of assistance I think that is required to make it quite effective. Immigration is still making work permit decisions without having a complete view of the labour market. Ready2Work is now underway but that is limited in scope. This Government had to actually resort to a Christmas—what I called an emergency job programme which I supported. But this was something that this Government had always said that we would not resort to, because, for obvious reasons, but faced

with the reality of what we saw, it was something that had to be done and on a semi-emergency basis.

Madam Speaker, I attended the Lion's Centre when people were registering for those jobs. These are not people who show up with their hand out. These are people who would shock you sometimes when you saw who was standing there asking for work. I remember myself and the Minister for Community Affairs discussing that. It brought the reality home for us. These are our own Caymanians—decent Caymanians—out of work.

Madam Speaker, in response to—I see the Premier is back, so I will jump right into his concern. The Government speaks to a reduction in the Consumer Price Index of about 2.3 per cent over the previous year. That is a reduction over the previous year, but it still increased. It is still a 1.3 per cent increase in the Consumer Price Index, in my view. It is the way I see it. Maybe I am wrong.

#### POINT OF ELUCIDATION

**The Speaker:** I recognise the Honourable Minister of Finance. Can you please state your point of order?

**Hon. Marco S. Archer, Minister of Finance and Economic Development:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise on a point of order to explain the actual numbers because the Member did say that he is quoting from the Economics and Statistics Office website, so therefore for the benefit of the listening public and the Members in the House, he just said that the Consumer Price Index (or the CPI) did increase, and I have here before—

**The Speaker:** Honourable Minister, before you proceed, that would be tantamount to a point of elucidation, so I would need to seek the consent from the Member which, by the nod of his head, he seems to be giving it.

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** But, Madam Speaker, I haven't finished my point so if I finish my point, I would be happy to then give way if the Minister still disagrees with me.

**The Speaker:** Please proceed.

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** I did say it's my opinion, but I can go deeper into this.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** Madam Speaker, when you drill down into the various categories that make up the Consumer Price Index, there are increases and there are significant increases as far as I am concerned by category. There are increases in the costs of miscel-

laneous goods and services; there are increases in communications; there are increases in clothing and footwear; and, Madam Speaker, there are increases in food. So when we say that the cost of living has gone down—I am looking at the items that make up the Consumer Price Index that I know that the average Caymanian is depending upon on a daily basis, and all those things went up. So, in my opinion, yes there is a recorded fall when you average it, but the things that mean something to Caymanians, the things that they rely on—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** I said I was going to make the point but people didn't want to wait—

*[Desk thumping]*

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** When you drill down into it, the things that affect the average Caymanian went up and that is why you hear Caymanians talking about going to the grocery store and coming out in shock. I know it happens to me. Clothing? You can't afford to buy clothes in most places on this Island. So those are the areas that affect Caymanians and those are the places that we are failing Caymanians with this budget. We should look to reduce—if families are unable to buy groceries—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** Someone is not passing on the costs.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** So while, Madam Speaker, things like utilities have fallen due in part to duty reductions and global oil prices, those critical needs of our people, our average Caymanian, are not improving.

Madam Speaker, the price of oil is going to rise again and with that we are going to see more increases. And maybe the Minister knows more than me but the ESO report that I read assumed that there was going to eventually be an increase in Consumer Price Index again—or an inflation, sorry—over time. So whatever savings, whatever reductions we have experienced now are short-lived. The ESO is predicting that it will increase and that is the point I was trying to make, Madam Speaker.

#### POINT OF ORDER

**Hon. Marco S. Archer:** Madam Speaker, may I—

**The Speaker:** Honourable Minister responsible for Finance.

**Hon. Marco S. Archer:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I no longer need an elucidation. I now rise on a point of order, Madam Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Please state your point of order, Minister.

**Hon. Marco S. Archer:** Madam Speaker, on a point of clarification which . . . not that I am seeking clarification, but that I want to clarify.  
Madam Speaker—

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** Madam Speaker—

**The Speaker:** Honourable Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town.

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** I just want to help the Minister out. I think he has to do that when he winds up because that will then eat into my debate time. I am not being selfish, Madam Speaker, but I would prefer that.

**The Speaker:** Just for the sake of Members, because I have a very strong suspicion that this is going to come up over the course of the debate more and more. Standing Order 34 says, “**A Member shall not interrupt another Member except- “(a) by rising to a point of order, when the Member speaking shall resume his seat and the Member interrupting shall direct attention to the point which he wishes to submit to the Presiding Officer for decision;**

“(b) to elucidate some matter raised by the Member in the course of his speech, if the Member speaking is willing to give way and resumes his seat and if the Member wishing to interrupt is called by the Presiding Officer; or [and perhaps we will not come to that stage]”**(c) by rising to move the closure under Standing Order 38 (Closure of debate).”**

Just for the sake of Members to refresh our memories.

Honourable Minister of Finance—

**Hon. Marco S. Archer:** Madam Speaker, I will in the interest of time, address the point in my wind up.  
Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Honourable Fourth Elected Member from Bodden Town.

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I just want to thank the Minister for understanding my point as well. I am trying to get through this debate but not being a seasoned debater, I obviously get distracted easily so I would like to maintain my flow. But I think I will finish with addressing that particular concern anyway, so I don't think we will have any more need to have a discourse.

**The Speaker:** Member, you have 45 minutes remaining and we will take a 15 minute afternoon break.

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Proceedings suspended at 5:07 pm**

**Proceedings resumed at 6:26 pm**

**The Speaker:** Please be seated, proceedings are resumed.

I recognise the Fourth Elected Member for the District of Bodden Town.

## SECOND READING

### APPROPRIATION (JULY 2016 TO DECEMBER 2017) BILL, 2016

*[Continuation of debate thereon]*

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, just before we took the break I was about to move on into a quick look at the Financial Services and continue to make my point that things are not as good as we would hope. We do see that work permits have gone up recently.

**The Speaker:** Member, you have 43 minutes remaining.

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

In addition to that, bank and trust licences have fallen by 6.3 per cent; insurance licences have fallen by 6.7 per cent; mutual funds have fallen by 0.7 per cent; and stock exchange listings have declined by 2.6 per cent. So in the face of some contractions in Financial Services, we are still approving work permits at an increasing rate. I will say, however, that new company registrations have increased by 7.8 per cent.

Madam Speaker, in looking at the policies that have been put in place, they were aimed at restoring investor confidence and providing jobs and opportunities. For example, the Government has not introduced new taxes; they have reduced taxes in areas where they said that they would have the greatest impact, and also trying to reduce the cost of doing business.

We have seen where some incentives were offered to businesses, where business licence fees were reduced across districts. But in the big scheme of things, Madam Speaker, again, this is where I have an issue because I don't think we are doing enough. These things are appreciated by businesses, but the actual economic benefit to businesses is minute when

you consider the cost of health insurance, and they are already increasing the rates of utilities and generally the overheads involved in running a business. We see that Government—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** We see that—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** Well, I think we should be offering more incentives to small businesses. Small businesses are the engine of this economy; they employ the most Caymanians. The same way that we go about giving foreign investors huge concessions, we should be doing the same for our own. I think that is the solution. I hope that that answers the question.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** That is how I would do it.

Madam Speaker, Government has reduced the duty on fuel and we have global oil prices come down and that has brought some relief to consumers and households and businesses. Government has taken steps to be able to better monitor the pricing mechanisms of the fuel companies. But Madam Speaker, I think we missed boat because we are already seeing oil prices creeping up. Fuel prices are creeping up and I think we stopped short of giving the Government the necessary powers to have more of a say in the price of fuel here. We know how far-reaching the price of fuel is in our economy and how important it is to our economy. And I think to some extent we missed the boat on that one. I am already seeing gas prices at the pumps starting to go up. So pretty soon, despite the Government's efforts, we are going to be back in a situation where we are feeling the effects of inflation.

As I said earlier, I think we need to do a little bit more for our small- and medium-sized businesses because they are the ones that don't come asking for the concessions. They are the ones that on a day-to-day basis just try to operate. But they are the ones that are hiring our people. I haven't seen much evidence that . . . and I hope, I really do hope that when the Minister of Finance winds up he will point to some evidence indicating that small businesses are doing better and that we are seeing significant improvements in their financial position, because that would give some hope to curbing the unemployment issues. But in the same way that we offer the big investors, the wealthy investors, incentive packages, we should have a structure in place where our local smaller businesses can also get concessions and a hand up, especially during the start-up phase. I know that some effort has been made in that area. I won't deny that it has, but I think more can be done.

Madam Speaker, the George Town revitalisation process is underway and millions of dollars are being spent revitalising George Town. I wholeheartedly support bringing business and life back to George Town. I grew up in George Town and while I am now a Bodden Towner, I did spend a lot of my childhood in those same areas where I see the work. But I have to focus on my district now, Bodden Town.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** Breezy Castle.

*[Laughter]*

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** I didn't know many people knew where Breezy Castle was.

*[Inaudible interjections and laughter]*

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** But Breezy Castle has changed. It has changed quite a bit, but I do see some of the roadworks and so on going through that area as well. It is becoming an industrial town.

Madam Speaker, I did ask earlier, when we were talking about George Town revitalisation, for a smaller Bodden Town revitalisation plan to piggyback off of that when using the same resources of individuals, but at the time that was not accepted. But I do think that with the start of the Beach Bay Hotel that this needs to definitely be looked at. The road going from where the hotel would be located down connecting to Manse Road is underway. That road is going to open up central, well, Bodden Town proper, to opportunities. I think that this budget needs to contain some element of investment in that area. We have Bodden Towners, Madam Speaker, who own property there and don't want to sell their property but would much rather develop it and develop businesses that will offer entertainment or services, what have you, to the guests and residents at the Beach Bay facility. Madam Speaker, it is a huge opportunity for Bodden Towers. That area of Bodden Town is economically depressed. There is not much happening there, and I dare not ask what is going on with the chaos on the Coe-Wood Beach.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** I hope so, because that has been hanging for quite a while as well.

There are many property owners, our own local Bodden Towners and Caymanians who would definitely benefit from it, once that road is completed and once the hotel is operational. We think about it—restaurants, bars, retail establishments, what have you, will benefit. So I think we should be preparing that area and our people there to benefit as much as they can. Again, Madam Speaker, this all goes back

to helping our people to help themselves and reducing the reliance on social services and Government to assist. When we campaigned, Madam Speaker, we talked about a programme of incentives for eastern communities. We called it the “peace plan.” It is still not too late for that to become a reality. But you just can’t have a plan; you have to put the resources and the mechanism behind it for it to work.

Madam Speaker, speaking of Bodden Town, we have already talked about the schools and the issues faced by the two primary schools. Now that we are rolling on into hurricane season, we need to talk about hurricane shelters. Madam Speaker, I have a list of all the hurricane shelters across Grand Cayman. In George Town there are six, with a capacity of 2,530 people. In West Bay there are three, with a capacity of 625 people.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** The ones listed here are Sir John A. Cumber Primary School—

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** Yes. —and the [John A. Cumber Primary School] Hall, and also the John Gray Memorial Church Hall.

Madam Speaker, in East End, there are two shelters with a capacity of 305 people. And in North Side there are two, with a capacity of 815 people.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** But in Bodden Town, Madam Speaker, we have three designated shelters with a total capacity of 255 people. This is the second largest district and the fastest growing. Neither of the three [shelters], Madam Speaker, are fit to withstand something like a [Hurricane] Ivan. As a matter of fact . . . well, I won’t say what I think they are rated right now, because I am not 100 per cent sure, but I am certain that they are not rated for a CAT 5.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** But certainly not CAT 5.

So, Madam Speaker, in comparison to smaller districts like East End and North Side, we actually have less capacity in our hurricane shelters. But a little ways down the road from Bodden Town Primary School is a building that was being designed and built as a hurricane shelter and I know that it was a partnership between the Government (I think) and the developer. That building is still unfinished, for whatever reasons. I have heard several versions of what may have gone wrong with that project, but I am aware, Madam Speaker, that the building is now debt free. The developer, which is connected to the church right

down the road, is actually looking to enclose the building now and move forward with completing it. Madam Speaker, all that developer now needs is CI\$125,000 to enclose the building. And that would be a significant development and would propel them to being able to do what is that they plan to do with that building. It is still being built to hurricane standards.

So, I am hoping and asking, Madam Speaker, if the Government would consider trying to divert some resources, because it is not a huge amount in the grand scheme of things to that shelter, to at least enclose it. I think the community would be extremely grateful. It would ease some of the concerns people have about hurricane shelters. When you think about what happens in the two primary schools, which are running out of space and have to have Christmas concerts outdoors at agricultural grounds and other places, that building would be ideal to start hosting some of those events for our children as well. So all the developer really needs is CI\$125,000 to make a big jump ahead with that building, and I am sure we must be able to find that somewhere in this budget.

I will leave the negotiating and conditions of that up to the Government, but I do have to point out that the shelter is badly needed. I hate to think what will happen—we are in hurricane season now—if we do get another bad storm. [Having a] 255 people capacity is not going to cut it.

So, Madam Speaker, this is a budget, it is a surplus budget and I am certain that the Deputy Governor is pleased with this budget because it gives him the resources to continue operating the Service and to move forward with improving efficiency and effectiveness of the Service. But what is lacking, Madam Speaker, are those issues that I have highlighted. I don’t see enough in there that is going to allow the people to derive those benefits and opportunities and employment that we promised. The way I see it, Madam Speaker, our reliance on Social Services continues to grow. Unemployment continues to be an issue and is projected to increase. [The] cost of living, inflation, continues to be an issue and is projected to increase. Education is at critical levels in a number of places, including the two primary schools in Bodden Town. Our young people continue to feel disgruntled and frustrated.

Madam Speaker, I don’t want to see this Government fail. Despite what others may think, I don’t hold any malice to anybody on the other side. My decision to come over here was a decision based on my personal convictions. I left the Government with ample time for them to make plans to operate without me. I didn’t spring it on the Government at the last minute. I am sure, as I expect, they are putting plans in place to operate without me.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** But, Madam Speaker, I have no ambitions that would have been satisfied by me just simply making up some excuse to walk away from the Government. I took a risk. If I was purely a political animal, Madam Speaker, I made a bad decision because I don't have that mechanism that machinery behind me any longer. I am a lone wolf to some extent. I can't do as much for my constituents as I could have done sitting on the Government bench. But, Madam Speaker, what kind of representative would I have been if I had chosen to compromise my values out of necessity for me to survive politically? I am not that sort of representative, Madam Speaker. I feel strongly about certain issues and I made a decision to remove myself and I gave the Government more than enough time to prepare to replace me. If I had failed to stand up for what I believe in, if I put party before God and country, Madam Speaker, I know I would be checking myself out of politics.

Madam Speaker, I remember when I got elected. We were discussing forming the Government. There were a number of discussions and I said to the Honourable Premier, *Use me where you think I will do the most good.* Madam Speaker, my mistake was I didn't say that to Almighty God first. I refuse to make that sort of mistake again. I am guided by my principles. I am not, as I said, the perfect human being, but I know how I was raised. I know what sort of family I come from. I know what sort of community I come from, and there are times that you have to make an unpopular decision because you know it is right. And that was a personal decision for me; I do not judge anybody who didn't make the same decision. But for me, the issue was large enough and I knew the people who I represent respect me for it. So, Madam Speaker, if at the end of the day I pay a price for that, well then, so be it. But I am very strong in my convictions and my beliefs and maybe if some of those who criticise me have gone through the experiences I have, their faith may be a little bit stronger and they would understand why I make certain decisions.

Madam Speaker, I wish the Government well this final year of their term. I remain committed to the people of Bodden Town. I remain committed to assisting and supporting the things that are good for this country.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** I meant the final year of this term. I am not signing anybody's—

*[Inaudible interjections and laughter]*

**Mr. Alva H. Suckoo, Jr.:** Madam Speaker, I am not so presumptuous. I believe that if I am deserving and worthy, it will come. But I remain committed. I will continue to be a productive Member of this Honourable

House. I will continue to support what is good for this country and I will always endeavour to do what I think is right. And everybody, every Honourable Member in this House can take that as my word.

So, Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this debate. And with that I think that is all I have to offer this evening. Thank you.

*[Applause]*

**The Speaker:** I recognise the Honourable Premier.

## ADJOURNMENT

**The Premier, Hon. Alden M. McLaughlin:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Since everybody has been so behaved, let them off work 15 minutes early.

Madam Speaker, I move the adjournment of this Honourable House until 10:00 am tomorrow.

**The Speaker:** The question is that this Honourable House be adjourned until 10:00 am tomorrow.

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

**AYES.**

**The Speaker:** The Ayes have it. The House is accordingly adjourned until 10:00 am tomorrow.

**At 6:51 pm the House stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Friday, 3 June 2016.**