



**PARLIAMENT OF  
THE CAYMAN ISLANDS**

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**2021/2022 SESSION**

**Wednesday**  
**21 July, 2021**  
*(Pages 1-8)*

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

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PRESENT WERE:

#### MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

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

#### EX OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

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

#### ELECTED MEMBERS GOVERNMENT BACKBENCHERS

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

#### OPPOSITION MEMBERS

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

#### INDEPENDENT MEMBER

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour, JP, MP	Elected Member for Boddén Town East
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#### APOLOGIES

Ms. Barbara E. Conolly, JP, MP	Elected Member for George Town South
Mr. David C. Wight, JP, MP	Elected Member for George Town West

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**  
**FIRST MEETING 2021/22 SESSION**  
**WEDNESDAY**  
**21 JULY 2021**  
**11:07 AM**  
*Third Sitting*

*[Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Speaker, Presiding]*

**The Speaker:** Good morning.

Prayers to be read by the Honourable Deputy Premier.

**PRAYERS**

**Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance, Elected Member for Bodden Town West:** Let us pray.

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

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

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

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

**The Speaker:** Please be seated.

The proceedings of this honourable Parliament are now resumed.

**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 FINANCE  
COMMITTEE ON THE APPROPRIATION CHANGES  
IN ACCORDANCE WITH  
SECTION 12 OF THE PUBLIC MANAGEMENT  
AND FINANCE ACT (2020 REVISION)  
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING  
31 DECEMBER, 2021**

**The Speaker:** The Honourable Minister of Finance, the Deputy Premier.

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

Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House, the report of the Standing Finance Committee on the Schedule of Appropriation Changes Sought under section 12 of the Public Management and Finance Act (2020 Revision) with respect to the Government's financial year ending 31 December, 2021.

**The Speaker:** So ordered. Is the Honourable Deputy Premier speaking?

**Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier:** Briefly Mr. Speaker, briefly—can I get the lectern please?

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 67(4), I have Tabled the Standing Finance

Committee's Report on the Schedule of Appropriation Changes sought under section 12 of the Public Management and Finance Act (2020 Revision), with respect to the Government's financial year ending 31 December, 2021.

Mr. Speaker, the Committee had its first meeting on Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021, at which time Finance Committee scrutinised and questioned the items appearing on the previously mentioned schedule, as well as changes proposed thereto. The Committee also met today 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021, to finalise and approve the report recently Tabled.

Mr. Speaker, the Committee considered and approved the Schedule of Appropriation Changes sought under section 12 of the Public Management and Finance Act, as well as further changes that were proposed. In terms of individually significant items that the Committee approved, the single largest appropriation change was \$27.5 million for the continuation of the stipend payable to eligible persons previously employed in the tourism industry, to mitigate some of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, other significant amounts approved by the Committee were: \$17.6 million extra funding with respect to Tertiary Healthcare for Indigents, Seamen and Veterans who are referred for treatment locally and overseas.

The Committee also approved \$10 million to support the operations of the Cayman Islands Airports Authority and it should be noted, Mr. Speaker, that this is in addition to the \$20.9 million loan that the Government has advanced the Authority to provide financial assistance to enable the Authority to meet its obligations, particularly, Capital Expenditure matters.

Mr. Speaker \$8.8 million was also approved to fund remaining commitments for the long-term Residential Mental Facility, as well as another \$7 million to support the operation of Cayman Airways. Also approved was \$4 million additional funding for road surface upgrades, and \$3.1 million of additional funding with respect to Services to Irregular Migrants arriving in the Cayman Islands.

The Committee also approved \$2 million for major road networks and \$2 million for additional funding for the Cayman Turtle Conservation and Education Centre Limited. Finally, Mr. Speaker, the Committee also enabled \$2 million for Grants to micro and small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, as the proceedings in Finance Committee were publicly aired, and can still be viewed online, there is no need for me to present the items considered in greater detail, but I would like to close by saying that the Committee agreed that the report that has just been laid on the Table of this Honourable Parliament be the report of the Standing Finance Committee on the Schedule of Appropriation changes sought under section 12 of the Public Management and Finance Act (2020 Revision), with respect to the

Government's financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2021.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT AND  
BORDER CONTROL  
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT  
ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020**

**The Speaker:** The Honourable Deputy Premier, Minister of Border Control.

**Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of this Honourable Parliament, the Annual Report of the Ministry of Employment and Border Control for the Year 2019 to 2020.

**The Speaker:** So ordered. Is the Minister speaking?

**Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier:** This time, Mr. Speaker, definitely briefly.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank the capable staff at the Ministry of Border Control and Employment. The report is quite thick; it is actually a good read and includes the Department of Customs and Border Control Services (CBC), the Department of Labour and Pension (DLP), Passport and Corporate Services Offices, Workforce Opportunity and Residency Cayman (WORC), and the Cayman Islands Regiment.

Mr. Speaker, I want to highlight that this Annual Report also looks at the activities of the Business Staffing Plan Board, the Cayman Brac and Little Cayman Immigration Board, the Caymanian Status and Permanent Residency Board, the Work Permit Board, the National Pension Board and the Labour and Labour Appeals Tribunals.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry received a clean audit from the Auditor General; it is very thick and makes for good bedtime reading.

Again, I thank the staff for their work.

Thank you.

**2020 ANNUAL REPORT  
PUBLIC SERVICE PENSION BOARD —  
SECURING TOMORROW TOGETHER**

**The Speaker:** The Honourable Deputy Governor.

**The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson:** Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of this Parliament, the 2020 Annual Report for the Public Service Pension Board - Securing Tomorrow Together.

**The Speaker:** So ordered. Is the Deputy Governor speaking?

**The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson:** Yes, Mr. Speaker; briefly.

I think it is absolutely important that I share with this honourable House and members of the public some of the highlights of the Public Service Pension Board during 2020.

Mr. Speaker, the Public Service Pension Board (PSPB) manages three distinct plans: the Public Service Pension Plan, the Parliamentary Pensions Plan and the Judicial Pensions Plan; additionally, it administers ex-gratia pension payments which are directly funded by the Government.

Mr. Speaker some of the key milestones in 2020 were as follows:

The return on the Public Service Pension Board Fund was 15.5 per cent. As at the 31 December, 2020, the PSPB had US \$1.193 billion in assets and the Public Service Pension Board Fund grew by US \$170 million.

In terms of administrative milestones, the PSPB processed 2,375 Plan member files, conducted 4,933 one-on-one meetings with members, processed 128 new retirements, recorded 1,057 interactions with members, processed 80 transfers during COVID-19 Shelter in Place Provisions, and delivered 16 presentations to 409 members.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to highlight that despite the challenges of COVID-19, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020, the PSPB signed a contract with an external provider to deliver a new customisable pension administrative system. This partnership paved the way for work to begin on developing a new system that will allow the board to enhance member services.

Also in 2020, the Government continued with plans to top-up the pensions of long-serving public servants to align minimum pensions with the level of Poor Relief. To enact this change, the PSPB, in partnership with the POCS undertook the necessary measures to assess the eligibility and implement the new minimum pension threshold of \$850 per month for pensioners, which was increased to \$950 in 2021; the PSPB team completed all of the applications on behalf of the eligible plan members. Additionally, the PSPB administered over 1,000 ex-gratia and ex-gratia uplift payments on a monthly basis throughout 2020.

Mr. Speaker, during one of the most challenging years throughout the world, the PSPB responded in a successful manner in both operations and investment growth. In a year where it would have been easier to blame any shortfall on a pandemic, the Cayman Islands benefited from a sound and ethical response from leaders in the country to ensure our citizens were protected, and further, that a pension provider like the Public Service Pension Board could continue to thrive during unprecedented times.

The PSPB not only continues to be the only pension plan in the Cayman Islands that is beyond \$1 billion in assets, but the Public Service Pension Fund maintains outstanding gains over the year and, as I

stated earlier, it crossed the US \$1 billion threshold as of 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2020.

Specific to the PSPB, the fund experienced significant growth in 2020 with a return of 15.5 per cent. To achieve this, the fund holds a diverse portfolio of bonds and equity securities that, over the long term, provides above average returns with minimised variability. Strong investment returns were not just as a result of the market that rebounded in 2020, it was also a direct result of the increased investment management and oversight that led to a much quicker recovery from the pandemic recession than the PSPB's industry peers.

With that, the fund ended the year ahead of its investment fund policy benchmark by 1.2 per cent. Further to these gains, the quarterly credit of return applied to members' accounts in 2020 were all positive and it demonstrates that an investment approach of smoothing any market volatility benefited our plan members.

Also in 2020, the PSPB welcomed Mr. Bryan Bothwell, a Caymanian with over 35 years of Financial Industry experience in the Cayman Islands as a government-appointed member of the PSPB Board of Directors. Mr. Bothwell's background is in Audit and Governance and helping to shape the ongoing focus and delivery of the Public Service Pension Board Audit and Risk Committee, which he chairs.

In addition to the noteworthy accomplishments I have highlighted, the PSPB prepared their financial statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 and submitted them to the Auditor General, receiving an unqualified opinion. The PSPB met all statutory requirements in preparing, submitting and completing the audit of the financial statements.

Mr. Speaker to wind up, having provided you with the key highlights, I am sure that you will agree that the Public Service Pension Board's performance, both operationally and financially was impressive, especially against a backdrop of global uncertainty due to the pandemic.

I would like to sincerely thank the Managing Director, Ms. Jewel Evans-Lindsey and her team, and Chairperson Ms. Sheree Ebanks and other distinguished members of the Board of Directors, for their commitment and sound leadership.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**ANNUAL REPORT 2018 —  
NATIONAL DRUG COUNCIL  
AND  
NATIONAL DRUG COUNCIL, CAYMAN ISLANDS —  
ANNUAL REPORT 2019**

**The Speaker:** The Honourable Minister of Health.  
**Hon. Sabrina T. Turner, Minister for Health and Wellness, Elected Member for Prospect:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I beg to lay before this honourable House, the Annual Reports and Audited Financial Statements for the National Drug Council for the fiscal years 2018 and 2019.

**The Speaker:** So ordered.

Is the Minister speaking?

**Hon. Sabrina Turner:** No, sir. Thank you.

**FINANCIAL REPORTING AUTHORITY  
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT  
PORTFOLIO OF LEGAL AFFAIRS  
ANNUAL REPORT  
1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2020**

**The Speaker:** The Honourable Attorney General.

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

Mr. Speaker, I seek leave of this honourable Parliament to lay on the Table the Annual Report for the Financial Reporting Authority (FRA) for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2020.

**The Speaker:** So ordered. Is the Attorney General speaking?

**The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin:** Mr. Speaker just to recommend that it be read as the report so simply sums up, on page 5, the activities of the Authority during the relevant period.

I certainly commend the report to Honourable Members of this Parliament and to the wider public, Mr. Speaker.

I also take the opportunity to say thanks to the Director of the FRA, Mr. Robert "RJ" Berry, and his staff, for a wonderful job, their professionalism and dedication throughout the relevant period and beyond, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

**The Speaker:** None.

**STATEMENTS BY HONOURABLE  
MEMBERS AND MINISTERS  
OF THE CABINET**

**The Speaker:** I have been informed by the Honourable Premier and the Honourable Minister of Tourism afterwards.

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

Mr. Speaker, I have pondered long and hard the various remarks made about the reopening of our borders and the more I listened and read, what I regard as some of the irresponsible utterances and comments, the more I am convinced that I must take a clear and firm stance against the wave of misinformation, selfish behaviour and apathy that I think is placing us all at risk.

Have we all forgotten, Mr. Speaker, how much we had to give up in the early days of COVID to stay safe? Have we forgotten that COVID is a killer? Have we forgotten how we were all in this together to keep all of our people safe?

Mr. Speaker, I am reminded of the adage, "The more things change, the more they stay the same", especially when I think of the sad irony that it is many of the same people who have attempted to dissuade us or even oppose the previous Government's policies aimed at burning out the virus, who are now voicing opinions and complaints that our safe reopening plan will not work.

At that time Mr. Speaker, many of them refused to be convinced that closing our borders, lockdowns, curfews, mask wearing, limiting numbers of people for gatherings—all the things that helped keep us safe—were the right things to do; now some of the very same people are warning our Government to abandon our gradual, measured, and scientific approach to reopening, Mr. Speaker. Instead, in their view, we should simply throw open our doors to those who would come to our shores, spend their money and bring COVID with them.

I understand, I get it, Mr. Speaker. Of course we must eventually open our borders. I know we have to get visitors and their money back into our economy. We must all accept that, but I also get the fact that if we do, as the Leader of the Opposition has suggested, reopen our borders to tourism on the 1<sup>st</sup> September, we would be putting our people in grave danger; literally. I go to enough funeral services for our loved ones as it is, sir. I certainly do not want to have to go to more because this Government bowed under pressure and reintroduced contagion into our community before we are fully prepared.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I will agree that we must adjust our way of thinking away from expecting to completely eradicate the existence of COVID-19 for the foreseeable future; indeed, we must all prepare to exist in a world alongside COVID. Therefore, since it is not going away anytime soon, we must exercise wisdom, be guided by the science, and give our community every chance to successfully unlock our economy and reintroduce tourism. However, this cannot be done if we do not protect our vulnerable, limit the potential spread of the virus and keep our health care system from becoming overwhelmed.

COVID-19 is very much out there. I will not say it is lurking about—no, it is aging—and the new Delta variant is one mutation that is proving to be a most formidable and lethal foe. We must remain on guard, because the ones who are going to get sick are the people who refused to get vaccinated, the most vulnerable and our children, who cannot yet get vaccinated—and a word to our healthy young people: The virus does not discriminate on age. Many of those who are getting seriously ill around the world are unvaccinated young people.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that there are people who cannot get vaccinated for medical reasons. We must all get vaccinated for them as well. We continue to urge those unable to get vaccinated to use all safety protocols, including wearing masks whenever they go out in public, but for the rest of the population that is eligible to receive the vaccine, but for various non-medical reasons have not yet done so, I am once again asking you to roll up your sleeve. It is not just about you; it is about our economy, our community, and the interests of our country.

I especially want to highlight that we have another group that we need to collectively rally around and that is our children, who are too young to get the vaccine. Mr. Speaker, there are many people in this Chamber today who have children and grand-children younger than twelve. Likewise, many people listening to the sound of my voice or watching this broadcast and broadcasts of these proceedings, enjoy the blessing that is being a parent or grandparent to a young child—are we as a community really going to insist that we rush ahead with a full re-opening of the economy in September, placing our precious children and grandchildren in danger? Really? Have they considered new-born babies when they make their comments about bringing forward the full re-opening?

I can tell you that the health, safety, and well-being of our precious young children were at the forefront of my mind when we deliberately chose to avoid schools opening for the full term simultaneously with the initial opening of the borders to tourists which is what we would do if we accepted the proposal to open borders on the 1st September, Mr. Speaker. That is a risk that neither I, nor this PACT Government are prepared to accept. I am confident that the Opposition will agree with me that none of us would knowingly want to risk the lives of our young children or grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I want to again appeal to the Opposition as we enter this new phase of reversing the restrictive measures that have protected us. I want to encourage them to continue to take the high road and avoid the slippery slope of making political hay with a rapidly evolving public health issue.

The good Lord knows Mr. Speaker, that I was lobbied, entreated, and encouraged by many members of the private sector to oppose the previous administration when we were under those tight COVID restrictions. I had calls from people asking me to exert

whatever influence I may have had at that time to get the Government to change their position so that we could get a little “ease-up”. Well, Mr. Speaker, I did not apply that pressure; I did not respond to the requests, because I agreed with the last administration’s cautious approach to keep COVID out of our community and keep us all healthy and safe. That caution and their decisions were made on the advice of the very same people who are advising this Government today.

What has changed, Mr. Speaker? We are still under threat and so is the rest of the world and the threat appears to be increasing at this point, rather than decreasing. As many of us do, I continue to observe the virus as it spikes the world over and I am keen to see how different countries are reacting.

Mr. Speaker, British Virgin Islands (BVI) is certainly on my radar because it is a fellow British Overseas Territory (BOT) where the number of people infected has gone, in less than two weeks, from near zero to more than 2,000. This past Saturday, the BVI Government decided to hold an emergency vaccination drive. Certainly, in relation to those who are currently sick, infected, and those who have passed on, it may be too little, too late.

Interestingly Mr. Speaker, of the 16 deaths and more than 30 hospitalisations in the BVI, including some on ventilators or high concentrated oxygen, only one person had received the vaccine. It is their unvaccinated who are being most affected by the virus there. Theirs is not a unique situation Mr. Speaker, but it is clearly illuminating. The world over, it is clear that this is becoming a pandemic of the unvaccinated. That is why the PACT Government insisted on a vaccination drive in May and why we are going to be holding another one shortly. It is a proven fact that vaccination gives your body the best ability to fight the virus.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to reflect on some of the lessons we can learn from our friends and neighbours in the BVI. They were letting in travellers who had been fully vaccinated, giving them a PCR test at the airport and forcing them to quarantine for 24-hours to just await the test result. If the result was negative, the visitors were allowed to roam freely throughout the country; obviously a very short period of quarantine. Unvaccinated travellers, Mr. Speaker, had to quarantine for a mere seven days and allowed free range if the test on the last day was negative.

It is clear, Mr. Speaker, that their approach has been significantly different to our own so far, so today the residents of the BVI are living with added restrictions and lockdowns, and the pain and suffering that comes from the deaths that have occurred. I do not want our country to suffer the loss of people we know and love, then have to go back into lockdowns and curfews and other possible harsh restrictions.

We have also seen other countries that attempted to ignore the established science and what a price they have paid.

In the Netherlands, where 46 per cent of the population has received two doses and 77 per cent received one dose of the vaccine, COVID-19 infections have exploded by more than 500 per cent over the last week, after the Government removed all restrictions and limitations; however, due to the massive spike in infections, plans have been reversed with social distancing being reintroduced and bars and restaurants and night clubs closed once again to indoor service.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is that they too attempted to defy the science and have been heavily criticised. In particular, for such things as running a special incentive programme that encouraged young people to take a single-shot vaccine with the implication that they could go out partying sooner—sometimes hours after receiving the first dose—however, that was in the face of official advice for people to wait two weeks after their shot in order to build up maximum immunity.

Furthermore, we see many scientists and medical professions around the world questioning the efficacy of the much-vaunted UK freedom day. Broadcasts around the world, Mr. Speaker, showed people gathering in clubs and bars, and hugging and kissing and revelling in the fact that after a year and a half they were free to interact. Let's stick a pin there, Mr. Speaker. Let's see how high the infection rates soar now that people have been given the freedom to be responsible for their own actions and, ultimately, possibly irresponsible.

We cannot outsmart the proven science behind this. In fact, the real experiment that is being conducted is not with the vaccine as some suggest, Mr. Speaker, but with those attempting to re-open their economies and borders to the world without any form of protection for their most vulnerable; without high vaccination rates and without maintaining other appropriate safety protocols.

Do we need to go down the road that France has taken? More recently, belatedly, the UK requires a health pass to venues such as cinemas, bars, restaurants, hospitals, planes and other forms of public transportation. Is that where we need to go, Mr. Speaker? The short answer may be, *yes, if we have to*. If we do not collectively do the right thing and get vaccinated, I can assure you that this Government will be prepared to take the measures we need to. Some may call them draconian Mr. Speaker, but if they are necessary to protect our people in these Islands, they may be just that—necessary.

Mr. Speaker, it seems that some people view re-opening as some kind of limbo dance with a pole set ablaze—they simply focus on how low we can go with setting the vaccination rate and want us to aim for the lowest possible rate in order to get life back to normal. Well, Mr. Speaker, the growing evidence, based on our observations and experiences in other places, is that even with the vaccine we cannot necessarily expect a normal lifestyle.

To keep the Cayman Islands and our people safe, our approach Mr. Speaker, is similar to that being taken in Singapore. Like us, Singapore was quick to shut its borders, implement a comprehensive tracing and testing programme and impose quarantine requirements early on. Also like us, Mr. Speaker, Singapore in June unveiled the country's road map to a new normal in which they will focus on medical outcomes, such as how many fall sick, how many are in intensive care units, how many need to be intubated for oxygen. Like us, they will let science and medicine determine their next step in re-opening Singapore's borders. Unlike us, Mr. Speaker, Singapore wants the number of vaccinated people in their country to be 90 to 95 per cent. In an admission, their Health Minister said Singapore would be lucky if they got to 80 per cent of its 5.69 million populace vaccinated.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that our target of 80 per cent is a challenge too, but it is a challenge that we must meet. We estimate our population to be 71,106 and we are taking Public Health England's advice to get 80 per cent of our population vaccinated. So far, only 66 per cent of our population has had the two dose course of the vaccine. That is to be celebrated, but at the same time, we know it is insufficient. Mr. Speaker we can, and must, do better.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton:** For emphasis on why we need to do better, I go back to our children, sir. Those younger than 12. We fret and fuss over our babies when they have the sniffles, the common cold, when they fall and hurt themselves. I cannot imagine Mr. Speaker, the fretting and hand-wringing a parent or grandparent would do if their precious child was in ICU in one of our hospitals fighting COVID, fighting to breathe—fighting for their lives.

It is not just the immediate effects of catching the disease either, Mr. Speaker. There is also that thing called long-COVID to consider, and that is when the symptoms of COVID persist over extended time, and while researchers are not clear yet why symptoms persist in some young people and some adults, some do agree that the effects could be the result of organ damage caused by the virus.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the grandparents and parents in this country again: Are you really willing to risk the lives of your dear little ones by demanding the re-opening of our borders too soon or refusing to get the vaccine?

Mr. Speaker, I will leave us with the words of Dr. Peter Hotez, a vaccinologist and Dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine in the United States, in a comment to a Cable News Network (CNN) reporter, **“transmission will continue to accelerate and the ones who will also pay the price, in addition to the unvaccinated**



**adolescence, are the little kids who depend on the adults and adolescents to get vaccinated in order to slow or halt transmission.”**

Mr. Speaker, I would ask everyone listening to please let that sink in, particularly those who would insist on carelessly throwing open the doors to travellers when we are unprepared and at a time when it can do us harm; consider his words, as those out there who are stubbornly resisting taking the vaccine maintain that view. Think about his statement, anyone who is considering introducing politics into a public health issue.

Mr. Speaker, I am asking everyone to do the right thing. Get vaccinated now. Unlike many countries, Mr. Speaker, where there is no option and desperation exists as a result, we have the world's best vaccine available here for free. I am imploring people, do not waste your opportunity to be a part of our solution to re-open while keeping your family and children and the loved ones of all others in this great country, as safe as possible.

I ask the Opposition and all residents to unite with us on this critical issue, Mr. Speaker, and let my Government do its job of taking the advice of the experts, using science to embark on the safest way to re-open the borders of the Cayman Islands.

I thank you for allowing me to make this statement, Mr. Speaker.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** I have been informed of a statement by the Honourable Minister of Tourism. The Honourable Minister of Tourism.

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Minister of Tourism and Transport, Elected Member for George Town Central:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The statement will be rather short.

As per the outline in the Government's Strategic Policy Statement, the PACT Administration has started to take the necessary actions to fulfil our Broad Outcomes, specifically Outcome 5(a), Building a Legacy of Sustainability, to offer incentive programmes to encourage recycling and reduce waste.

As such, Mr. Speaker, the PACT Administration has decided we will be using reusable bottles in this Honourable Parliament. As you see, all Members of Government have them and we ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to distribute them, as we have them labelled, to each Member of Opposition. This supports the Government's Broad Outcome in Section 5, to continue to encourage recycling and reduce waste in our country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** So Honourable Minister, you are giving to the Opposition?

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan:** Yes, Mr. Speaker; we did not want to pass them over until we made the announcement. I want to say thanks to my Ministry—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan:** I want to note that the Elected Member for Bodden Town East has his already on the Opposition side. These bottles were donated to the Government through my Ministry as a promotion for the Cayman Islands and I thought, what better way to show our commitment to sustainability and reduction of waste in our country, than to no longer use plastic bottles in this Parliament.

**The Speaker:** The colour is very appropriate and the purpose is very laudable. I trust that the Speaker's Office will get one and would not have to report that.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan:** Yes, Mr. Speaker; as you have seen, the Honourable Deputy Governor and Honourable Attorney General have received one. I will ensure that you and your staff members receive one as well, sir.

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

**The Speaker:** None.

## OBITUARY AND OTHER CEREMONIAL SPEECHES

**The Speaker:** None.

## RAISING OF MATTERS OF PRIVILEGES

**The Speaker:** None.

## GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**The Speaker:** I am not aware of any other business—excepting that I should have said earlier that I had apologies from the Members for George Town West and George Town South, who were unable to be present today.

## ADJOURNMENT

**The Speaker:** The Honourable Premier.

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

Thank you Mr. Speaker and thank you to all Members for their good work today. I now move the adjournment of this honourable House sine die.

**The Speaker:** The Member for George Town North.

**Mr. Joseph X. Hew, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Elected Member for George Town North:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition has a number of outstanding Parliamentary Questions; we are requesting that these be carried over to the next Sitting.

**The Speaker:** Honourable Member, I am sure that the outstanding questions will be dealt with in the usual manner, according to Standing Orders.

The question is that this honourable Parliament stands adjourned sine die.

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

**AYES.**

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

This honourable Parliament stands adjourned sine die.

**At 11:56am the House stood adjourned sine die.**