



PARLIAMENT
OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS



PARLIAMENT OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

First Meeting of the 2023-2024 Session
First Sitting

Tuesday
19 September, 2023
(Pages 1- 26)

Hon. Katherine Ebanks-Wilks, MP
Speaker

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PRESENT WERE:

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, MP
Speaker

MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

Hon. G. Wayne Panton, JP, MP	<i>Premier, Minister of Sustainability & Climate Resiliency and Finance & Economic Development</i>
Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly, JP,	<i>Deputy Premier, Minister of Education and District Administration & Lands</i>
Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, MP	<i>Minister of Tourism & Ports</i>
Hon. Sabrina T. Turner, MP	<i>Minister of Health & Wellness and Home Affairs</i>
Hon. Johany S. "Jay" Ebanks, MP	<i>Minister of Planning, Agriculture, Housing & Infrastructure</i>
Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour, JP, MP	<i>Minister of Border Control & Labour</i>
Hon. André M. Ebanks, MP	<i>Minister of Financial Services & Commerce and Investment, Innovation & Social Development</i>

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

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

ELECTED MEMBERS

GOVERNMENT BACKBENCHERS

Ms. Heather D. Bodden, OCI, Cert. Hon., JP, MP	<i>Parliamentary Secretary to Tourism and Social Development, Elected Member for Savannah</i>
Hon. Isaac D. Rankine, JP, MP	<i>Deputy Speaker, Parliamentary Secretary to Home Affairs and Planning, Agriculture & Infrastructure, Elected Member for East End</i>
Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, JP, MP	<i>Elected Member for West Bay West</i>

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

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

INDEPENDENT OPPOSITION MEMBER

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders, MP	<i>Elected Member for Bodden Town West</i>
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APOLOGIES

Hon. Bernie A. Bush, MP	<i>Minister of Youth, Sports, Culture & Heritage</i>
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OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
FIRST MEETING OF THE 2023/2024 SESSION
TUESDAY
19 SEPTEMBER, 2023
10.46 A.M.
First Sitting

[Hon. Katherine Ebanks-Wilks, Speaker, presiding]

The Speaker: Good morning. I will call on the Honourable Deputy Premier to grace us with prayers.

PRAYERS

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly, Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and District Administration & Lands, Elected Member for Cayman Brac East: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Good morning.

Let us pray: *Almighty God, from whom all wisdom and power are derived. We beseech thee so to direct and prosper the deliberations of 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 these Islands. Bless our Sovereign, King Charles, III; William, 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, 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. Proceedings are now resumed.

PROCLAMATION

The Clerk: CAYMAN ISLANDS PROCLAMATION NO. 3 OF 2023 BY HER EXCELLENCY, JANE OWEN, GOVERNOR OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS.

WHEREAS Section 83(1) of the Constitution of the Cayman Islands provides that the sessions of the Parliament of the Cayman Islands shall be held at such places and begin at such times as the Governor may from time to time by proclamation appoint.

NOW THEREFORE, I, JANE OWEN, Governor of the Cayman Islands, by virtue of the powers conferred upon me by section 83(1) of the Constitution of the Cayman Islands, HEREBY PROCLAIM that a session of the Parliament of the Cayman Islands shall begin and be held at the House of Parliament, George Town, Grand Cayman, at 10 a.m. on the 19th day of September, 2023, and shall thereafter continue until such date and time as the Parliament may adjourn thereto.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND THE PUBLIC SEAL OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS AT GEORGE TOWN IN THE ISLAND OF GRAND CAYMAN THIS 11th DAY OF SEPTEMBER IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD TWO THOUSAND AND TWENTY-THREE IN THE SECOND YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HIS MAJESTY KING CHARLES III.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS OR AFFIRMATIONS

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE AND DUE EXECUTION OF OFFICE

The Speaker: Ms. Reshma Sharma.

[Honourable Members], please stand.

The Acting Attorney General, Hon. Reshma Sharma: I, RESHMA SHARMA, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King Charles III, His Heirs and Successors, according to Law. So help me God.

The Acting Attorney General, Hon. Reshma Sharma: I, RESHMA SHARMA, do swear that I will well and truly serve His Majesty King Charles III, His Heirs and Successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands, in the Office of Ex-Officio Member of the Parliament. So help me God.

The Speaker: Ms. Sharma, we welcome you, on behalf of this honourable House as Temporary Ex-Officio Member. You may take your seat.

Please be seated.

READING BY THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER OF MESSAGES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Speaker: I have received two apologies.

One from the Honourable Minister of Tourism and Ports who has advised that due to official travel he will be arriving late today.

Additionally, I have received notice from the Honourable Minister for Youth, Sports, Culture and Heritage, who has advised that he will be absent, as he is off Island on official business.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

The Speaker: None.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND OF REPORTS

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL CAYMAN ISLANDS - ANNUAL REPORT - 31 DECEMBER 2022 - PROVIDING VALUE TO THE PEOPLE OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS (APRIL 2023)

The Speaker: Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Leader of the Opposition, Elected Member for George Town East: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House the Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General for the year ended 31st December, 2022.

The Speaker: Does the Honourable Member wish to speak thereto?

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Leader of the Opposition: Very briefly, Madam Speaker.

Included in the report that I have Tabled are the Audited Financial Statements. The Auditor General received an unmodified opinion issued by their external auditors. Also included is a very detailed description of the activities undertaken by the Office of the Auditor General. I think it makes for somewhat interesting reading for Members and the public because it details their activities, quite extensively.

The public is probably not completely aware of the wide-ranging activities that the Auditor General's Office undertakes on behalf of the Government; it is not just all audits of financial information. They do a num-

ber of other things and issue special-purpose type reports, so I commend the report to this honourable House.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

2022 ANNUAL REPORT – OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS – CAYMAN ISLANDS

The Speaker: The Honourable Acting Attorney General.

Hon. Reshma Sharma, Acting Attorney General: I rise, Madam Speaker, to lay on the Table of this honourable House the 2022 Annual Report for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) for the year ending 31st December, 2022.

The Speaker: Does the Member wish to speak thereto?

Hon. Reshma Sharma, Acting Attorney General: Very briefly, Madam Speaker.

The report provides a comprehensive overview of the work of the DPP's Office during the reporting period. That work, Madam Speaker, extends not only to the prosecution of a range of matters before the courts of the Islands, but includes international cooperation, mutual legal assistance, and the office's ongoing work in relation to the international standards of the Financial Action Taskforce, commonly known as the FATF, with respect to the investigation and prosecution of money laundering and other types of offenses.

For completeness, I would add, Madam Speaker, that the Office of the DPP's Financial Statements received an unqualified opinion from the Auditor General, a copy of which is set out just after the substantive report, and before the financials.

I, therefore, commend the report to the honourable House; it makes for very good reading about the important work that is done by the Office of the DPP.

Thank you, Madam Speaker

MINISTRY OF BORDER CONTROL & LABOUR - CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT - 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

The Speaker: The Honourable Acting Minister of Border Control and Labour.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Can I call on another Member to Table the report? The Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton, Minister of Sustainability & Climate Resiliency and Finance &

Economic Development, Elected Member for Newlands: Here we go. Thank you, Madam Speaker; I can't see this morning, I am pressing the wrong button.

Madam Speaker, as the Minister has been delayed, I will ask for your permission to lay on the Table of this honourable House the 2022 Annual Report for the Ministry of Border Control and Labour on his behalf.

The Speaker: So ordered. Would you like to speak thereto, Premier?

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: No, thank you, Madam Speaker.

MINISTRY OF FINANCE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT - 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

The Speaker: The Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to seek your permission to lay on the Table of this honourable House the 2022 to Annual Report for the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

The Speaker: Does the Member wish to speak thereto?

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Very briefly, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the Office of the Auditor General issued an unqualified opinion on the Financial Statements of the Ministry for the year ended 31st December, 2022. An unqualified opinion signifies the information contained in the financial statements is accurate and can be fairly relied upon.

Madam Speaker, as shown on page seven of the Annual Report, during the twelve-month period ending 31st December 2022, the Ministry comprised of 163 staff members of which 144 or 88 per cent, were Caymanian, 68 per cent were female, and the majority of staff was 46 years and older.

Some of the Ministry's key events and achievements during the financial year included:

- Successfully completing and issuing the Cayman Islands 2021 Census of Population and Housing Report;
- Processing 662 requests for the waiver of stamp and import duties at a value of \$8.9 million;
- Developing a more strategic and structured approach to government procurement, as well as reviewing and improving procurement processes;
- Reviewing and enhancing the government-wide risk management framework; and

- Releasing the stamp issues of the late Mr. Wesley Howell, and her late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee.

Further, Madam Speaker, Ms. Melissa Martinez-Ebanks, the Deputy Postmaster General - Operations and Human Resources became the first person in the Caribbean to be elected as Vice-Chair of the International Express Mail Service Cooperative Board.

In addition, the Cayman Islands Postal Services achieved the Universal Postal Union (UPU) S58 and S59 security certification at the civil level at the Airport Post Office, by prioritising the prevention of injuries to people due to carriage of dangerous goods in the mail; preventing the loss or theft of mail; and the loss of revenue or assets, thereby preserving customer confidence. Cayman now joins the elite company of Barbados, Bermuda, Jamaica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in earning the UPU S58 and S59 certification in the Caribbean region.

In addition, Madam Speaker, 42,323 government-related payments were processed at a value of \$1.4 billion. This generated \$8.6 million in investment revenue from the government's investment portfolio. The investing US\$393 million of loan funds in US-Government Treasury notes, at a yield interest rate of 3.2 per cent per annum, was also carried out. Madam Speaker, the last item, to summarise, is managing the health insurance benefit for 1046 seafarers and veterans and their dependants.

On page 46 of the report, Madam Speaker, the Statement of Entity and Executive Financial Transactions shows that on behalf of the Cabinet, the Ministry collected \$27.2 million in executive revenue which was \$3.1 million above budget. The Ministry also incurred \$78.5 million in executive expenses which were \$2.1 million below the revised budget. Some of the reasons that contributed towards the overall under-achievement of the executive financial transactions included:

1. Cruise ship departure tax was under budget by \$2 million due to the postponement to March 22nd of the resumption of cruise ship arrivals to the Islands;
2. Environmental protection fund fees were under budget by \$0.9 million again, due to the postponement of the resumption until March, 2022, of the cruise ship arrivals;
3. The past service pension liability payment was over budget by \$1 million due to the budget being underestimated; and
4. The cost for general insurance was over budget by \$1.4 million, due to an increase in premium rates and additional insurance for new property.

Madam Speaker, the Statement of Financial Position shows that the Ministry ended the financial period with \$22.4 million in total assets, and of this amount, \$12.4 million— or 55 per cent— is comprised of cash and cash equivalents which includes cash on

hand, cash in transit and bank accounts with a maturity of no more than three months from the date of acquisition. Total liabilities amounted to \$2.8 million, the majority of which comprised \$1.7 million in other payables and accruals. Net assets, which are total assets minus total liabilities, amounted to \$19.6 million.

Madam Speaker, the Statement of Financial Performance shows that the Ministry earned \$16.6 million in operating revenue for the year. Almost all of this revenue was earned from the delivery of outputs to Cabinet. The Ministry incurred \$16.6 million in operating expenses during the financial year, of which \$12.9 million or 78 per cent, comprised personnel costs which include salaries, health insurance and pension costs. The Ministry ended the 2022 financial year in a break-even position.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the staff and management of the Ministry for their hard work during the 2022 financial year, and I look forward to their future successes in the years to come.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I commend the report to this honourable House.

**RCIPS - CRIMINAL JUSTICE UNIT –
JUVENILE/ADULT CAUTIONS
APPROVED REPORT - MAY 2023**

The Speaker: The Acting Honourable Attorney General.

Hon. Reshma Sharma, Acting Attorney General: Madam Speaker, I rise to lay on the Table of this honourable House the Juvenile/Adult Cautions Approved Report for the period 20th October, 2022 to 19th May, 2023.

The Speaker: Does the Honourable Member wish to speak thereto?

Hon. Reshma Sharma, Acting Attorney General: Briefly, Madam Speaker.

This report, Madam Speaker, sets out the number of cautions administered pursuant to section 12 of the Cautions (Adult) Act, 2017, which provides that, **“the Commissioner of Police shall cause to be laid before Parliament a report specifying the number of persons who have been administered with a caution and the nature of the matters for which the cautions were administered.”**

While cautions may be administered to persons under the age of 18 pursuant to section 28 of the Youth Justice Act (2021 Revision), there is no similar reporting requirements under that Act; nevertheless, Madam Speaker, the report now before Parliament sets out the cautions administered to both adults and young persons over the stated period.

The report, Madam Speaker, is very short and self-explanatory, but if I may briefly summarise. With respect to young persons, over the reporting period

seven cautions were administered for the following ofenses:

- Possession/consumption of ganja;
- Threats to kill; and
- Causing alarm and distress

With respect to adults, six cautions were administered over the period for offences including possession and consumption of ganja and cocaine; assault occasioning actual bodily harm, common assault and theft.

Madam Speaker, cautions may be administered where a criminal suspect has unequivocally admitted that he or she is guilty of the offence, and agrees to be cautioned for it. In such circumstances, Madam Speaker, the suspect is not charged or prosecuted in court.

As we know, Madam Speaker, the out-of-court disposals scheme avoids the charging and prosecution of offenders for minor or one-off offenses, and the resulting criminal records which may damage future prospects, employment opportunities, and the ability to travel abroad, among other things. It also allows law enforcement to focus on more serious crimes and reduces the volume of cases before the courts.

With those brief remarks, I commend the report to the honourable House. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**RCIPS - CRIMINAL JUSTICE UNIT -JUVE-
NILE/ADULT CAUTIONS APPROVED
REPORT - JULY 2023**

The Speaker: The Acting Honourable Attorney General.

Hon. Reshma Sharma, Acting Attorney General: Madam Speaker, I rise to lay on the Table of this honourable House, the Juvenile/Adult Cautions Report – July, 2023 for the period 19th May to 27th July, 2023.

The Speaker: Does the honourable Member wish to speak thereto?

Hon. Reshma Sharma, Acting Attorney General: Very, very, briefly Madam Speaker.

As with the previous report, this one details the number of cautions administered to adults and young persons over the period 19th May to 27th July, 2023.

Again, it's a very short report, and we see that there were three cautions administered during the reporting period. In relation to young persons, these related to the offences of causing alarm or distress, possession and consumption of ganja; and with respect to adults, there was one caution and it was in respect of common assault.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**2022 ANNUAL REPORT -
MINISTRY OF YOUTH, SPORTS,**

**CULTURE & HERITAGE -
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT**

The Speaker: The Acting Minister of Youth, Sports, Culture and Heritage.

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Minister of Financial Services & Commerce and Investment, Innovation & Social Development, Elected Member for West Bay South: Morning, Madam Speaker. I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House the 2022 Annual Report of the Ministry of Youth, Sports, Culture, and Heritage.

The Speaker: Does the Honourable Member wish to speak thereto?

Hon. André M. Ebanks: Very briefly, Madam Speaker. The Ministry of Youth, Sports, Culture, and Heritage is responsible for providing strategic and policy direction advice, funding, and governance support to its departments, units and statutory authorities, namely:

- The Youth Services Unit;
- The Department of Sports;
- The National Gallery of the Cayman Islands;
- The Cayman National Cultural Foundation; and
- The Cayman Islands National Museum.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry has three priorities which are the foundation of its work and the driving force that underpins its initiatives. These are:

1. Talent identification and development;
2. Enhancing and empowering our youth; and
3. Awareness and preservation of culture and heritage.

I am pleased to report that the Auditor General has given an unqualified opinion for this reporting period and, on behalf of Minister Bernie Bush, I wish to express deep appreciation, not only to the Minister himself and the Chief Officer, but the deputies, the heads of departments, the entire team at the Ministry for their tireless and unwavering commitment to this important work on a wide range of subject areas. I invite all members of the public to review the report in detail.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF
THE CAYMAN ISLANDS
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
31 DECEMBER, 2022**

The Speaker: The Honourable Acting Minister for Youth, Sports, Culture, and Heritage.

Hon. André M. Ebanks: Madam Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House, the National

Gallery of the Cayman Islands Annual Report and Accounts for 31 December, 2022.

The Speaker: Would the Honourable Minister wish to speak thereto?

Hon. André M. Ebanks: Yes, Madam Speaker.

The National Gallery is a statutory authority under the purview of the Ministry. The National Gallery is dedicated to preserving and promoting Caymanian culture and heritage through preservation, collection, exhibition and fostering of and understanding of Caymanian art.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to report that the Auditor General issued an unqualified opinion for this reporting period, and on behalf of Minister Bernie Bush, I wish to express deep appreciation to the National Gallery for their rock-solid commitment to this crucial work. I invite all members of the public to review the report in detail.

**CAYMAN NATIONAL CULTURAL FOUNDATION –
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
31 DECEMBER, 2022 –
CREATIVITY: HERITAGE: EDUCATION**

The Speaker: The Honourable Acting Minister of Youth, Sports, Culture, and Heritage.

Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House, the Cayman National Cultural Foundation Annual Report and Accounts 31 December, 2022.

The Speaker: Does the Honourable Minister wish to speak thereto?

Hon. André M. Ebanks: Yes, Madam Speaker.

The National Cultural Foundation is a statutory authority operating under the purview of the Ministry, and its work fosters Caymanian cultural and artistic expression through performing, visual and liberal arts and manages the Harquail Theatre— Cayman's National Theatre.

Madam Speaker, it delights me to report that the Auditor General issued an unqualified opinion for this reporting period. On behalf of Minister Bush, I would like to express deepest gratitude to the Cayman National Cultural Foundation for their unwavering dedication to fostering various artistic disciplines; and for their invaluable contributions to the development of our people. We are truly grateful for their efforts and I encourage all members of the public to review the reports in detail.

Thank you, Madam Speaker

**CAYMAN ISLANDS NATIONAL MUSEUM –
2022 ANNUAL REPORT**

The Speaker: The Honourable Acting Minister of Youth, Sports, Culture, and Heritage.

Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you, again, Madam Speaker. I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House, the Cayman Islands National Museum – 2022 Annual Report.

The Speaker: Does the Honourable Minister wish to speak thereto?

Hon. André M. Ebanks: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Cayman Islands National Museum is a statutory authority operating under the purview of the Ministry, dedicated to preserving the cultural and natural heritage of the Cayman Islands, including historical, cultural, environmental, artistic, and scientific items both on land and sea, for the present and future generations.

I am pleased to report, Madam Speaker, that the National Museum received an unqualified opinion from the Auditor General for its financial statements for this reporting period. On behalf of Minister Bernie Bush, I would like to express heartfelt appreciation to the Cayman Islands National Museum for their dedication to nurturing various artistic disciplines; promoting Caymanian cultural heritage and natural history, and educating people of all ages, including Caymanians, residents, and visitors about our Islands. I welcome everyone to read the report in detail.

Thank you, Madam Speaker,

QUESTIONS TO HONOURABLE MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

QUESTION NO. 1

UPDATE ON THE SITUATION WITH BEACH VENDORS ON PUBLIC BEACHES

The Speaker: The Elected Member for George Town North.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise to ask the Honourable Minister of District Administration and Lands question number 1 standing in my name: can the Honourable Minister provide an update on the status of the situation with the beach vendors at the Seven Mile public beach?

The Speaker: The Honourable Deputy Premier and Minister responsible for District Administration and Lands.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: [Thank you,] Madam Speaker, and thanks to the honourable Member.

The answer, Madam Speaker: The Cabinet approved the Seven Mile Beach vendor policy in June of this year. Since that time, the Public Lands Commission has made a call for vendor applications. The commission received applications, and has been corresponding with the applicants for additional information in order to complete the processing of the applications.

I am reliably informed, Madam Speaker, that the Public Lands Commission anticipates completion of the grant of vendor permits for the Seven Mile Beach by the end of October, 2023.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The Elected Member for George Town North.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Mr. Joseph X. Hew: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank the Honourable Minister for her response.

If I could just ask the Honourable Minister, I know that the main topic has been the Seven Mile Public Beach as we know it, [however,] will this policy and the application process be applicable to all government-owned beaches?

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Madam Speaker? Your attention to Standing Orders.

Suspension of Standing Order 23 (7) and (8)

The Speaker: Thank you, Member for West Bay West. It has come to my attention that it is past 11 o'clock already. I call on the Member to suspend Standing Order 23(7) and (8).

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Madam Speaker, thank you. I beg to move the suspension of Standing Order 23 (7) and (8) in order to allow questions to be asked after the hour of 11 o'clock.

The Speaker: The question is that Standing Order 23(7) and (8) be suspended to allow question time to continue beyond 11a.m.

All those in favour, please say aye, those against no.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Standing Order 23 (7) and (8) suspended.

The Speaker: The Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you Madam Speaker.

The answer to the Member's Supplementary: The February, 2021 policy regarding beach vending remains in place for all beaches other than the Seven Mile Beach part. The policy allows for commercial vending at the Coe Wood Public Beach, [and] no commercial vending at the following public beaches:

- Smith Barcadere;
- Spotts Public Beach;
- Government House Beach;
- Consuelo's Beach;
- Kaibo Public Beach;
- Cayman Kai Public Beach;;
- Star Fish Point Public Beach; and
- Governor Russell Public Beach

The Speaker: The Elected Member for George Town North.

Mr. Joseph X. Hew: Thank you, Madam Speaker and I thank the Minister for the answer— I appreciate it.

I noticed, maybe it is because I don't think it has a name, but the North West Point Public Beach—the West Bay Public Beach by the North West Point boat ramp.

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the North West Point Public Beach had temporary permission. It has expired, so the policy extends to it as well.

[Pause]

QUESTION NO. 2 UPDATE ON THE "BEACH RE-NOURISHMENT" PROJECT

The Speaker: The Elected Member for George Town North.

Mr. Joseph X. Hew: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I rise to ask question number 2 in my name, to the Honourable Minister of District Administration and Lands. The question reads: Can the Honourable Minister provide an update on the beach re-nourishment project that was announced in December 2021, along with a budget allocation of \$21 million and that was expected to start within the first half of this year?

The Speaker: The Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you Madam Speaker, and thanks to the honourable Member.

Madam Speaker, the responsibility for the Seven Mile Beach Re-nourishment project was transferred to the Ministry of District Administration & Lands; however, the accompanying budget has not been transferred along with the project. Since the transfer of the project the Ministry of District Administration & Lands has facilitated the technical working group's completion of its initial work, and the initial strategic outline case has been prepared.

Due to the estimated size of the project, the necessary business case work (i.e. 3 stage business cases) is in progress and, provided funding is approved for the project in the 2024/2025 budget, the project will progress accordingly.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

The Speaker: The Elected Member for George Town North.

Mr. Joseph X. Hew: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the Honourable Minister for that response. I don't think I need to delve into the response anymore; it was pretty clear.

I do want to ask a couple more supplementaries, if you will allow me, Madam Speaker.

Can the Minister tell me if the technical working group is the same group referred to as a "beach erosion committee"?

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Madam Speaker, I am reliably informed that it is not the same group. It is a new group that has been set up to deal with the strategic business case since it came to our Ministry.

The Speaker: Elected Member for George Town North.

Mr. Joseph X. Hew: Is the Honourable Minister able to say whether or not this Beach Erosion Committee still exists?

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, [the best I can say is that I would give an undertaking to find out whether they exist and if so, where they reside.](#)

The Speaker: Elected Member for George Town North.

Mr. Joseph X. Hew: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the Minister for that and it would be appreciated.

My other question would have been whether or not this beach erosion committee had met with, or consulted with any of the properties from the Marriot Beach

Resort, North to Coral Beach, and that includes The Sovereign, I think.

Madam Speaker to the Minister, I don't know if you can answer this, but there are properties that are facing, potentially— if we do have another storm and we pray that we don't this summer—major structural damage because they have lost their seawalls in previous storms, and are now being told in writing on their planning applications to replace their seawall which was built from 1985.

I have been told that they are waiting on the coastal works policy from this beach erosion committee in order to address these situations. Madam Speaker, I visited the sites as late as yesterday, and I'm afraid that without any assistance, direction, or policy, if we have a storm pass within a couple of 100 miles of us, some of these properties will end up in the water.

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I will have to give an undertaking to get this information. As the substantive answer indicated, it was not originally with our Ministry, it has been transferred responsibility. There are still transmissions to occur, including knowledge.

The Speaker: The Elected Member for Red Bay.

Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin, Elected Member for Red Bay: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the Minister for Tourism, who is absent today, has said on public radio that he will not support the spending of \$21 million as part of a beach re-nourishment project.

Given that the Government announced the policy in relation to beach re-nourishment and, indeed, Finance Committee appropriated a budget of \$21 million therefore, I wonder if the Deputy Premier, who at this stage is in a most unfortunate position in relation to this matter can explain, or indicate, if Government's policy in relation to this has changed.

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

One thing I most appreciate about the honourable Member from Red Bay is that he knows how to ask his questions. The answer, Madam Speaker:

Madam Speaker, so as to anticipate his supplementary, I will answer in the following way. The Constitution makes provision that if a Minister of Cabinet seeks to deviate from the Government's policy there is an option available. I have no briefing from the Honourable Minister and I would suggest that, perhaps, if the answer is not satisfactory, that a substantive answer be

put forward when the Minister is here. Being a lawyer himself, he would understand what I just said.

Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and my thanks to the Honourable Deputy Premier. I, along with my colleagues wait, with bated breath, to hear the next episode.

QUESTION NO. 3 UPDATE ON HAVING PRIVATE SCHOOLS UTILISE SCHOOL BUSES

The Speaker: The Elected Member for Red Bay.

Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin: Madam Speaker, I am to ask the Honourable Minister of Education and Deputy Premier question number 3 on the order paper standing in my name. The question reads: can Honourable Minister provide an update on the progress of having private schools utilise school buses for their students to travel to and from school?

The Speaker: The Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you, Madam Speaker, the answer: the Ministry reviewed the matter of providing buses for private schools' students as promised a Caucus and Cabinet note was subsequently prepared and duly submitted. As Minister of Education I presented the said note to Cabinet on the 30th May 2023. As the honourable Member would appreciate this is a multifaceted project which inevitably requires some decisions outside of my Ministry.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

The Speaker: The Elected Member for Red Bay.

Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Again, Madam Speaker, I appreciate that the Minister of Education may be encountering some difficulties in relation to this issue. However, Madam Speaker, this honourable House approved a motion which I moved earlier in the year asking the Government to consider not only stipulating that private schools go to a busing system, but also that government assist, in financial terms where that was required. I believe if my memory does not fail me that the House approve that motion unanimously. And, it did so Madam Speaker, I believe because to all of us who live here, it is obvious that when the private schools are on vacation, the traffic situation improves significantly.

I will ask the Minister and Deputy Premier, understanding her position, which is but one Member of the Cabinet, whether the Government has approved or will approve the project, if I may call it that, of stipulating

that private schools bus their students and that government assists in whatever way it can to ensure that this occurs.

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the issues remain from a logistical and financial standpoint, from a willingness of the private sector to cooperate. We still have the audacity for optimism within the Ministry and indeed the wider government that the motion will be given all of our energies and synergies to try to come to a positive conclusion. I cannot give a guarantee to that effect because to date the success rate has not been 100 per cent but I live in hope.

The Speaker: The elected Member for Red bay.

Hon. Alden McLaughlin: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the Minister being very careful with her words. But the question I asked is whether or not the Cabinet has approved or will approve such a policy. There are many things people in the private sector don't agree with, but this House and the Cabinet has the authority to ensure that the necessary steps are taken by legislation, if not by policy, with particular matters which affect the quality of life of all who live here.

The Speaker: The Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As indicated to the Honourable Member, a note was prepared to Cabinet setting out all of the different issues, challenges and decisions that needed to be made. For example, unlike the government schools where there are catchment areas in the private sector, there is no such thing. So, there were logistical issues with that. If the Member wishes, I can share offline in summary, the note that was put to the Cabinet. I say offline, unless he wants it in writing. Although I have the Cabinet paper note with I don't have the permission to share at this stage. Having been in Cabinet before, it requires a consent to share it and I would not want to be in breach. However, subject to the consent, I am happy to go through with Honourable Member and his colleagues, the findings that the Ministry made. They went to Cabinet and pretty much, the extract came back and said 'duly noted', but discussions ensued agreeing that there were some severe restrictions since seeing the policy being become reality.

Hon. Alden McLaughlin: Thank you, Madam Speaker. One final supplementary, with your permission.

Madam Speaker, the Minister has referred to a Cabinet note I take it therefore—which is merely advisory—that there has been no Cabinet Paper proposing this introduction of this policy and therefore no decision yet; no decision yet by the Cabinet to implement such a policy.

The Speaker: The Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the very detailed and thought out note that was prepared by the technical staff within the Ministry was presented in the exact same detail and it was decided based on that, that it was not necessary at this time. We were seeking a steer and the steer was that the concerns within the paper were noted. Because the concerns were serious enough, it was not necessary... I certainly was not given a green light to prepare paper. Subject to such policies being accepted, subject to the funding, subject to the child's safety concerns, subject to the private sector and the government sector and the actual persons who had the bus transition...

One of the concerns that members may wish to add was that they had no guarantee unless government bought the buses themselves because it had to go to bid, they would go and invest this kind of money into new buses—which it would require new buses—and then it would be for two or three-year contract with no guarantee that those contracts would be renewed. So, there are a number of considerations to be done. It is still a work in progress, but until I am given the funding, direction and support from all members, that is the best I can do, Madam Speaker.

QUESTION NO. 4 - WITHDRAWN CHANGES TO THE NATIONAL PENSIONS ACT AS PER PRIVATE MEMBER'S MOTION NO. 17 OF 2022-2023

The Speaker: The Elected Member for Bodden Town West.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders, Elected Member for Bodden Town West: Madam Speaker, with the issuance yesterday, three months and nine days after the unanimous passage of the motion, draft changes to the National Pensions Law has been gazetted, I withdraw the question at this time.

STATEMENTS BY HONOURABLE MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

The Speaker: None.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

The Speaker: None.

OBITUARY AND OTHER CEREMONIAL SPEECHES

The Speaker: Honourable Members, we haven't received any statements, but I know that there were a number of persons within our community who experienced significant losses since we last met.

Right here in this honourable House, two of our very own Members, both suffered the significant loss of their beloved mothers. The elected Member for Savannah, her mom, Ms. Mary Bodden; and the elected Member for George Town North, his mom, Mrs. Lorna Valma Hew. On behalf of this honourable House, I want to extend condolences to both Members.

In addition, our former Minister, Ms. Tara Rivers and her sister Ms. Liana from West Bay, have just lost their dad, Mr. Irvin Rivers; and I also want to offer my condolences.

In just a few minutes, I will also give Members an opportunity to offer any condolences that they may wish to share. However, before I do, I also want to offer condolences to the family of Ms. Deborah Bodden. When I think of her, I think that we have lost a young, hardworking, dedicated, lifelong civil servant because I know that she spent her entire life as a civil servant, and many of us know her affectionately as Debbie.

I've been advised by both the Minister of Financial Services and the Deputy Governor that they also wish to extend their condolences. I will make it brief because I would imagine we have other Members who would like to speak. However, I would like to put on record the huge loss that Debbie's death brings. For me, on a personal note, she was a good friend. She was with me from the very beginning of my legal journey, and we spent lots of time together with her young children.

Today, I want to offer condolences to her parents, and to her children Matthew and Alexander. Also, again, just to say what a huge loss her death brings to our country.

If any other Member would wish to offer condolences at this time, please indicate.

The Honourable Deputy Governor.

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

Madam Speaker, I join you in offering condolences to all Members who lost their loved ones. However, I do want to speak a little bit about Deborah Bodden. We were all saddened by her passing.

Just a brief history of her tenure within the Civil Service, and as you said, it was a long and distinguished one. She started in the Civil Service in September 2002 as a counsellor at the Caribbean Haven. She then moved to the Portfolio of Internal & External Affairs which is now the Deputy Governor's Office, on

1st September, 2007, where she was an Administrative Officer II.

Madam Speaker, in February 2010, when I was the Chief Officer in that Portfolio, I had the pleasure of appointing her as the Manager of the Commissions Secretariat, which, as we all know, was set up to support the constitutional commissions set up under our new Constitution that came into force in 2009. That was the Constitutional Commission, the Human Rights Commission, Judicial and Legal Services Commission and the Commission for Standards in Public Life.

She did such a great job setting up those Commissions that we decided to give her some more work. We added the Civil Service Appeals Commission and the Anti-Corruption Commission to her workload, and she expertly managed those six commissions. She did her job exceptionally well; she was dedicated. Managing those six commissions was a very difficult job. You are dealing with members of the judiciary, senior members of the private sector who are leading these commissions, you have to navigate the work of those commissions interacting with the civil service; and she was able to do that job very well.

She was known for her quick wit, for her dedication, for her integrity. She took great pride in doing her job at a very high level. She was a very private person. Many of us had no idea that she was sick. [As a] matter of fact, I can say with a high degree of confidence that she managed those commissions from overseas while she was getting treatment and no one even realised that she was not in office because of her responsiveness and her ability to multitask. I don't think I've known anyone who could multitask as well as Deb.

She was then later appointed in August 2021 to be a Cayman Islands Government representative overseas. She was to be sent to Brussels.

Madam Speaker, as you correctly said, we have lost an outstanding civil servant, who was dedicated to the service of our people, and for service to the Government. [Her Excellency,] Governor Owen has asked me to also extend her condolences to the family.

[Former] Governor Roper, also asked me to do the same. He said, *Lizzie and I are hugely saddened to learn of Debbie's tragic passing. I worked with her very closely, as did previous governors, on many important and sensitive issues. She carried out her work duties in a highly diligent, conscientious and tactful manner and was a credit to the Civil Service. I was pleased to be able to award her a Cert. Hon. [Certificate of Honour] for her outstanding work establishing the commissions and her contributions to the good governance of our Islands.*

In addition, Madam Speaker, to what the Governor said in terms of her being awarded a Cert. Hon., I nominated her for what she did in the Commissions but also for what she did during COVID. Obviously, the Commissions were not functioning during COVID for obvious reasons, and she quickly pivoted to working many, many long hours, time away from her dear sons,

managing isolation facilities, making sure that people were being properly cared for.

Debbie was not someone who wanted to stand still; she wanted to serve, she wanted to make people's lives better and she did that in a very special way.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of all of us in the Civil Service; Her Excellency, the Governor, Ms. Jane Owen; and all Members here, I want to offer sincere condolences to her family, especially her dear sons Matthew and Alexander who we all know she loved dearly. May her soul rest in peace. Thank you.

The elected Member for West Bay West.

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Elected Member for West Bay West: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, as you have said, there were several outstanding citizens we lost since the House last met. I won't speak at length on many of them that I've been associated with in my long political career, but I do want to mention Mr. Brainard Watler who died suddenly, and his acumen, his sensibilities of things Caymanian, his knowledge and his involvement.

At times, he was on the platform with the United Democratic Party [UDP] which I led at one time, and his knowledge, his common sense, and I'd say his background of things Caymanian, led so much to solid advice.

I knew him and his good wife, Ms. Maizie who passed away before him. I was associated with them and [had] been at their house discussing so many different things; and to say that we have lost a good Caymanian, is just small words.

I do offer my condolences and I trust that what I have said and will say will be forwarded to family members.

Also, Madam Speaker, a young man I would have to say, he was entering his sixties or 60th birthday I think, is the late **Mr. William Connolly** formerly of East End, but well known to us here in Cayman; and particularly those of us who worked with him. William was one of Cayman's greatest ambassadors in tourism. A great pity, Madam Speaker, that in his last years, he was not afforded an opportunity to work, as he could have contributed much but didn't get the chance. [He was] sick for quite a long time.

I do recall in the tourism plan, although I had moved for a tourism school in my first term in the Executive Council, he was with me and we went from district to district to promote the school even offering \$250 or \$300 a month to students. We went throughout these Islands to promote it. Only 10 students took up the opportunity to attend the courses at the Community College, so that fell by the wayside after I left the Executive Council.

Then, in my last term in Cabinet, when I was Minister of Tourism 2009-2012, I took up that opportunity again to promote the establishment of a Hospitality Training Institute of some kind. I gave William charge over it, put an executive secretary with him and they

produced the Programme. When I left it, I don't think it was all ready to roll, and the incoming Minister, the now Minister for Cayman Brac [West and Little Cayman] who was Minister of Tourism at the time, pushed ahead with it and established it. I don't know if they did all that William had envisioned because William had grand plans, he was a grand planner. However, things Caymanian and pushing for Caymanian workers, and from the day I know about when he entered Hyatt, [he] became a leading force in management there; and going off to the United States and leading there, he became a true ambassador for our Islands. That kind of knowledge didn't push through until his passing because he didn't get to work. Thus, I pay tribute to him.

One of the things that he did also—his knowledge was vast in commerce as well—he opened the Hong Kong office for us. When I, as leader of the government and the Minister of Commerce at the time, pushed ahead with opening offices, in New York, in Dubai and that one in Hong Kong, William actually was the man in charge of the one in Hong Kong. For those things, we can put down in our history book that he did his part, a good Rotarian and in other aspects of community life. Of course, he was a good supporter of McKeever Bush but nothing wrong with that, more of you should do that too. However, Madam Speaker, we give great thanks to him for his work, his knowledge that he gave and the things he did for many, many Caymanian workers in the tourism industry.

Madam Speaker, although I have personally extended my condolences to the Hew family, Mr. Lenny and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, his son; I want to extend here and to place on Hansard record my condolences on their loss of Ms. Valma, as she was known to me.

Ms. Valma was my constituent from 1984 and remained in West Bay West where she lived all that time; my current constituency. She was a wonderful, wonderful lady and a devoted mother and wife. I knew and was associated with all the children, and was Sunday School teacher and youth leader in the church at times where they attended. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, his sister and Mr. Richard, who I think, still leads CUC, all three of them were in my Sunday School class at times and in our youth group, although the Deputy Leader of the Opposition skipped at times and made her believe that he was in Sunday School.

She was a wonderful, wonderful ambassador in many ways for our Islands. Again, in our tourism industry. My mother worked with her for many years—and I know and I have complained as Minister of Labour and fought it as the Minister of Tourism and still continue to fight that battle of gratuities for workers—[and] my mother always said, as long as she worked in the tourism industry, the one person they knew that they were getting their gratuities from was Valma Hew. My mother over the years said that, and remained respectful and a friend to Ms. Valma. Ms. Valma treated her workers, her Caymanian ladies, and many of them, if

not all, of course, because of the tourism industry, were from the district of West Bay where she lived.

Of course, she was not born in West Bay, did not live all her life in West Bay, but the greater part of her life was lived in that community. She enjoyed the sport of football. The one thing that I appreciated, and I liked to go sit by her to watch the games, was when the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was on one team and Richard was on the next. One time she was pushing for Richard, and when he would lose she would say, *awe*. Then she would say, *come on, Joey, come on, Joey*. It was just fun to sit with her and humorous at times when you have children playing in opposition to each other. They were good times and we shall miss her.

I certainly, as I see it, counted her continuously, even with the Deputy Leader on the opposite side when he got pulled into politics, but that didn't separate my friendship with much of the family, including Ms. Valma and Mr. Lenny. I shall always respect them for what they did in the community, the people they helped, the ideas that they came forward with, and they worked together as a team. Mr. Lenny was in insurance at times in the early days, and Ms. Valma, as I said, in the tourism industry, managing the condominium industry. A great and good ambassador.

I have also had family members, the one you just mentioned was Tara's father who is my cousin and his mother was my great-aunt, and we shall have his funeral on Saturday.

My last mention is my own aunt who passed away suddenly. She was a stalwart, a great defender of me. I don't have only but one aunt left but she died suddenly; she walked into the hospital and was transferred to the next one and walked into that one and passed away.

She had her likes and dislikes. I recall when I first was going to run and I told her, she was overjoyed, but when I told her who I was going to run with, she told me I was an idiot. That was in 1980, but by '84 they were on my side and understood, and because I was her nephew, of course, she was a great defender and supporter. She had one child and she knew parenthood and of course, now grandchildren and great-grandchildren as she was 82 years when she passed away suddenly. Thus, I want to record our loss as well, and thank the House for your kind indulgence.

The Speaker: Before I call on the Honourable Member for West Bay South, I also want to mention that I failed to draw attention to the Member for George Town South who also lost her brother suddenly since we last met, and want to convey condolences to you as well.

The Honourable Member for West Bay South.

Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I'm glad you covered that because if you didn't, I was going to extend condolences to the Member for George Town South, whose brother was a West Bay South constituent. Condolences ma'am, and to all the

other names that were mentioned and all those who may not have been mentioned, there has been a lot of death in our Islands since the last time we met.

I join again to give condolences to my predecessor for West Bay South, on the loss of her father; and Brainard Watler, who I considered an in-law. However, when you are married to someone from Savannah, in-law is a wide term, but he was no doubt an in-law. I was saddened because so many times I have driven past his house and every time I ever saw him, he always would say, *now that you're in the business of politics, please do stop by anytime for advice*. There were many times where something would be on my mind, but because you're rushing back and forth, I'd passed by the house. Once I was sitting at the service, I thought, I could have stopped by one more time because in his case, it was a sudden passing. I think the family found it unexpected. Again, that is why we have to say what we need to say when we can.

I do rise in the capacity though, as the Minister of Financial Services and Commerce, if we could just go back briefly to the passing of Debbie Bodden. It was stunning; someone so vibrant, intelligent, articulate. It just was shocking news. I received the news early on a Sunday morning and I had to ask twice because it didn't occur to me that someone of her age, even though I knew of some of the struggles, that it could possibly be her, so I asked twice. Deputy Governor, if you remember it was Sunday morning that we were in church together, and I told you and you had the exact look on your face as I had when I read the WhatsApp. We were just both speechless and stunned. She was everything, Madam Speaker that you recalled earlier, and everything that the Deputy Governor recalled. We'll always have fond memories.

Madam Speaker, you'll remember when you were the Parliamentary Secretary for Financial Services and we did our first trip to Brussels in 2021, me, you, Gene DaCosta and Debbie Bodden. If you remember, we were meeting an extremely high-ranking EU official that Cayman had never met yet. However, Debbie was fearless. She did the research, the profile, the background, and that is even in the face of having a paid adviser in Brussels who knew the territory better than the rest of us. She still made sure to vet their work to be sure that we were prepared. I think she was probably the least nervous out of the four of us based on her over 20 years' experience as a civil servant, she was ready. Even if it wasn't a field that she had great familiarity with. I think her process driven mind didn't allow her to be nervous. She was determined, dedicated, detailed; and it's an eerie feeling. I don't know how many other Ministers have experienced it, but it's an eerie feeling to work with someone so closely and then look across at their cubicle and they are gone. Again, in that case, many of us didn't get a chance to say what we could have said.

If she were here now, she should know that the Cayman Islands has lost an *outstanding* public servant

who made sure i's were dotted, t's crossed, advice was given whether you liked the advice or not, it was given and it was given in full, frank, and an intelligent manner.

We extend our sympathies to her family and may she rest in peace.

The Speaker: The Honourable Minister for Health and Wellness.

Hon. Sabrina T. Turner, Minister of Health and Wellness and Home Affairs, Elected Member for Prospect: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like to put on record and express my sincere condolences for the loss of a colleague, civil servant and friend. Even though I wasn't directly placed [in] or worked with Customs, Mr. William James Watson. From years of being in the Immigration Department in my earlier days, we exchanged words in between flights and there is a connection there because of my late grandmother was also a dialysis patient. With that connection, I want to express sincere condolences to his family and definitely his sister.

On the late Ms. Emmie June Piercy Brunson who I'd like to extend my sincere condolences to the grieving family, having [been] raised up around her in the Elgin Avenue area, right there in that little square with the Godfrey's and the Nicholas'. It's amazing how much of our good people we are also losing.

Also, our veteran, the late Mr. William David Smalldon. To the Smalldon family, he did so much. He's contributed so much also to the Prison Service to which I have the honour of being the [Minister as] Minister of Home Affairs, and I would like to publicly convey my sincere condolences to that family and thank them for their support and thank him publicly for his support as a veteran and for what he has given during his time.

Last but not least, I would like to also put on record and express public condolences to the family of Pastor Wesley Nyack. This has been a huge loss to the Seventh Day Adventist community. Even though this man was small in stature, he was a giant when it came to spreading the Word. I wish to express my sincere and deepest condolences to all of these families.

Thank you for this opportunity.

The Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour, Minister of Border Control and Labour, Elected Member for Bodden Town East: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I too stand to say that I knew Deborah well. We grew up in the same Bodden Town district, our family, we all went to the same Sunday School at Presbyterian church, now Bodden Town United. She was definitely professional, very intelligent and served the country well. My condolences to her and her family, and her sons especially.

I also want to give condolences to Ms. Gelia [van Genderen] from Water Authority, her mom passed

away yesterday, Ms. Veta Frederick, and I want to give my condolences.

Madam Speaker, as you mentioned earlier, so sad that we're losing so many Caymanians. It seems that we only meet at funerals now. Please allow me to share a list of Caymanians who passed away: Ms. Petra Kelly, Bodden Town; Ms. Andeen Sanderson, Mr. William Conolly, Mr. Rudy Ebanks, Mr. Brainard Watler who I knew well; also Mr. Frank Watler, a very good friend; Customs and Border Control (CBC) Officer Mr. William Watson and his dad Mr. Max; Mr. Lindbergh Webster, Ms. Althea Seymour, Mr. Lewis Berry.

Also, from the Members of the House, Ms. Barbara [brother] Mr. Searle Bodden; Ms. Heather, if I may call you by your first name, your mom Ms. Mary [was] a sweet soul.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour: Yes, my grandmother's friend. Also, to my good friend Joey, Member for George Town North, and to all the family [on the passing of] his mum Ms. Valma. Also, one of my constituents Mr. Wesley Nyack who passed away, [to] his wife and their sons, my condolences to you. Also, Mr. Adrian West, Pilot, Cayman Airways; I wish their families comfort, and again, my condolences. Thank you.

The Speaker: Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Madam Speaker, thank you.

Madam Speaker, we have rightly, I think, taken the time to recognise the loss of so many of our wonderful citizens and I certainly want to join in putting on record my condolences to their families.

Ms. Mary, the mother of the representative for Savannah, obviously a wonderful Caymanian lady who was very near and dear to me and so many others. She was the matriarch, almost, of much of our community. She was someone who nominated me for the last election, and I was certainly very proud of that. I was proud of having her support and guidance, just knowing her as an incredibly wonderful person.

Madam Speaker, I want to extend as well, as most have done, profound condolences to the Member for George Town North on the loss of his lovely mother. A lady with an incredible history, someone who you could put, I think, any Caymanian man beside her and look at their life history and see no difference, in terms of achievement. Of course, she was also a mother to wonderful children who have achieved so much and I certainly will join in extending condolences again, because I have done previously. Also, to my friend, the Member for George Town South, condolences on the passing of her brother, as other Members have noted. We certainly join in their loss and grief.

Madam Speaker, there has been mention by many members of the passing of Ms. Deborah Bodden.

As you have noted Madam Speaker, she was a fantastic person. Others have noted what a dedicated public servant she was, mother; and I think you also noted, Madam Speaker, one of the interesting things about her having that incredible wit, but she also had a very sharp tongue. As many will know, and as many found out in unfortunate circumstances. I remember at times having a laugh when she would unleash it on others until the day that she unleashed it on me, but it didn't change my views of her or my respect for her, for all the reasons my colleagues have noted. She was an absolutely dedicated person and as the Honourable Deputy Governor noted, throughout all of her illness, she performed at a very high level and most people would never have known what she was dealing with.

Madam Speaker, we also lost a young Caymanian pilot with Cayman Airways as the Minister for Border Control noted, Mr. Adrian 'Josh' West; completely unexpected. He seemed to be the picture of health; he was someone who was enjoying a career, his lifelong dream as a pilot. Madam Speaker, some of his friends told me about all the conversations they had with him, and how he was thinking that he was too old to get into the industry, to change professions to become a pilot. They encouraged him, *don't give up on your dream*, and he did it, he did it. I have a picture of him, Madam Speaker, it must have been a selfie, I think, that he took, where he was leaning out of the first officers window on the Max-8, and that always stands in my memory as one which greatly represents what a young man can dream and achieve and just what a wonderful person he was. We all miss him greatly.

Madam Speaker, he was a constituent. I will certainly greatly miss him; I will miss driving by the house and seeing the chair that he would sit in with his wife; [it's] empty now. I extend condolences to all.

Another constituent, Madam Speaker, who was lost under tragic circumstances was Ms. Rachel Forbes. She was the mother of a Member of the Cabinet Office, and she's the aunt of two other senior civil servants. Again, I would extend condolences to all of them.

Madam Speaker, William Watson was a classmate of mine and the Honourable Deputy Governor. He too was a very dedicated civil servant. Someone who, was an absolute gentle, wonderful person who enjoyed all the things that... I mean, I think he continued throughout his life, enjoying the things that most boys talk about and do. He was just a wonderful person. He had challenges, I think, probably not long after he began his working career and he was fortunate enough to find ways to overcome some of them from a health perspective, but others obviously he was not able to. He was another relatively young Caymanian that we have lost from our communities, from the civil service. A person dedicated to serving the people of the Cayman Islands.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Brainard Watler, as has been mentioned, is someone I certainly want to extend

condolences to all of his family and friends. As the Minister of Financial Services & Commerce and Investment, Innovation & Social Development noted he was an in-law for him, but he felt that way for so many other people as well. He was a friend to so many. He was a repository of Caymanian history, and when you heard him speak you understood that he was the same for Caymanian culture and Caymanian identity. Thus, we certainly extend condolences to his family.

Mr. Lindbergh Webster, Madam Speaker, I was very close to all my life, I don't remember a day in my life that I didn't know Mr. Webster. He was both a father and a brother and a very good friend to me, to my brothers and some of my cousins, so he was a big loss as well.

Pastor Nyack was another incredible loss within our community, within the Seventh Day Adventist church community. Just an incredible gentleman and as the Minister for Health and Wellness noted, despite his short height, he cast a very long shadow. [There are] so many others, Madam Speaker, who we could mention but one that I...

Madam Speaker, you know, there are obviously situations in life where we lose many who are at an older stage in life and it is painful, it hurts, and sometimes it's completely unexpected. However, it's even worse, Madam Speaker, when you lose those who are younger. I want to pay tribute particularly, Madam Speaker, to a young Caymanian, an incredible young woman, who I had the very distinct honour and privilege to work with, and that is Dr. Celine Manoosingh.

Madam Speaker, hers was a short but very impactful life. She was a very bright Caymanian young woman whose star was extinguished far too soon. She was a great role model for any young Caymanian, particularly those going through the public-school system. You see, Madam Speaker, she went through Savannah School as it was then, or the Joanna Clarke Primary School as we know it now. She went through the various iterations of public high schools. She then went on to do a degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering, a Masters degree in Engineering, and a PhD in Civil Engineering, all at the University of South Florida, with a concentration on sustainability in the built environment. Madam Speaker, that led her to approach me to tell me that, even though she was a tenured professor out of university in Georgia, she wanted to take a sabbatical—which she was entitled to take—to come to work in the government because she wanted more than anything else in the world to make a significant contribution, to use her years of training and developed expertise, to help her beloved Cayman Islands.

Madam Speaker, her parents, Ralph and Jasmine Manoosingh are both retired teachers who served this country and the public education system in Cayman for over 20 years. She has a brother who also has a PhD, so there are obviously a family of considerable achievers. However, it was just so significant that all of

this, all of her basic education was in Cayman Islands public schools and she achieved so much.

Madam Speaker, I will greatly miss her. Those who work around me, my colleagues, my friends, they will greatly miss this incredible young lady. She was someone who didn't just achieve things here, she was recognised even in the US. She was a representative of the National Science Foundation that is based in Washington. She served on a committee which had been set up by the current administration focusing on resiliency, renewable energy, sustainable smart cities and green infrastructure; all of which she wanted to continue to do as she wanted to bring that expertise and assist her beloved Cayman Islands.

Madam Speaker, we will greatly miss her. I extend deepest condolences to her family, her parents, her brother, and her many friends here in the Cayman Islands and overseas.

Madam Speaker, I thank you very much for indulging me.

The Speaker: Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to rise on behalf of the Opposition to express our condolences and sympathies to everyone today who is grieving the loss of loved ones.

Madam Speaker, there are many, I cannot recall a time in the 10 ½ years I have been a part of this Parliament where we have taken this much time and had so many people to recognise and pay homage to who have passed on in this community. Everyone in here is grieving and within the community, you talk to people and they recognise and say the same things; there are so many people who have passed on in the past month, two months, that it's difficult to recall a time in our history where there was just so much sadness.

I especially wanted to express condolences to all the Members in here who have directly lost loved ones. We mentioned the Member for Savannah, Deputy Leader [of the Opposition], and also the Member for George Town South on the loss of their loved ones; and say on behalf of the Opposition that we grieve with you all and we continue to pray and to uphold you, and pray that you will find comfort in the memories that you have of the time you had with your loved ones. That is really all we have left now; it's the memories. Let's cherish those times.

I also especially wanted at this time Madam Speaker, to mention Ms. Debbie Bodden and her untimely passing because it truly came as a shock to me. I learned about her passing a few days after she had gone, before I think, the word really started to get out publicly of her passing. To say I was shocked would be an understatement.

Madam Speaker, I knew Debbie very well. She was the first director of the secretariat when it was

formed in the 2010/11 period. I was one of the first commissioners on the Commission for Standards in Public Life appointed by then Governor Duncan Taylor. I think it was probably late 2010 because I know we truly started the work of the Commission in 2011 and Deborah was there and I had the privilege to work with her for a good two years before I was forced to resign when I announced my candidacy for the 2013 elections.

I just always remember the dedication and zeal and commitment which Deborah brought to her position and her job. She was blazing a trail. We were setting up something new, but this lady immersed herself into it. The Premier mentioned her wit, I saw it; he mentioned her sharp tongue, I saw that too.

[Laughter]

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Leader of the Opposition: Those things do stand out in terms of your memory. However, there is one thing I can say about Deborah, when she came to a meeting she was prepared and she had your answers, and she led with a zeal and a commitment that you find so rarely today. Deputy Governor, I'll say to you, she was the epitome of what it takes to be a world class civil service. I don't have any shame in saying that. She was that type of person.

I was so happy when I heard that she was being selected to go to Brussels because like my good friend the Minister of Financial Services mentioned, she was so well prepared and made sure she was knowledgeable of what you were doing and what you were trying to accomplish, I know that she would have been a success over there. It's unfortunate that didn't pan out.

Obviously, Deborah was truly sick, she was far sicker than we all knew and appreciated. All I can say for her and in terms of the work that she did, is that we will remember her and the example that she has left for us all and for the wider civil service as well.

To everyone today who is grieving, deepest condolences to you, and let us always remember that we really have no idea when life is over. We have all experienced that in the last two months in a very big way.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Honourable Member for Cayman Brac West and Little Cayman.

Mr. Moses I. Kirkconnell, Elected Member for Cayman Brac West and Little Cayman: Thank you Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I rise to join voice with all of the previous speakers and offer condolences to all the community members who have been named. I would like to especially acknowledge my good friend, MP Heather Bodden on the loss of Ms. Mary; and I would also like to acknowledge Ms. Barbara Connolly on the loss of her brother. I would also like to just say a few

words about Ms. Valma, a good Cayman Bracker. Her children, obviously, I'm very close to Joey and Richie; the other ones [are] lifelong friends.

Ms. Valma was known and respected and loved in Cayman Brac. I can say that she was the same for all three Islands. In Cayman Brac when she came with Mr. Lenny, you will hear people say, *Ms. Valma is on the Island you know, got to look for her*; and she welcomed everybody. She was a good wife to Mr. Lenny a good husband, beautiful family, successful family. She was a good mother, but Ms. Valma had the ability to attract more than just her children. They had a club called Naya and every person on that team would consider her their mother or some close relative, that when they needed something they could go see Mr. Lenny and Ms. Valma. Very, very special lady. She will be missed.

I want to bring condolences to Joey and his family, especially from all of the Cayman Brackers who were not able to get down to the funeral and have so much love for that family. A life well lived.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the time.

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Joseph X. Hew, Deputy: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, first let me also extend my condolences as I did previously, but to all the family of our colleagues. [My] colleague from Savannah and your mom, we shared a lot of intimate moments reminiscing. To my colleague George Town South, Ms. Barbara, on the passing of her brother Searle; and to all of those who have been through the pain of a loss recently, no matter how prepared you think you are, you never are. I will say that I will keep you all in my prayers, and I never knew what that meant either until recently. However, on behalf of the Hew and Dilbert family, I just want to thank everyone for the outpouring of messages and comfort and condolences that we all received.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Honourable Members, I take this time to agree with the Honourable Leader of the Opposition that we have taken much time today to pay our respects to our citizens who have passed and also to our fellow colleagues. Yes, it has taken a significant amount of time out of our order of business, however, they are most deserving of this honour.

I think it is now an appropriate time to take a break for our lunch hour and we will resume at 1.45 p.m. Thank you.

Proceedings suspended at 12.42 p.m.

Proceedings resumed at 1:47pm

The Speaker: Proceedings are now resumed. You may be seated.

RAISING OF MATTERS OF PRIVILEGES

The Speaker: None.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

BILLS

FIRST READINGS

Public Lands (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2023

The Speaker: The Bill is deemed to have been read a first time and is set down for a second reading.

Plant Protection Bill, 2023

The Speaker: The Bill is deemed to have been read for the first time and is set down for a second reading.

Terminal Charges (Validation) Bill, 2023

The Speaker: The Bill is deemed to have been read a first time and is set down for a second reading.

Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Bill, 2023

The Speaker: The Bill is deemed to have been read a first time and is set down for a second reading.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Members, we will take a five-minute suspension. I ask you to stay in your seats.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Proceedings are now resumed. You may be seated.

SECOND READINGS

Public Lands (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2023

The Speaker: The Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I beg to move the second reading of a Bill entitled the Public Lands (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2023.

The Speaker: The Bill has been duly moved. Does the mover wish to speak thereto?

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I rise to present the Bill on behalf of the Government. The Bill seeks to clarify, and indeed improve, the composition of the members of the Public Lands Commission.

Madam Speaker, the Bill is needed to rectify the composition of the said commission; the voting rights of members, the term limits of members, and the validation of members due to the ill intention of the existing Public Lands Act— that is the Act limits the terms of the members to two years, and in the small pool of available persons, it makes it difficult to find competent persons with only having one possible extension to the initial two-year term.

Madam Speaker, on the issue of the composition of membership: The current public members of the commission represent the six historic districts; however, from these six members, one is elected as Chairperson and as such, that district is deprived of a vote other than having a casting vote on the matters arising before the PLC meetings. The (Amendment) Bill seeks to change this, and indeed provides each historical district with a Member, plus an additional Member as the Chairperson, all of whom must be Caymanian.

Madam Speaker, the (Amendment) Bill, importantly, also adds the Chief Officer a designate for the Minister responsible for Planning. Planning matters, and the matters dealt with by the PLC are usually linked, and as such it is important, Madam Speaker, that such an addition is being made to the PLC.

The (Amendment) Bill also clarifies the civil servants' role on the commission as being that of ex officio— that is, non-voting members of the commission. They are to provide their guidance, advice and expertise to matters, but [it would be] the members of the public who would now vote and decide the matters. This is a well-needed change.

Additionally, Madam Speaker, the current Principal Act sets term limits for members of the commission to a two-year term plus one additional two-year term. The intention of the principal Act is therefore to remove this limitation. This provides for continuity of the commission, as well as retention of historical knowledge.

Madam Speaker last, and perhaps most importantly, Clause four sets out a validation of existing members that may have surpassed their term limits based on the existing Act. These persons have deep-rooted love for the country, and we believe seek to protect the interests of our Caymanians by serving on this important commission.

As noted earlier, Madam Speaker, the inadvertent issue in the principal Act has caused the person to only be able to serve a maximum of four years, according to the legal advice that we are the beneficiaries

thereof— that is two two-year terms. The Government recognises, Madam Speaker, the need to retain members of our community on important boards such as the PLC. We have taken this step then, to validate their continued work and hope to retain such on the commission going forward.

The Bill, Madam Speaker is arranged in four clauses:

Clause 1 of the Bill makes provision for the short title.

Clause 2 provides for the amendment of the principal Act by repealing and substituting section 6 in order to provide for the chairperson to be not only a Caymanian appointed by Cabinet, apart from the Caymanian members appointed under subsection (1) (b); but the clause also provides for Cabinet to appoint the Deputy Chairperson from among the six Caymanian members of the commission from each of the six traditional districts, as set out in subsection (1) (b).

Clause 2 Madam Speaker, removes the term limits for the commission by providing that after the expiry of the initial two years term, members may be re-appointed for additional two-year terms without a set limit on the number of times that they may be re-appointed.

Clause 2 Madam Speaker, provides that the civil servants of the commission, as is set out in subsection (1) (c) to (g) are ex-officio members and as such are not entitled to vote.

Clause 3 provides for deletions and substitutions of specific words to ensure consistency throughout the entire piece of legislation that is drafted.

Clause 4 validates the appointments of members of the commission who were re-appointed for a term beyond the maximum permitted under section 6 of the principal Act. The clause provides that their appointment shall be treated as if they were made under the amending and validating Act.

The clause further provides, Madam Speaker, that the acts or omissions of the commission members shall not be regarded as invalid by reason only of their appointments being for a period beyond the term permitted under the principal Act— that is, Madam Speaker, that following the expiry of the appointments on 1st December, 2021 up to the date that this amending and validating Act comes into force.

Madam Speaker, Clause 4 further provides that the commission should not be regarded as improperly constituted from 1st December 2021, up to the commencement of the Act because of the reappointment of the commission members beyond the date of expiry for their second two-year term.

Madam Speaker, since the publication of the (Amendment) Bill, changes have been further identified, and we have therefore sought to make Committee Stage Amendments during the Committee Stage, which I shall speak further to at the appropriate time.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, this concludes the presentation of the proposed amendments. I look

forward to making those said amendments at Committee Stage which we've filed one in July, and we sought leave today for the wave of today's notice on the second amendment.

Madam Speaker, I wish to thank the Public Lands Commission, the Honourable Attorney General's Chambers, the Legislative Drafting Department and my ministerial staff, for their valiant efforts in respect of the preparation of this Bill.

I therefore commend the Public Lands (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2023, to this Honourable House. May it please you.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to be able to make some comments on the Public Lands (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2023.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Opposition, I indicate quite clearly that we support the Bill and the amendments that it is making to the Public Lands Bill itself. Madam Speaker, we understand the changes that are being made, and I understand too, Madam Speaker, subsection (4), particularly where it speaks to the membership of the committees where they are elected for two-year periods, but will now be eligible for election to and reappointment to further two-year terms. That, Madam Speaker, is a change because I believe they were limited, as you said in presenting the Bill, to just one further two-year term.

Madam Speaker, I do know that there are a number of Acts on boards and committees that have similar sorts of restrictions in terms of the limits that a person may serve on boards. I wonder if this is a policy direction of the Government with regard to maybe amending other legislations similarly, to conform with language here. If the Minister is able to indicate whether that is the case, I would be grateful for it.

Other than that, Madam Speaker, we have no further observations on the Bill and are happy to support it at the appropriate time when voting for it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders, Elected Member for Boddan Town West: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I just have a few observations on this Bill. First of all, Madam Speaker, I couldn't help but notice that this Public Lands Bill was first passed by Parliament back in March 2017 or thereabouts, at the same time as the Public Authorities Act, so, I wonder if they are basically looking for some similarity in the spirits of both laws, seeing that they arrived at Parliament at pretty much the same time.

Madam Speaker, something that jumped out at me, while looking at the Bill was the actual membership, because in the first Bill the civil servants who were on the committee were not recognised, or deemed at the time, as ex-officio members, whereas in this Amendment it makes it perfectly clear that they are so.

With that said, Madam Speaker, it would indicate that the original membership of the Public Lands Commission went from ten members, as it was originally—I think there were six representatives from the different districts, where both the Chair and the Deputy Chair came from being one of the six, and then the four civil servants. Under this amendment it is moving to twelve members, so one of the things that I am a bit curious about, Madam Speaker, is the quorum, because the quorum has remained at five members, which originally would have been half of the ten members who were there, but now it is seven voting members with the rest being ex-officio members. Is it the intention that the quorum remains at five?

The other observation I made, Madam Speaker, was around the appointment of the Chief Inspector in that, recognising that this is a commission—again, looking at the spirit of what the Public Authorities Act may have wanted to be—should the commission play a more active role in the appointment of the Inspector to some extent, where either the Chairperson or the committee, as you would have it with a Board of Directors, appoint the CEO to some extent? Maybe the Minister can [provide] that clarification.

Also, the appointment of the Deputy Inspectors, Madam Speaker. That was another issue where I noticed that those are actually appointed by the Chief Inspector per se; and then, if they are an employee from a statutory authority, they would need the CEO's approval, or if it is an employee from another government entity, it would actually need the Chief-Officer's approval. Is it then, that these positions were meant to be part time, or rather not fulltime since, in essence, you can co-op someone from another Ministry?

The three other issues that jumped out were the vendor's permit process, whereas we noticed that there could have been cases where those permits were refused in terms of being renewed or even granted. The question is, is there some kind of appeals process that can basically be put in the law, that if someone's permit is turned down that they feel they have some recourse outside of judicial review, et cetera? Recognising that in some cases, these may be small businesses. Just the appeals' process, Madam Speaker, if someone's permit was not renewed or they were not having any luck.

The last two issues that jumped out, Madam Speaker. One, was these inspectors basically having police powers. I recognised that they are basically giving them the same powers as [police] constables. The question is, Madam Speaker, seeing that the only authority competent to deal with the management of police constables is the Commissioner of Police, in that

situation, would it be prudent to have someone of the Commissioner of Police or a rank above, a gazetted officer or something, also included on the committee as ex-officio members? Because the last thing you want, Madam Speaker, is someone running around with police powers with no one training them— at least we have some comfort that people who are being trained in this field, to carry out the powers of a police constable, have some level of training or supervision.

The last thing that jumped out, Madam Speaker, was the very last part of the law, where it speaks about the duty of care; basically, the commission has no duty of care to do XYZ but, remembering the issue we had, where some young people wanted to use the public beach, was it for jet skiing, Honourable Minister? And they had challenges with regard to insurance, et cetera— what can we put in there to mitigate against those kinds of events?

Those are my observations, but in general, I am in support of what is presented today.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?
[Pause] Does any other Member wish to speak?
[Pause] Does any other Member wish to speak?
[Pause] Does the mover of the Bill wish to exercise their right of reply?

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

First and foremost, let me thank all honourable Members for their expressed and their tacit support for the Bill. There were a number of issues that were raised, first one being from the Honourable Leader of the Opposition as related to boards having similar limitation and whether this is the way forward for the policy. At this current juncture, Madam Speaker, I cannot say that this is the way forward for the policy; but what I can say as it relates to this particular board— and the Member would know well, that some boards are easy to fill. The Cayman Airways and Immigration boards are much more “luxurious” boards in the minds of persons; but this particular board is a most difficult board to fill.

Not only does it take Caymanians who are passionate and have the time available to do it, but those that have the historical knowledge and are cognizant and able to wrap their minds around not only the legality, but the practicality and the social aspect of the law that they wish to implement. If I had full say into it, I would not be advocating for boards to have limitations because the pool of Caymanians that are available and are actually competent to sit on the numerous boards that government has to fill seem to be less and less because many people run away from the declarations of interest not necessarily because there is a cloak of secrecy, but it's a small Island and we don't like everybody to know our business. Purely, that is the fact; so those who are competent, and would have the time, [like] some of the retirees, are not into the drama of letting

the whole world and sundry know everything that you have and what you don't have and what you should have had from what you ought not to have.

As it relates to the membership of civil servants, the Member for Bodden Town West concurred with the proposal of keeping it concurrent with the PAA, whereas civil servants who sit on it to give their guidance and advice, do so in a technical capacity; not as full voting members, but merely ex-officio members.

As it related to the quorum, it was decided that it would remain at five, as we ourselves have full experience of how difficult it is to get quorums on standing committees and select committees. In order for this important commission to operate, we thought it was prudent to keep it at five. Obviously, it can be under active consideration that if all members are so excited and turning up, we could increase it by one, but for the time being, in the interest of the applications that have been there, that need to be fully considered and decisions rendered, five was thought to be what is practical and reasonable within the circumstances.

Should the PLC have a more active role with the appointment of the inspector? I don't think it is something that I can comment on, on the spur the moment without conferencing with the protectors and architects of Section 55 of the Constitution, which falls squarely under the delegated powers of the Honourable Deputy Governor; but I can say, as it relates to having the members of the commission or the inspectors being trained, the lead inspector is an ex policewoman who comes, I am reliably informed, with full knowledge of executions of warrants— serving thereon and all of the aspects that go with it. [I can certainly undertake to the honourable Member that if training has not been in vogue, that training commences, because it is a valid point.](#) What I can say is not void of any training, but there is an experienced person there, I am reliably informed, as that too, does not fall under my recruiting powers. I have zero recruiting powers.

I would like to thank you, Madam Speaker, for your indulgence for allowing me to close and explain this and certainly to thank my Acting Chief Officer in particular, in the Ministry; the Attorney General's Chambers, who have at the very last minute, as we see how to tweak it, to try to get it working better from a holistic perspective, which would be beneficial to all and sundry. Up until today, we sought to make those amendments and I look forward to navigating them when we get to Committee Stage.

I thank you.

The Speaker: The question is that a Bill shortly entitled the Public Lands (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2023 be given a second reading.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Public Lands (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2023 was given a second reading.

Plant Protection Bill, 2023

The Speaker: The Honourable Minister for Planning.

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks, Minister of Planning, Agriculture, Housing & Infrastructure, Elected Member for North Side: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I beg to move the second reading of a Bill entitled the Plant Protection Bill, 2023.

The Speaker: The Bill has been duly moved. Does the mover wish to speak thereto?

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I rise to present the Bill on behalf of the Government. It is a Bill that repeals and replaces the Plant and (Importation of Exportation) Act, (1997 Revision) to provide a comprehensive regime to prevent the introduction and spread of plants and pests; protecting our plants and resources, and facilitating the trade in plants, plant products, and other regulated articles. The Bill does this by establishing a system of powers that can be exercised in the event of a pest outbreak and other phytosanitary emergencies.

Madam Speaker, the Plant Protection Bill, 2023, will be a very important piece of legislation as it aims to improve the protection of cultivated and native plants in the Cayman Islands. This will be done through strengthening and national safeguarding against the entry, establishment and spread of plant pests while facilitating the safe and effective trade of plants and plant products.

Madam Speaker, the Bill also seeks to ensure that we are harmonised with international standards for the safe and regulated trade of plants and plant products, as established by the International Plant Protection Convention.

If I may, Madam Speaker, I would like to provide a brief overview of the Bill to the honourable House and members of the general public. The Bill, Madam Speaker, has seven sections:

Part 1 deals with preliminary matters including definitions and key terms consistent with international standards as set out in the International Plant Protection Convention and the International Standards for Phyto-Sanitary Measures.

Part 2 addresses the administration of the legislation. This is to establish the Department of Agriculture as the National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO), as required under Article IV of the International Plant Protection Convention. Among the other provisions of this section is the establishment of the administrative structure of the NPPO, and the principles

that govern the operations of the NPPO and international movement of plants and plant products.

Part 3 sets out the provisions for imports. Among these provisions are guidelines to provide for the control of the importation of plants, plant products and regulated articles. Madam Speaker, a regulated article is essentially any object or material capable of harbouring or spreading pests—for example, mulch, potting soil or wood packaging material;

Part 4 creates provisions to harmonise national legislation with international standards for the export, re-export and transit of plants, plant products, and regulated articles. An important area under the Bill will be the regulations to export of prescribed plants or plant products. Madam Speaker, this will reduce the red tape for the agriculture exports while retaining the ability to control the export of specific items such as native and endemic plants.

Part 5 provides the mechanisms and authorisations for the control, eradication, and management of introduced pests through various declarations, including declarations of quarantine, pest-free areas, quarantine areas, and phytosanitary emergencies. Along with other sections of the Bill, this will enable the authorities to control the movement of pests, plants and articles in and out of areas where pests have been detected, and to take the actions necessary for eradication and control.

Enforcement will be critical to this legislation, Madam Speaker, [therefore,] Part 6 of the Bill provides the mechanism for the enforcement of the legislation and includes the powers and procedures for an inspector performing his or her duties including the power to search and inspect premises, vehicles and consignments for pests, plants and regulated articles.

One of the noticeable changes being proposed by the Bill, is the provision of the power to the inspector to search and inspect consignments including passengers' luggage. Previously, such power was only vested in Customs and Border Control (CBC) officers, requiring Agricultural Inspectors to wait to be called to inspect, if a CBC officer suspected that a consignment or luggage contained items regulated under the Plants Act. This proved a significant limitation to detection programmes, such as the deployment of agricultural detector dogs at ports of entry.

Finally, Part 7. Madam Speaker, the final section defines how various provisions of the legislation will be administered. It provides the authority to Cabinet to make regulations prescribing all matters that may be required or permitted under the Act.

Madam Speaker, the Government and my Ministry of Agriculture are very aware of the threats to plant health, and the need to combat these threats to ensure the efficient and safe trade in agricultural products. As we strive to adhere to a harmonised plant health system, the Plant Protection Bill will put us several steps closer to achieving this goal.

Madam Speaker, I now seek the full support of the House for the Plant Protection Bill. [Thank you, Madam Speaker.]

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? [Pause] Does any other Member wish to speak? [Pause] Does any—

The Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Joseph X. Hew: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I rise to provide a short contribution to the Plant Protection Bill, 2023.

Madam Speaker, over all, the Official Opposition has no problems with this. We think it is past time in certain areas. Those of us who are not farmers as much as the Member from Red Bay, but backyard gardeners even, understand the struggles of seeing your labour come to fruition because of the pests that we have to deal with, especially if you're trying to stay as organic as possible, so we have no problem with the Bill, Madam Speaker.

I do have a couple of observations; perhaps the Minister could provide some insight in his wrap up. The first one is the declaration of pest-free or low prevalence area as clause 28 (1) of the Bill which reads:

“28 (1) The NPPO may declare an area to be —

- (a) a pest free area in relation to a specific pest, if the NPPO is satisfied that —**
 - (i) the pest is not present in the area;**
 - (ii) phytosanitary measures have been implemented to keep the area free of the pest; and**
 - (iii) a surveillance system has been instituted to verify that the area remains free of the pest; or**
- (b) a low pest prevalence area in relation to a specific pest, if the NPPO is satisfied that —**
 - (i) the pest is present in low levels in the area;**
 - (ii) phytosanitary measures have been implemented to keep the pest levels low; and**
 - (iii) a surveillance system has been instituted to verify that the pest levels remain low.**
- (2) The declaration may prohibit, restrict or impose requirements on entry into the area by anyone or anything.**
- (3) The NPPO shall ensure that an up-to-date list of pest free areas and low pest prevalence areas is published on its website.”**

I think it is well intended, Madam Speaker, but... if West Bay is declared a pest-free area, does it

mean that we have agricultural checks set up at the entrance to West Bay to ensure that no products are brought into that area that could— or is this intended to... And I am being serious here. Was this perhaps intended to protect the Sister Islands should they become pest-free areas.

I know at one point, the Sister Islands were mealy bug free— many, many, many years ago— and you couldn't bring certain plant products [such as] hibiscus, et cetera, between the two Islands, because that area was mainly bug-free. I suspect that is what it is. I don't suspect that we will be setting up pest-free zones and no one can bring or take vegetables or ornamentals from that zone to the next zone; but if the Minister could clarify that for me.

The second part, Madam Speaker, was the declaration of a quarantine area. [In] clause 32 there are declarations of provisional quarantine areas, and it speaks about the NPPO being the head and the powers thereof, but then it goes on to say:

- 32 (1) If the NPPO determines that a quarantine pest is present in an area, whether or not the area has been declared to be a provisional quarantine area, the NPPO shall advise the Minister to declare the area to be a quarantine area.**
- (2) After receiving the advice of the NPPO, the Minister shall declare the area to be a quarantine area.**

It then goes on to say, Madam Speaker, what the declarations are, which are all fine.

I just find it a bit odd; and perhaps someone could assist in explaining the legal jargon behind having the Minister being the person declaring the place a quarantine area and how it's written here— saying that once NPPO has notified the Minister, he *shall* make the area a quarantine area; and if you read it, the declaration of a phytosanitary emergency and the measures, and the quarantine areas and the measures that are there quite drastic.

It's interesting, the way this is written. Perhaps someone could shed some light on it for us.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? [Pause] Does any other Member— the Elected Member for Bodden Town West.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My contribution will actually be quite short.

Madam Speaker, first of all, I want to thank the Honourable Minister for bringing this Bill, especially with budget coming around, et cetera. We have a tendency in this honourable House, every time we are putting together the budget, we have the plan and estimates, and included in the plan and estimates, Madam

Speaker, is normally the list of all the different legislative activities that the Government will seek to undertake during the budget term.

This is actually, Madam Speaker, the plan and estimates from 2016-2017, and included in it at the time was actually to change this law. It is an exercise I have always been quite tedious about, in the sense that we include these legislation as things that we want to get it done, so to finally see a Bill that has been moving from plan and estimates every year, every year, every year to finally making it to the House, I think is quite commendable for the Minister, and on behalf of the people who I represent, I want to thank him.

My only observation on this Bill, Madam Speaker, is in clause 17(4) which deals with import permits reads: **"In addition, if the application is for a permit to import a live or viable specimen of an alien or genetically altered plant, the NPPO shall consult the National Conservation Council before granting the permit."** Madam Speaker, I do have a concern.

I am trying to understand, Madam Speaker, and maybe the Minister can clarify on his closing, what purpose the National Conservation Council (NCC) would serve in this regard. We have seen the challenges, or the issues, that we have had on planning, and the last thing I want to see, Madam Speaker, is the NCC now being inserted into this process. So maybe the Minister can clarify what the purpose is— what they were intending; the spirit of why this was included within the law. I want clarification on that, Madam Speaker. I will just wait to hear the Minister, because then I will decide if I seek to make a Committee Stage amendment. I need a bit more clarification on that.

Outside of that, Madam Speaker, I once again congratulate the Minister and thank him for bringing a Bill that has been outstanding for quite some time which needs to be modernised. With that Madam Speaker, thank you.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

[Pause] Does any other Member wish to speak?

[Pause] Does the mover of the Bill wish to exercise his right of reply?

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Madam Speaker, thank you.

Madam Speaker, I just want to go back to [clause] 28(1) of the Bill where the Member for George Town North asked the question about the declaration of pest-free of the low-pest prevalence area. Madam Speaker, that section of the Bill really sets out about mainly for the exports of the Sister Islands, the separations from there.

On the declaration of the quarantine area, the NPPO will be set up more for the short period, to be able to deal with a short period and then the consulting of the Minister is actually to for a long period of areas that we can in consultation with Cabinet, but—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: We can definitely have a conversation about that in the committee room to speak about that, if you want to look at any changes on that.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Okay.

Madam Speaker, that is what I have for today on this Bill.

Madam Speaker, the Member for Bodden Town West also spoke about consulting with the National Conservation Council. Madam Speaker, 17(4) says, **"In addition, if the application is for a permit to import a live or viable specimen of an alien or genetically altered plant, the NPPO shall consult the National Conservation Council before granting the permit."** Madam Speaker, I don't know whether that is really 100 per cent necessary, because I think most of the expertise is already with the agriculture department, but it's—

[Pause]

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Madam Speaker, I understand that alien species falls under the National Conservation Regulations. That is why that was put into that section, ma'am. That is my contribution on this.

The Speaker: The question is that a Bill shortly entitled Plant Protection Bill, 2023 be given a second reading.

All those in favour please say aye, those against no.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it. in

Agreed: The Plant Protection Bill, 2023 was given a second reading.

Terminal Charges (Validation) Bill, 2023

The Speaker: The Honourable Minister for Tourism and Ports.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Minister of Tourism & Ports, elected Member for George Town Central: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I beg to move the second reading of a Bill entitled the Terminal Charges (Validation) Bill, 2023.

The Speaker: The Bill has been duly moved. Does the mover wish to speak?

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

Madam Speaker, I rise before you today to discuss a matter of significant importance to our nation's aviation infrastructure and its economic development.

Madam Speaker, the Terminal Charges (Validation) Bill, 2023, seeks to address the long-standing issue regarding terminal charges at our airports. It not only reflects my Ministry's and this Government's commitment to modernising our airport infrastructure and passenger support systems, but also highlights the diligence with which we ensure the legality and fairness of our policies.

The current terminal charge of CI\$1 has been in effect since October, 1997. Over time, Madam Speaker, as our air travel landscape has evolved, it has become evident that an adjustment is required to align the charge with the current operational needs and economic realities.

The Ministry of Tourism and Ports, in collaboration with the Cayman Islands Airports Authority has proposed an increase of CI\$4 in the terminal charge, raising it to a total of CI\$5. Cabinet has approved this proposal recognising the necessity of adequate funding to maintain and enhance our airports facilities and services; however, Madam Speaker, during the discussions with the Attorney General's Chambers, an important legal aspect came to light.

It was discovered, that the current terminal charge did not even exist in legislation leading to the need to validate the payments and collections of the terminal charges dating back to October 1st of 1997. It is crucial that we rectify this situation to ensure the legality of the charges and provide a clear framework for their collection. To this end, Madam Speaker, I will explain in more detail what each of the clause in the proposed Bill seeks to address.

Clause 1, Madam Speaker, provides for the short title of the legislation, namely the Terminal Charges (Validation) Bill.

Clauses 2(1) and 2(2) validate terminal charges collected during different periods under distinct regulatory framework and, more specifically, Madam Speaker, Clause 2(1) validates charges paid under earlier airports security tax regulation spanning from October 1st, 1997, to August 16th 2004.

Madam Speaker, Clause 2(2) validates charges collected by the Cayman Islands Airports Authority from the 17th August, 2004, until the commencement of this legislation today.

These validations operate as if the terminal charges have been prescribed under the relevant sections of the Civil Aviation Authorities Act (1997 Revision), namely, section 27(d) of the Civil Aviation Authorities Act (1997 Revision), and section 41(1) (K) of the Airport Authorities Act 2004 and 2005 Revisions, respectively.

Madam Speaker, clause 3(1) and clause 3(2) validate the penalties for non-payment of terminal charges during the same periods covered by clause 2 (1) and clause 2(2) which, for your ease of reference,

Madam Speaker, are from October the 1st 1997, to August 16th 2004; and from August 17th 2004 until the commencement of this legislation. The validation extends to the penalties that would have been assessed and paid in accordance with regulations had those charges been properly legislated.

Madam Speaker, Clause 4 ensures the validation of orders or determinations made by the courts pertaining to terminal charges before the commencement of this legislation. In essence, Madam Speaker, it serves to provide legal certainty and continuity to any past judicial orders in this context.

Madam Speaker, Clause 5 aims to strike a balance between validating actions taken by the Director of Civil Aviation of the Cayman Islands airports and the Cayman Islands Airports Authority in collection of terminal charges and the assessment of penalties, while also safeguarding against any bad faith actions. As such, it serves to indemnify those authorities— i.e. Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and Cayman Islands Airports Authority (CIAA)— from legal challenge, except where the actions are deemed to have been taken in bad faith. As would be expected, Madam Speaker, actions pursued in bad faith would not be considered as lawful, and therefore not be indemnified under this provision.

In closing, Madam Speaker, the Terminal Charges Validation Bill, 2023, is a crucial step towards legalising and regulating our airports' terminal charges, while accommodating the ever-changing demands of our aviation landscape. This legislation ensures fairness, transparency and accountability in our efforts to maintain and enhance our aviation infrastructure. Moreover, Madam Speaker, this Bill is pivotal to our efforts to safeguard, and become more competitive in our aviation sectors.

By updating the terminal fees to cover essential costs, the Cayman Islands Airports Authority can continue to provide efficient services to passengers, while the Ministry and the Department of Tourism continue to work hard on maintaining our position as a competitive destination. I therefore urge all Members of this honourable House to support the Bill, and look forward to the successful passage of this important legislation.

Madam Speaker, this concludes my presentation of the proposed Bill. I therefore commend the Terminal Charges (Validation) Bill, 2023, to this honourable House for passage.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, not much to say by way of debate with regard to this proposed (Amendment) Bill that is before us; quite clear, it was an oversight for many, many years. If my count is correct it is like 28 years. Almost— it's almost a lifetime; but I'm glad the

error has been identified, and we do have legislation here to give footing to the collection of these terminal charges.

Madam Speaker, the only thing I would add is that the Minister did indicate, in presenting the Bill, that it looks as if the government is raising the terminal charge fee from what is it— \$1 per passenger?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Leader of the Opposition: So, it is going from \$1 per passenger to \$5 per passenger?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Leader of the Opposition: If he could indicate in his wind up exactly the basis upon which the fee is being charged, to give us some flavour as the amount of revenue that is actually collected; but my real point here, Madam Speaker, [is that it] represents a very sizeable jump. It is a 500 per cent increase in the fees that would appear to be coming forward not too long from now, in terms of the regulations that will amend the fee structure.

I'm curious, as well, if he might indicate if there have been any discussions with the entities or persons who actually pay these fees to the Airports Authority. I suspect it would be the airlines with regard to the fees that are being charged and the ability, really, to absorb it, as well, at this point in time.

With those few comments, Madam Speaker, I again indicate our support for the amendments, and we will be voting for it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* Does any other Member wish to speak? Does any other Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* Does the mover of the Bill which to exercise his right of reply?

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Thank you, Madam Speaker, I will be short; only to thank all my honourable colleagues for their tacit support in respect to the Bill and I thank the Opposition for recognising the intention to clarify this error for over a very long period of time.

The Honourable Opposition Leader spoke about an increase of 500 per cent. Madam Speaker, not to nick-pick but it is a 400 per cent increase and it may sound like a lot when you say 400 per cent increase, but it is moving only \$4 extra, and I dare say, Madam Speaker that, based on reliable information from the very capable board that manages the Airports Authority, the monies that will be collected will be going to upgrades in technology and safety, as the airport has grown substantially from 1997 and the technology used in the modern-day security efforts, as well as, aviation signalling is more costly than it was in 1997.

Now, Madam Speaker, it may be perceived as a very large jump due to the fact that Cayman has not

increased its fees over a long period of time while other jurisdictions have; and as a result, now that the authority is trying to do everything it can to modernise and stay ahead of the competitive aviation industry game funding is necessary. The Board and the head of the Airports Authority have advised that the amount of the increase is well below standard average, and still allows us to be in a competitive margin in respect to other regional airports' infrastructure and authorities.

Madam Speaker, with that being said, I'm happy that this Bill has been presented to the House so we can also clarify and safeguard the government and CAA as well as CIAA from potential [lawsuits] of any sort in the future, which is a key component to this legislation being brought today.

The Speaker: The question is, that a Bill titled Terminal Charges (Validation) Bill, 2023, be given a second reading.

All those in favour please say aye, those against no.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Terminal Charges (Validation) Bill, 2023 was given a second reading.

The Speaker: Honourable Premier.

ADJOURNMENT

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Madam Speaker, thank you.

Madam Speaker, the Parliament schedule reflects the fact that we will very likely have a very long day on Thursday and a long day on Friday to complete business. We intend to have Finance Committee on Friday as well.

We have gotten through three of the four Bills. The remaining Bill is the Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Bill, which has some very technical aspects Madam Speaker. The desire would be to have the Bill presented by the Honourable Attorney General tomorrow, as he has very specific knowledge of the detailed workings of the technical revisions.

At this point, Madam Speaker, I would move the adjournment of this honourable House. It may be unusual for us to have such an early day, but I move the adjournment of this honourable House until 10am tomorrow morning in order to facilitate the continuation of the presentation of that Bill, and other matters, tomorrow morning.

Thank you, Madam Speaker,

The Speaker: The Elected Member for West Bay West.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: Madam Speaker, I do not want to disagree with the Premier, but tomorrow being

Wednesday and— am I understanding correctly, you are not going to be dealing with this fourth Bill tomorrow?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: You will be dealing with it tomorrow; but on Friday you have Finance Committee.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: Well, because of how we run things here, or how things have been run here... We have at least what? Five, six, maybe more Private Members Motions?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: Nine. Don't think now that we can get through all that on Thursday— I don't believe so. Then tomorrow you have this Bill, I don't know what kind of debate that is going to draw, and then you have all the committee stages of the other Bills. I mean, maybe we should even try to get to those committee stages today, because there is still much business.

As much as we think not, discussions on those Bills and those motions could be long, tedious, and will probably keep you till late at night Thursday, to try to rush them through; and Friday we have Finance Committee— again, you don't know how long that will be, and I don't think you're proposing for the House to meet on Friday except for Finance Committee.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: Madam Speaker, we started at 11:00 and I think it is just about 3:00. Plenty work to be done.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: No, I do not want to go home yet.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Madam Speaker, I understand the comments of the Member for West Bay West but I think we have ample time to get through the business of the House tomorrow.

I know that there are likely to be a number of statements. We can deal with Committee Stage tomorrow as well in relation to the four Bills. I think what is likely to happen is today, we will have a relatively light day and tomorrow, we will see how things go, but I expect to be able to finish in a reasonable period of time tomorrow as well. But yes, Thursday is definitely going to be... Because of having nine Private Members' Motions, we will have probably an extended period into the evening to have to deal with that. And on Friday, we will be able to deal with Finance Committee. I don't see a

problem with that. We will probably have to go into the evening to complete Finance Committee as well.

Obviously, it's all subject to debate, collaboration, cooperation, however you want to describe it, but this should be a normal business, Madam Speaker. I don't see a problem with us being able to move forward on this basis, so I would just ask that you put the motion to adjourn until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: The question is that this House do now adjourn until 10 am tomorrow morning.

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

AYES and one audible No.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: Madam Speaker, divide please.

The Speaker: Madam Clerk, please arrange for a division.

Division No. 14

AYES

Hon. G. Wayne Panton
Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly
Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan
Hon. Sabrina T. Turner
Hon. André M. Ebanks
Ms. Heather D. Bodden
Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour
Hon. Isaac D. Rankine
Mr. Joseph X. Hew
Ms. Barbara E. Conolly

NOES

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush
Hon. Roy M. McTaggart
Mr. Moses I. Kirkconnell
Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin
Mr. David C. Wight
Mr. Christopher S. Saunders

Absent

Hon. Johany Ebanks
Hon. Bernie Bush

The Speaker: I have 10 Ayes, 6 Noes and 2 absentees.

The Ayes have it.

This honourable House do now stand adjourned until 10am tomorrow morning.

At 3.04pm the House stood adjourned until 10am, Wednesday, September 20th, 2023.