



PARLIAMENT
OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS



Swearing-in

of

Governor Designate
Mrs. Jane Owen

as the

15th Governor of the Cayman Islands

Friday
21st April, 2023
(Pages 1-9)

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

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

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

ELECTED MEMBERS
GOVERNMENT BACKBENCHERS

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

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

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

APOLOGIES

Hon. Bernie A. Bush, MP	Minister for Youth, Sports, Culture & Heritage
Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, JP, MP	Elected Member for West Bay West
Mr. Christopher S. Saunders, MP	Elected Member for Bodden Town West

**SWEARING IN CEREMONY OF THE
15th GOVERNOR OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS
MRS. JANE OWEN
FRIDAY
21 APRIL, 2023
2:00 P.M.**

(Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, Speaker, Presiding)

**ADDRESS BY THE
HONOURABLE SPEAKER**

**WELCOME MESSAGE BY THE
HONOURABLE SPEAKER**

The Speaker: Good afternoon. Welcome to this special ceremony to swear in our new Governor. We will start with prayers. Let us pray.

PRAYER

Rev. Jerome Small: Let us pray.

Almighty God, the fountain of wisdom and the source of justice whose will is good and gracious, and whose law is truth; it is through You that authority is rightly administered, laws are enacted, and judgment is decreed. We come to You this day, humbly beseeching You to bless and guide these Cayman 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. We especially pray this day for the Governor-Designate of our Islands, Mrs Jane Owen; for the Premier, the Speaker of the Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition; Ministers of the Cabinet, ex officio Members and Members of the Parliament; the Chief Justice and members of the judiciary, that they May be enabled faithfully to perform the responsible duties of their high office.

We likewise commend to your unbounded mercy, all those who live in these Islands; that we May be blessed with and in the knowledge of your love, and sanctified in the observance of your Holy law. May we as a people be preserved in union, and in that peace which the world cannot give; we make our prayer through your son, our saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

(Sung by Miss. Jhenelle Colquhoun)

The Speaker: Please be seated.

The Acting Governor, Honourable Franz Manderson; the Governor-Designate Mrs. Jane Owen; the Premier, Honourable Wayne Panton; the Chief Justice Ms. Margaret Ramsay-Hale; Acting Deputy Governor Mrs. Gloria McField-Nixon; the Deputy Premier, Honourable Juliana O'Connor-Connolly, Members of the Cabinet, Leader of the Opposition, Honourable Roy McTaggart; Elected Members of the Parliament, former legislators, Reverend Small, Ms. Colquhoun, civil servants, ladies and gentlemen: As Speaker of the House of Parliament, I would like to welcome each of you here today, whether you are present in the Chamber or viewing our live stream.

This afternoon we are assembled to welcome, and swear in, the Governor-Designate Mrs. Jane Owen as the 15th appointed, and second female Governor, of the Cayman Islands. The swearing in of a new Governor has always been a time when the citizens of this country have welcomed the reigning Monarch's representative at the commencement of their duties here in the Cayman Islands.

Over the span of fifty-two years, we have had 14 Governors thus far, and each one has brought their unique perspective to the role. Some helped the Cayman Islands carve a place on the world stage; some created a bit of controversy, and some immersed themselves in our culture. Regardless of how they carried out their roles and responsibilities, they all left here appreciating the Caymanian people and culture. I certainly wish the same for you, Mrs. Owen.

I must admit that I am very pleased for the women of our country today, not solely because we are swearing in a female Governor, but because this will be the first time in the history of the Cayman Islands that the three arms of Government will be overseen by women.

Our country just recently highlighted the suffrage of the women of this country who fought hard to ensure that women had a fair opportunity to vote, and also stand for elections. There is a recently placed plaque on the Constitutional Hall next door, which has the names of the women who signed a petition in 1957 demanding to have their voices heard and the right to vote. These women, a few of whom are still alive today

and I do hope that they're watching online or on TV, paved the way for a moment such as this to occur.

Governor-Designate, you will quickly discover that you have set foot in paradise— I believe you have already discovered that. For the next four years you will be residing where many people dream of living and vacationing.

In addition to the diverse sea, flora and fauna, the most beautiful part of these three Islands are our people. The people of these Islands pride themselves in the progress that the country has made whilst at the same time, some share that they feel when we had less, we had more. We are a resilient people; however, we are facing trying times. The global pandemic, coupled with the economic issues, has left many of the people of our country scrambling to make ends meet.

I would urge you to take the time to get to know these Islands over the next four years. Get to know the people— we have some 135 different nationalities living here. Learn about our culture, learn about our issues and our struggles, and learn what makes Cayman no other place on this earth.

I welcome you to the House of Parliament today and to the Cayman Islands for the next four years; and I wish you a most productive and rewarding first governorship.

We will continue to follow the programme as it has been arranged.

WARRANT OF APPOINTMENT

His Excellency, the Acting Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Good afternoon.

Warrant of Appointment:

“Charles, III, by the grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of his other realms and territories King, Head of the Commonwealth, defender of the faith.

“To our trusty and well-beloved Jane Owen. Greetings.

I. We do, by this Our Commission under Our Sign Manual and Signet, appoint you, the said Jane Owen, to be Our Governor in and over Our Territory of the Cayman Islands, during Our pleasure, with all the powers, rights, privileges and advantages of the said Office, belonging or appertaining. And We do direct that your appointment shall take effect from the day of your disembarkation in Our said Territory.

II. “And We do hereby command all and singular Our Officers and loving subjects in Our said Territory, and all others whom it may concern, to take due notice hereof and to give their ready obedience accordingly.

III. “And We do hereby direct that this Our Commission shall determine upon signification to that effect being given by Us through one of Our Principal Secretaries of State.

“Given at Our Court of Saint James’s, the 16th day of February 2023, in the first year of our reign by His Majesty’s command.”

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE AND OATH FOR DUE EXECUTION OF OFFICE

[Administered by the Honourable Chief Justice, Margaret Ramsay-Hale]

Her Excellency the Governor, Mrs. Jane Owen: I, Jane Owen, 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 Governor of the Cayman Islands.

Honourable Chief Justice, Margaret Ramsay-Hale: Thank you.

Her Excellency the Governor, Mrs. Jane Owen: I, Jane Owen, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to his Majesty, King Charles III, his heirs and successors according to law.

Honourable Chief Justice, Margaret Ramsay-Hale: Thank you.

[Applause]

WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE PREMIER

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Your Excellency Mrs Jane Owen, I would like to start by saying it is an absolute privilege to be the first to officially congratulate you after taking your oaths as the 15th Governor of our wonderful, beautiful, Cayman Islands. A warm welcome to you also on behalf of the Government and the people of our wonderful Cayman Islands, as we mark the start of what I have no doubt will be a very delightful journey together.

This afternoon we are taking part in a ceremony that brings me great pleasure and pride as well as of now, as indicated by our Madam Speaker, there are three women holding the top four positions on the Cayman Islands’ order of precedence. On 25th of October of last year, we swore in her ladyship, Honourable Margaret Ramsay-Hale, King’s Council (KC), as Chief Justice who, of course, administered your oath.

We have Madam Speaker, the Honourable Katherine Ebanks-Wilks, who commenced these proceedings; she was, of course, sworn-in in November of 2022. She’s the 4th woman to serve as Speaker of this Honourable House.

I am also pleased to say, Your Excellency, that I have the privilege of having a Deputy Premier and Minister for Education, District Admin and Lands, the Honourable Juliana O’Connor-Connolly. She is one of

those four women who previously served as Speaker of this honourable House. In addition, she served as Premier of our beloved Cayman Islands as well.

Of course, you have now entered our history books as the second woman appointed as Governor of our wonderful Cayman Islands however, Your Excellency, I think you also represent an important first for us here in Cayman, as you are the first Governor of these Islands to be sent as His Majesty's representative—the King's representative.

In 1971, when the title of the UK's representative was changed from administrator to Governor, the late Mr. Athelstan Long became our first Governor and from that point onward, every successive Governor ending with your immediate predecessor, Mr. Martyn Roper, was appointed by our beloved, her late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, II therefore, I think it's important to acknowledge that fact, and to congratulate you, Your Excellency, on being the first Governor of these Islands appointed by our Monarch, his Majesty King Charles III.

Not counting our brief exchanges at the airport on your arrival earlier today, I have had the opportunity and pleasure, obviously, of engaging with you albeit through video calls—I think just prior to Christmas—which I certainly enjoyed, and it left me with a very clear impression that you are a person of professionalism, integrity and openness and that gives me no doubt that the seat has been filled by an individual who is determined and committed to serve the people of these Cayman Islands, as you have just taken the oath in respect of, and obviously, to represent His Majesty and the United Kingdom.

Thus, while I am looking forward to working with you and forging a very cordial and positive working relationship I, along with probably many other people, have taken the opportunity in the past, to do a little bit of research on your outstanding career as a civil servant, especially in the diplomatic service representing the United Kingdom around the globe so it should be noted that you do possess some very, very impressive linguistic skills.

I do hope that you take some comfort in knowing that you need only speak English in the Cayman Islands although I have to say, Your Excellency, that your German sounds most impressive—I had to do a bit of digging in relation to that so don't ask me how I found that out; but Your Excellency, when your appointment was announced, we learned that you most recently served as the UK Ambassador to the Swiss Confederation and Liechtenstein.

Our Minister for Tourism and Ports, the Honourable Kenneth Bryan, will tell you that while we can't boast of snow-covered mountaintops in the Cayman Islands, we do have the world's most beautiful white sandy beaches. Absolutely second to none.

I am confident that you will be taken aback by the uninhibited views of Seven Mile Beach, and I think you had a taste of it when you went home for a quick lunch. Hopefully, if the weather cooperates, you will be

able to see your first beautiful sunset from that location in the Cayman Islands. The view from Governor's House is second to none.

I will also admit that when I learned of your appointment as Governor, I observed what appeared to be some degree of relief in the face of my colleague, the Minister for Financial Services and Commerce, the Honourable Andre Ebanks, amongst others. While the Minister is more than capable of explaining the significance and importance of financial services to our economy, to our country, to our people, it's refreshing to know that you bring very real-world knowledge and experience of this industry, having worked to promote financial services and trade between the UK, Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

I must also state for the record that we have welcomed and enjoyed the support of successive Governors who remained genuine advocates for the Cayman Islands and utilised diplomatic channels in support of our financial services industry. This was certainly true of your immediate predecessor, Mr. Roper, and there is no doubt in my mind that it will prove to be true for you as well, Your Excellency.

Your Excellency, the Cayman Islands have held a close, yet unique, relationship with the United Kingdom that has evolved over the decades. Looking back, it is fair to say that some of the terms used in the past to describe the constitutional structure of our relationship, like "dependent territory", did not accurately reflect the reality on the ground here. To the contrary, we are a very proud country and we have an established track record of effectively managing our own domestic affairs.

Perhaps this is partially a function of our relative geographic isolation, sort of being in the middle of the Western Caribbean Sea, but it is also a function of our people's drive for self-sufficiency—our desire to meet our own needs and to innovate and find ways of achieving that.

For most of our settled history, the Cayman Islands were hidden from the eyes of the world and became known as *the Islands time forgot* and, while there are no significant grassroots movements championing a change to the status of our constitutional relationships, we are proud of the ongoing advancements to our Constitution that have been brought about, which strengthen our democracy.

For just a little context on how far we have come, Your Excellency, there was a time when the Governor had the additional duty of serving as the Presiding Officer of this honourable House—for no additional pay, I might add—and I think, for those who can recall that time period, there was no limit on the period of time within which a Member could speak, so Your Excellency, one could well understand an argument that there was some degree of hardship pay due, for having to endure days of representations on a particular point.

Today, it is settled and established that all areas of domestic policy are delegated to the elected government with the UK through you, Your Excellency, as its representative, retaining special areas of responsibility, including defence, external affairs and the civil service. These were hard-earned constitutional advancements which have evolved over time. After much learning on both sides of the Atlantic, it is fair to say that the UK has put its trust in us, and as Members of Parliament we are all cognizant of our duty to efficiently manage the affairs of our country.

Like any democracy we have our moments, especially as we seek to balance the duties that we have as Members of Parliament, representing our people, dealing with local and community based issues, then as Ministers, having to focus on national and even global crises; so as you settle in and begin to get the feel for our people and community, I think your Excellency will observe that sometimes, the most effective approach on the matter may differ from a position taken by the United Kingdom.

Some hold the misperception that the Governor only represents and protects the UK's interests as they relate to the people of the Cayman Islands. Your Excellency, I would say that successive governors have demonstrated and shown that this relationship is, in fact, reciprocal and goes both ways.

Your Excellency indeed, there will be times when you as Governor will have to stand for us, speak out for us, and to utilise your first-hand knowledge I mentioned earlier, about what is happening in relation to on the ground here as well as your knowledge as I said, of external, global matters, to provide context and clarity to those in Whitehall and perhaps even further afield. Many within and outside of the public sector are rarely privy to the quiet, yet important diplomacy that is directed from your office across the pond, but this balanced approach makes a world of difference. It bolsters trust and ultimately serves the greater interest of strengthening the spirit of partnership and mutual respect between the UK and our beloved Cayman Islands.

Your Excellency, we have benefited from governors advocating on behalf of financial services matters, promoting our efforts in areas such as the Russia sanctions, or perhaps the greatest example of support during crises— the COVID 19 pandemic. The British Airways Air Bridge, vaccines, acquisition of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), technical support for testing, and overall public health guidance are a few examples of matters pressed for on our behalf by the Governor's Office during the height of the pandemic induced challenges. I hope you don't have to face any of those going forward.

The combination though, of that advocacy in collaboration with the Government, resulted in an enviable record of high vaccination rates and low death rates in our country. Our healthcare system as well has proven to be resilient, having stood the greatest test of

our generation and I know that this is a great source of pride for my colleague, Minister for Health and Wellness and Home Affairs, Honourable Minister Turner and indeed, our entire country, and I would hasten to add every Member of this Chamber, I am certain.

Your Excellency, we also fully expect that you will inform us when the UK wishes to take a position which is impactful on us; obviously, we have no quarrel in that respect, but we may not always find ourselves agreeing with this position as I noted earlier. The people who we have the privilege of representing in this honourable House require us to articulate their interests, their values and their perspectives, therefore, when those occasions— which I am sure will be rare— do arise, it is certainly my hope that you will engage with us and seek to understand any concerns raised by our people, since it is our duty to ensure that the voices of our people, those who elected us, are heard.

We also have to govern in a way that is constitutionally and legally sound for all the people who reside, arrive in, or visit the Cayman Islands. While it's a delicate issue affecting everyone, who lives and works here, we continue to balance immigration needs with employment opportunities for Caymanians. That is a challenge I know the UK itself, or any other country with a strong, globally competitive economy for that matter, has to contend with. Of course, I'm only confining my comments to legal migration, Your Excellency. The newest Minister in our Cabinet, Honourable Dwayne Seymour, has been given responsibility for the Ministry of Border Control and Labour, and he is well equipped and committed to addressing the complex issues in this area.

Now, as you get to meet our wonderful Caymanians and other residents of these Islands, you will hear agreement that it is one of the most special places on earth— unique in its beauty, charm, relative safety, and standard of living; however, as we do, you will also hear from the Caymanian people concerns for the future of their children and their ability to find a good job, to own a home, and to be able to compete in a rapidly-changing environment.

Your Excellency, the growth we have experienced over the years is astounding. Recent estimates show that we currently have around 80,000 people residing in our lovely Islands. The most recent census carried out in late 2021, just under two years ago, recorded our population then at just over 71,000, so one can appreciate the impact such significant growth in population brings.

While we are very thankful for the positive aspects, and the growth that comes with it, as a Government and a People, it can be challenging to keep up with the demands. For instance, we have been experiencing worsening traffic challenges all over the Islands, really, but in particular, our Eastern districts as of course, the majority of our business activity remains centred around the west end of the island and the George Town area.

The further you go towards the East, the more available and affordable property becomes for purchase or rental and certainly, our overworked road networks and inefficiencies with our public transport system force people to own a vehicle instead, which of course, just compounds the problem that we have on our roads. Coincidentally, the Eastern districts are home to our most arable lands, so of course we have conflicts with land use and things of that nature.

Hence, Your Excellency, public transport and improving the road infrastructure are some of the priority areas we have to address as a Government and my colleague, the Honourable Johany Ebanks, the Minister for Planning Agriculture Housing and Infrastructure and a few other important unnamed subjects is, like any of us on the Government bench, experiencing those realities every day and committed, as we are, to addressing them. Of course, I also wish to acknowledge that we have Parliamentary Secretary Mr. Isaac D. Rankine, the Member from East End, whom you we met earlier, and he will be working with Minister Ebanks in that respect, as he shares and understands some of those issues and concerns.

Many of the issues that we are dealing with point to the broader theme of sustainability, Your Excellency. As our world faces major shifts in economic crises and geopolitical fragility, small Islands like ours face greater levels of vulnerability to external shocks that larger countries can absorb better. Of course, we possess less and control less of the key factors for resiliency in that respect.

For instance, as a small island nation with numerous vulnerabilities, climate change presents a serious challenge across the time continuum for ensuring the prosperity of the Cayman Islands and its people, and that is why, to prioritise sustainability in all its facets, we have created a Ministry of Sustainability and Climate Resiliency. Your Excellency, we are also formulating a comprehensive Cayman Sustainability Agenda that focuses on ensuring that these Islands are and will be a place for Caymanians to live and thrive, while ensuring that it is a welcoming place for newcomers who wish to become part of our diverse social fabric.

Perhaps the most underestimated positive impact of pursuing sustainability is the ability for us to protect our culture, our heritage, and our identity as a people. That is why Honourable Bernie Bush has taken on the mantle as our Minister for Youth, Sports, Culture and Heritage. He has a very distinct passion for these subjects, and as a Government we are united in the view that the Caymanian way of life and our values are the true treasures that must be preserved and passed on to future generations.

I know, Your Excellency, you plan on getting out and about to meet our people in the various districts; expect to see within our communities, individual characteristics, but all sharing a common history. You will meet the last of the generation of former seafarers

who are now approaching their golden years. It was their remittances, Your Excellency, which helped kick-start our economy— helped to grow the Caymanian middle-class. Their contributions to our society are immeasurable and have continued to have impact up until today. In fact, to give you a sense of our seafarers' longevity and participation in public life, this is the first time that we have had a Governor sworn in before a group of parliamentarians that does not include a former seafarer.

You will get to know other seniors who will share with you that they are still grieving the loss of her Majesty the Queen, whose coronation many of them still recall, and I am sure they will share with you the sense of endearment they hold for the Royal Family, and their excitement for the upcoming coronation of King Charles III, which you and I will have the great honour of attending in a few weeks' time, as the representatives of these wonderful Cayman Islands.

Your Excellency, we are not a homogeneous people, but that's the beautiful thing about us. Gone are the days when you could be certain to tell a Caymanian merely by their last name or their accent, yet diversity remains one of our greatest strengths. Your Excellency, please believe me when I tell you that there was a time when you could not only tell what district the person was from, but what part of that district they were from based on their accents. There are a few districts that retain distinct accents; we have some, and they are to be celebrated.

Unfortunately, many of our young people today are developing more of a westernized accent based on what media they are exposed to and demographic changes, but all of us in here encourage our own people to recognise that the way we speak is as important a part of our identity as anything else; but besides this, it is important for you to meet professionals, returning graduates, business owners, students, young parents, educators, healthcare professionals and members of our clergy, basically Caymanians and residents from all walks of life.

I hope you get the time to marvel at the beauty of our natural environment. These Islands are incredibly beautiful and there are sights and scenes on land, and in the sea, teeming with colourful and vivid examples of our Creator's glory. As a people, we once lived in greater harmony with our natural environment, depending on it for daily sustenance. Sadly, our natural environment can no longer sustain the domestic population it once did.

As I am sure you can imagine, Your Excellency, this requires far greater stewardship on our part, as we seek to responsibly interact with our environment. We work very hard to keep our natural environment clean, beautified and litter-free. Our cleanliness and level of care for our environment is very important to our people. In fact, when we have visiting members from other parts of the Caribbean and many other parts

of the world, it is one of the comments or observations they make straight away.

We have no greater champion for greater civic pride by way of keeping our communities looking spotless, than my dear colleague and friend, Parliamentary Secretary Mrs. Heather Bodden, who supports our Minister for Tourism and Ports. She takes it very seriously, and as long as it is in her hands, the Cayman Islands will maintain that perception.

Your Excellency, ours is a relatively young but healthy democracy. Continuously built and supported by strong institutions, our civil service, under the capable leadership of our passionate and dedicated Deputy Governor, the Honourable Franz Manderson, often does not receive the credit it deserves. To put things in perspective, you'll never hear of strikes crippling the delivery of services in Cayman.

I think it is also worth mentioning that one sign of our healthy democracy is our ability to have smooth transitions between Governors. Our Acting Governor Manderson has done it for that period. He has done it for much longer periods in the past; but he has very much demonstrated his ability, and our ability, to ensure that we can maintain governance while we are waiting for the baton to be passed. He has certainly shown that Caymanians can do any job and do it well, when given the opportunity.

Importantly, Your Excellency, I also wish to acknowledge the other official Member of the Parliament and Cabinet, the Honourable Attorney General, Mr. Samuel Bulgin, King's Council (KC). Like us, you will no doubt come to rely on his vast experience, wisdom, knowledge, as he provides advice on navigating Cayman's comprehensive legal framework. Our independent judiciary is globally recognised as well, and as noted earlier, has just experienced a smooth and successful transition to our new Chief Justice who, like our Attorney General, was not born here, but we are as proud as they are to have them counted amongst us as Caymanians.

We also have other robust bodies such as the Office of the Ombudsman, the Auditor General's Office and, of course, the Commissions established under our Constitution which are designed to protect, serve, and further our democracy so they all serve extremely vital roles; and most importantly, we have tremendous social capital.

Many churches, religious organizations, non-profit organisations, and service clubs are deployed throughout our community addressing many areas of need. Our social cohesion heavily relies on these institutions to maintain our culture of generosity, altruism, and cooperation. You will see that throughout these Islands, while the pace of life has accelerated, there are still many who demonstrate the ethos of our Christian values of loving their neighbours as much as they love themselves.

It is seen in the acknowledgement of strangers in an elevator or in a waiting area. In small things like

letting a car into traffic in the morning, the charity and fund-raising efforts for the sick and the paying of respects and attendance at funeral services. This is the Cayman Islands I know and we all know. We are all proud to call it home, Your Excellency, and we are honoured to be able to introduce it to you.

In closing, Your Excellency, I am delighted to once again welcome you formally to the Cayman Islands and share this brief overview and perspective on your assignment.

Today you have taken an oath to serve his Majesty, the King, his heirs and successors and the people of the Cayman Islands. Every one of us in this Chamber also took similar oaths, symbolising our common purpose. From myself you can expect a relationship based on principles of mutual respect, courtesy, and absolute honesty, even on those rare occasions where we may not see eye to eye.

We also certainly look forward to having your daughter Phoebe join us in the Cayman Islands. I'm sure it will be lovely to have a Member of your family joining you as you settle into your new home, so we really look forward to getting to know her as well. I do hope that she, and perhaps other loved ones, will come to visit you as often as possible, and they get to see where you have to toil.

[Laughter]

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Your Excellency, on behalf of the Government, we look forward to working with you to ensure a strong, prosperous, and bright future for the people of these wonderful Cayman Islands.

It is my hope that the United Kingdom continues to foster this mutually beneficial relationship with us, ever-growing in its strength; may God continue to bless you and the people of these Cayman Islands, as we embark on this new journey together, united as a Government and as a country.

I thank you.

[Applause]

WELCOME ADDRESS ON BEHALF OF THE CIVIL SERVICE

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: I stand before you today with a great sense of optimism as we welcome our new Governor, Her Excellency Ms. Jane Owen, to the Cayman Islands. Your Excellency, your arrival signifies an opportunity to further strengthen a relationship with the United Kingdom and to make lives better. I am honoured to be here to welcome you on behalf of the civil service and the wider public service.

Before I proceed, let me express my immense gratitude to the Honourable Premier and my Cabinet colleagues for their support and cooperation during the

past three weeks. It has been a pleasure to Chair Cabinet and to work with the Premier, Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries. I can say without reservation—

[Applause]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: I can say without reservation that I had their full support, and I offer my sincere thanks. Premier, thanks also to you, for your personal support and advice during my time as Acting Governor.

I also take a moment to acknowledge Chief-Of-ficer of the Portfolio of Civil Service Ms. Gloria McField-Nixon, for her time as Acting Deputy Governor. As always, she delivered exceptional leadership in the civil service while I was acting Governor— and of course, she is one of those outstanding ladies the Premier spoke about, who are leading part of our organisation. Thank you.

[Applause]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Your Excellency, I am proud to share with you a bit about my favourite topic which is the civil service, which you are now leading.

The civil service is the largest employer in the Islands with over 4,300 staff comprised of over 3000 of my fellow countrymen and women, represented at all levels throughout the diverse Ministries and departments that make up our government sector.

You will be pleased to know that 55 per cent of the civil service are women, and they earn slightly more than their male colleagues.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Yes; additionally, 50 per cent of our senior team are women and women hold key positions within the service such as Solicitor General, Chief Information Security Officer, Director of Hazard Management, and Director of Department of Environment.

Civil servants oversee the provision of many critical services such as education, security, health, immigration, transport, food, sanitation, and disaster response. Without hesitation I can say, that our civil service has performed with excellence, perseverance and resilience, through the hard times such as the COVID-19 pandemic and many tropical weather systems we face each year— I hesitate to say hurricanes, but the season is upon us, so I think we better acknowledge it.

The work of the government through crises such as these has reinforced that what we do is critical for the business of the country, but also for the preservation of life when times are perilous. We have said it many times, but I applaud the outstanding performance, our civil and public services during the COVID 19 pandemic. Once again, they made us very proud.

I thank my senior leadership team and all civil servants for helping deliver on the very bold vision that we have, of being recognised as a world-class civil service. I thank them for collectively working towards achieving this vision, as we do our part in servicing the many needs of the people of these beloved Islands. The work we do is often behind the scenes and out of the public eye, however, I say here today that the service works tirelessly towards achieving this vision of being a world-class entity. Governor, I believe you will be impressed by the talent and work ethic of our civil servants.

Delivering results for the elected government is our mandate. With that comes high expectations for performance, and a responsibility of leadership to help our people thrive. It is the people, not laws and policies that deliver for the Government. It is therefore important that our civil service is engaged and motivated.

I am pleased with the excellent results of the 2022 Civil Service Engagement Survey, which I have already shared with you, Ma'am. The survey shows that 89 per cent of respondents are proud to be civil servants. Proud civil servants work hard for the elected government and are committed to the success of the service. Highly engaged civil servants provide exemplary customer service to our valued customers. This is evidenced by the results of a happy or not polling stations, which showed that 93 per cent of the over 800,000 customers who have participated in the polling said they were happy with our service. While this is a world class performance.

There are still many areas where we have not achieved our vision of being world class therefore, Governor, I look forward to tapping into your expertise. Also, your knowledge, earned throughout your long and distinguished service, will be invaluable as we strive for excellence in all that we do. Additionally, your expertise in areas such as trade, finance and climate change will also greatly benefit our Islands. I am confident that your sound counsel on these issues and other matters will be invaluable to all of us.

While I have focused on the civil service, we are a small country and I take this opportunity to join the Premier in extending to you a warm Caymanian welcome on behalf of all of our amazing Caymanian people. I am confident you will feel at home in no time, as you explore all three Islands and experience our culture of kindness, friendliness, good food and fellowship. I do believe your predecessor may have warned you about our heavy cake, which is delicious but high in calories.

[Applause]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: In closing, Your Excellency, I firmly believe that together and working closely with the elected Government, we can build a brighter future for the Cayman Islands.

I will leave you with this quote from a great leader: *'The best way to predict the future is to create it.'* Let us all work together to create a better future for ourselves and the generations to come.

Thank you and May God bless our beloved Cayman Islands.

ADDRESS BY HER EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR, MRS. JANE OWEN

Her Excellency the Governor, Mrs. Jane Owen: Thank you, everyone; and I'm sorry that I have a little bit of a frog in my throat today, but I will try to speak clearly so that you can understand my words.

To begin, Honourable Chief Justice, Honourable Speaker, Honourable Premier, Honourable Deputy Governor, Honourable Ministers and Members of Cabinet, Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Members of Parliament, Commissioner of Police, distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you, Honourable Premier and Deputy Governor for the very warm welcome you have extended to me today. It's a privilege and it is an honour to have been appointed as the Governor of the Cayman Islands by his Majesty, King Charles III and to continue, thereby, to build this special and important relationship between the United Kingdom and Cayman.

I am greatly looking forward to working with you, Honourable Premier and with all of your Government and Parliament and with all the distinguished representatives who are here today in a spirit of partnership based on mutual trust and respect underpinned by the clear resolve we all share to serve the people of these beautiful Islands.

Firstly, I want to pay tribute to Governor Roper for the work he has done over the past four and a half years, for his leadership throughout the pandemic, and for being a source of advice to me as I've prepared to take on this role; and I wish him and Mrs Roper all the very best upon their return to the United Kingdom.

I would also like to thank you, Deputy Governor Manderson, for once again so ably fulfilling the role of Acting Governor and I look forward to working with you and your Chief Officers as you strive to ensure that the civil service delivers for the ministerial team and for the entire community, as you have just said.

The timing of my arrival is particularly auspicious, of course, as it affords me the opportunity to attend his Majesty's coronation in just over two weeks, joining the Honourable Premier in representing Cayman at this historic event. Immediately afterwards, the Joint Ministerial Council will provide an opportunity for the Honourable Premier to discuss with UK Ministers priorities both in Cayman and for our wider Overseas Territories family.

As I begin my appointment, I will have much to learn and I hope that you will all help me to do that. I am determined to ensure that our UK-Cayman relationship continues to grow, and continues to bring benefits

for both sides. In this world in which we live, faced with geopolitical shifts, threats to the freedoms we cherish, and the galloping pace of new technology, it is good to have firm friendships and mutual support.

In working on this agenda with all of you, I will always respect the boundaries of the Constitution while being open to sharing expertise and experience from the United Kingdom where this can add value here in Cayman, and as you would all expect, I will focus firstly on those areas where the Governor has direct responsibility— external affairs, defence, internal security, and endeavouring to promote the good governance that is the hallmark of Cayman.

The war in Ukraine continues to rage in Europe, and I can imagine that this must, at times, seem to be a far-off conflict, but I know that Cayman is playing its part in the stand against dictatorship and oppression, in particular, through the enforcement of sanctions to ensure that Russia's unprovoked attack on a sovereign state is met with severe consequences. Cayman has frozen almost \$9 billion in assets and only last month, a sanctions forum in London praised your high-level cross-government coordination as a model to be admired by others.

I am also committed to working with you all to fulfil my responsibilities to ensure the safety and security of Cayman. This includes supporting our law and order authorities to meet new threats, protecting our air and sea routes, supporting you as you deliver robust and fair immigration policies, and most importantly, ensuring that we are all fully prepared to face each hurricane season.

Hazard Management Cayman Islands have an excellent reputation across the region for the detailed work they do enhancing crisis response, and the Cayman Islands Regiment has added a new dimension, combining the talents of a small, but dedicated group of predominantly Caymanians who want to give back something tangible to their homeland.

There are, of course, many areas of domestic policy where the Governor has no direct role and I will continue to respect the authority of this Parliament in creating and passing legislation. I look forward to our weekly Cabinet meetings where I will support the effective handling of business, timely policy development, and strong oversight and analysis behind decisions.

The strength of Cayman's economy and financial services industry, as you have said Honourable Premier, is impressive, and clearly well-regulated. As the daughter of shopkeepers from the small town of Bilston, in the West Midlands, and as someone who has spent a large part of their career promoting trade and investment links, I will do what I can to support you in continuing to build these strong economic fundamentals, in an increasingly competitive world. In this respect, Cayman's overseas offices have an important role to play as we aim to fly the Cayman flag high.

I cannot conclude without talking about the beauty of these Islands that I have already seen from

my doorstep, and the unique and fragile environment that you continue to curate, attracting visitors and residents from all over the world. I will support the Cayman Government in its environmental and climate change initiatives, including signing up to the Blue Belt Programme and promoting Cayman's significant contribution to marine conservation in this iconic natural environment.

I very much look forward to visiting both Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, before I leave for the coronation and I will return regularly, throughout my time as Governor, to understand the unique place of the Sister Islands in the Cayman family. I am delighted that the United Kingdom has applied for Little Cayman's Marine Park to be recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site—the only Overseas Territory to be included in the UK's recommendations.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of my Governorship, I expect, will be meeting the many people who make up Caymanian society and this diverse and vibrant culture. As a mum of two children in their early twenties, I know that young people have hopes and aspirations for the future which they expect us, as leaders, to protect and to promote. This includes being able to support themselves and their families, to live free of crime, and to enjoy happy and healthy lives.

Throughout history, change has perhaps been the one constant that is guaranteed, isn't it, but we can shape and nurture that change to reflect and create the kind of society that we want to see offering opportunities for all through fair and transparent governance, benefiting from the strong traditions within this Parliament, within our civil service, the judiciary, government agencies and institutions, and community and church leaders throughout these Islands. I hope I will really get to know people from all walks of life, and to be able to listen to their priorities and their concerns.

In conclusion, Honourable Premier, it falls to me simply to say again, that I am both humbled and excited to be appointed as Governor, and to have this opportunity to work with you all; and I wanted to reiterate three commitments:

- First, to listen and to learn;
- Second, to further strengthen this great vision that we share, to ensure that Cayman remains vibrant, successful, safe and resilient; and finally
- To devote myself to the service of all the people of the Cayman Islands on behalf of his Majesty, the King.

May God bless the Cayman Islands; thank you.

[Applause]

NATIONAL SONG

[Sung by Miss. Jhenelle Colquhoun]

[Procession departed from the Chamber]