



**PARLIAMENT OF
THE CAYMAN ISLANDS**

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

Special Meeting of the 2023/2024 Session

**Special visit of the
Rt. Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle, MP**

**Speaker of the House of Commons
United Kingdom Parliament**

**Thursday
1st August, 2024**
(Pages 1-9)

**Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin
Speaker**

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PRESENT WERE:

Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin, KCMG, MBE, KC, JP, MP
Speaker

MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

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

Hon. Heather D. Bodden, OCI, Cert. Hon., JP, MP	<i>Deputy Speaker</i> , Parliamentary Secretary to Tourism <i>and</i> Social Development, Elected Member for Savannah
Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, JP, MP	Elected Member for West Bay West

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
Mr. Moses I. Kirkconnell, OBE, 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

INDEPENDENT OPPOSITION MEMBERS

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders, MP	Elected Member for Bodden Town West
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APOLOGIES

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine, JP, MP	Minister of Youth, Sports and Heritage
Mr. Bernie A. Bush, MP	Elected Member for West Bay North
Hon. G. Wayne Panton, JP, MP	Elected Member for Newlands

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE 2023/2024 SESSION
SPECIAL VISIT OF
THE RT. HON. SIR LINDSAY HOYLE, MP
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
UNITED KINGDOM PARLIAMENT
THURSDAY
1 AUGUST, 2024
12:40 PM**

[Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin, Speaker, presiding]

The Speaker: Good afternoon. Parliament is resumed.
I will invite the Reverend Donovan Myers to grace us with prayers.

PRAYER

Reverend Donovan Myers: Let us pray:

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we gather in gratitude and reverence with humble hearts and open minds; thanking you for the privilege of living in freedom and the blessings of leaders who serve us through their work in this noble branch of Government.

We commend to your grace and sustenance our King and his government; may they lead with vision, integrity and compassion. Bless them with strength and courage to make decisions that reflect justice and fairness; grant them clarity of mind, and unity of purpose, to address the challenges and seize the opportunities that will enhance the well-being of our community.

In this special Sitting of Parliament, we embrace the presence of the Honourable Speaker of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom's Parliament and we pray that your presence, evidenced by graciousness, humility, and love, will be felt in this Chamber today.

May we experience your blessing on our land, and our people. We pray for continued peace, prosperity and harmony, in the name of Christ.

Amen.

The Speaker: Amen.
Please be seated.

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

The Speaker: I am certain that everyone within these Chambers is very well aware of this auspicious occasion, the arrival and address by the Rt. Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle, MP, Speaker of the House of Commons of the UK Parliament.

This is the first occasion we've had the Speaker of the House of Commons come to Cayman on an official visit and, indeed, pay us the honour of addressing this House; so, I do hope that all Members feel as proud as I do, of this occasion.

We will have to suspend these proceedings to allow the Honourable Speaker, as well as her Excellency the Governor, to proceed into the Chamber, and carry on with the ceremony.

I invite the Honourable Premier to move the Motion for suspension of the House to await the arrival.

**MOTION FOR THE
SUSPENSION OF THE HOUSE**

The Premier, Hon. Juliana O'Connor-Connolly, Minister of Finance & Economic Development, and Education, District Administration & Lands: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, good afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, indeed, it is my pleasure to move that this honourable House do suspend to await the arrival of The Speaker of the House of Commons, the Right Honourable Sir Lindsay Hoyle, and her Excellency the Governor.

The Speaker: Thank you, Madam Premier.

The question is that this House do now suspend to await the arrival of Her Excellency, the Governor and The Right Honourable Sir Lindsay Hoyle, MP, Speaker of the House of Commons.

Those in favour, please say Aye. Those Against, no.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: That the honourable House rise to await the arrival of the Right Honourable Sir Lindsay Hoyle, MP and Her Excellency the Governor.

Proceedings suspended at 12:44 pm

[Pause]

ARRIVAL OF THE RT. HON. SIR LINDSAY HOYLE, MP AND HER EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Your Excellency, Honourable Premier, Honourable Deputy Governor, Honourable Attorney General, Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Honourable Deputy Premier, Honourable Ministers and Members of Parliament, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good afternoon, and please join me in welcoming to the Cayman Islands Parliament, our very special guest, The Speaker of the House of Commons of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, The Right Honourable Sir Lindsay Hoyle, MP.

Members, you may signify your approval in the usual way.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you.

Sir Lindsay, we are indeed privileged and deeply honoured, to have you among us. Over the years, we've had many royal visits, including two by her late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, II, and two by our present sovereign, King Charles, III, when he was Prince Charles. We've also hosted numerous UK Ministers and MPs, but never a Speaker of the House of Commons, so we are absolutely delighted at your visit.

First off, I offer you hearty congratulations on your recent re-election as the Member of Parliament for Chorley, and your subsequent re-election as Speaker of the Commons. To have served as a Member of Parliament for 27 years, and to have been re-elected as Speaker, means you must know a thing or two about being a representative of the people, and about the conduct of the affairs of Parliament.

I was first elected in November of 2000, three years after your initial election success, and though I can't remember precisely when we first met, I know it was a long time ago. Over the course of those years, the abiding impression of you that remains with me, and I dare say other leaders in all the Overseas Territories, is your respect, support, and love for the Overseas Territories.

This is most evident in your willingness to engage with Parliamentarians across the Overseas Territories, and your various initiatives, such as establishing an Annual Overseas Territory Speakers' Conference. This conference is, I believe, an extremely important one, aimed as it is, at building capacity and appreciation of the highly responsible role Speakers play in safeguarding the practice of democratic principles, free speech, and fairness in the conduct of Parliament. This is even more crucial in an era which sees increasingly high parliamentary turnover at each election, and with that, the loss of institutional knowledge.

I benefited immensely from attending the most recent conference in the Turks and Caicos Islands, in April of this year. Sadly, you were unable to attend, as your dear father, Lord Hoyle, was gravely ill. Having lost my own father just a few years ago, I know how it feels to lose someone who has been your North Star for all your life. We carry on because we must, but it is never the same again. May God in His grace, and the precious memories of your dad, continue to comfort and sustain you.

Sir Lindsay, you have brought a quality to the role of Speaker of the Commons, which I dare say us in the Overseas Territories, have never previously experienced. You demonstrate, in tangible ways, a respect for the Overseas Territories to which, frankly, we are wholly unaccustomed. These include the installation of a window with images of the Coats of Arms of all Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies in Speaker's House; the flying of our flags on Constitution Day; invitations to important events such as the recent celebration in London of the 75th Anniversary of the Commonwealth, and generally, our access to you and facilities within your Parliament.

If you will forgive me for saying so, though, your visit here this week is currently my favourite example of your commitment to the Overseas Territories. It was a pleasure to greet you this morning, as you and David stepped off the plane to a very warm Caymanian welcome in more ways than one. Indeed, summer in the Caribbean is, frankly speaking, downright hot. It is not your first visit to our shores, so I hope the heat is not too much of a shock.

I am glad that you appear none the worse for wear despite the adventure you've had getting here, but please believe me when I say the trip across the pond to the Caribbean is usually uneventful and quite pleasant. It is disappointing that your detour has meant that we missed dinner last night at one of Cayman's oldest waterfront restaurants, nevertheless, over the course of the next couple of days, I look forward to introducing you to as many of our people as possible, and showing you some of the things and places which make Cayman such a wonderful place to live, work, and visit.

Given the modern infrastructure and amenities which Cayman residents and visitors now enjoy, as well as the size and sophistication of our financial services industry and the relative prosperity that is plainly evident, it is always difficult for visitors to our Islands to believe that Cayman wasn't always just like this— but it certainly was not. Indeed, this Cayman bears little resemblance to the Cayman my generation grew up in. When I was born, which I still like to think wasn't all that long ago, Cayman's population was approximately 8500 souls— the three Islands combined; and the Government Budget, now converted from Pounds to Cayman Islands Dollars was approximately \$240,000.

The Eastern districts in Grand Cayman didn't get electricity until I was eleven years old. Telephone service came even later. The case was much the same

for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. In Grand Cayman, paved roads stopped in Bodden Town, which is situated in the middle of the Island. Mosquitoes were so thick in the rainy months that you could grab a handful at will. Folk walked with a smoke pot in the evenings, and farmers had to make a fire at nights to keep them from smothering their calves to death.

The vast majority of Cayman's adult males were away, plying the world's oceans on large American ships and sending their remittances home. They did so, because there were few employment opportunities here in Cayman. Indeed, for several generations, seafaring was the principal national vocation and Caymanian seamen were known as some of the best in the world. By the time I graduated High School in 1978, the Government Budget had increased to around \$17 million, and the population to 16,000.

Since then, the population has generally continued to increase at an incredible, and some would even say an alarming, rate. Currently, estimates place the population at around 85,000, an increase of 10-fold in my lifetime. Caymanians no longer have to go abroad to make a living, and can be found working in virtually every vocation and profession in these Islands. Indeed, in a complete reversal of fortunes, as Cayman has developed, the demand for labour over the course of the last 50 years is what is largely responsible for the massive immigration that we have experienced. There are now more immigrants working here, than there are Caymanians, and with no exaggeration whatsoever, I can honestly say that there are people resident here from almost every country in the world.

There is no perfect place in the world, and certainly no paradise here on earth; and Cayman's incredible growth has brought with it significant challenges, such as a constant demand for more critical infrastructure, schools, housing, roads, ports, hospitals, as well as major social issues— and yes, crime, as well. The current year's Government Budget is C\$1.1 Billion. The responsibilities of those who are elected to Parliament grow more onerous and demanding with every passing year, let alone with every term in Office. Expectations of the populace become greater and greater as time passes. Prosperity is great, but it also exacts a dear price.

By any gauge and standard Cayman's economic success over the last half-century is nothing short of phenomenal. These Islands were first sighted by Europeans around the year 1500 AD, and are generally believed to have been first settled by former British soldiers from Cromwell's disbanded army in Jamaica, who arrived here around 1658. They were acknowledged by Spain as belonging to Britain by the 1670 Treaty of Madrid, which also ceded Jamaica to the British Crown. Following that, the Islands were administered from Jamaica, which had a British Governor, and existed in relative obscurity for the next 300 years.

We had the lowest form of constitutional status: we were a dependency of a dependency. This was a

long period of what can only be described as "benign neglect", during which the settlers in Cayman were generally left to fend for themselves with very little intervention by the officials in Jamaica and Britain— but fend for themselves they did, and then they did some more. The hardships, privations, and isolation endured by Cayman's early settlers developed a tough, enterprising, and self-reliant people who called themselves Caymanians. They generally lived by what they could catch from the sea and grow in the rocky soil of these Islands. They were a bold, pragmatic, and determined lot who did what had to be done to eke out an existence.

Indeed, Britain and Jamaica were so distant and remote, that in 1831 Caymanians decided they needed their own Legislature and government. They did not ask for permission, or seek the assistance of the administering power, but neither did they declare independence— they worried not about such constitutional niceties; they simply set about holding elections, and created a bi-cameral legislature consisting of a Lower House of Vestrymen and an Upper House of Justices.

The Legislature met for the first time on New Year's Eve, 1831, on a property which I hope you will have the pleasure of seeing — as Caymanians say, Pedro Castle—they have a fancy name now called, "Pedro St. James".

The legislature met for the first time on New Year's Eve 1831 and passed its first Act early in 1832. Although the British Governor did not assent to that first Act until 1865, some 33 years later, this was of little concern to those early Caymanians. They gave the Act the force of law locally and continue to legislate for the Islands. Eventually, in 1863, the British Parliament passed an act which validated on an ex post facto basis, all the Acts which had been passed by the Cayman legislature. That Assembly of Justices and Vestrymen existed for 127 years until 1959 when the Cayman Islands received its first written Constitution. That first Constitution, and the local and international events which preceded and succeeded it, can probably be best described as the awakening of the Cayman Islands.

In the aftermath of World War II, many of the British colonies were agitating for independence and this forced Cayman and the British government to make some decisions which would fundamentally change the fortunes of the Cayman Islands. Jamaica would become independent in 1962, and the Cayman Islands had to choose whether to go with Jamaica, choose its own independence or become a crown colony in its own right. We chose the latter. It was a pragmatic decision, made with the foresight and determination to control the destiny of these small Islands that remains typical of Caymanians.

In 1958 women won the right to vote and to hold public Office, and Cayman received its Coat of Arms. The following year, elections were held for the first time under the 1959 Constitution and 12 members

were returned to the rebranded Legislative Assembly, representing each of the districts in Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

The Constitution created an Advisory Executive Council, chaired by the Administrator, as the UK representative was called in the Constitution back then. The Administrator was also President of the Assembly and as such, performed the role of presiding officer. In this day and age, it seems incongruous that the head of the executive branch of government would also be head of the legislative branch, but that remained the case in Cayman until 1991, despite a number of other significant constitutional changes that occurred in the intervening period.

In 1962 Jamaica gained its independence and severed its constitutional ties with Cayman, which then became a Crown Colony in its own right. In that same year, Cayman's Constitution was amended, mainly to deal with the changes resulting from ceasing to be a dependency of Jamaica. Notably though, in 1962, Cayman saw the first woman being elected to the Assembly, the Honourable Evelyn Wood, of blessed memory, now a National Hero.

In 1972 Cayman was granted a new Constitution which increased the term of Office of the Assembly from 3 to 4 years, created an Executive Council with whom the Governor had to consult on local matters, and for the first time, provided for elected members of the Council to be given responsibility for Portfolios.

In addition to the 12 elected Members of the Assembly there were three official members appointed by the Governor. Despite the fact that this Constitution provided for the Assembly to be able to elect the Speaker, no Speaker was elected until almost 20 years later, and the Governor remained as both chairman of Executive Council and Presiding Officer of the Assembly; that changed in 1991 with the election of the first Speaker of the Assembly, the late Honourable Sybil McLaughlin, now also a National Hero.

Over the course of the ensuing years up to 2009, there were a number of relatively minor changes to the Constitution, changing the name of Executive Council to Cabinet, and Exco members to Ministers, as well as creating the constitutional offices of Leader of Government Business and Leader of the Opposition. There was also an increase in the elected membership of the House from 12 to 15 Members and an increase in the number of elected Members of Cabinet from four to five.

However, it was not until 2009, when Cayman approved a modern Constitution by referendum, that the elected government was given full responsibility for internal affairs and the Governor, though chair of the Cabinet, ceased to be a Member of that body.

The Constitution also created the Office of Premier and conferred on the Premier, the power to choose Ministers. The 2009 Constitution also created for the first time a Bill of Rights, binding on the Government. The elected membership of the House was

increased to 18 and then later, following a report of the electoral boundary Commission, to 19.

Later changes in the 2020 Constitution Order rebranded the Legislative Assembly as Parliament of the Cayman Islands.

Now, Sir Lindsay, 65 years after it received its first Constitution, the Cayman Islands enjoys, arguably, the most advanced Constitution of the Overseas Territories. Despite that progress, however, we struggled for a long time to remove the historical spectre of executive control of the administration of Parliament. But finally, in 2020, Parliament passed the Parliament Management Act, which made Parliament an autonomous body, thereby finally cutting the apron strings of the executive to which it had clung for far too long.

There is still much to do to improve both the operations and perception of Parliament, but I believe we are headed in the right direction. As Speaker and Chairman of the Standing Orders Working Group, I hope to be able to present Members with a draft of modern Standing Orders for approval by Parliament before this parliamentary term concludes early next year. Likewise, I will keep pressing for Members to finally agree a Code of Conduct for parliamentarians.

Sir Lindsay, I have tried to give you a flavour of what these Islands and our people are like, and from whence we came. Caymanians are a special breed. We come from real good stock. Despite the disagreements from time to time, we remain steadfastly loyal to the British Crown. We simply want to continue to be responsible for our own destiny and to stay true to the principles which have guided our development and success from the earliest times.

I say again, sir, we are deeply grateful and immensely proud that you have taken the time out of your busy schedule to visit us. I hope, on behalf of all Members of this House, that you do enjoy your visit and that you depart our shores feeling it has been worth the trip, even the one up to New York to come back down.

Sir Lindsay, I now invite you to take the Dias.

The Right Honourable Sir Lindsay Hoyle, MP, Speaker of the House of Commons, UK Parliament:

Your Excellency, Mr. Speaker, Premier, Honourable Members, ladies and gentlemen, it's an honour to be with you here today, but can I say thank you for the very warm welcome to the Cayman Islands and for granting me the honour of the first Speaker of the House of Commons to address your Parliament and to visit the Cayman Islands.

Can I also say, thank you, for the kind words about my father. My father, Doug, came to the Cayman Islands. He was the first one of our family to set foot. He came as a Member of Parliament on a visit. Why did he want to come to the Caribbean? He's mad about cricket and I've got to tell you, he had a sense of humour. He called me *Lindsay*. It's a bit like being named a boy called *Sue*.

[Laughter]

**The Right Honourable Sir Lindsay Hoyle, MP,
Speaker of the House of Commons, UK Parliament:**

I've got to tell you, in a local school where everybody's called "David" and "Steven" and something exotic as "Edward", to be called "Lindsay" makes you stand out. Why did he do that to me? He did it because he watched the Invincibles, the Australians tour, England and won every match and the Captain was called Lindsay Asset. Hence, I got called Lindsay.

Few years later, it would have been Clive. It could have been any of the great Caribbean cricketers so he always told me of his love, and his love of coming to Cayman, and he was the one who inspired me about Overseas Territories. So, I really do appreciate your kind words. It was sad to lose him earlier this year at 98. Like all good batsman, he couldn't quite make the century. Well, there we are.

In my first term as Speaker, I've championed the British Overseas Territories as an important part of the British family. Yes, we are one family and as an important symbol of this relationship—and you quite rightly said, Mr. Speaker—I installed stained glass windows depicting the Coats of Arms of each of the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies in the entrance Hall to Speaker's House, embedding this relationship into the fabric of Parliament itself.

Why was it important? It was important to me because we had Wales, we had Scotland, we got Ireland, but nothing represented our other part of the family. So, of course, I wanted to change that and we began to look at records, and of course, coming here helps you look at records. So, the first mention of the Cayman Islands in the official record of Parliament, Hansard is in 1863 with over 700 references since, including two which are embodied in your crest.

In 1940, during the Second World War, a list of gifts that were given to support the war effort were shared and put on the record in Hansard from Messrs H.O Merren and Company of George Town to the Royal Navy, 50 live turtles.

In 1952, Members of Parliament discussed the growth of the thatch rope and boat building industries in the late 1940s.

As Speaker of the House of Commons, I've been committed to enhancing our strong partnership between the House of Commons and the British Overseas Territories. From the visible flying—as you said—of the Cayman Islands flag each year on your Constitution Day, to securing a dedicated meeting room on the parliamentary estate for colleagues from the across the Overseas Territories and the crown dependencies, so, you have somewhere to meet. So that when you come to London, you have an office that you can use.

I've got to tell you, I've been so impressed with the contributions of the youth parliamentarians at the dispatch box in the House of Commons during the Youth Parliament sitting. I listened to Lili Anne Aleria

eloquently discussed life as a modern, young Caymanian, and the future she hopes to see for her and her peers. And she brought alive, how she has a vision, a vision for the future of Cayman, and it was about that vision that I want to share. It's about a modern relationship that we must have, not some colonial past. It is about a future that we work together. It is about looking after the universal recognition of all of the overseas territories.

I want to be a champion for you. I want to make a difference. When the doors aren't opening I want to knock on the doors to make sure they open. When you have an issue, it is an issue for me, and we're very good in the UK Parliament at telling people what they need to do; try it with me sometimes. And of course, when we looked around and began to discuss each other's problems and issues. If one issue is an issue of one part of the overseas territories, it is an issue for all of the Overseas Territories, because it is coming together that works stronger in that relationship. It puts a greater pressure. Isolation is not a way forward with an issue. It is jointly supporting each other in the issues that are there. And that's why Montserrat was so important to me.

To visit Montserrat, it mattered. Why did it matter? Because it's a privilege today to be in a parliamentary building. When you go to Monserrat, there is no parliamentary building, and yet we tell the world that democracy starts in Parliament. Well, it should start in the Overseas Territories as well; and that's why the Foreign Office has recognised and ensuring that the money will be made available for that new Parliament; and that was the pressure that you put on together, by saying '*we support Montserrat*'. '*We want to be there for Montserrat*' and peer pressure works by working together. Unity is strength. Please do not break the strength that you've got. It is important to me that we continue to deliver.

So, I have to tell you, while I'm Speaker, your voice will be there and I intend to visit all of the overseas territories. I've got to tell you, I thought Cayman was one of the easiest visits. It actually took me longer to get here than the Falklands and Saint Helena—

[Laughter]

**The Right Honourable Sir Lindsay Hoyle, MP,
Speaker of the House of Commons, UK Parliament:**
But at least I made it.

So, of course, I was pleased to welcome Mr. Speaker to London in March to mark the 75th anniversary of the Commonwealth, where we committed our parliaments and assemblies to continue to contribute to a world that is free of strife, war and inequality, that co-operating in the pursuit of peace, liberty and process. As first declared in London, Declaration of April 1949, it is as relevant today as it was then.

Finally, I wanted to touch on the on the Commons Overseas Territories Speakers Conference

which has now brought us together. The Speaker, as you said, Mr. Speaker, from across the Overseas Territories, once virtually and three times in person since 2021. This is a start of sharing that knowledge which I mentioned earlier. It's a great forum for that and the experiences, former Speaker Ebanks-Wilks. At the conference Anguilla in 2023, he hosted us. It made that difference.

Discussion of the constitutional changes that took place in 2020 from the Legislative Assembly to Parliament and the establishment of the Parliament Management Act and the Parliament Management Commission, something that many of the others OTs are now looking to, to implement it themselves; building on the excellent work by the Cayman Islands.

I am so grateful for the team of people who have put this visit together and created such a wonderful programme.

Over the next few days, I'm particularly looking forward to learning more about your steadfast conservation efforts to protect the flora, the fauna and the waters.

I've heard so much about what we believe is the only thing that anybody could talk about, and that's the iguana. Of course, you are unique. Everybody gets an Iguana, don't they? These regions, nobody does the blue one. That is something special again. And of course, it is about that. So, I was so pleased to host the reception at Speaker's House for "Saving the Blues"—episode one of the Planet Insights, where I actually learned the story of the Grand Cayman Blue Iguana, which was brought back from the brink of extinction. I hope that I will see one while I'm here.

I also look forward to meeting with those working on disaster preparedness, and of course, the Girl Guides who I'm so pleased not had to close their doors following the closure of the British Girl guiding overseas. A testament of campaigning and working together, the girls themselves, of those who support them across the territories, as well as an important visit to the birthplace of democracy in the Cayman Islands, Pedro St. James. But it is about the Girl Guides, which just shows you that we have to remind organisations in the United Kingdom that you don't turn your back on the family and that's what they were doing. They were turning their back on our family and life was made difficult, and we will make life difficult if people make the wrong decisions. But I've got to thank the young people across the Overseas Territories who ensured that overseas girl guiding will remain.

So, as I say, I've only scratched the surface of my time here on this occasion. And indeed, I know there is so much more to see, but I know the friendships that we built, the links that we have. I come as a friend and as part of the family. So, can I say Mr. Speaker, thank you once again for allowing me to speak to your Parliament. It means so much for me to take back to London.

Thank you all.

[Applause]

The Premier, Hon. Juliana O'Connor-Connolly: Mr. Speaker, protocol having been duly *[inaudible]*, it is indeed my distinct honour to address you today at this Special Sitting of Parliament on the occasion of the visit of the 158 Speaker of the United Kingdom House of Commons, the Right Honourable Sir Lindsay Hoyle, Member of Parliament.

I join you, Mr. Speaker, in welcoming Speaker Hoyle to this House of Parliament and our beloved Cayman Islands; and thank you, Speaker Hoyle, for addressing the Honourable House at this afternoon's proceeding. We are indeed most grateful for the reminder of the shared values that root us in our deep historic relationship with the United Kingdom.

Mr. Speaker, I am indeed appreciative that you are a fervent guardian of the ancient privileges of Parliament, such as the freedom of speech, parliamentary privilege, and exclusive cognizance. It is a tribute to the strength and great potential of this relationship that you are visiting with us for the next few days. You have the distinction of being the first Speaker—as was said earlier—for the United Kingdom to visit our beautiful shores, and we therefore trust that this time with us will be a most memorable one.

The United Kingdom and the Cayman Islands have a strong collaborative partnership. We have been able to converge on several matters of critical importance aimed at promoting security and good governance, sustainable development, and the economic and social progress of the Cayman Islands, as well as other British Overseas Territories. Your presence, Mr. Speaker, in this House, reinforces both the Cayman Islands and the United Kingdom's commitment to a modern and transparent partnership and our collective ambition to deliver a most prosperous and secure future for all of our people.

Speaker Hoyle, we welcome this visit as a great opportunity to strengthen collaboration and maximise our engagement here in the jurisdiction, as well as across in the UK. The UK and Cayman relationship is one of kinship, and so we hope to contribute to deepen our friendship and bilateral relations in keeping with my Administration's goal to strengthen engagement with the United Kingdom and other British Overseas Territories.

Mr. Speaker and Members of this honourable House, as some of us may already be aware, Speaker Hoyle has had a long and illustrious career in politics. From beginning, he was the youngest ever councillor to serve in Lancashire in Chorley, and to later becoming the deputy leader of the said council and then mayor of Chorley in 1977, and in 1998 he concluded that.

Having his appetite wet by local politics, Speaker Hoyle won the Chorley seat in 1997, the first Labour Member of Parliament to represent the constituency for 18 years. On a pledge to keep MPs' staff and their respective families safe to improve the image of

Parliament, he was elected as Speaker in November 2019 and has been re-elected since that time, to which we wholeheartedly congratulate you, Sir.

Speaker Hoyle is a keen supporter of and indeed an advocate for the armed forces. In addition, a key priority during his speakership has been to strengthen and renew the UK ties with the commonwealth group of nations and the British Overseas Territories.

Mr. Speaker, it is through Speaker Hoyle's efforts that we have two new—not one, but two—stained-glass windows in the Speaker's House of the Palace of Westminster, we both had the privilege to see them, incorporating all sixteen of the Overseas Territories, which represents the significance of the United Kingdom's family. As a result of his advocacy for us, representatives of the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies have a Passholder access to the Parliament estate. There's also space, a spacious room, in fact, for them on the estate, for their sole use and purpose.

It was, again, Speaker Hoyle, who, back in 2022, established the Commons and Overseas Territories Speakers Conference, reaffirming the important role played by legislators in democratic life. Our commitment to the principles of democracy in our own legislatures, the sacredness of democracy, and the need for partnership to sustain this important principle.

We are also grateful to you, Speaker Hoyle, for your hand in creating opportunities for our youth representatives from each Overseas Territory, to participate in the United Kingdom Youth Parliament Programme. As some of the honourable Members will recall, our own Chad Powell, Jr. was one of the eighteen making history as the first representatives from the Overseas Territories to participate in the UK Youth Forum in November of 2022.

Speaker Hoyle, I believe there is so much for us to share and learn from each other. Through our exchanges over the next few days, we will have the opportunity to take forward our cooperation in many areas. We also welcome other occasions during this visit, that will allow us to share views and opinions on a variety of global and local issues.

Speaker Hoyle, I thank you, once again, for your presence; for taking the time to grace us today, for accepting our invitation and making the journey, convoluted though it ended.

Speaker Hoyle, we warmly welcome you, and we are indeed, most happy to have you in the jurisdiction. May our special relationship continue to strengthen and deepen for the benefit of both our respective countries.

Thank you, Speaker Hoyle, and once again thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing this occasion to happen in this Special Sitting.

May God continue to bless the Cayman Islands.

[Desk thumping]

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

Protocol having been established, it is my privilege, as Leader of the Opposition, to make these comments on the auspicious occasion of the visit of Sir Lindsay Hoyle to our Parliament.

Honourable Speaker, Honourable Speaker of the House of Commons, the Right Honourable Sir Lindsay Hoyle, Members of our Parliament, distinguished guests and fellow citizens, it is my honour and privilege to welcome the Honourable Speaker of the House of Commons to our beautiful Cayman Islands, and our esteemed Parliament. This visit marks a historic moment for our Islands and our young Parliament, as we host a Speaker of such significant stature and influence within the British Commonwealth.

Mr. Speaker, your presence here is a testament to our country's enduring bonds, friendship and cooperation. It is a moment of immense pride to us all, reflecting the deep respect and mutual admiration between the United Kingdom and the Cayman Islands but, more importantly, your visit is a testament to your appreciation, your respect and admiration for our Islands and our people. Indeed, for all the UK's Overseas Territories. Sir, I want you to know that such appreciation, respect and admiration are not one-sided but mutual, and fill us with pride and a true sense of being valued.

As you know, the role of The Speaker in any parliamentary democracy is one of immense responsibility and integrity. Honourable Speaker, in your remarks prior to your re-election, you highlighted this when you said, **"I know from experience that decisions have consequences, but with experience comes wisdom, and if re-elected, I will be guided by that experience as I continue to be fair, impartial and independent."** As Leader of the Opposition in our beloved Parliament, we on the Opposition benches certainly appreciate the importance of those words; during my time here, I believe the Speakers of this esteemed Parliament have shared your sentiments about the role.

Reflecting on your visit, and the Great Democratic Institution you serve, I am reminded of the profound words of former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill who once said, **"Democracy is the worst form of government— except for all the others."** This witty yet insightful observation highlights the inherent challenges and imperfections of democratic governance while also affirming its unparalleled value. It is through the continuous improvement of our institutions and practices, that we strive to better serve our constituents and uphold the principles of justice, equality and freedom.

The Cayman Islands, like many countries, regardless of size, grapple with a range of challenges from economic development and environmental

sustainability, to social justice and public health. In addressing these issues, we must draw on the collective wisdom of our leaders, citizens and international partners. Your visit, Mr. Speaker, serves as a reminder of the importance of international cooperation in tackling these challenges. The exchange of ideas and experiences with distinguished visitors such as yourselves, enriches our perspective, and enhances our capacity to develop effective solutions, reinforcing the importance of our global community.

Before I close on a rather light-hearted note, Mr. Speaker, I recall a rather humorous observation you recently made. You noted that since being elected Speaker in 2019, you have presided over the tenure of three prime Ministers and two Monarchs. That sounds like quite a roller coaster ride, sir; and your light-hearted take on it is very entertaining, but sir, I smiled too, when I reflected and realised that we have more in common than I initially thought. You see, Mr. Speaker, in just over three years as Leader of the Opposition, I have already served under three Speakers of this Parliament and two Premiers.

[Laughter]

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Leader of the Opposition: As we all know, Mr. Speaker, politics provides memorable moments— and speaking of memorable moments, Mr. Speaker, your presence here will stay with me.

On behalf of the Opposition, and the People of the Cayman Islands, I express our heartfelt gratitude for your visit to our Islands. Your presence truly honours us, and we eagerly anticipate the possibility of your return one day soon. Mr. Speaker, enjoy your stay with us these next few days. We wish you an enjoyable time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: I wish to thank both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition for their kind remarks.

Sir Lindsay, I now invite you, and invite Miss Lili Anne Aleria to present you with a small token of our appreciation of your visit and our thanks for all that you have done, and continue to do, for the Overseas Territories.

Miss Lili Anne Aleria, Youth Parliamentarian: It is my honour to present this gift on behalf of the House of Parliament, in appreciation of your hard work and unwavering dedication to the United Kingdom and British Overseas Territories. May it also symbolise our respect and gratitude for your diplomatic efforts for the Territories.

The Speaker: The platform party will now depart the Chamber. Please stand.

DEPARTURE OF THE RT. HON. SIR LINDSAY HOYLE, MP AND HER EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR

Procession departed in the following order:

*The Serjeant-at-Arms
The Honourable Speaker
The Rt. Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle, MP
Her Excellency the Governor
Reverend Donovan Myers
Miss Lili Anne Aleria*

The Speaker: The House will now resume. Please be seated.

Honourable Members, I want to thank you all for attending this Special Meeting on this very auspicious occasion. I hope it is a memory that will stay with all of us for as long as we are around.

I want to especially thank the former Members of the House who have attended and the former Speaker, my good cousin, the Honourable Mary Lawrence, for making a special effort to be here. Is that Miss Daphne in the gallery? I wish to thank you as well, and to thank the senior civil servants who are here for turning out on this occasion.

I will now call on the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to move a vote of thanks to The Rt. Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle.

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

Mr. Speaker, I move that this honourable Parliament does record its grateful thanks to The Rt. Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle, Speaker of the UK House of Commons, for his historic visit to the Cayman Islands, and for his gracious address delivered at this Meeting.

The Speaker: The question is that this honourable Parliament does record its grateful thanks to the right honourable Sir Lindsay Hoyle, Speaker of the UK House of Commons, for his historic visit to the Cayman Islands and for his gracious address delivered at this Meeting.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.
Agreed: The motion passed.

The Speaker: I will now invite the Honourable Premier to move the adjournment of the Honourable House.

ADJOURNMENT

The Premier, Hon. Juliana O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, before moving the adjournment for the Honourable House, I would beg your indulgence to announce that our very own Jordan Crooks made it first in the semi-finals and will now move on to the finals so indeed, it's a double historic day and I would—

[Desk thumping]

The Premier, Hon. Juliana O'Connor-Connolly: I would ask—

The Speaker: I'm sure this is un-Speaker like and un-parliamentary, but: Go Jordan, go!

[Desk thumping]

The Premier, Hon. Juliana O'Connor-Connolly: I will just ensure that we add “Crooks” to that to make sure it's not basketball's Jordan. It's a special day for Cayman, so we're going to claim both of his names— and it is not unparliamentary. We totally accept it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it leaves for me to beg to move the adjournment of this honourable House sine die.

The Speaker: The question is that this honourable House do now adjourn sine die.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

At 1:56 pm the House stood adjourned sine die.