



PARLIAMENT OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

Second Special Meeting of the 2022/2023 Session

**Friday
25 November, 2022**
(Pages 1-18)

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

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

Hon. Gloria M. McField-Nixon	Acting <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. Dwayne S. Seymour, JP, MP	<i>Deputy Speaker</i> , Parliamentary Secretary to Labour, Housing <i>and</i> Transport, Elected Member for Bodden Town East
Hon. Dr. W. McKeever Bush, JP, MP	Elected Member for West Bay West
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

Ms. Heather D. Bodden, OCI, Cert. Hon., JP, MP	Parliamentary Secretary to Tourism <i>and</i> Social Development, Elected Member for Savannah
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OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
SECOND SPECIAL MEETING OF THE 2022/23 SESSION
FRIDAY
25 NOVEMBER, 2022
10.30 A.M.
First Sitting

The Clerk: Good morning.

I will call on the Honourable Premier to say prayers this morning.

PRAYERS

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton, Minister of Sustainability & Climate Resiliency, Elected Member for Newlands: Good morning colleagues. Let us pray.

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

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

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

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

Amen.

**NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF
THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER
OF THE PARLIAMENT**

The Clerk: Thank you.

I now call for the nomination and election of the Honourable Speaker of the Parliament.
Nominations are now open.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Madam Clerk, I rise to nominate the Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, representative for the constituency of West Bay Central, to the post of Speaker of this honourable House.

The Clerk: The Honourable Premier has nominated the Elected Member for West Bay Central. Does the Elected Member for West Bay Central accept the nomination?

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, Deputy Speaker, Elected Member for West Bay Central: Thank you, Madam Clerk. I accept the nomination.

The Clerk: Thank you. Are there any other nominations?

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Leader of the Opposition, Elected Member for George Town East: Thank you, Madam Clerk. I beg to nominate the Member for Red Bay, the Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin, as Speaker of this House.

The Clerk: There is a nomination by the honourable Leader of the Opposition for the Elected Member for Red Bay. Does the Elected Member for Red Bay accept the nomination?

Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin, Elected Member for Red Bay: Thank you, Madam Clerk. I humbly accept the nomination.

The Clerk: Thank You. Are there any other nominations? If there are—

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly, Minister of Education and District Administration and Lands, Elected Minister for Cayman Brac East: Madam Clerk, based on a matter of procedure, shouldn't that nomination be seconded, out of an abundance of caution so that if the votes come it will be a valid acceptance?

The Clerk: I apologise. Can I have a seconder to the Motion that was moved by the Leader of the Opposition?

Mr. Joseph X. Hew, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Elected Member for George Town North: Madam Clerk, I second the nomination of the Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin for the constituency of Red Bay.

The Clerk: Thank you. The nomination has been moved by the Leader of the Opposition, seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and accepted by the Elected Member for Red Bay. Are there any other nominations?

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Elected Member for West Bay West: I move that nominations be closed.

The Clerk: The Motion by the Honourable Member for West Bay West is that the nominations now be closed.
All those in favour, please say Aye—

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Madam Clerk, I hate to stand up again as I am not really the Speaker, nor have any intention to be the Speaker, but the Member is a member of the Government Backbench. Based on where he is sitting, it needs to be seconded.

The Clerk: Yes, thank you. Can I have a seconder to the Motion moved by the Member for West Bay West that the nominations now be closed?

Mr. Isaac D. Rankine, Elected Member for East End: Madam Clerk, I second the Motion.

The Clerk: Thank you. The Motion that the nominations now be closed has been moved and seconded.
All those in favour please say, Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Clerk: The Ayes have it. The nominations are now closed.

Since we have more than one nomination to the position of Speaker of the Parliament, we will now proceed by ballot. If everyone could give us a couple of minutes to prepare the ballot papers; please stay in your seats. Thank you.

[Pause]

The Clerk: The Serjeant-at-Arms will now show the Members the empty ballot box and the ballot papers will be distributed to everyone. I ask that you only nominate one person on the ballot paper, please.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Madam Clerk, — I got my exercise this morning— on a point of elucidation, who is chairing the election of the Speaker? By action, is it you or is it the longest serving Member in Parliament as stated in Erskine May, the 24th edition?

The Clerk: It is myself.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Might I enquire based on the *locus standi*, because I would ask you to refer to Erskine May at least starting from page 170.

[Pause]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: Honourable Members, I certainly appreciate the thought and the correctness of the Honourable Minister of Education, however, it has been a long time that I have not been able to vote; I want to vote.

[Laughter]

[Pause]

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Madam Clerk, while Members seem to have quite a puzzled look on their faces so that they wouldn't think it is subjective, page 170, sub-section 8.18 of Erskine May, which our Standing Orders say that if it is silent that we refer to Erskine May, it says, "**the commons then proceed to the election of their Speaker. In accordance with Standing Order No 1, the senior backbencher resumes their place. The Member taking the Chair under these circumstances is granted all the powers which would be exercisable by the Speaker, if following a decision to relinquish that office during the course of a session, the Speaker [were] presiding over the election of a successor. Under the procedure under the Standing Order, if at the commencement of a Parliament the Member who was Speaker at the dissolution of the previous Parliament is returned to the House and—I would ask Members to look at it because what I am reading everybody should have access to—is willing to be chosen once more as Speaker, the question that they do take the Chair of the House as Speaker is moved by a single Member and the question is then put forward.**"

It goes on to where the Speaker once elected give thanks, et cetera. So basically, it is respectfully, tautological reasoning it's the longest serving Member of the House; he has the right to consent not to take the Chair. However, it doesn't mean that it falls to the Clerk, there is a specific conventional reason why the Clerk should not sit it because there could be questions that have to be answered. The Clerk does not have the *locus standi* to rule on that. So it would go down to the next longest serving Member, if that person doesn't

want it, it would be the next [longest] serving Member but it has to be a Member of the House.

[Crosstalk]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Madam Clerk and Honourable Members, I am at the will of the House. If the House thinks it fit that I should go in the Chair as the Father of the House and the Government wants that, then I will do so but it is up to them.

[Pause]

The Clerk: Can I have a motion for the longest serving Member of the Parliament to preside over the election of the Speaker of the House?

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Minister of Tourism and Transport, Elected Member for George Town Central: I rise to move a motion that the longest serving Member being the Member for West Bay West to preside over the sitting of the election of the next Speaker of House.

The Clerk: Thank you. The Motion has been moved by the Minister of Tourism.

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

AYES.

The Clerk: The Ayes have it.

Honourable Member for West Bay West, can you take your seat at the Clerk's dais?

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Can I give my proxy to one of the Members? I had already marked my ballot.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Honourable Members, the Clerk has made a point. I don't know if the House wishes to take that, that is, that we start from the beginning for the process. Agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: All the way, do we mean we need to start the nominations again?

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Thank you. I now call for nominations for the election of the Speaker of the Parliament.

Nominations are now open.
The Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Thank you sir. I rise to nominate the Member for West Bay Central, Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks as the Speaker of this honourable House.

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Nominations have been made. Are there any other nominations?

[Pause]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Honourable Member for West Bay Central are you accepting the nomination?

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Yes, I accept the nomination, thank you.

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: The nomination has been accepted.

An Hon. Member: Mr. Chairman—

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Are there any other nominations? *[Pause]*

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Leader of the Opposition: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I beg to nominate the Member for Red Bay, the Hon. Sir. Alden McLaughlin as Speaker of this honourable House.

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: The Member for Red Bay has been nominated. Is there a seconder?

The Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Joseph X. Hew, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I rise to second the nomination for the Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin for the constituency of Red Bay as Speaker of this honourable House.

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: The Honourable Member for Red Bay are you willing to accept the nomination?

Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin: Thank you Mr. Chairman, I humbly accept the nomination.

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Nominations have been made. Are there any other nominations? *[Pause]* If not, can we have a mo—

[Crosstalk]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Can I ask for a motion to close the nomination?

The Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Economic Development,

and Border Control and Labour, Elected Member for Bodden Town West: Good morning. I move that nominations be closed.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: The Motion has been made for nominations to be closed.

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

AYES.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: The Ayes have it. Nominations are now closed.

So we go through the process again for the vote. Do you want to keep the paper you have; are you satisfied with that?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: Still nobody wants to take my vote? Just give us a few minutes then to collect the ballots.

Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin: Mr. Chairman, is it not required that scrutineers be appointed?

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: Yes well, I think we are going to get to that part of it next. After we collect them we will appoint scrutineers.

There's one other matter and again the Clerk has brought it to my attention but I don't know if there is a rule that actually stops the Chair in this instance from casting his vote.

[Pause]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: So out of an abundance of caution we will leave as normal that the Presiding Officer does not vote. One more time that you'll take away my vote.

[Laughter]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: Please bear in mind we need one from— let me inquire of the House. Do you want one person from either side to be (scrutineer) or do you want the two Clerks to be the scrutineers, or the Attorney General (AG) and the Acting Deputy Governor? Is that okay?

The Honourable Minister of Tourism.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As per the Standing Orders, it would normally be the AG and the Deputy Governor. Since the Parliament has not been called to order to swear in the Acting Deputy Governor, ultimately from an authority perspective only the AG is able to preside as a scrutineer. So I would suggest that the AG and the Clerk, one of the Clerks be the

two scrutineers as per the Standing Orders that is necessary for two.

Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin: Mr. Chair.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: Member for Red Bay.

Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin: It's been a while since we have done this but as far as I recall the appointment of the scrutineers requires a resolution of the Parliament; so that this Parliament resolves that the Honourable Attorney General and whoever else it is are appointed scrutineers for the purpose of conducting the election of the Speaker.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: The point has been—

Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin: It can't be Mr. Chairman, it can't be that a Member gets up and says I want so and so and I want so and so, it must be a resolution of the House.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: Certainly we can take that suggestion in the form of a resolution and that's what I was taking it as. The Member made a very valid point, the point is that the House has not been called as yet; therefore the Acting Deputy Governor is not in the seat and has not been appointed as such. So, at this point in time rather than me receive any more licks from the bunch of you, let me ask the AG to make a ruling.

[Laughter]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: I think our Standing Orders are silent in that regard and I don't recall that we have done as the Member for Red Bay suggested the last couple of times. I think it leaves to the House to accept that way forward and the way forward is for a Member to make a nomination as to who would be [scrutineers]. At this point rather than hold up this House any longer, I am going to ask that a motion be made to nominate the AG and someone else, the Clerk. So at this point—

Hon. Bernie A. Bush, Minister of Home Affairs and Youth, Sports, Culture and Heritage, Elected Member for West Bay North: Mr. Chair.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: The Honourable Minister of Culture.

Hon. Bernie Bush: To prevent any future games or things being said that are not so, maybe we can nominate the Premier and they nominate the Leader of the Opposition and they can scrutineer it; simple. If that makes him happy.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: That would be a big clear up, except that they are voters in this process.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: As the Presiding Officer here, I am not satisfied that we should go the route of putting someone as a scrutineer that is not yet a Member of the House. The Clerk is more official than the Acting Deputy Governor at this point in time and I would ask the House, the Government and the Opposition to bear with me and allow that nomination to go forward. It would still be a nomination, a nomination for the Attorney General and the Clerk to be the scrutineers.

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairman, I have no objections.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Mr. Chair, with that being said, I would like to move a motion to nominate the Honourable Attorney General and the Clerk of the Parliament to be the scrutineers of the voting process for the new Speaker of this honourable House.

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: The Motion has been made that the Honourable Attorney General and the Clerk be our scrutineers.

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

AYES.

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: The Ayes have it. Our scrutineers are the Honourable Attorney General and the Clerk.

[Crosstalk]

[Pause]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: The Honourable Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, the Honourable Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, the Honourable Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, a blank ballot paper.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Chairman: *[reading out the Ballots]:*

The Honourable Sir Alden McLaughlin; The Honourable Sir Alden McLaughlin; The Honourable Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks; The Honourable Sir Alden McLaughlin; The Honourable Sir Alden McLaughlin; The Honourable Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks; The Honourable Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks; The Honourable Sir Alden McLaughlin; The Honourable Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks; The Honourable Sir Alden McLaughlin; The Honourable Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks; The Honourable Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks; The Honourable Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks; The Honourable Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks.

[Pause]

The Chairman: The results are: The Honourable Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks 10 [votes]; The Honourable Sir Alden McLaughlin 6 votes; and 1 blank ballot paper. Therefore, the Honourable Speaker of this Parliament is, by vote, Honourable Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks.

I shall now resume my seat on the backbench.

MOTION TO INVITE HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR, MR MARTYN ROPER, OBE TO ADMINISTER THE OATH OF DUE EXECUTION OF OFFICE TO THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Thank you, Madam Clerk.

I rise to move a Motion to invite His Excellency the Governor, Mr. Martyn Roper, OBE to administer the Oath of Due Execution of Office to the Honourable Speaker.

The Clerk: The Motion has been moved.

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

AYES.

The Clerk: The Ayes have it.

We now await the arrival of His Excellency the Governor.

OATH OF DUE EXECUTION OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED TO THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR MR MARTYN ROPER, OBE

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, Elected Member for West Bay Central: I, Katherine Anne Ebanks-Wilks, 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 Speaker of Parliament of the Cayman Islands. So help me, God.

[Pause]

His Excellency the Governor, Hon. Martyn K. Roper, OBE: The election of a new Speaker is a big and important moment in the history of any jurisdiction, so I very briefly want to pass on my warmest congratulations to our new Speaker, the Honourable Katherine Ebanks-Wilks.

I know it's a big personal achievement for you, but it is an important moment for our jurisdiction and I know I speak for everyone in wishing you every success. We will provide you with every support that we can; so many, many congratulations.

The Speaker: Thank you, Governor.

[Applause]

[Pause]

The Clerk: We will just give the Speaker a few minutes to robe and return. At that point in time, Parliament will officially commence.

[Pause]

The Speaker: This honourable House is now in session.

Please be seated.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS OR AFFIRMATIONS

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE AND DUE EXECUTION
by Mrs. Gloria McField-Nixon, the Honourable
Acting Deputy Governor, responsible for the
Portfolio of the Civil Service to be the Temporary
Ex-officio Member of the Parliament of the
Cayman Islands

The Speaker: I now call on the Acting Deputy Governor to be sworn in as Temporary Ex-Officio Member who will take the oath at the Clerk's Dais.

Please stand.

[Pause]

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

The Acting Deputy Governor, Hon. Gloria McField-Nixon: I, Gloria Michelle McField-Nixon, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King Charles III, his heirs and successors, according to Law. So help me God.

OATH FOR DUE EXECUTION OF OFFICE

The Acting Deputy Governor, Hon. Gloria McField-Nixon: I, Gloria Michelle Mcfield-Nixon, do swear that I will well and truly serve His Majesty King Charles III, His heirs and successors, and the people of the Cayman Islands in the Office of Ex-Officio Member of Parliament. So help me God.

[Pause]

The Speaker: On behalf of this honourable House, I welcome the Honourable Temporary Ex-Officio Member to take her seat.

STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER

The Speaker: Before I proceed to the next Order of business, I crave the indulgence of this honourable House just to say a few words.

Today, I am filled with gratitude to have been appointed to the Office of Speaker, which is a role that holds an enormous responsibility and authority. I thank God because I am here today only because of Him, I am humbled that Members have bestowed their trust and confidence in me.

Today, I feel a great sense of pride to have been given the privilege to follow in the footsteps of four previous esteemed, strong, female leaders of our country: the Hon. Sybil McLaughlin, the Hon. Edna Moyle, the Hon. Mary Lawrence and, last but not least, my fellow Elected Member for Cayman Brac East, the Hon. Juliana O'Connor-Connolly, who has always displayed leading with graceful force. As a female Speaker, I want to publicly acknowledge all of their efforts as each of them did their part to pave the way for female parliamentarians in our country.

When I was first approached about accepting the nomination of Speaker, my first consideration was to the Members who have more experience, particularly the Minister of Education who did a phenomenal job as Speaker. We often hear the honourable Minister of Education refer to "her children" and right now they are her priorities.

The second consideration was whether or not this would impact my duties to my constituency, and lastly, I considered the ongoing need to fill the vacancy of Speaker in order to provide stability to our newly autonomous Parliament, which has many items on the agenda to be actioned.

As fate would have it, a friend of mine was led to share an interview that Speaker Sir Lindsay Hoyle had with a reporter in the UK. The reporter asked him if he finds it hard to advocate for his constituents as Speaker, and he replied by a simple 'no'. He stated that if he needs to advocate for his constituents he might not be able to say it on the Floor of the House, but he has frequent meetings with the Prime Minister, which means that he is able to express the issues of his constituency directly to the Head of Government.

He also stated that he had more access for his people than he did before. Whilst I have always had access to the Government, what Sir Lindsay's words did was give me comfort in knowing that I can still advocate for my constituents of West Bay Central by continuing to work in close daily proximity with Heads of Government and their Ministers. I will have the same benefit to deal with matters at their first and final stages. It was at that stage that I was willing to embrace this opportunity that I had no idea would approach me so early in my political career.

I acknowledge the tremendous importance of this position, and the need for the Speaker to preside over this House in a manner where fairness is apparent by both sides of this House. I give this House and this

country my solemn undertaking that I will discharge my duties diligently, firmly and fairly.

As former Speaker Ms Edna Moyle stated in her maiden speech, ***“The Office of Speaker is an ancient and honourable one steeped in tradition and convention. It is an intricate feature of our system of governance; and the proper exercise of the functions of this office is critically important not only to the operations of the Legislative Assembly but, ultimately, to democracy itself. It is an awesome responsibility and a position of trust. It is the duty of the Speaker to ensure that there is fairness, decorum and decency in the Legislative Assembly and that democracy flourishes.”***

Democracy is not just about majority rule, it is also about minority rights. Certainly, it is the duty of the Speaker to facilitate the work of the Government and to ensure that the business of the House gets done in an efficient manner. But, importantly, it is also the duty of the Speaker to protect the rights of the minority and to insist that the voice of the Opposition in and to insist that the voice of the Opposition in the House is not stifled. Adequate opportunity must be given to Members of the Opposition to make their points as forcefully as they deem fit within the bounds of common decency and parliamentary decorum.”

This quote best describes for me the impartial nature that the Speaker must possess, and I give an undertaking to this honourable House that I, too, will be fair, and will follow in the footsteps of our previous Speakers. I also give a commitment to go further than to aspire to lead with integrity and competence, as it is an obligation as leaders—certainly my obligation as Speaker—to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct to continue to serve our people with dignity. Our people expect that we maintain the integrity and competence of the parliamentary profession.

The role of the Speaker is not just that of a presiding officer, but also one that should be focused on making it easier for the people of this country to engage with Parliament by improving the operations of Parliament and also by enhancing the Office of Speaker.

I will work closely with our very capable Clerk, Ms. Zena Merren and the parliamentary team. We will focus to improve access to information and make it easier for the community to engage with this House of Parliament, to learn about the current affairs and our rich Parliamentary history. This will be done by launching a much-needed new website and creating a greater social media presence.

As Speaker, I want to do my part to encourage people to get involved. Every Member values the attitudes of our voters toward specific issues and political participation. We are a Government with the people and for the people, and these tools will give the public added power to make a positive difference in your community.

To the public: I want to encourage everyone watching or listening, to participate in the development of your country, express your opinions on the world and how it is governed, and take part in it by shaping the decisions that affect you. As I mentioned, once the new website is launched, this information will be easier to access and understand.

As I approach the closing of my remarks, I want to take a moment to acknowledge my predecessor, the former Speaker from the West Bay West constituency. We thank him for his long service of over 40 years to his constituency and the Cayman Islands, especially for his Speakership for the past five and a half years and all of his involvement with getting our Parliament to an autonomous standing.

I also want to thank my colleague, the Honourable Minister for West Bay South for allowing me to take part in much of the journey in Financial Services since election. I thoroughly enjoyed the many meetings, both local and international, and I certainly feel that I have benefited from this experience. I am confident that the Minister is able to continue to take our Financial Services to a position of excellence, as he continues to change the false perception that has been hanging over the Cayman Islands for far too long.

To the Minister of Education: I thank you so much for your mentorship, and for taking the time to explain many processes and procedures to me. Most importantly, thank you for always leading by example. A woman of grace, who is a force to be reckoned with, and I think we all have seen that here this morning.

I once again humbly thank all elected colleagues again for their belief and confidence in me in this role. This is indeed a significant achievement in my political career of which there is much to be grateful for. As former Speaker Nancy Pelosi recently stated, ***“It’s time to empower younger leadership”***. Today, this has been done in the Cayman Islands.

To the people of the Cayman Islands: I will strive to always walk in the steps of all of our National Heroes and I vow to unconditionally serve the people of the Cayman Islands in the House of Parliament, and to honour the words of our National Hero, the Honourable Sybil McLaughlin, *“Whatever you do, do your best.”*

Thank you.

NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF THE HONOURABLE DEPUTY SPEAKER OF THE PARLIAMENT

The Speaker: Thank you.

I now call for nominations for the election of the Deputy Speaker of Parliament.

Nominations are now open.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Madam Speaker, thank you. It's been a while since I've had to use that that term. Thank you.

I rise to nominate the Member for Bodden Town East as the Deputy Speaker.

The Speaker: Does the Elected Member for Bodden Town East accept the nomination?

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour, Elected Member for Bodden Town East: Madam Speaker, I honourably accept this nomination. I thank the Premier for doing so.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Are there any other nominations?

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker; that sounds good. Congratulations, Ma'am.

The Speaker: Thank you, sir.

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Leader of the Opposition: I do rise to nominate the Member for George Town South as Deputy Speaker of this honourable House.

The Speaker: Is there a seconder?

Mr. Joseph X. Hew, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, I rise to second the nomination for the Member of George Town South as Deputy Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The Speaker: Does the Elected Member for George Town South accept the nomination?

Ms. Barbara E. Conolly, Elected Member for George Town South: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I humbly accept the nomination.

The Speaker: Thank you. Are there any other nominations?

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: Madam Speaker, I move that the nominations be closed.

The Speaker: Can I get a seconder to that Motion?

Mr. Isaac D. Rankine: Madam Speaker, I second the Motion.

The Speaker: All those agreed that nominations be closed please say Aye; those opposed No.

AYES.

The Speaker: Nominations are now closed.

As there is more than one person being nominated as the Deputy Speaker, we will have to proceed by way of ballot, therefore we ask that you give us a few minutes as we prepare the ballot papers, so I ask Members to remain in your seats.

[Pause]

The Speaker: While Members are voting, I would ask the Honourable Attorney General and the Honourable Acting Deputy Governor to attend the Clerk's Dias to act as scrutineers.

I will ask for a Motion to appoint the scrutineers.

[Pause]

The Speaker: I call on the Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders: Madam Speaker, it's good to see you up there in that wig and that gown—I am really, really proud of you.

Madam speaker, I rise to move that the Honourable Attorney General and the Honourable Acting Deputy Governor be scrutineers as per the Standing Orders.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The scrutineers Motion passed.

[Pause]

The Speaker: I will now call on the scrutineers, as the ballot boxes are in.

I ask for the Honourable Acting Deputy Governor to unlock the box and hand the Clerk the ballot as she reads the votes.

The Clerk: *[Reading out the Ballots]:* Ms. Barbara E. Conolly; Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour; Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour; Ms. Barbara E. Conolly; Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour; Ms. Barbara E. Conolly; Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour; Ms. Barbara E. Conolly; Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour; Ms. Barbara E. Conolly; Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour; Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour; Ms. Barbara E. Conolly; Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour; Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour.

[Pause]

The Speaker: The result of the ballot is: Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour, 10 votes; Ms. Barbara E. Conolly, 6 votes. It is my duty to announce that the Elected Member for

Bodden Town East is hereby elected as the honourable Deputy Speaker of Parliament.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: I look forward to working with the Deputy Speaker in this new capacity.

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour, Deputy Speaker, Elected Member for Bodden Town East: Madam Speaker, I beg your indulgence to just say thank you.

The Speaker: You're welcome. Would you like to say a few words?

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour, Deputy Speaker: Yes, Madam Speaker, I just want to thank the Premier for nominating me and thank the Members who voted for me. This is a long journey and one that couldn't be done without my faith in God.

I want to, again, thank all my colleagues but to single out my friend, the Honourable Juliana O'Connor Connolly, for her guidance. I want to thank the Deputy Premier Christopher Saunders, the Honourable Kenneth Bryan and Honourable Johany Ebanks for allowing me to act on their behalf and to be their (Parliament Secretary) PS. It has definitely been very encouraging—

The Speaker: Honourable Member for Bodden Town East...

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour, Deputy Speaker: Sorry.

The Speaker: I think there will be an opportunity for you to give remarks a bit later in the proceedings.

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour, Deputy Speaker: Yeah, I was just wrapping up, really.

The Speaker: Please proceed.

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour, Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the people of Bodden Town East, I thank you for your recognition. I am the representative that can reach different levels in representing this country and Bodden Town East to the highest degree. This elevation, as I call it, will allow me to represent you better.

I thank the scrutineers. I also congratulate you, Madam Speaker, in being elected as Speaker and I thank my family for tolerating me.

God bless you all, God bless this country.

The Speaker: Thank you Honourable Member.
Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart: Madam Speaker, I want to raise a matter with regard to the election. Just counting

the ballots, it seems to me that there were 16 ballot papers but there are 17 eligible to vote. I mean: there are 19 of us here, you are unable to vote, and I know we had one absentee.

The Speaker: We have one blank paper and one abstained. I will acknowledge in relation to the votes that there was one blank ballot paper and one abstained; 10 votes for Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour and six votes from Ms. Barbara E. Conolly.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Honourable Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Just a matter of clarity to help the proceedings.

I think that there was a ballot that was not submitted, rather than an abstention. If the record is being shown to you as an abstention that would be, in my humble opinion, ill-advised and incorrect. There were 10 votes for the now Deputy Speaker, and 6 votes for the nominee, which should be recorded as such; and the one that is recorded as absent cannot be recorded as absent, unless you're notifying that it is absent because they did not receive it.

We are all well aware in the House that a Member has chosen not to vote therefore a ballot was not in the box, and we are just trying to have this for the note and the Hansards in the future if someone questions the fact that the number is not adding up as the Leader of the Opposition has done. Hopefully that will help clarify for *Hansard* purposes, that there was nothing wrong in this process.

All Members have a right to choose not to vote if they want to, it is not a dictatorship, and therefore that should give enough clarification as to the process.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member for George Town Central. I have also asked that the document be amended to reflect absent, rather than abstain.

[Pause]

The Speaker: For the avoidance of doubt, we have one person who did not vote today, and we have one person who was absent.

Thank you.

Hon. Juliana O'Connor-Connolly: Madam Speaker, so that Members can wrap their head around what just transpired: I had every intention to vote, it was given to me. Based on my interpretation of the proceedings not going correctly, I then made the decision, as I have the constitutional right to do, not to partake in that aspect of the proceeding. Abstentions can be expressed or implied, I implied an abstention.

The Speaker: Thank you for your explanation, Honourable Member.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MOTIONS

GOVERNMENT MOTION NO. 2 OF 2022-2023 - CHANGE IN MEMBERSHIP OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

The Speaker: The Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Thank you Madam Speaker. I rise to move Government Motion No. 2 of 2022-2023.

The Speaker: The Motion has been moved and is open for debate. Does the Honourable Premier wish to speak?

The Speaker: I will move the Motion, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the Motion is headed Change of Membership of Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

WHEREAS paragraph (1) of Standing Order 77 provides “There shall be a standing select committee, to be styled the Public Accounts Committee, to consider reports of the Auditor General –

- (a) on the accounts of the Government;
- (b) on such other accounts required to be laid before the House as the committee may think fit; and
- (c) on any matter incidental to the performance of his duties or the exercise of his powers as the committee may think fit.”

AND WHEREAS the current Public Accounts Committee (in this Motion referred to as “the Committee”) was elected on Friday, 22 April, 2021 and comprised:-

1. Leader of the Opposition and the Elected Member for George Town East - Hon. Roy McTaggart — Chairman
2. Elected Member for George Town South - Ms. Barbara Conolly
3. Elected Member for East End - Mr. Isaac Rankine
4. Elected Member for Savannah - Ms. Heather Bodden
5. Elected Member for Bodden Town East - Mr. Dwayne Seymour
6. Elected Member for West Bay Central – Hon. Katherine Ebanks-Wilks

AND WHEREAS paragraph (2) of Standing Order 80 authorises the House to revoke the appointment of

a Member to a standing select committee and appoint another Member in his or her place;

BE IT THEREOFRE RESOLVED THAT the Parliament revokes the appointment of the Elected Member for West Bay Central and elects the Elected Member for George Town North as member of the Committee.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The Motion has been moved and is open for debate. Does the Honourable Premier wish to speak thereto?

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Very briefly, Madam Speaker. It is, of course, by Standing Orders requirement that the balance of the composition of the Committee be primarily on the Government side.

I think originally, when the Member for Bodden Town East moved across, we would then have had an imbalance. We should have dealt with this issue previously but, given your election and elevation as the Honourable Speaker, this now gives us the opportunity to replace your position, Madam Speaker, with the Member for George Town South to restore the appropriate balance as contemplated by the Standing Orders.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Sorry, George Town North. Did I say south? How could I get that wrong? You don't even have long hair.

The Speaker: Thank you. Does any other Member wish to speak?

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

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

Madam Speaker, just rising to express our support for the Motion before us as well, and to offer my thanks to the Premier for taking the opportunity this time to rebalance the Public Accounts Committee so, thankful to him for bringing the Motion.

The Speaker: Thank you.

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

The Honourable Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. “Thank you, Madam Speaker”—that sounds good, yes, it does.

Madam Speaker, my contribution to this Motion is simply to highlight for the record of this honourable Parliament, that though this Motion has been read as

to revoke your appointment from PAC, in normal tradition we would have given the opportunity as resignation by yourself rather than the honourable House recording that you have been revoked because it gives the negative connotation.

However, Madam Speaker, considering the fact that we are all here in Parliament together at the same time when you were appointed as the Speaker of this honourable House, it is implied that the reason is there, but I want the record to show [that] by no means were you ever questioned about being revoked from this very important Committee called Public Accounts Committee, but you had to leave on the basis of leading this country's House of democracy forward.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you very much, Member for George Town Central. Does any other Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* Does any other Member wish to speak? The question is—Honourable Premier.

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

Just to thank the Member who spoke for clarity, and thank the other Members for their tacit support.

The Speaker: Thank you Premier.

The question is, **BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the Parliament revokes the appointment of the Elected Member for West Bay Central and elects the Elected Member for George Town North as Member for the Committee.**

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Hon. Juliana O'Connor-Connolly: Can I have a division please?

The Speaker: Sure.

Madam Clerk, can I ask you to call for a division.

Division No. 3 of 2021-2025

Hon. G. Wayne Panton	Aye
Hon. Christopher Saunders	Aye
Hon. Kenneth Bryan	Aye
Hon. Sabrina Turner	Aye
Hon. Johany Ebanks	Aye
Hon. André Ebanks	Aye
Hon. Bernie Bush	Absent
Hon. Juliana O'Connor-Connolly	Aye
Hon. Dwayne Seymour	Aye
Mr. Isaac Rankine	Aye
Ms. Heather Bodden	Absent
Hon. W. McKeeva Bush	Absent

The Clerk: Hon. W. McKeeva Bush?

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: I was not here when the vote was called, therefore I was not in my seat.

The Clerk: I apologise.

Hon. Roy McTaggart	Aye
Mr. Joseph Hew	Aye
Mr. Moses Kirkconnell	Aye
Ms. Barbara Conolly	Aye
Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin	Aye
Mr. David Wight	Absent

The Speaker: The result of the ballot is 14 Ayes and 4 Absentees.

The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Government Motion No. 2 of 2022-2023 passed.

The Speaker: I will now call on the Honourable Premier to move the adjournment.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Madam Speaker, I would rise to move the adjournment of this honourable House but before doing so, I wish to extend a few words to you by way of congratulation, and I am sure other colleagues in this honourable House would wish to do the same.

Madam Speaker, it is a privilege and an honour to see yourself elected today as Speaker of this honourable Parliament. I congratulate you and I have every confidence, I'm sure I can say on behalf of my Government, that you will do an excellent job. You will perform the role admirably, you will restore—sorry, you will maintain dignity and honour, and Madam Speaker, I think the significance of today, was probably beyond yourself. As you noted earlier, it is a day which reflects younger people being able to participate at an elevated level within government.

Madam Speaker, a couple of weeks ago we had an historic event in Cayman. It was the first time in which we had a female Chief Justice sworn in, and it was historic at the time. The significance today is equally historic, in that we now have two arms of this country's government being presided over by women. Madam Speaker, I think that is to be recognised, it is to be celebrated. As the Minister for Gender Affairs, I am particularly happy about that. As Premier, I am very happy that it has transpired. I celebrate you, and I wish for the whole country to recognise the significance of this day and this event.

Madam Speaker, I know you mentioned the concern around how you would be able to perform your role as Speaker as well as maintain and improve your role as a representative for the people of West Bay Central as we go along, and you have referred to the

words of no less than Sir Lindsay Hoyle and the challenge that he would face as Speaker of the House of Commons in the UK, and being quite a ways away from his own home constituency. Madam Speaker, I would like the people of West Bay Central to know, that I have every confidence that you will be able to continue to perform your role as a representative of the people of West Bay Central and you will have every support of the Government in assisting and meeting their needs as well.

I have indicated to you that I would be happy to meet with you regularly to ensure that that is happening, and I certainly intend to keep my word both to you, and to the people of your constituency, your own constituents in West Bay Central.

Madam Speaker, I don't want to prolong things because I am sure other Members will have a few words they would wish to express, but just to wrap up by saying congratulations again. I am personally very proud of you and I'm expressing pride, on behalf of the Government, of your elevation to this role, Madam Speaker.

I would say that I started my career for four years beginning my contributions in this House with a reference to Madam Speaker, and as I stood earlier to refer to you as Madam Speaker, it certainly was a nostalgic moment for me; it was... It was one of those moments that took me back significantly. I am really happy. Even if by God's grace or otherwise, you know, I don't end up coming back here, if I can finish by referring to yourself as Madam Speaker for the rest of this term, I am very happy.

Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to make those comments, and I wish to extend that to others as well.

The Speaker: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

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

The Opposition joins with the Premier in congratulating you on your elevation to this most important position and role within our Parliament. Like I said when I first got up, it really sounded good to address the Speaker's position as "Madam Speaker".

I have known you for so many years, Madam Speaker, from the time you were much younger—we were all much younger—and to see you grow up and get to such a position of prominence, not just within this Parliament, but within the whole Cayman Islands. It is indeed a very joyous time, it is a happy time. I know your family has got to be just over the moon proud of you for what you have accomplished.

I pledge to you that I will work with you and that we will give you the support that we know you will need, and we will always continue to support you in your work here, as well. I wish you all the very best in your role as the Speaker of this honourable Parliament. May you

have a very successful term and time here—and I hope you enjoy it, because if you're not enjoying what you're doing, it's difficult to do the job.

I really wish you the very best in your work. That's all I can say and...here to support you in fulfilling that role so, thank you very much.

The Speaker: Thank you.

I call on the Honourable Member for West Bay West.

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, let me add my congratulations to what has been said. I have known you for many years now, you were best friends with my only daughter, so I knew you from those teenage years and on losing her, I counted you as one of my own. Just to announce too that we are close in our family—in that big, West Bay numbers and numbers of close family. From those teenage years I knew you to be an intelligent young woman and, being able to work with you these last... well, one year and more months, I know just how intelligent you are.

This job comes with many demands. Far too many, in fact, for these small Islands, for people believe, without systems, that you are to be elected, you can be the Speaker and then have nothing to say, but yet must tend to every need that is thrown at you, because you are an elected person. Well, it doesn't work that way, because you are an elected person. The Speaker is an elected person, and has that responsibility. That responsibility does not leave, and so at times [you] will find it challenging, but I am convinced that, because I have seen how you work, I know you will rise to meet those challenges. I know that you can be where you are, and that you will still represent the people of West Bay.

I have at least two years left I hope, and after that, I am calling it a day. I'm done. Forty years, ten terms of being elected, 15 years of being directly involved is enough, and so I have announced [that] I won't be running but you can depend on my help in these next two years plus, and thereafter, to assist you in anything to do with West Bay Central. As we stand now we work well together. You tend to my people, my people come to your office; your people come to my office as they go [to] West Bay South [and] West Bay North. Those people come to us. We still work as a good community ought to work, and as good elected colleagues ought to work. I hope we can maintain that stand.

Madam Speaker, I have given you some advice and again, I said that last year, I said it at the beginning of my term before that: We here should not leave our family out, and far too many people expect that. All these many years, my wife has never been on a public platform, yet she was my greatest asset as an elected person. She was my rock, she still is. We are

moving up in age, I would be nearly 70 at the next election, God's willing. I think I have done a lot of good. I have been crucified for some of it, lied about for much of it and it will continue, because our humanity is like that.

Bad part Members, remember what Gerard said when he was leaving here? Remember what he said? Let it not be so. He said, *'if a Caymanian cannot be the captain, he will go down in the engine room and wreck the rigging'*. That was a serious indictment on his departure. Let it not be so. We are too small, and we have moved on from much of that, but there is far too much of it. Too much glory in seeing this one trampled. Too much—too much.

I will continue to offer advice from the Floor as I can at times, and ought to at times as a Member, and I promise you my continued respect and continued assistance where I can.

My friend, the Deputy Speaker, is a long-time friend. He grew up in our district. He was one of my footballers on one of my teams that I helped found. I was the sponsor of that team and we got him into our Party. He has done well in serving his people and I have no doubt that he will bring much to the Office of Deputy Speaker. So, I want to congratulate both of you and offer you, again, my continued respect and my continued assistance where I can, Madam Speaker.

In knowing that I will not be pursuing the next election, part of my thoughts was to see you in the post if we had the full support of our Members; to see another young person move forward. That has taken place, and in the next two years I hope to see a few more things done before calling it quits. Thank you for being a friend—thank you for the advice that you have given me. I know that you are going to perform well.

God bless you, God bless your family, and remember what I said: You have to take time for your family. Especially now, you only have your mom. Even more so now, God bless.

The Speaker: Thank you. I call on the Member for Bodden Town East.

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I want to quickly mention a few things in terms of the proceedings this morning. I first want to thank the former Speaker, the Honourable William McKeeva Bush for serving this country in the many roles that he has over the years, and I want to publicly thank him for his service.

Madam Speaker you are smart, courageous, and passionate about Cayman and about fairness. I worked with you in the private sector many years ago, I have known you probably over 30 years and we are connected by family and we spent many family dinners together over the years. Even your spouse was a Member of my Bodden Town football team many years ago so, connected in many ways.

I thank the House again for electing me as Deputy Speaker and I will do whatever is necessary for this country to move along. I want to work with you in a manner that has never been done before. Hopefully one day you will take a bathroom break and allow me to sit in the seat unlike—the former Speaker didn't give you a chance.

[Laughter]

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank God he walked out of the House so I can talk about him. That's what happens. He may come back in.

However, it was me who nominated a female for this post 13 years ago, the Honourable Mary Lawrence—and yes, it does sound good saying Madam Speaker. When I first came to the House that is what I was used to, and I got a little confused even after the first male got in the seat.

I thank you my friend. My family in Bodden Town is watching and cheering for you. Pray every day as you sit in that seat, and be guided by God and the other Members who have experience, whether it's from the Opposition or from the Government; get all the advice you can. Thank you for this opportunity and allowing me to say these few words.

God bless.

The Speaker: I thank the honourable Member. The Honourable Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will try not to be too long because all the Members have highlighted some very important points about your journey to that chair.

I think the records should show that its well-deserved, that you have the necessary qualification to honour that seat in every capacity necessary, but for the Hansards I think it should be noted that when this Government asked you to consider the post of Speaker, the first thing that came to your mouth was, *"I have to focus on the people of West Bay Central"* and your questions about ensuring that they would be cared for and attended to, and to ensure that we as a Government, address the issues that face them. It told me from then, your priority, in respect to your role.

Madam Speaker, I want to give my commitment as Minister of Tourism and Transport, that I will do everything within my power to assist your constituents where sometimes you may not have the voice that you would like to have to address particular issues that would normally be addressed in Caucus, on the Floor of this House; but this sacrifice, which some could consider, is a sacrifice not only for West Bay Central, but for the Cayman Islands—Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac, and Little Cayman—to be in that seat. And you can see the signs of it already, Madam Speaker, by your address to ensure that the Opposition has their fair say in the house of democracy which you now lead.

Madam Speaker, I am certain, as I was certain when I came to West Bay Central to stand on your platform to endorse you as a young, strong, educated, Caymanian woman, that you will do everything that you have said you would do for the people of West Bay Central, just right here, in another capacity, as the Presiding Officer of democracy in the Cayman Islands.

I congratulate you as a younger elected Member, like myself, hoping to take the country forward in these senior roles, and I would be happy, for the rest of this term, to continue to call you 'Madam Speaker'.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The Honourable Member for Prospect.

Hon. Sabrina T. Turner, Minister of Health & Wellness and Home Affairs, Elected Member for Prospect: Thank you Madam Speaker, for your indulgence and indeed, I join the chorus in celebrating this milestone and this journey with you.

I want to say that it is indeed an honour to stand here to actually address you as Madam Speaker. Our interactions over the past 18-19 months have been a roller coaster as we both settled in our new roles that have been appointed by the people of the Cayman Islands; but prior to being officially elected into Office, my first official interaction with you was actually on the airwaves, and I will never forget that experience with you, where we actually held each other up.

We were both somewhat nervous, but quickly we pivoted and identified each other's strengths and just as that was displayed in the public forum of women supporting women, I give you my word of supporting you in this journey as you elevate and continue to take care of us, as now Madam Speaker of the House, and that delicate dance of remaining in an elected role and serving the people of West Bay Central. May God continue to bless you, guide you, and never, ever, give up, or doubt yourself. Embark on this journey. Embrace it wholeheartedly, and the best is yet to come. Congratulations to you on your role.

To the Deputy Speaker, the honourable [Mr. Seymour] from Bodden Town East, as you embark in this new chapter of your life as well, and in your elected capacity, I extend the same wishes to you in your role. We are all here to assist you.

All the best.

The Speaker: Thank you very much, honourable Member.

Honourable Member for George Town North.

Mr. Joseph X. Hew, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I will not be too long. There was much talk about football earlier, and it reminded me that I have a very important 2 o'clock meeting to attend.

[Laughter]

Mr. Joseph X. Hew, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, I rise to congratulate you on your elevation as the Honourable Speaker of this House, and also my friend and classmate across the aisle, on being elected as the Deputy Speaker—and truth be told, Madam Speaker, whomever had been democratically elected here today, I would be proud of because we are all Caymanians—

[Desk thumping]

Mr. Joseph X. Hew, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: And we are all one people.

I do also want to point out: The Honourable Leader just made an observation following up on the Premier's comments about the Chief Justice being sworn in is a female, and yourself as a young Caymanian woman today; but earlier we also swore in the Deputy Governor as a strong, young, Caymanian woman as well.

[Desk thumping]

Mr. Joseph X. Hew, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: I'm young so... and so we have three arms of government all being led by women this morning. I am very proud, and certainly hold each of you in the highest regard.

Congratulations.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The honourable Member for George Town South.

Ms. Barbara E. Conolly: Thank you, Madam Speaker—and I am happy to call you Madam Speaker.

I rise to congratulate you as our Speaker of the House. I am also proud to be a woman, a lady Parliamentarian, and I just want you to know that I am here to work with you, to assist you, because I once was there for a very brief time, and I learned quite a bit at that time. I want to say that I will support you in whatever you need going forward, but just to say that I stand here today really proud of our women Parliamentarians. I know the Minister of Education, I worked with her, it was a pleasure to work with her, and also our former Speaker of the House, the Honourable Edna Moyle (rest in peace); she's also my cousin and many people, you know, always refer to me as resembling Ms. Edna.

I am so proud to be a part of this Parliament today and want to congratulate you again, okay? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you very much.

The Honourable Member for East End.

Mr. Isaac D. Rankine: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of myself and my constituents, I rise to offer my congratulations to you on your elevation to this role of Speaker of this honourable Parliament. We met approximately four years ago, and we journeyed together on the road to being elected to this Parliament. It was not easy, because we know that we were up against more experienced parliamentarians than ourselves but we did it.

With that same commitment of working with you Madam Speaker, I also commit that I will continue working with you and I will also commit to help in any way I can. I am proud of you, Madam Speaker, very proud of you, and I wish you God's grace and mercies as you perform and lead this honourable Parliament.

I also want to take this time and congratulate the new Deputy Speaker, the Member from Bodden Town East in his role to this position. I know that you both will do the position well, and I just want to wish you both God's blessing.

Thank you.

The Speaker: I thank the honourable Member.

The Honourable Member for West Bay South.

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Minister of Financial Services and Commerce and Investment, Innovation and Social Development, Elected Member for West Bay South: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Very briefly because I think I know the appointment the Member for George Town North was referring to.

I just want to say that on first hearing of your appointment it was, as you alluded to in your statement, bittersweet for me, personally, because I will sincerely miss you as a co-pilot Parliamentary Secretary in the area of Financial Services and Commerce. You have been an extraordinary support. You know full well that there is a very strong civil service team in the Ministry of Financial Services and Commerce, but sometimes it is so good to have that person who understands the political nuances and be that co-pilot, so I will miss you in that regard but now, having the feeling of seeing you take the chair, I am very proud of you.

We've known each other for quite some time in our twenties, the nocturnal activities those in their twenties get up to, and we didn't at that time appreciate, until the run up to your dearly departed father's service, that we were actually family. I think it is worth stating that he is probably looking upon you today very humbly and very proudly.

I look forward to working with you in this capacity as Presiding Officer, and I do hope that the Member for Bodden Town East does get breaks and is able to take the chair and we also see that bit of balance so congratulations, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: I thank the Honourable Member.

The Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Madam Speaker, you know, as I watched you walk into the room, your robe and everything else, I said to myself, *Am I going to get more calls from Kathy, or less?* Almost about every single day Madam Speaker, you would call me for something for one of your constituents.

I think, while you may have been the Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Financial Services and also the Ministry of Education, the work that you did in the Ministry of Labour was also a big help, and there were many things that you did behind the scenes, that I'm sitting back and I am going to wonder where am I going to get the help from, because that's the kind of person you are, in the sense that you just help, and as much as you called on me I also called on you many times, to help on different projects within my various Ministries.

Today, as I looked at your election, as the Minister for Finance and having recently seen Cayman's rating being re-affirmed by Moody's, they spoke of Cayman's political stability. Despite the political differences that may have happened in this House before, the public got to see right here today that, once the vote was taken, all hands were on deck and everyone is fully supportive of you, and I think it is important for the public to recognise that despite our political differences, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition stated, we are all Caymanians. The vote is taken, we have come together, and now we move on, politics aside.

As the Minister for Labour, it really punctuates to me the fact that we send a message today to all our young people that once you work hard, you apply yourself and you are diligent, you can achieve anything, but the one thing that really hit me the most today, as a father who has a daughter who wants to be a lawyer, seeing you in that seat and the message that it will send to many young people—many young women in particular. It says something about us as a people here in the Cayman Islands, and it is important that we in this House as political leaders never, ever forget that: That we should always make sure that we, at all times, strive to live our best life and show the best that Cayman has to offer.

I also need to pause the pay congratulations to my comrade in struggle, my brother from my neighbouring District of Bodden Town East, the Honourable Dwayne "John-John" Seymour. John-John brings a lot of passion and he genuinely cares, like yourself, Madam Speaker, about the people he represents not just in the district of Bodden Town East, but also across the Cayman Islands, because I can tell you that there are many people, even my constituents, who still go to John-John for help and vice versa—people from his constituency will still come to me for help, but it goes to show that is who we are as Caymanians and that at the end of the day, we can come together.

I listened to the warm remarks of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and it was really moving,

it was really touching. I also want to publicly congratulate the Progressives for their 20 years of service to the country at this point. They extended an invitation to myself and others to attend their concert. I was very happy to attend along with the Member from Savannah, and it was a really good concert—Carlene Davis was really, really, good.

Madam Speaker, more importantly, the one thing I want to close on and I want this to resonate not just to yourself Madam Speaker, but every Member of this House: Politics by its nature is a contact sport. It is adversarial in nature and at times it can be quite dark, but at the start of every proceedings in this honourable Parliament, we start off with a prayer before we even start conducting the business of this House, and if there is one thing I want to leave anyone and everyone with, that is listening, is from Matthew 6:33: *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all those things shall be added unto you.*

I think it is important for all of us in Cayman to remember that; that there are dark times ahead. There are challenges out there for our people, you know. Inflation is not going to go away. We see the challenges that are happening in terms of the oil and everything else. Look at all of the different [issues] going on around the world and every morning part of my routine is to actually read the different newspapers from the Caribbean to Europe to Africa to everywhere just to see what's going on, and I want to say this: despite our challenges here in Cayman, let us not forget that this is still one of the best places on this planet to live and work.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Madam speaker, I want to give you the commitment, as a Member of this Government, that your calls will definitely be answered even more now as Madam Speaker, but that your constituents of West Bay Central also need to remember that as far as we are concerned, there are still Caymanians, they are still our people, and like any other constituency we will make sure that they still get the resources or whatever it is that they need. Also, that the sacrifice they have made, in terms of putting their representative into a more neutral position will not be forgotten, and that we will make sure they are taken care of. I can assure you that we will still be looking at Blossom Village; that's not forgotten and that will stay there.

I want to congratulate you and also my good friend from Bodden Town East on your elections here today.

Thank you.

The Speaker: I thank the Honourable Member.
The Member for West Bay North.

Hon. Bernie A. Bush: Madam Speaker, the goldilocks really can't be seen now with that horsehair on top of your head, Ma'am.

[Inaudible interjection and laughter]

Hon. Bernie A. Bush: Madam Speaker, I hope I'm still your favourite PE teacher.

Today, I sit here and I thought about your father—he's proud; so are we. Like we said before, we will continue to work as the team we have been in West Bay. Just have confidence in yourself. One of your shortcomings is many times you don't believe in yourself like other people do. Madam Speaker, believe in yourself. Anything is possible.

You have made many young women out there proud and I have gotten texts from my family saying, 'get up and say something' because everyone knows I am not one who likes to get up and speak but, on behalf of my family, on behalf of West Bay North, congratulations. I'm sure you will be doing a good job and especially with the people you have at hand who can assist you as you go along this new journey.

Congratulations and well done.

The Speaker: I thank the Honourable Member.

The honourable Member for Cayman Brac West and Little Cayman.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise to join voice with my colleagues of all of the congratulations that have been given to you and the new Deputy [Speaker].

Madam Speaker, it is not lost on any of us the movement towards youth for the leader of the legislative branch. I heard you mention it in your remarks. I thought they were very well done and I can tell you, sitting here close and watching you deliver the remarks, I can tell this country they were from your heart. Well done.

I want to say that I am thrilled to see the strength in the family members that you have here today because I am sure, as they have done to this point, you have supported her and she's understanding and needing of it. I can tell you that we all recognise what it means to have you here today and the others who have been here with her. You are very fortunate to have a lovely family and so proud to see them here today and know that they are going to have to be here and as you give them strength, they will continue to give you strength.

I also want to take just a little bit of time and say congratulations to my friend, the honourable Dwayne Seymour, the Bodden Town representative who works extremely hard. Congratulations on your appointment today.

Madam Speaker, with those few words, I want to make sure that you know that congratulations are in order from not only myself, but from Cayman Brac West and Little Cayman.

Thank you.

The Speaker: I thank you very much, honourable Member.

The Honourable Attorney General.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise to also add my congratulations. This is understandably and rightly so a very proud moment for you, as you join a rich tradition in becoming Speaker of this House. You quite rightly enumerated those who have gone before, and the Honourable Member for George Town South as well having had the pleasure of so serving.

We have our esteemed Acting Deputy Governor with us, and as others have mentioned before, Madam Speaker, we recently celebrated the elevation of the Honourable Madam Ramsay-Hale to the post of Chief Justice. So, Madam Speaker, while other countries are wrestling with gender issues and how to recalibrate and recognise women, we can proudly proclaim that we have no such issues in the Cayman Islands. The sky is the limit, really, for our females and purely on merits.

Madam Speaker, all the best to you during your tenure. I certainly, understandably, pledge the support of the Attorney General's Chambers to the Speaker. We work hand in hand, obviously, and the Constitution contemplates that. We also have the benefit of having a female Clerk of Parliament, which is also a very proud addition, if I might say so, to the construct of government.

Allow me to also pay tribute to the newly-elected Deputy Speaker, a man, as others have mentioned, who is very passionate about things Parliament and he comes to this new post with all the passion, vision and energy that we are accustomed to.

I want to wish both of you well, as you take forward the stewardship of this Parliament which is in itself, relatively new in terms of the designation but Madam Speaker, this is by all means a very proud moment for this country, this jurisdiction.

In 2022, we sadly lost our beloved Queen but, whilst we still mourn that loss, we have much to be happy about and so we celebrate the success of yourself and others.

I thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Attorney General.

I now call on the Honourable Acting Deputy Governor.

Mrs. Gloria McField-Nixon, Acting Deputy Governor: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My remarks today will be brief, as you can probably hear I have not much voice left. I had the privilege of being in PAC yesterday and had to speak a bit longer on that occasion, but I would not miss this chance Madam Speaker, to add what voice I have left to congratulate you on what is a tremendous day not only for this Parliament, but for the Cayman Islands. It has been such a pleasure to see your ascent to this Chair.

I am very familiar with the work that you have done as a former civil servant and the time you have been elected as a parliamentarian, and I have had the privilege of also receiving your calls, the discussions about your being a very ardent advocate for your constituents. I know first-hand, even in the midst of a hurricane, I have been in the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) to receive your calls ahead of time as you've made such preparations on behalf of your constituents.

Your competence is well known, but what I was privileged to experience in that time as well, Madam Speaker, was your compassion. I have had the opportunity of sitting with you on a panel as we were talking about issues of women in leadership, and to hear the humility with which you have discussed your tremendous accomplishments, and to share with such candour the challenges that you have every day.

I saw women across that audience really relating to you and being in awe, but also the way that they were able to connect; the impact that you will continue to have across these Islands, but in particular for the women of these Islands as you take that chair, Madam Speaker, is tremendous and although I am here as a temporary Member, I am so incredibly grateful for this opportunity to witness this day first-hand. My sincere congratulations on behalf of the entire civil service. We look forward to continuing to work with you even as you lead this autonomous Parliament, you can count on our continued support.

To the Elected Member for Bodden Town [East], the Honourable Dwayne Seymour: Sir, I look forward as well to continuing to work with you and to support you. You are also a man of considerable compassion, which is really spelled out in the way that you represent the people, in the way that you continue to bring around our deliberations to how this impacts the people. You never let us forget the reason why we exist: we are here to make lives better and I know, sir, on your watch, that will continue to be our primary focus; so congratulations Honourable Mr. Seymour.

Thank you again, and congratulations, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Does any other Member wish to speak? I then call on the Honourable Premier to move the Motion to adjourn.

ADJOURNMENT

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

I am very pleased that Members have had the opportunity to express their congratulations and their support this afternoon... Yeah, afternoon now. From the time we began I have heard nothing but truth, honest reflection, solidarity, unity amongst Caymanians and that is what we are here about Madam Speaker. We are here to represent our country, represent our people and to make this country the best country that it can be so I am very proud, again, Madam Speaker to have you in that chair.

It only remains for me, Madam Speaker, to formally move the adjournment of this honourable House until the agreed date of the 7th December at 10 a.m.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The question is that this House do now stand adjourn until 10 a.m. on the 7th December.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it. This honourable House now stands adjourned until 10 a.m. on the 7th December.

At 12.53 p.m. the House stood adjourned until Wednesday, 7th December 2022 at 10 a.m.