



**CAYMAN ISLANDS
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

First Meeting of the 2020/2021 Session
Eighth Sitting

Monday
26 October 2020
(Pages 1-8)

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, OBE, JP, MLA, Speaker

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PRESENT WERE:

SPEAKER

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, OBE, JP, MLA

MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

Hon. Alden McLaughlin, MBE, JP, MLA	<i>Premier</i> , Minister of Employment, Border Control, Community Affairs, International Trade, Investment; Aviation and Maritime Affairs
Hon. Moses I. Kirkconnell, JP, MLA	<i>Deputy Premier</i> , Minister of District Administration, Tourism and Transport
Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour, JP, MLA	Minister of Health, Environment, Culture and Housing
Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, JP, MLA	Minister of Finance and Economic Development
Hon. Joseph X. Hew, JP, MLA	Minister of Commerce, Planning and Infrastructure

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

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

ELECTED MEMBERS

GOVERNMENT BACKBENCHERS

Ms. Barbara E. Conolly	<i>Deputy Speaker</i> , Elected Member for George Town South
Mr. Austin O. Harris, MLA	Elected Member for Prospect
Mr. David C. Wight, MLA	Elected Member for George Town West

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

Hon. V. Arden McLean, JP, MLA	<i>Leader of the Opposition</i> - Elected Member for East End
Mr. Alva. H. Suckoo, MLA	<i>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</i> - Elected Member for Newlands
Mr. Christopher S. Saunders, MLA	Elected Member for Bodden Town West
Mr. Bernie A Bush, MLA	Elected Member for West Bay North
Mr. D. Ezzard Miller, MLA	Elected Member for North Side
Mr. Kenneth V. Bryan, MLA	Elected Member for George Town Central
Mr. Anthony S. Eden, OBE, MLA	Elected Member for Savannah

APOLOGIES

Hon. Tara A. Rivers, JP, MLA	Minister of Financial Services and Home Affairs
Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly JP, MLA	Minister of Education, Youth, Sports, Agriculture and Lands
Capt. A. Eugene Ebanks, JP, MLA	Elected Member for West Bay Central

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
FIRST MEETING OF THE 2020/2021 SESSION
MONDAY
26 OCTOBER 2020
2:33 P.M.
Eighth Sitting

[Hon. William McKeeva Bush, Speaker, presiding]

The Speaker: Prayers will be read by the Honourable Deputy Governor.

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson:
Good afternoon. 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 Legislative Assembly now assembled, that all things may be ordered upon the best and surest foundations for the glory of Thy Name and for the safety, honour and welfare of the people of these Islands.

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

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

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

Amen.

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Proceedings in this honourable Legislative Assembly are now resumed.

**ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS
OR AFFIRMATIONS**

The Speaker: None.

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

The Speaker: I have apologies from the Honourable Minister of Financial Services whose son is still in hospital. We continue our prayers for the Honourable Minister and particularly her son.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

The Speaker: None.

**PRESENTATION OF PAPERS
AND OF REPORTS**

The Speaker: None.

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

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

The Speaker: Can I call on the Premier to suspend Standing Orders after 11.00 a.m.?

The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin, Minister of Employment, Border Control, Community Affairs, International Trade, Investment, Aviation and Maritime Affairs, Elected Member for Red Bay: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the suspension of Standing Order 23(7) and (8) in order that questions may be asked of Ministers after the hour of 11.00 a.m.

The Speaker: The question is that Standing Orders be suspended for questions to be taken after the hour of 11.00 a.m. All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

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

QUESTION NO. 17
HAS THE POSITION OF DIRECTOR AT
WORKFORCE OPPORTUNITIES AND
RESIDENCY CAYMAN (WORC) BEEN FILLED;
IF SO, BY WHOM?

The Speaker: The Member for George Town Central.

Mr. Kenneth V. Bryan, Elected Member for George Town Central: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I recognise there is a question standing in my name to the Minister of Employment and Border Control, but the question should be to the Deputy Governor. I'll read it and hope the Honourable Premier will address that element.

The question: Can the Honourable Minister say if the position of Director at Workforce Opportunities and Residency Cayman (WORC) has been filled; and if so, by whom?

The Speaker: The Honourable Deputy Governor.

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

Mr. Speaker, WORC is currently headed by Caymanian Mr. Jeremy Scott, who is the Acting Interim Director. Given the provisions of section 55 of the Constitution, I am constrained from discussing individual staffing matters in the Legislative Assembly.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

The Speaker: Member for George Town Central.

Mr. Kenneth V. Bryan: Mr. Speaker, I am going to ask two supplementary questions and if the Honourable Deputy Governor can't answer them, I understand, because I am not sure how far my line of questioning can go. Can the Deputy Governor say how long it is intended for the Acting Director to be there, because I see an advertisement for that position? Is there an estimated time for filling that post?

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, *I don't have that information, but I'll be happy to provide it to the Member.*

The Speaker: Member for George Town Central.

Mr. Kenneth V. Bryan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last supplementary.

As we all, as elected Members, get calls frequently about jobs in government, is there anything that we can do to assist with helping Caymanians find employment within government? I think sometimes the expectation of us being able to appoint persons is not reality. Perhaps the Deputy Governor can address that.

The Speaker: I have been asking that for thirty-six years.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Governor.

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

Mr. Speaker, yes. This is one area that Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) do not have responsibility for; section 55 of the Constitution makes that very clear. Of course, Ministers and other Members of this Legislative Assembly will be asked questions by their constituents.

The Civil Service operates with fair recruitment exercises in terms of open recruitment so, very rarely and only in the most exceptional circumstances would someone be appointed without going through an open recruitment exercise. One of the ways we wouldn't have to advertise is if it's a returning Caymanian graduate.

Mr. Speaker, in response to his question I would urge the Member, when he is asked about jobs in the Civil Service to refer the persons to our job portal — we advertise all our jobs. If there is a specific concern, address it with me; I'll be happy to help in any way I can. I get the same questions from members of the public.

The Civil Service is doing a really good job in bringing Caymanians into the Service at all levels but this is one area where Members can say, *this is not my responsibility, call the Deputy Governor.*

The Speaker: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. V. Arden McLean, Leader of the Opposition, Elected Member for East End: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Now that the position is permanently filled, I wonder if the Deputy Governor can tell us if the person who was there acting on an interim basis has returned to their substantive post.

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Governor.

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my answer, I am not able to discuss individual staffing matters here, sir. Further, the post has not been filled permanently. Mr. Jeremy Scott is the Acting Director.

The Speaker: Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. V. Arden McLean, Leader of the Opposition: It's filled with someone who is acting, who took over from someone who was acting.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. V. Arden McLean, Leader of the Opposition:
So, no one was Head of WORC all this time?

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Governor.

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson:
Mr. Speaker, there was an interim Director.

The Speaker: Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. V. Arden McLean, Leader of the Opposition:
I'm wondering if the interim Director has taken another post there, or has returned to her substantive post.

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Governor.

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson:
Mr. Speaker, like I said, I'm not going to be discussing individual staffing matters here. If the Member wants to have a conversation off mic, I'd be happy to do so.

The Speaker: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. V. Arden McLean, Leader of the Opposition:
Mr. Speaker, that is a simple question. We moved one to be an interim [Director], now we have an acting [Director]. Why do I have to talk off mic about that? That's not discussing individual staff matters.

We have said in here that Mr. Jeremy Scott is the Acting Director, and there was one before. We can say that Mr. Jeremy Scott is the Acting Director; but we can't say whether the other one has gone back to their substantive post? That's nothing personal about the staff member.

The Speaker: Honourable Leader of the Opposition, you've been here twenty years and you've been down that road several times. It's obvious that the Deputy Governor is not going to go further. If you have another supplementary question...

Hon. V. Arden McLean, Leader of the Opposition:
Mr. Speaker, I hear you, sir. I know I've been down that road before, yet we can announce that Mr. Jeremy Scott, called by name, is now the interim Director.

An Hon. Member: Acting Interim Director.

Hon. V. Arden McLean, Leader of the Opposition:
Acting Interim Director, and it's simple to say whether the other one is still working there or has gone back to their substantive post or was fired.

The Speaker: Honourable Member, as I said, the Deputy Governor has made his statement and I would

think that's why, because he would have to get into all those things.

[Inaudible interjection]

STATEMENTS BY HONOURABLE MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

The Speaker: I have received statements from the Honourable Premier and the Honourable Deputy Governor.

The Honourable Premier.

The Premier Section 11(5) "exceptional circumstance" transactions for the Ministry of Employment and Border Control Funding to set up and operate a Regiment

The Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the two statements that I wish to make relate to the upcoming Finance Committee meeting. They speak to the requirement of section 11(6) of the Public Management and Finance Law, with respect to "exceptional circumstance" transactions that were approved by the Cabinet for the Ministry of Employment and Border Control during the 2020 financial period.

Mr. Speaker, the establishment of the Cayman Islands Regiment is a part of the Government's commitment to improving the resilience of these Cayman Islands. We debated the Defence Bill in this House just a short while ago and we are yet to go into Committee Stage with respect to that Bill.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose is to improve the resilience of these islands by expanding our capabilities in the areas of disaster response, humanitarian relief, security and defence. To that end, the following Appropriations were approved by Cabinet in accordance with section 11(5) of the Public Management and Finance Law to begin the work necessary to set up and operate the Regiment.

Funding is critical in ensuring that the Regiment is equipped and staffed by appropriately trained personnel. To that end, a supplementary appropriation was approved for the initial budget for the Regiment totalling \$1,455,227.25, of which \$137,000 is an equity injection for capital expenditure and \$1,318,227.25 is for recurring expenditure.

I would also like to formally recognise the contributions of the United Kingdom Government as agreed by the UK Minister of Armed Forces at the time, Mr. Mark Lancaster, during his visit to the Cayman Islands. The UK has provided support for the formation and ongoing development of the new Regiment. Thus far, the UK has supplied planning and lo-

gistical support, funded training courses for the officers at Sandhurst, and sent a team of training officers to the Cayman Islands to train the first intake of recruits. The UK has also contributed uniforms, personal and operational equipment. For the avoidance of doubt, operational equipment does not include weapons.

Mr. Speaker, these supplementary appropriations have already resulted in tangible improvements in the strength and resilience of these Cayman Islands.

Office of the Commissioner of Police

Mr. Speaker, the second statement is in the same vein, for the Office of the Commissioner of Police.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to make this statement to Members in support of the supplementary funding under section 12 of the Public Management and Finance Law for the Office of the Commissioner of Police.

Within the auspices of the Office of the Commissioner of Police, the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service (RCIPS) is charged with fulfilling one of the Government's eight Broad Outcome goals namely, "**4. Reducing Crime and the Fear of Crime**". The Police Service also contributes along with other Government agencies to fulfilling "**6. Stronger Communities in Support for the Most Vulnerable.**"

Mr. Speaker, as you would be aware, West Bay is the third fastest-growing district in Grand Cayman. The existing West Bay Police Station facility has outgrown its useful life and also lacks the space required to serve the district adequately in future decades. Members of this honourable House may recall that in 2019 the land was cleared for the project; the supplementary funding is for the furtherance of developing this facility within the next stage of site preparedness, including the de-mucking and filling of the land and covering the design costs for the new station. The total supplementary appropriation amount for these next stages of the development is \$2,395,000.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, the West Bay Station will also service some national level units within the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service including the much-needed new purpose-built exhibit spaces, the indoor gun range, and the training and development unit to better serve the mission of the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service which is to keep these Cayman Islands safe.

The Speaker: I call now on the Honourable Deputy Governor.

[Pause]

Deputy Governor

Launch of Travel Cayman's new online portal

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

Mr. Speaker, since late March 2020, as the World Health Organisation declared that the spread of COVID-19 around the globe had triggered a pandemic, the Government has taken decisive steps to protect Caymanians and those resident in the Cayman Islands by putting in place an effective first line of defence at our borders. These measures include putting in place repatriation flights to allow Caymanians and those resident in Cayman to return home, and adopting quarantine measures and COVID screening before allowing travellers to move freely within our community.

At the same time, robust measures were taken to contain community spread so that life may gradually return to a new normal. The outcome of this, Mr. Speaker, is that today, our people participate face to face in classrooms and churches. Commerce has returned with no restrictions applying to restaurants and retail operations, and persons can gather in celebrations as large as five-hundred persons at a time. This is in stark contrast to the vast majority of developed countries which are seeing a second wave, which is flooding their hospitals and emptying their schools and businesses.

There can be little doubt of the wisdom of the timely and decisive action that has been taken and continues to be taken to keep these Islands safe. We also understand that we have an obligation to provide services at a high standard. It is because of this enduring commitment that we have to not only do the right thing but do it well. I am happy to provide the latest update of the framework, which exists to process inbound travellers to the Cayman Islands.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce the launch of Travel Cayman's new travel portal, www.explore.gov.ky/travelcayman, which was piloted on Monday, 19th October 2020. This online portal is designed to enhance the travel application process by providing a streamlined one-stop shop for applications and approvals. Our goal is to create a more efficient process that delivers a positive customer experience.

Mr. Speaker, the new, user-friendly, online gateway collects information from prospective travellers and manages their travel application through a multi-agency vetting process. At present, travellers can select their preferred quarantine arrangements via the Travel Cayman Portal for November travel only. This is a temporary restriction to allow applications for travellers arriving in November to be prioritised. All persons who plan to travel in November, including those who may have submitted various emails through Travel Time, are being asked to reapply using the new Travel Cayman portal in order to select their quarantine option.

Mr. Speaker, as of Saturday morning, 21st October, less than one week since the site was launched, 752 requests have been received for a total

of 1,038 travellers. Of these requests, 290 travel approvals have been issued, approximately 40 per cent of the requests; 25 have been rejected because they do not meet the criteria for travel; 31 requests have received provisional approval subject to the traveller confirming their quarantine arrangements; 36 requests are awaiting further input from the traveller prior to the certificate being issued, and 370 requests are actively being processed.

In addition to being able to provide speedy turnaround times for applications, we have also eliminated the long wait times on calls that were previously experienced by applicants as we transition from Travel Time to our new Travel Cayman management system. As an example, I would like to share some call times statistics for Saturday, 24th October of a total of more than one hundred thirty calls handled. The average wait time was 48 seconds and the maximum waiting time was 11 minutes and 20 seconds. The average duration of a call was around 4 minutes, and the maximum call time was 28 minutes and 34 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, Travel Cayman is a cross-ministerial project and comprises teams from a number of government agencies working in collaboration. To date, over 140 staff from Core Government and Statutory Authorities and Government-owned Companies (SAGCs) have been redeployed to work with Travel Cayman, supporting various aspects of the travel management, travel support, health screening, and monitoring and compliance requirements. As the volume of travellers increases over time, the level of support provided increases in tandem to maintain a positive travel experience. In addition, a new travel support team, staffed through a collaboration with the Ritz Carlton, Grand Cayman, has been incorporated to provide support to travellers who have queries or need non-emergency assistance while in quarantine.

Mr. Speaker, persons wishing to travel to the Cayman Islands are required to register on the Travel Cayman site and will be guided through a series of fields in order to provide basic information such as the traveller's name, proposed travel dates, immigration status, names of other persons in the same travel party, and preferred quarantine option. Using the new portal, the traveller can also indicate if they will be isolating at a residence with another occupant who is already on island. This allows the non-travelling household occupants to provide their details at the same time for smooth onboarding for the monitoring and surveillance team.

Mr. Speaker, once the completed application has been submitted, the applicant receives an automatically generated email advising when they can expect to hear back from the Travel Cayman team. The travel request then appears on the dashboards of multiple government agencies, each of which plays a part in reviewing and approving the travel requests. Customs and Border Control will check the immigration status to confirm that the traveller complies with pre-

vailing policies, while in parallel, several teams of inspectors validate that the proposed residential quarantine location is suitable for the prescribed quarantine period.

Mr. Speaker, when all checks are completed in the system, a "certificate of travel" is automatically issued and applicable travel data is passed on to relevant agencies as required. For example, two days before a flight the Health Services Authority will receive a complete list of incoming passengers so they can register travellers in the system used to manage COVID-19 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing and prepare and label the tests we will require each day.

Mr. Speaker, travellers who have not submitted an application and received approval to travel from Travel Cayman will not be permitted to board a repatriation flight to the Cayman Islands. It should be noted that Travel Cayman's authorisation is in addition to normal entry and landing requirements.

Mr. Speaker, a dedicated email address and phone system have been established as part of the new Travel Cayman management system. Questions or concerns related to in-bound travel should be directed to the Travel Cayman team by emailing travelcayman@gov.ky or by calling 743-8463 between the hours 8.30 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, the new Travel Cayman site is already greatly improving the traveller experience by reducing the need to call or email the Travel Cayman team for information. The site manages the applications based on arrival dates and quarantine requirements, thereby removing the need for manual sorting and responding to each query, which streamlines and speeds up the application process. Since launching the site, the travel call lines have been clear and feedback on the portal has been positive. The portal is currently processing travel requests for the month of November, but this will be gradually extended.

Mr. Speaker, the development and implementation of the Travel Cayman management system and the launch of the Cayman travel portal are important milestones in the programme for the phased reopening of our Cayman Islands borders. This achievement has been possible through hard work and dedication of many individuals and project teams across multiple government agencies and with the generous donation of much-needed staff resources from the Ritz Carlton.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognise all those contributing to this important initiative including the Programme Board and Programme Management Office for the phased opening programme, with particular recognition due to Dr. Tasha Ebanks-Garcia for her tireless efforts; Cayman Airways, the Department of Public Safety Communications, the Health Services Authority (HSA) and Public Health Department, the Mobile Compliance Team

made up of Customs and Border Control and the Regiment Reservists; the Computer Services Department, the Facilities Management Department, the Ritz Carlton Cayman Islands, the Travel Team in the Ministry of International Trade, Investment, Aviation and Maritime Affairs, Government Information Services, and PeerIslands who have been assisting with the software development.

Mr. Speaker, we owe a special thanks to Chief Officer Bush and his team who also successfully managed curfew time and then Travel Time; they did an incredible job under strenuous conditions. I'm happy that the Ministry of International Trade, Investment, Aviation and Maritime Affairs can now return to the important work of the Ministry.

Mr. Speaker, the transfer of Travel Time to Travel Cayman on 1st October did not go smoothly. The number of travellers who wished to return home using the new home isolation policy overwhelmed the Cayman travel team, but I have said before and I will say it again, the Civil Service aims to provide an exemplary service to our customers. When we do not achieve a goal, we will not make excuses; we will not bury our heads in the sand and hope the problem goes away. We redouble our efforts and resolve the problem.

Mr. Speaker, from the information provided, I hope you will agree that we have effectively solved the problem.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. V. Arden McLean, Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, I beg your indulgence under [Standing Order] 30(2) to ask the Deputy Governor.

The Speaker: Permitted.

Hon. V. Arden McLean, Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Deputy Governor can tell us how many times those inspectors visit those being quarantined at home on a weekly basis.

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, those are operational details. I don't want to go into details here to say how many times persons should expect a knock on the door. It is random. We do try to ensure that we visit all persons. There are currently six hundred people in home isolation, so it is a mammoth task. We have given the monitoring team additional staff so it can keep up, but it is a mammoth task and so far, things have been going quite well.

The Speaker: Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. V. Arden McLean, Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, can the Deputy Governor give us some guarantee as to the robustness of this to ensure that the people can feel comforted that unauthorised people are not out and about in the community because rumours abound.

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Governor.

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for the question. We have many layers of security. First, we have the iMSafe device, which is a bracelet put on the traveller when they arrive; they are given a phone, so the two systems talk to each other, and we have the 911 staff who monitor any alerts from those bracelets 24/7.

We've had some complaints, yes — a lady went outside to do gardening and that triggered an alarm and the enforcement team showed up; things of that nature. Some people say they beep too often. Let people know that we're trying to keep them safe. We've had such complaints. That's one area of security.

The second area is boots on the ground. Like I said, we have persons who visit the locations, knock on the door and ask people to show themselves. There is no personal interaction. We also have a phone monitoring team who calls people and ensures they are actually at the residence, so there are many layers of security. Is it 100 per cent foolproof? No, I don't think anything is; but I think we have a good system which seems to be working very well, Mr. Speaker.

[Pause]

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

The Speaker: None.

OBITUARY AND OTHER CEREMONIAL SPEECHES

The Speaker: None.

RAISING OF MATTERS OF PRIVILEGES

The Speaker: None.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

BILLS

SECOND READING

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (JANUARY 2020 TO DECEMBER 2020) BILL, 2020

The Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Minister of Finance & Economic Development, Elected Member for George Town East: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the Second Reading of a Bill entitled the Supplementary Appropriation (January 2020 to December 2020) Bill, 2020.

The Speaker: The Bill is duly moved. Does the Minister wish to speak thereto?

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart: Briefly, Mr. Speaker. I thank you for the opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this Bill is to seek the Legislative Assembly's approval for supplementary expenditure, equity investments, executive assets, loans made, and borrowing appropriation changes in respect of the financial year ending 31 December 2020.

Once an Appropriation Bill has been approved by the Legislative Assembly, it becomes an Appropriation Law for a particular financial year, and that law establishes what is commonly referred to as the Budget for the financial year. There are three ways in which the budget amount contained in an Appropriation Law can be changed during the financial year:

- First, section 11(5) of the Public Management and Finance Law (PMFL) allows the Cabinet to make such changes.
- Secondly, section 12(2) of the PMFL allows Finance Committee to approve changes to an established Appropriation Law.
- Thirdly, section 25 of the PMFL permits the Legislative Assembly to authorise changes to an already approved Appropriation Law.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill arises with respect to the Government's use of two sections of the PMFL, sections 11(5) and 25. Sections 11(6) and 25 of the PMFL state that when a Government utilises section 11(5) or 25 of the PMFL respectively, to make changes to an Appropriations Law, those changes made by Cabinet are to be included in a Supplementary Appropriation Bill, which must be presented to the Legislative Assembly. That explains the existence of the Bill now before the House. It satisfies a legal requirement that changes to an already approved Appropriation Law must be incorporated into a supplementary appropriation bill, and that Bill must be presented to the Legislative Assembly for its scrutiny and approval.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to make two additional points.

Firstly, the vast majority of changes set out in the schedule to the Bill have already occurred. The changes are processed shortly after they are approved by Cabinet under section 11(5) of the PMFL. Secondly, it is Government's reasonable expectation that given the circumstances explaining the origin of the Supplementary Appropriation Bill, the Finance Committee's consideration of the items in the Schedule to the Bill will be efficient.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill indicates changes that can be categorised as follows:

1. Items on the Schedule to the Bill that were approved by Cabinet for presentation to the Legislative Assembly and Finance Committee for their review, scrutiny and approval. This is being done in accordance with section (25) of the PMFL.
2. Items on the Schedule to the Bill where Cabinet, as it is legally empowered to do under section 11(5) of the PMFL, made changes to budgets during the 2020 Financial Year.

Mr Speaker, the Government always endeavours to match a request for an increase in expenditure with a corresponding reduction in expenditure, though this is not possible all the time. The significant financial transactions arise mainly as a result of Government's decision taken to mitigate and suppress the COVID-19 pandemic. The significant financial transactions included in the Bill are:

- a. \$500 million to cover a \$330 million line of credit that the Government secured; plus, the capacity is sought to borrow an additional \$170 million should it become necessary.
- b. \$40 million for the purchase of supplies to mitigate COVID-19, extensive testing for the presence of COVID-19 in the population, cost of air bridge flights between the UK and the Cayman Islands, and other specific Government decisions made in response to COVID-19.
- c. \$23.1 million for financial assistance to the most vulnerable, displaced tourism workers and non-Caymanian residents.
- d. \$20.9 million for a temporary loan to the Cayman Islands Airport Authority.
- e. \$20.1 million for additional work on the John Gray High School campus and other capital works.
- f. \$16.3 million in operational support for Cayman Airways Limited (CAL).
- g. \$9.5 million for micro and small business relief efforts.
- h. \$6.1 million to increase the regulatory capacity at the Cayman Islands Monetary Authority (CIMA).

- i. \$3 million for the purchase of laptops for public schools' students.
- j. \$2.4 million for the construction of the West Bay Police Station.
- k. \$1.4 million for the establishment of the Cayman Islands Regiment.

Also impacting the forecast financial statements and the net-debt principles of responsible financial management is the financial impact of the Government-guaranteed Loan Scheme for medium and large-sized businesses where the Government will guarantee or be liable for 50% or \$100 million of a maximum loan liability of \$200 million.

Turning to the Bill, Mr. Speaker. The Bill contains three main parts: clause 1 provides the name of the proposed law, clause 2 speaks to the Appropriation authority of the Cabinet; and the Schedule to the Bill which shows the individual items of appropriation changes that the Legislative Assembly is being asked to approve.

Mr. Speaker, it is also important that I point out that not all supplementary appropriations involve expenditure increases. There are a number of decreases to expenditure contained in this Bill. I therefore respectfully ask all Honourable Members to support the Bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

If no other Member wishes to speak, I will call on the Minister of Finance, if he wishes to reply.

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to acknowledge the tacit support of all Members of the House for the Bill that is now before it.

Thank you, sir.

[Pause]

The Speaker: The Bill is referred to Finance Committee; therefore, the House will suspend proceedings until the completion of Finance Committee.

[Long pause]

ADJOURNMENT

The Speaker: Honourable Members, the House stands adjourned until the completion of Finance Committee.

At 3:18p.m. the House stood adjourned until the completion of Finance Committee.