

PARLIAMENT OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

2021/2022 SESSION

Friday
23 April, 2021
(Pages 1-33)

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, OBE, JP, MP
Speaker

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PRESENT WERE:

MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

Hon G Wayne Panton, JP, MP	*Premier*
Hon Christopher S Saunders, MP	*Deputy Premier*
Hon Juliana Y O'Connor-Connolly, JP, MP	Minister
Hon Bernie A Bush, MP	Minister
Hon Kenneth V Bryan, MP	Minister
Hon Johany S Ebanks, MP	Minister
Hon Sabrina T Turner, MP	Minister
Hon André M Ebanks, MP	Minister

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

Hon Franz I Manderson Cert Hon, MBE, JP	*Deputy Governor*, ex officio Member responsible for the Portfolio of the Civil Service
Hon Samuel W Bulgin, QC, JP	*Attorney General*, ex officio Member responsible for the Portfolio of Legal Affairs

ELECTED MEMBERS
GOVERNMENT BACKBENCHERS

Hon Katherine A Ebanks-Wilks, MP	*Deputy Speaker*, Parliamentary Secretary
Ms Heather D Bodden, JP, MP	Elected Member for Savannah; Parliamentary Secretary
Mr Isaac D Rankine, MP	Elected Member for East End; Parliamentary Secretary

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

Hon Roy M McTaggart, JP, MP	*Leader of the Opposition*, Elected Member for George Town East
Mr Joseph X Hew, MP	*Deputy Leader of the Opposition*, Elected Member for George Town North
Hon Alden McLaughlin, MBE, 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, MP	Elected Member for George Town South
Mr David C Wight, MP	Elected Member for George Town West

INDEPENDENT MEMBER

Mr Dwayne S Seymour, JP, MP	Elected Member for Bodden Town East

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
FIRST MEETING 2021/22 SESSION
FRIDAY
23 APRIL 2021
10:12AM

Second Sitting

[Hon. W. McKeeva Bush, Speaker presiding]

The Speaker: Good morning.

I will call on the Honourable Premier to grace us with prayers.

PRAYERS

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: 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 Lady, Queen Elizabeth II; 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 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 in Thy great Name's sake.

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

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

Amen.

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Proceedings are resumed.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS OR AFFIRMATIONS

The Speaker: None.

READING BY THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER OF MESSAGES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Speaker: Just to note that we have apologies from the Elected Member for Red Bay and a few notices of late arrivals.

STATEMENTS BY HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT

The Speaker: None.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

The Speaker: None.

OBITUARY AND OTHER CEREMONIAL SPEECHES

The Speaker: Just to note, Honourable Members, the passing of the Deputy Speaker from Cameroon, a good friend of ours in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and a good friend of the Member for Cayman Brac East.

I must say that her name skips me at this point but nevertheless to take note and put in our records of her sudden passing just a few days ago. (***The Late Hon. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka***).

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE STANDING PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

The Speaker: Members to the Standing Public Accounts Committee.

This is a Standing Committee that exists under Standing Order 77, therefore there is no need for a motion to establish a committee. First of all, I would ask the Honourable Premier to read the terms of reference of the Standing Public Accounts Committee.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Standing Order 77(1) reads:

"77 (1) There shall be a standing committee, to be styled the Public Accounts Committee, to consider the 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.

(2) The Public Accounts Committee shall be nominated by the House at the beginning of a new session following a general election and consist of six elected Members. The quorum shall be a majority of Members, including the chairman.

(3) Upon its receipt by the Speaker, a report mentioned in paragraph (1) shall be deemed to have been referred by the House to the Public Accounts Committee for consideration and shall forthwith be distributed to all Members and shall become a public document."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Premier.

I will now take nominations for the Standing Public Accounts Committee; that committee comprises six Members. Premier.

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

I nominate the Member for East End, the Member for West Bay Central and the Member for Savannah.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The Member for George Town North.

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

I rise to nominate the Leader of the Opposition, the Member for George Town South and the Member for Bodden Town East.

The Speaker: The Member for… I am sorry, I have to ask the Premier to rename those persons.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Mr. Speaker I rise, again, to confirm the nomination on our side for: the Member for East End, the Member for West Bay Central and the Member for Savannah.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Constituencies.

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

I rise once again to confirm the nominations for the Leader of the Opposition, the Member for George Town South and the Member for Bodden Town East, who is not here but has confirmed that he would accept the nomination.

The Speaker: Thank you both.

Honourable Member for East End, do you accept the nomination?

Mr. Isaac D. Rankine, Elected Member for East End: Mr. Speaker, I accept the nomination.

The Speaker: The Member for West Bay Central and Deputy Speaker, do you accept the nomination?

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

The Speaker: The Member for Savannah.

Do you accept the nomination?

Ms. Heather D. Bodden, Elected Member for Savannah: I accept the nomination, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you.

The Opposition needs a seconder to the nominations.

Mr. David C. Wight, Elected Member for George Town West: Mr. Speaker, I second the motion for nominations.

The Speaker: Nominations are then closed, I take it?

[Pause]

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Mr. Speaker, may I move to motion to close the nominations please?

The Speaker: A motion has been made to close the nominations. All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it, nominations are closed.

Agreed: Nominations for the Public Accounts Committee closed.

The Speaker: Member for George Town East, do you accept the nomination?

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Elected Member for George Town East: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do.

The Speaker: The Member for George Town South.
Do you accept the nomination?

Ms. Barbara E. Conolly, Elected Member for George Town South: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
I hereby accept the nomination.

The Speaker: And you have indicated the Member nominated for Bodden Town East has agreed to serve?

Mr. Joseph X. Hew: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
Yes. He is not in the Chamber at the moment but he has agreed to serve.

The Speaker: And I would think that the House accepts that.
Do we need a formal vote in his absence?

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: There being no further nominations we declare the following Members to be the members of the Standing Public Accounts Committee.
The Member for East End, the Honourable Deputy Speaker for West Bay Central, the Member for Savannah, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, the Member for George Town South and the Member for Bodden Town East.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: All Members now being satisfied we have agreed on the Public Accounts Committee. Premier.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to confirm for the record, as is tradition, that the Leader of the Opposition would be Chair.
If you need a specific nomination in that respect sir, I will be happy to make that.

The Speaker: No.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: If that is not the case that is fine.

The Speaker: Once the Member accepts, there is no objection?

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart: No objection, sir.

The Speaker: Good; you have been there before.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MOTIONS

GOVERNMENT MOTION NO 1/2021-2022 APPOINTMENT OF THE STANDING BUSINESS COMMITTEE

The Speaker: The Honourable Deputy Governor.

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, thank you.
Government Motion 1, appointment of the Standing Business Committee.
BE IT RESOLVED THAT, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 79, this House appoints a Standing Business Committee charged with deciding the order of business of the House and, in particular-

(a) to consider the Business Papers of the House;
(b) to decide and inform the Clerk the order in which Private Members' Motions are to be debated on;
(c) to decide and to inform the Clerk two clear days before a Question Day the questions to be put down for reply on the Order Paper for that Question Day;
(d) to provide a ready means of consultation between Members who are not Members of the Cabinet, and the Leader of Government Business, the Leader of the Opposition, the Presiding Officer and the Clerk;
(e) to select a Member to read Prayers on each day of the Meeting of the House other than the State Opening Meeting;
(f) to inform the Clerk the order in which Bills shall be set down upon the Order Paper;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Standing Business Committee shall comprise six Elected Members;
AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the quorum for the Committee shall be four Members of the Committee including the Chairman and that the Committee shall meet at such times as called by the Chairman;
AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Committee review its terms of reference and report any recommendations to this Honourable House.

The Speaker: The question is:
BE IT RESOLVED THAT, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 79, this House appoints a Standing Business Committee charged with deciding the order of business of the House and, in particular -
(a) to consider the Business Papers of the House;

(b) to decide and inform the Clerk the order in which Private Members' Motions are to be debated on;
(c) to decide and to inform the Clerk two clear days before a Question Day the questions to be put down for reply on the Order Paper for that Question Day;
(d) to provide a ready means of consultation between Members who are not Members of the Cabinet, and the Leader of Government Business, the Leader of the Opposition, the Presiding Officer and the Clerk;
(e) to select a Member to read Prayers on each day of a Meeting of the House other than the State Opening Meeting;
(f) to inform the Clerk the order in which Bills shall be set down upon the Order Paper;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Standing Business Committee shall comprise six Elected Members;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the quorum for the Committee shall be four Members of the Committee including the Chairman and that the Committee shall meet at such times as called by the Chairman;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Committee review its terms of reference and report any recommendations to this Honourable House. The motion is now open for debate.

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

The Speaker: The Honourable Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Thank you Mr. Speaker.

I rise to nominate the Elected Member—

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Thank you Mr. Speaker.

On behalf of the Government we look forward to the setting of this Business Committee to make sure that the order of business of this Administration is followed in a timely manner to set the necessary precedents of the people's business moving forward.

The Speaker: Does any Member wish to speak?

The Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker just to say that the Opposition bench does support the Motion.

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

If not, the question is, and I must tell you this is one of the things that we have got to change in our Standing Orders because this will be the third time that I would read it but under the orders I have to. So just in case Members think otherwise, it's what I have to do.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 79, this House appoints a Standing Business Committee charged with deciding the order of business of the House and, in particular –

(a) to consider the Business Papers of the House;
(b) to decide and inform the Clerk the order in which Private Members' Motions are to be debated on;
(c) to decide and to inform the Clerk two clear days before a Question Day the questions to be put down for reply on the Order Paper for that Question Day;
(d) to provide a ready means of consultation between Members who are not Members of the Cabinet, and the Leader of Government Business, the Leader of the Opposition, the Presiding Officer and the Clerk;
(e) to select a Member to read Prayers on each day of a Meeting of the House other than the State Opening Meeting;
(f) to inform the Clerk the order in which Bills shall be set down upon the Order Paper;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Standing Business Committee shall comprise six Elected Members;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the quorum for the Committee shall be four Members of the Committee including the Chairman and that the Committee shall meet at such times as called by the Chairman;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Committee review its terms of reference and report any recommendations to this Honourable House.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Government Motion No. 1 has been carried.

Agreed: Government Motion No. 1/2021-2022 passed.

The Speaker: The Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Elected Member for Bodden Town West, Deputy Premier: Thank you Mr. Speaker.

I rise to nominate the Honourable Premier—the Member for Newlands—as Chair and member of this committee.

The Speaker: To be clear, the Honourable Premier would be the chairman?

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Correct.

I rise to nominate the Honourable Premier, the Member for Newlands, to be the Chair of the Standing Business Committee.

The Speaker: The Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I rise to second the nomination.

The Speaker: No.

There is no need for a seconder from the Government side. It is agreed by the Government that the Premier is the Chairman and he will make the other nominations from Government. Is that the understanding?

The Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Joseph X. Hew: Mr. Speaker, I rise to nominate the Leader of the Opposition, the Member for George Town East and the Member for Red Bay who is not in the Chamber at the moment, but has accepted the nomination.

The Speaker: The Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Mr. Speaker, I rise to nominate the Member for George Town Central, the Member for Bodden Town West, and the Member for West Bay South to be Members of this Committee.

Ms. Barbara E. Conolly: Mr. Speaker I wish to second that nomination.

[Inaudible interjections]

Ms. Barbara E. Conolly: Mr. Speaker, I wish to second the motion to appoint the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for Red Bay as members of the Standing Business Committee.

The Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, sir. I beg to nominate the Member for George Town North.

The Speaker: Can I have a repeat of those names and their constituencies please?

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: If I may assist you, Mr. Speaker.

The names nominated from the Government bench are the Member for Newlands, the Member for George Town Central, the Member for Bodden Town West and the Member for West Bay South.

I understand that the Opposition has nominated the Leader of the Opposition—being the Member for George Town East—and the Member for Red Bay. Mr. Speaker, I see that the Leader of the Opposition recommended a seventh Member but the Standing Business Committee is only obligated to have six Members.

The Government is in support of the recommended four from the Government side; I am not sure how to handle the recommendation by the Leader of the Opposition as they are only allowed two appointments.

The Speaker: Leader of the Opposition, the committee consists of six members—five members plus the Chair. I had not taken your nomination in any event, but if you want to just—

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Leader of the Opposition: No, I will just respectfully withdraw that nomination.

The Speaker: Yes.

[Pause]

The Speaker: I recognise that all Members who have been nominated have agreed and therefore the committee will consist of the:

- Honourable Premier
- Member for George Town Central
- Member for Bodden Town West; and the Member for West Bay South

On the Opposition:

- Honourable Leader of the Opposition; and
- Member for Red Bay.

These are the six members for the Business Committee.

The Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker just for clarity: I want to nominate the Premier, the Member for Newlands, as the chairperson of that committee.

The Speaker: I thought that was taken. He didn't formally do it?

[Inaudible interjections]

The Speaker: I thought that I had said the Member for Newlands as the Chair. Out of an abundance of

caution, the Honourable Premier is the Chairman of the Business Committee.

GOVERNMENT MOTION NO. 2/2021-2022
APPOINTMENT OF THE
STANDING SELECT COMMITTEE
ON PRIVILEGES

The Speaker: The Honourable Deputy Governor.

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

Government Motion No. 2—Appointment of the Standing Select Committee on Privileges:

WHEREAS Standing Order 79 provides that this Honourable House may appoint other standing select committees as required from among its Members;

AND WHEREAS on the 19th day of March 1998 this Honourable House established the Standing Select Committee on Privileges by way of Private Member's Motion No. 3/98;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 79, this House appoints a Standing Select Committee of Privileges to consider and report to the House on any matter affecting the privileges of this Honourable House;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Committee comprise all Honourable Members of this Parliament, the Chairman being elected from among the Committee Members;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Committee shall elect a Deputy Chairman from among the Committee Members who shall act as Chairman of the Committee during the absence of the Chairman.

The Speaker: The question is:

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 79, this House appoints a Standing Select Committee of Privileges to consider and report to the House on any matter affecting the privileges of this honourable House;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Committee comprise all Honourable Members of this Parliament, the Chairman being elected from among the Committee Members;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Committee shall elect a Deputy Chairman from among the Committee Members who shall act as Chairman of the Committee during the absence of the Chairman.

Is the mover of the motion, the Deputy Governor speaking? Are you speaking?

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: No, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Mr. Speaker, I rise to accept the motion on behalf of the Government.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak—the Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On behalf of this honourable Government, we look forward to this Committee as we find it a key part of the democratic process for any good Government. It acts as a check and balance of Members of this Honourable House and we support this motion in its totality.

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

I take it that the appointment of the chairman shall be at the first meeting or do we do that on the Floor of the House?

[Pause]

The Speaker: If no other Member wishes to speak—

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it. Government Motion No. 2 is carried.

Agreed: Government Motion No. 2/2021-2022 passed.

The Speaker: The Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

On behalf of the Government, I would like to nominate the Honourable Premier, the Member for Newlands, as the chairperson of the Standing Select Committee on Privileges.

The Speaker: Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to accept.

The Speaker: The Honourable Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move a motion to close the nominations.

The Speaker: If there are no other nominations—nominations agreed to be closed?

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

The Honourable Premier is elected chairman of the Standing Select Committee on Privileges.

Agreed: Premier elected as Chairman of the Standing Select Committee on Privileges.

The Speaker: The Motion for this says that we shall elect a deputy chairman from among the committee members who shall act as chairman of the committee during the absence of the chairman.

The Honourable Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to nominate the Deputy Premier and elected Member for Bodden Town West.

The Speaker: The Member for Bodden Town West.

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, I accept the nomination.

The Speaker: Are there any other nominations?

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Mr. Speaker, I rise to close the nominations.

The Speaker: Motion moved that the nomination be closed.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it, nominations closed.

The Honourable Deputy Premier is the Deputy Chairman of the Standing Select Committee on Privileges.

Agreed: Deputy Premier elected Deputy Chairman of the Standing Select Committee on Privileges.

GOVERNMENT MOTION NO. 3/2021-2020 APPOINTMENT OF SELECT COMMITTEE TO OVERSEE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUSMAN

The Speaker: The Honourable Deputy Governor.

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

Government Motion No. 3—Appointment of the Select Committee to oversee the performance of the Office of the Ombudsman:

WHEREAS section 45 of the Public Management and Finance Act (2020 Revision) states that the Ombudsman shall be accountable to the Legislative Assembly for the performance of the Office of the Ombudsman;

AND WHEREAS Section 45 of the said Act provides that a Committee of the Parliament should be responsible for overseeing the performance of the Office of the Ombudsman, or if no such Committee exists, the Speaker shall be responsible for same;

BE IT NOW THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT, in order to provide for the oversight of the Office of the Ombudsman, this House appoints a Standing Select Committee to provide such oversight;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Committee shall comprise five Elected Members;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the quorum for the Committee shall be three Members of the Committee including the Chairman or the Deputy Chairman.

The Speaker: The question is:

BE IT NOW THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT, in order to provide for the oversight of the Office of the Ombudsman, this House appoints a Standing Select Committee to provide such oversight;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Committee shall comprise five Elected Members;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the quorum for the Committee shall be three Members of the Committee including the Chairman or the Deputy Chairman.

The Motion is open for debate.

Honourable Deputy Governor.

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, just to quickly say this is really a very important Committee; it is a part of our good Governance apparatus—the watch dog of the Civil Service and its performance. So I would ask all Members for their support.

The Speaker: The Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise to support the Motion, but I think it is important that the public recognises what—and in particular the members of the public service—the Ombudsman Office deals with. While there is oversight of the Civil Service, it is also important that the public knows that we also have oversight on people with responsibility for doing this. So if there are any public servant who disagrees with the findings or anything within the Ombudsman report that they are

comfortable, that there is a recourse, and this is part of the foundation of democracy where we do have to, in a sense, check the checkers to some extent.

This Committee is also very important in its role and it is important for the public servants to know that there is not just one person out there who puts out a report and that is the end all and be all of it. It is a very important role in our democracy, and I am really glad that we have this committee here to give public servants another avenue if they disagree with the Ombudsman.

Thank you.

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

Does the mover wish to exercise his right of reply?

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: No, sir; just to thank all Members for their tacit support.

The Speaker: The question is:

BE IT NOW THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT, in order to provide for the oversight of the Office of the Ombudsman, this House appoints a Standing Select Committee to provide such oversight;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Committee shall comprise five Elected Members;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the quorum for the Committee shall be three Members of the Committee including the Chairman or the Deputy Chairman.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Government Motion No. 3/2021-2020 passed.

The Speaker: Is the Government making the appointment of the chairman? Nominations are open.

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

I rise to nominate, on behalf of the Government:

- the Member for West Bay South
- the Member for West Bay North; and
- the Member for North Side

I invite the Leader of the Opposition to indicate on the Floor who his two nominees for this Committee are.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Thank you, Premier.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

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

On behalf of the Opposition I beg to nominate:

- the Member for George Town West; and
- the Member for George Town North.

The Speaker: Are there any more nominations?

Ms. Barbara E. Conolly: Mr. Speaker I beg to second that nomination.

The Speaker: Nomination is seconded.

Are there any other nominations? Can someone move that the nominations be closed?

The Honourable Premier:

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Mr. Speaker, I rise to address an issue that has just become apparent.

I would like to withdraw the nomination for the Member for West Bay South and replace that Member with the Member for Bodden Town West, the Honourable Deputy Premier.

The Speaker: Thank you very much, Premier.

Is there a motion for the nominations to be closed?

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Mr. Speaker, I rise to move a motion to close the nominations.

The Speaker: The question is that nominations be closed.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Nominations are closed.

Agreed: Nomination closed for the Select Committee to oversee the performance of the Office of the Ombudsman.

The Speaker: The Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Mr. Speaker, just out of an abundance of caution, we did not select the chairperson and, on behalf of the Government, we would like to nominate the Elected Member for West Bay North to be chairperson of this Committee.

The Speaker: The question now—does the Member for Bodden Town West, the Deputy Premier, accept the nomination?

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, I accept the nomination.

The Speaker: Member for West Bay North, do you accept the nominations, both as a member and as the Chair?

Hon. Bernie A. Bush, Elected Member for West Bay North: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I do.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Member for North Side.

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks, **Elected Member for North Side:** Mr. Speaker, I accept the nomination.

The Speaker: The Member for George Town West.

Mr. David C. Wight: Mr. Speaker, I accept the nomination.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The Member for George Town North.

Mr. Joseph X. Hew: I accept the nomination, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: All nominations have been accepted.

The Members of the Committee are:

- the Chair — The Member for West Bay North
- the Member for Bodden Town West, who is the Deputy Premier,
- the Member for North Side
- the Member for George Town West; and
- the Member for George Town North.

That would be the Committee.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Honourable Members, as presiding officer, all three committees are very important committees.

Two committees that are very important to the Chair would be the performance of the Office of the Ombudsman and the Committee on Privileges. I would ask that we soon gather for the preparation of a Code of Conduct to work in tandem with the Committee on Privileges. I think we need to have that in place as soon as possible. From my stand point as Chair, I would certainly talk to the Premier on this matter and get our Parliamentary staff organised to work with the Premier or whomever he appoints to carry through that work so we can put it in place as quickly as possible.

The adjournment, Honourable Premier—I would suspect that Members want this opportunity upon the motion for adjournment, to exercise a custom of Members speaking.

Honourable Premier:

ADJOURNMENT

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: Mr. Speaker, I rise to move a Motion for adjournment of this honourable House sine die.

INAUGURATION SPEECHES BY ELECTED MEMBERS

The Speaker: As I indicated earlier, I know that Members wish to exercise customary right for a new Parliament.

I thought I saw the Member for George Town Central rise? The Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will try my best to be as brief as I possibly can to give the new Elected Members of this honourable House an opportunity to take the Floor for the very first time.

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure and an honour to be in these hallowed Halls for a second time and I would like to first thank God for his blessings on not only me but my family and my country throughout these times.

I would like to also thank my family, my wife and kids, my mother and father for their continued support throughout this vigorous campaign.

A special thank you to my committee members who worked so hard, some days I almost thought they were candidates themselves.

I would like to also thank my political advisor Mr. Edlin Moore, better known in the streets of Cayman as “the Great Moose”, for his continued support and advice to make sure that I landed on the Government side this time around. More importantly, I want to move now to the two amazing women of George Town Central who nominated me to be the voice of the people of George Town Central for another four years, namely: Ms. Mavis Morris and Ms. Vernice Myles now Ebanks. Without their support and belief in me to legally sign their names, I would not be standing in this honourable House today.

I want to thank the voters of George Town Central for putting their faith and trust in me to stand on their behalf for the next four years as we face challenging times. I would like to say to them that I am committed to giving my all, in respect to making decisions on behalf of them and their families to improve their lives. I am honoured to be a part of a Government that I believe can deliver those necessary changes in a time like today.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I also want to congratulate you for your commitment to this Government in assisting the people of the Cayman Islands to end the long, drawn-out negotiations, and allowing them to form a Government that they wanted.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker; that is my contribution.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: The Honourable Deputy Speaker.

The Member for West Bay Central.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Honourable Members, I stand here today a very humbled woman. I would like to start out my maiden speech in the very same fashion that I do when I rise daily—first by thanking God for giving me another day to make a difference.

I would like to thank my husband Michael, my parents, my children, and the rest of my family for the sacrifice that they have put in over the last several months, and will continue to make as they support me while I serve my country.

I would like to thank my nominees, two strong women from West Bay, Ms. Darlene Glidden and Ms. Jordana Hyde-Hurlston for believing in me to the point of putting their names on my nomination paper.

I also want to thank my committee that worked tirelessly and gave up their time without compensation so that I can be here today. I am grateful for all of these persons who are my core foundation, who also believed in me and supported me with words of encouragement.

I am very proud to be here today—a day to be remembered in the history of the Cayman Islands. The commencement of this Administration marks the highest number of female representatives to serve concurrently as Members of Parliament in the Cayman Islands.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, Deputy Speaker: It is a testament to how far we have come as a country, and certainly as women. I stand here today because of those women who petitioned and paved the way for women to vote, and to also stand in General Elections. To them, I am eternally grateful. I look forward to being a voice and an advocate for all of the women of the Cayman Islands; and not only the women, but for the men, children and future generations who are counting on us to restore the balance that gives them the opportunity to live the Caymanian dream like some of us have been fortunate to do.

Success for Caymanians should not be an exception, it has to be the rule. We can no longer ignore our environmental and social responsibility and I will serve the people of West Bay Central and the Cayman Islands with those thoughts at the forefront of my mind, always.

I am pleased to be sitting on the Government side with the Independent MPs fulfilling the mandate of the people. I am excited that fresh out of the gate, this Government has already committed to putting provisions in place to ensure MP accountability and a code of conduct. I believe that as a collective, we can move this country forward to where it needs to be and I trust that we will always be guided by what is in the best interests of this country.

I would like to close by saying that I promise to lead with honesty and integrity and I promise to always be accountable to the people.

May God bless this honourable House and these Cayman Islands.

Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: The Honourable Member for Prospect.

Hon. Sabrina T. Turner, Elected Member for Prospect: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity.

The people of the Cayman Islands, but especially Prospect: it is my pleasure and a great honour, to stand here today in our House of Parliament as an elected representative for the Prospect electoral district of the Cayman Islands.

I am humbled and honoured to be afforded this opportunity to walk in the footsteps of the great women of Parliament before me. I will endeavour to uphold the sacred principles that were determined by them, which have brought us to this space of determination, honour and respect.

For the first time in history there have been five women elected into political office, and it is my desire, during my tenure, to inspire and lead by example so that other females will become interested and aspire to serve our country at this level, shattering the stigma surrounding women's ability to hold political office, sit at the table with my male counter-parts and taking on any other role they may so desire in society.

As stated in our manifesto, it is my desire to enhance our community and strengthen the family unit by being more inclusive no matter gender, age or social status; which is the foundation of success for our people and our country, while educating and empowering each other—especially our young adults—to reach their full potential and have access to equal opportunities. Our youths are near and dear to my heart, not just as a mother but as someone who has dedicated many hours working in tandem with you for the betterment of our community, to become more inclusive of our youths, young adults and seniors.

I chose to run as an independent candidate in the General Election, and having ran the race and won, thanks to God and to you making me your choice—that is the people of the Prospect electoral district—I am absolutely certain that I did the right thing. Together, with the support of you and my colleagues, I am confident that the hopes and dreams of all my

constituents for Prospect can and will be realised but, most importantly, recognising that democracy works when you the people become more educated of the election process, get involved in the community, and go out and vote.

I trust that you will quickly discover that I am not an all-talk-and-no-action representative. When I set my mind to anything, I have the tenacity to get it done and I will uphold our collective wishes—that has been already been demonstrated—and get Prospect's hopes and dreams realised by making them a reality once and for all.

At this juncture, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge my predecessor, Mr. Austin Harris, who I thank for his representation over the past four years.

I would also like to thank my beloved family, especially my husband; my nominators Ms. Irma Arch and Mr. Winston Ebanks; my small, yet dedicated committee, and close friends, for their patience, understanding and full support as I embrace this new chapter in my life with humility, dignity and grace. Without each of you, this would not have been possible.

This being my very first venture into the political arena, thus far the journey has proven to be tough but an interesting journey of my growth, both personally and professionally. It has been an experience like none other, but one for which I am grateful to be part of a dynamic team who genuinely has people and country first, not self. Undoubtedly, I have emerged stronger, wiser and better; better able to serve you, as we continue to unite, work and walk together, uplifting our community and ultimately these beloved Cayman Islands, because we are all one.

Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: The Honourable Member for North Side.

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks, Elected Member for North Side: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is my honour and great privilege to humbly stand here today as the duly elected Member for the district of North Side. I am filled with gratitude, first for guidance and grace from my Lord Saviour, for his many blessings and for his wonderful people of North Side, for the confidence and trust they placed in me as the right person to help lead these beloved Islands to a brighter future.

I extend sincere congratulations to all Members of our newly elected Government on their respective roles.

In particular, I wish to congratulate and commend our newly elected Honourable Premier on this historic achievement as the first leader of the Independent Government. I pledge to work with him, and all Members of this House, to ensure that we will be the Government that all Caymanians can trust and be proud of, a Government that will provide the service that our people want and need; a Government that will restore the faith and confidence in its leadership and re-build the economy.

The lesson coming out of this election is that our Islands were ready for a change. Collectively, we answered the call. It is therefore time to recommit and dedicate ourselves to restoring honourable values, ethics, and accountable governance to this country. On that note, I thank the PPM for their years of service. I strongly believe that their membership and new Government can and indeed, must work together, for the good of the country.

It is my pledge today that I will endeavour to carry out my duties to the best of my ability, and in so doing, I will treat each of my colleagues in this honourable House with the upmost respect. Indeed, it is my prayer that we can all commit to serve these Islands with integrity and respect, based on the sound principles instilled in us by our forefathers. May we all put aside differences and move forward in the same spirit.

I am mindful of the fact that I would not be here today without the love and support of my fellow North Siders and my two nominees, Mr. Ransford McLean and Mr. Oswell Rankine. I want to thank them from the bottom of my heart.

Thank you North Side for your faith and trust in me. I want to extend a special thanks to my wife and my family for all of their support during the challenging times.

Last but not least, let me also thank my trusted committee for your commitment and dedication during the campaign and for their pledge to stand by me going forward—my heartfelt thanks to all of you.

To my country, my beloved Cayman Islands, I will always remain true and faithful to you all.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: The Honourable Member for West Bay South.

Hon. André M. Ebanks, Elected Member for West Bay South: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. .

Mr. Speaker, I rise to take this opportunity to deliver my maiden speech. I should tell you that when the House stopped its business on Wednesday, I was torn as to whether we would resume on Thursday or today because I campaigned very hard on the protection of the environment and it would have been an honour to develop a maiden speech yesterday, which was Earth Day.

However, I am not totally disappointed because today is my youngest daughter Savannah's birthday. She is six today—

[Desk thumping]

Hon. André M. Ebanks:—and I am honoured to deliver my maiden speech on her birthday. However, that motivates me to brief, because I am under strict orders from the upper management in my home to be there for her birthday party at 4pm today—

[Laughter]

Hon. André M. Ebanks:—and I would like to set a precedent with my family to try as much as possible to keep important family appointments. So I will take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to just give thanks and make a few remarks.

Thank you to God; the journey was one of a leap of faith and I could not have done it without the Lord and the Holy Spirit.

To my amazing wife Tiffany, my children Jackson and Savannah, my father Attlee Ebanks; all of our West Bay fore-parents looking from above, my nana Laura and my mother, Elena Ebanks. My incredible sisters: Elizabeth, Meghan, Abbie, and to all of my friends and family here and abroad.

I would also like to extend a very heartfelt thank you to my extraordinary campaign team. Many times on the campaign trail, I did not refer to it as "my" candidacy, I referred to it as "our" candidacy. A group of diverse individuals who wanted to start a movement that would inspire a Government working hand in hand for the people of the Cayman Islands—thank you all. It would hurt me to see you work long hours on a voluntary basis, but I know you did so because you believed the cause was just.

To my nominators, of which there were four—Mr. Speaker, I read every page, every sentence of the Elections Act and I noticed that the nomination was *at least* two nominators, so I thought as a newcomer, it would be fitting to have the more the merrier. I had to debate it with the returning officer, Mr. Delano Solomon, but he accepted my reading of the Law.

I also wanted to have a gender balance, so I will thank my nominators my cousin Patty Rivers, Ms. Gen Hennings who refers to me as "my boyfriend" but my wife is okay with that.

[Laughter]

Hon. André M. Ebanks: Captain Owen Farrington and Mr. Roy Grant—thank you for your trust in nominating me. I think it is something that may be overlooked, but I think it is an important duty for you to be nominated. That person has put their name next to yours to say that you are a viable candidate. Thank you.

I would also like to extend thanks to the Elections Office, for throughout the entire process, their professionalism was superb. I don't think that I could have seen a finer group of officers who organised this election in a short-term basis.

Mr. Speaker, no matter what capacity that I will serve, I would like to extend these remarks to my former brothers and sisters in the Civil Service: I look forward to working with you so that you feel that your work is valued and respected.

Mr. Speaker, I am heartened to hear you a few moments ago, remind this honourable House that one of the first orders of business will be a code of conduct. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would also like to thank my predecessor, Ms. Tara Rivers, for the work that she completed in eight years. It is a quirk of fate that I served her as a civil servant and now she is my constituent, but I am pleased to pick up from where she left off and try to serve West Bay South with a set of West Bay MPs united to move the district forward in earnest, and in prosperity, with a bonded Government team who I pray will work in a collegiate fashion with the Opposition.

To the voters of West Bay South, please know that you are all in heart. I will be working diligently to achieve as much as possible what was in my manifesto of a re-imagined Cayman.

Mr. Speaker, God bless this honourable House, West Bay South, and these Cayman Islands, as we move forward with positivity and inclusivity, in a humble, harmonious fashion, in service of the people of the Cayman Islands.

Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: The Honourable Member for East End.

Mr. Isaac D. Rankine, Elected Member for East End: Mr. Speaker, fellow Members of the Parliament, my constituents of East End, people of the Cayman Islands: It is with humility and even more gratitude that I stand here today, in our House of Parliament, for this most auspicious occasion.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but reflect on my constituency's predecessors who took this journey as vestrymen, MLAs, or more recently, as Members of Parliament. They have each paved the way and set a standard for me to follow and emulate—a standard that in many respects is high and challenging. Today, as a political rookie and walking in their footsteps, I am comforted by their presence hanging from the walls of this Parliament. However, I am also excitedly nervous and humbled with the opportunity and challenge before me. A challenge that I am up to, and indeed has begun, and one which I will tackle head-on with vigour and vitality.

I give thanks to God for giving me the strength, health and vision to pursue this journey most can only dream of, and I thank Him for a free and peaceful election process. I am also very thankful to the community of East End for placing their faith and trust in to be their Member of Parliament in this next Government cycle. I want to assure my people that your faith and trust in me will not be taken for granted and please know, I will tirelessly represent the entire

community, but let me say that again Mr. Speaker: I will tirelessly represent the entire East End community. You will be hearing, and seeing more from, and of me.

I would also like to thank my opponents for running a competitive campaign and I look forward to their involvement and guidance as we move beyond the campaign phase to a phase of action for the country and East End in particular. I would also like to thank my campaign committee members, the committee chairperson and the many volunteers—you worked tirelessly.

I also want to thank my family and friends for their constant support; you were always a source of strength and encouragement. My advisors, your advice on strategy was invaluable.

Mr. Speaker, I know what it is to want. I know what is to go to sleep hungry. I know what it is to barter and it was not too long ago that I walked around the district of East End on bare feet. I reflect on that to say, that while this dream has materialised, and as I look forward to working for my people and with my colleagues on both sides of the Parliament, I will remain focused and grounded while remembering that I am merely a servant leader of the people.

I also want to give thanks to the staff of the Parliament—I look forward to your support and working with you.

May God bless this honourable House and the people of the Cayman Islands.

Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

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

The Member for Savannah:

Ms. Heather D. Bodden, Elected Member for Savannah: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am truly humbled to stand before this honourable House today. I had the privilege of working in these hallowed Halls over 25 years ago when I severed as an elected Member for the district of Bodden Town in the Legislative Assembly. I was honoured to sit in the seat of the late Honourable Haig Bodden. Today my title may be different, but my mission remains the same as it was over two decades ago: to serve my people and my country.

My remarks will be brief but I believe they are necessary. First, let me thank God, because without Him none of us would be here today. My family—my sisters who stuck by me, my nieces and nephews; grand-nieces and grand-nephews; my friends. Pastors of churches near and far who prayed over the phone with me—I will not forget their kind words; the Savannah constituents who voted for me and those who voted a different way.

I was honoured to take my oath as a newly Elected Member of Parliament for the electoral district of Savannah. On Wednesday I was especially proud to take this oath alongside four strong, intelligent, and inspiring women and Honourable Speaker, we look forward to making a difference.

I wish to publicly thank my nominators, Mr. Ray Jackson, Mr. Stanton Ebanks, and Mr. Andrew Eden who saw to it that all was duly signed and stamped with his JP seal. I, too, echo the words of the West Bay South MP's sentiments towards the election workers, they are deeply, deeply appreciated. They went above and beyond the call of duty and they are so appreciated.

[Desk thumping]

Ms. Heather D. Bodden: I sincerely thank them all.

To the new Premier, the Honourable Wayne Panton, I want to say thank you for always being a source of strength to the Savannah-Newlands community. We know the road ahead will be filled with many trials, but I know that you are the person to lead us forward; I have seen your strength and humility on display over the years, but this past week I witnessed just how deep those wells run. You have worked tirelessly, unselfishly, and with a clear vision of being as inclusive as possible to ensure all of our people are heard. I am proud to stand next to you and be a part of your Government.

To the Deputy Premier, Honourable Chris Saunders, and my other Cabinet colleagues: since Election Day we have spent countless hours together, many of them fraught with challenges. Through it all you have made me feel hopeful for the future alongside a team that intends to serve the people of this country; a group that is willing to be held accountable to and by the people.

To my Savannah-Newlands constituents: I have served you for decades and I promise I will not lose sight of you and the needs of our community while I take on the added responsibility of the needs of the country. We are the Cayman Islands and I was elected in my community to serve the country, the whole country—the vulnerable, the elderly, those who do not support PACT (People-driven, Accountable, Competent and Transparent) and those who do.

To all of the women, mothers, daughters, aunts and grandmothers listening, never forget that we are the back bone of this society and we play an equal and important role in every aspect of it. Today, five of us stand here committed to empowering more women to come forward and serve not only at the highest level of government, but in positions of power throughout society.

Not every decision we make or action we take will be perfect or viewed positively, but it will be well thought out and done in service of the Cayman Islands and its people. I am reminded of a quote from Charlotte

Whitton, first female Mayor of a major city in Canada: **"Whatever women do, they must do twice as well as men to be thought half as good. Luckily, this is not difficult."**

My sleeves are rolled up, so let's get to work for these our beautiful Cayman Islands; and Mr. Speaker, this begins first thing tomorrow morning with all the people in Savannah-Newlands who are taking part in Earth Day clean-up and I trust that all others will take this opportunity to make a difference island-wide, by getting out and making our Islands clean and beautiful.

I wish to take this opportunity to direct a few remarks to the Honourable Member for Newlands, our new Premier. This is coming from his Newlands and Savannah communities and the Cayman Islands are elated, I have been asked by his committee to tell him how proud they are of him. He has been a tower of strength and calm. They don't make them like him anymore. This gentleman has faced much criticism throughout this entire campaign, but has been the epitome of peace and calm. When I think of all that he has been through personally, the triumphs, the tragedies, the great personal losses, it fills me with great admiration for him and his passion for this country and our Caymanian people. He is a man that will steer this country in the right direction. He is here to build up, not tear down.

My final words are from an old familiar song:

"Lord, make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred let me bring love.
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord
And where there's doubt, true faith in you.'

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and my God continue to bless these beautiful Cayman Islands.
[Desk Thumping]

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

The Member for George Town West.

Mr. David C. Wight: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let me try to break up the monopoly of the Government speaking, so I will just have few words to say.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Four years ago I stood in the honourable Legislative Assembly, honoured and humbled to be the elected Member to represent the constituency of George Town West; but today Mr. Speaker, to be honest, I stand in the honourable House of Parliament even more honoured and humbled to have been re-elected to represent the constituency of George Town West.

I want to thank the constituents of George Town West for having the faith and the belief in me to re-elect me to represent them for another four years. I also want to deeply thank two great persons who nominated me to run for re-election, Mr. Neils Godfrey, who nominated me for the second time, and Mrs. Valney McLaughlin. I thank them so much. To be re-elected goes to show that the constituents of George Town West feel that I must be doing a good job and I pledge to continue to work, not only in George Town West but the entire Cayman Islands.

I further want to thank my many family and friends who have supported me through the four years, and especially, over the last six weeks and Mr. Speaker, I have to deeply thank the young ladies and gentlemen who went out of their way to help me over the last six weeks. I would like to name these young persons because without them I know I definitely would have had a problem being re-elected, canvasing everywhere we went, and the long hours they put in to help me: Sigourney Artiaga, Julisa Ramoon, Vanessa Hurlstone, James Jackson and even though I say Tommy Ramoon, it is the young Tommy Ramoon.

Also—and I know he believes that he is young—my twin brother Christopher. I have to mention him with great, deep gratitude. I have to thank him for all he has done, not only in the last six weeks but especially, definitely, from COVID—the hours that we spent on the road in George Town West. We never advertised it or publicised it, but he and I spent many, many hours in George Town West, and not only George Town West, but throughout the Cayman Islands, helping those who needed help during the COVID period.

I just want to thank everybody who has helped me; and thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me the time today.

Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

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

The Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour, Elected Member for Bodden Town East: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A very good morning to everyone, all the listening audience. As this election was going to take place I said a prayer that night of the election, and I asked God to let it be his will.

I came a little late this morning, preparing for the funeral, today, my secretary…

[Pause]

The Speaker: Honourable Member, I recognise you have quite a difficulty—a tough time.

Do you want to carry on at this point? Certainly I would take—if you want to get a break I will give you that chance and allow someone else to carry on if you need a break.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: No, Mr. Speaker, I will tough along. Thank you for your patience with me.

I want to first thank the people of this beautiful first capital, Bodden Town East. Thank you for electing me as your representative–as your MP—winning in such great fashion. It is my first time being re-elected. I know your hopes and prayers for me to continue as a Minister, and continue the good works. I pray still to be able to work with the current Government to be able to achieve similar success.

I want to thank my street teams, my agents, and office staff. I want to thank my constituents of Bodden Town East. I want to thank my campaign chairman, Mr. Berry, and my chief advisor, Mr. Scotland. All of the drivers and volunteers. I want to thank my nominators Mr. Harvey, Ms. Betty, Ms. Judy Seymour. All of the people who allowed me to come into your homes and utilise your yards and properties for meetings. It has been a very long year; one with COVID and pandemic never seen in a 103 years.

I want to congratulate Premier Panton for his win. I also want to congratulate all of the Ministers, the Deputy Premier, my good friend Chris Saunders, my good friend Ms. Juliana O'Connor-Connolly, my good friend Sabrina Turner, my cousin Jay Ebanks; my good friend André Ebanks, my good friend Kenneth Bryan, my in-family connect, Ms. Kathy. I want to thank Ms. Heather, Isaac Rankine, my good friend Bernie Bush. I don't think I forgot anyone, but it seems like they are all good friends.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: I know you all will do a good job.

Whatever I can do, especially with the experience in protecting our people from COVID community spread, I am willing to give whatever advice, or lend whatever help I can to any committee you create. The people have spoken and whatever is good for the country, and I can support, I will do so. Whatever I think needs further discussion, I will do also. It is my first time in the Opposition and it does feel a little bit weird, but I am sure this will be a great source of experience.

The feeling of sleeping on the floor until I was 11…not getting Christmas gifts…not getting anything at all—

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly, Elected Member for Cayman Brac East: Mr. Speaker, I know this is somewhat unorthodox, but I am going to cross to support my friend; I am not crossing the political divide.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Not being able to purchase a home.

This is what drives me to continue representing this great country. To my constituents: I will be fighting in the same manner with respect to the respective Ministries, to achieve as much as possible.

[Desk thumping]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: This is going to be a tough day.

To my constituents: the back to school, Christmas for kids and seniors, Easter for kids, will continue. As man of four daughters, raised by pure ladies—my aunts, my mother Petals, my grandmother Carolee, now gone—I applaud the historic elections in choosing five women as MPs. Hence why I always exclaim that the women left behind, while our brave men went to sea, are my heroes. I always remember my good friend saying that no one cares what you know, until they know that you care. Theresa, this one is for you.

Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

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

The Member for George Town North.

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

Max De Pree said, **"The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality, the last is to say thank you. In between the two, the leader [must become] a servant."**

Mr. Speaker, I stand here first as a representative for the people of George Town North, then as a Member of the Opposition in this Parliament, and lastly as a proud Member of the Parliament representing the People's Progressive Movement. That is my reality.

I will take the opportunity to congratulate all 19 Members of this Parliament on being elected to this honourable House. I also to take the opportunity to congratulate the Premier and his Government—your task is tall and I wish to you well.

Mr. Speaker, the past few months have been one of the most arduous periods in my political career. The influence of the unregulated world of social media caused confusion amongst our people. The final days of the campaign and the six days following the results exposed the ugliest side of politics and our people. The hatred and the aggression towards each other that was played out in front of the world to watch left a stain on our country.

This is not the example of leadership that we want to demonstrate for our children, so I hope that each of us here will do our part to discourage these types of actions in the future—or the type of actions that we saw over the last few weeks. It is my hope that each of us will lead with dignity, and be the statesmen and stateswomen that will demonstrate who we really are to the world.

I endured relentless attacks on my character, my family life and my integrity; however, the good people of George Town North were neither swayed nor

fooled. They re-elected me to be their representative for the next four years and I am committed to representing them, and these three beautiful Islands, to the best of my ability in my constituency and in this honourable House of Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, much was achieved over the past four years, by far the most important of which was the Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and might I say that even those on the other side should be thankful for that.

The foundation of many other great initiatives have been laid: Cayman Islands Centre for Business Development, Plan Cayman, the introduction of a third sub-c cable to modernise our IT infrastructure; the recommendations to reduce the traffic congestion on our roads and the Public Works Apprenticeship Program, the Integrated Solid Waste Management System (ISWMS), and the capping of the landfill to name a few.

I am committed to continuing my support for these and other programmes, and I am equally committed to continuing to advocate and work for the people of George Town North for the next four years. This is my commitment: to be of service to the people of George Town North and to the Cayman Islands.

That leaves for me to say thank you; I want to first thank God for his mercies and for his continued protection of our beautiful Islands.

I want to say thank you to the people of George Town North—it is with humility and graciousness that I offer my sincere appreciation and gratitude for once again choosing me to represent you for the next four years. Your support and loyalty, and the hospitality that you extended to me and to those who were canvassing for me did not go unnoticed, but was rather appreciated and provided hope during times of confusion and uneasiness so thank you, thank you, thank you, and may God bless you all.

I would like to also thank my nominators Ms. Betty Baraud and Mr. Thomas Bodden. To my family and close friends, which got closer but much smaller, thank you for your unwavering support and for demonstrating that you believed in the Joey Hew that you know, and not the villain characterised by my opposition and the keyboard warriors jacked up on caffeine at the coffee shops. To you I say: never worry, for I will always take the high road and I will never do anything to cause you shame or disgrace.

To my committee and the dozens of volunteers and supporters over the past four years, and especially during this campaign, I once read "*An eagle cannot soar if it is surrounded by a bunch of turkeys*"; so I say thank you for raising me up, and for being the support that allowed me, one foot and all, to soar across the finish line in style, claiming victory over our opponents. Your commitment and dedication to George Town North is greatly appreciated, as I know it is not easy to stick your head out in this ugly world of politics and to publicly offer your support and assistance to me and therefore, I am forever grateful and humbled by each of you.

To my colleagues and the loyal members of the Progressives, I say thank you for your support and your confidence in me. Let's stand strong with our heads high, with pride and with dignity, for what we stand for, our motto, *Love of Country*. We will continue to build on our strong base and stand ready to serve our country at any time to build a stronger, safer future for these beloved Islands.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the staff in the Ministry of Commerce, Planning and Infrastructure and the various subjects and Departments that I had the privilege to work with over the past four years. Much was achieved and we rose to various challenges faced over the term. Continue to serve our people with pride and empathy and remember to always consider the outcomes of your actions.

Mr. Speaker, I will close with the following quote by former President Thomas Jefferson, **"In matters of style swim with the current, in matters of principle, stand like a rock"**; may God bless these beautiful Cayman Islands.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to make a short contribution to the proceedings this morning.

Before I begin, I want to go on record in expressing my condolences to my colleague, the Member for Bodden Town East on the sudden passing of his secretary a couple of weeks ago. Despite the grief and mourning that he has gone through, he still carried through the remainder of the campaign and was quite successful in gaining re-election at the polls last week, but I know today is the lady's funeral and I know he is having a really tough day, so I would just like to express our condolence on behalf of us all.

The past six weeks have been quite stressful and challenging for every one of us, in what has been a very keenly contested election. We are now at the end of this election cycle, with the election on Wednesday of the Honourable Wayne Panton as Premier of this country. I congratulate him on his successful election, and I wish him—and every one of you in the new government—well, as you seek to lead this country forward. Congratulations to you all and congratulations to you, sir.

Today, I find myself appointed as Leader of the Opposition and I am joined by five of my Progressive colleagues and the independent Member for Bodden Town East; together, we are seven and we make up the Opposition. Within the Parliamentary system, we

have an important role to play in holding Government accountable to this Parliament and the people of the Cayman Islands. I promise the good people of these Islands that in my role, I will be robust, but I will be fair in exercising my duties. I promise also that I will be respectful of every Member of this Parliament and will never resort to personal attacks.

I also recognise this morning that any new Government will need time to become acquainted with, knowledgeable of, and comfortable in their new roles. I have been there, so I know first-hand. The Opposition will give them a period of time to do just that. In other words, to get your feet wet.

I first thank the voters of George Town East for their overwhelming support for me at the polls. I am truly humbled by your strong support for me. My constituency office remains as it always has for the past four years, at the Progressives Headquarters on Crewe Road, and I invite my constituents to visit and meet with me there.

I also thank my team of Progressives for their support and the trust they have placed in me as their leader. I am encouraged to have such a strong and seasoned team of MPs sitting with me on this side of the Parliament.

I also thank every member of the civil service with whom I have had the pleasure to work with over the past four years. In particular, I thank everyone at the Ministry of Finance, but specifically, Financial Secretary Ken Jefferson, Senior Assistant Financial Secretaries Anne Owens and Michael Nixon and the Accountant General, Matthew Tibbetts.

I thank them for their friendship and the strong support they gave me and their unwavering support during my four years in the Ministry. Collectively, I can proudly say they are true professionals; and Deputy Governor, they embody your vision of a world class civil service.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Roy M. McTaggart, Leader of the Opposition: You have a great team, Financial Secretary, and I wish you all very well. I have to say this morning that I will truly miss them.

I also thank my committee and the many volunteers who assisted me throughout this campaign for the many hours of tireless service and help in assisting me to get re-elected. I couldn't have done it without them.

Finally, I thank my family for all their support during this campaign; I pay particular tribute to my wife Glenda, my three daughters and my two grandchildren, who I have basically not seen in more than six weeks. The strong support of my family and friends was invaluable to me, and what gave me the courage and determination to persevere throughout this election cycle.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and may God continue to shower his blessings on these beautiful Cayman Islands.

Thank you very much.

[*Desk thumping*]

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

The Member for George Town South.

Ms. Barbara E. Conolly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Although the circumstances of my return to this honourable Chamber might be somewhat different to when I was last here, there is one thing that has remained constant and that is my representation of the good people of George Town South. Let me say to them in the clearest possible terms, that I understand the privilege they have bestowed on me. I remember what they said to me during the campaign and I intend to honour their wishes.

Mr. Speaker, from my new position I will continue to push this Administration on behalf of my people in George Town South for better infrastructure, affordable health care and housing, free health care for our children; continued improvement of our education system, and the equitable treatment of women and the vulnerable.

On this side of the aisle Mr. Speaker, I will continue to represent my constituents with dignity and truth—they deserve nothing less. I wish to join in welcoming the first-time Members to this Parliament with the hope that their stay will be fruitful and always to the benefit of the people who sent them here.

It only remains for me to thank the five hundred and twenty four people who voted for me and to say to those who did not vote for me, that the election is over and I will represent all of the constituents of George Town South for the next four years to the very best of my ability and without fear or favour.

First of all, let me thank God and the people of the Cayman Islands for their prayers, love and support. It has been an extremely difficult six weeks for me and, as the Member for George Town North indicated, it's been almost unbearable what the social media has actually alleged about me and my family; it has just really been very difficult for me.

I also wish to thank my campaign team to include my family and friends who canvassed for me; my polling and counting agents, who worked diligently on polling day. I would like to thank my personal assistant, Ms. Vicky Forero, who stood by me through thick and thin over the past four years and who worked diligently over the past six weeks which, as I indicated Mr. Speaker, were the most difficult six weeks of my life. I can honestly say that my campaign was a clean and dignified one.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank Mr. Norman Bodden and Ms. Hyacinth Hew for nominating me.

Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my brief remarks with a question to my fellow lady Parliamentarians across the aisle of this honourable House of Parliament. I say: #IsSheSupported?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me this opportunity.

[Desk thumping]

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

The Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, I really didn't plan on speaking today. I wanted to give the newer Members their opportunity to speak, having been in their position four years before.

However, I recall the words of Marianne Williamson that were made famous by the late, former South African president Nelson Mandela when he completed his journey from prisoner to President when he said,

"*Our deepest fear* is not that we are inadequate.
***Our deepest fear* is that**
we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness
that most frightens us.
We ask ourselves,
'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous,
talented, and fabulous?'
Actually, who are you not to be?
You are a child of God...
We were born to make manifest
the Glory of God that is within us.
It's not just in some of us;
it's in everyone.
And as we let our light shine,
we unconsciously give other
people permission to do the same.
As we are liberated from our own fear,
our presence automatically liberates others."

I say that to say Mr. Speaker, fear. More than 500 years ago, *Machiavelli*, in his book, *The Prince,* said, "*It is better for rulers to rule by fear as opposed to love, because people decide who they love, people do not decide who they fear, and as such, it is the one human emotion that is very easy to play on because people have no control over it."* They'll get up and they will threaten people to say, *well if you vote for this one or vote for that one, this is what will happen to you,* and it is fear.

Mr. Speaker, I am very happy with the events of last week and I am very happy with the way that things turned out because one, it is a process but two, it gave the Caymanian people and the world, a first-hand view of the mettle that now sits on this side of the Parliament.

When I look at my colleagues on this side, starting with my good friend, the Member for West Bay North, he and I started this journey back in the year 2000, I have had no more arguments, fights and malice and anything, than I have with that Member, but he's still here and is still my friend.

Mr. Speaker, I look at the Member for West Bay South; the first time I engaged with that young man he was sitting right there as a government employee, and the time was a Public Accounts Committee and I can honestly say what I saw then and I see now, he is one of the most decent young person I've ever met in a long time.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders: And I can say I am happy to be sitting on this side of the aisle with the Member for West Bay South.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for North Side, is one of the first persons I had to apologise to because I was wrong about him—I misjudged him; and Mr. Speaker, in the fullness of time, the country will come to realise the debt that we owe the Member for North Side—

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders: —for keeping this Government together. I can honestly say, single-handedly, the Member for North Side is one of the key persons why we are here today, and have kept this together, and I want to publicly recognise the Member for his efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I only recently met the Member for Prospect. The first time I spoke to her was because someone said they heard that I said something about her, when the truth of the fact is, I didn't even know what she looked like. I had to go on Facebook, send my friend a picture and ask *is this the same person?* And I said, *you know what, send me her number*. I called her, had a good chat with her and the first time I met her in person, I greeted her with the words, "Madam Minister" and I am proud to stand here to publically say to you again, *Madam Minister*.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders: Mr. Speaker, my friend from George Town Central. What can I say? I have been in the trenches with him and he is one of the most hard-working, caring Members of this Parliament, and I am very happy to be sitting on this side with him.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for West Bay Central—energetic, young but full of promise, smart. Mr. Speaker, when I hear people get up and say, *this*

Government has no experience, I think of the many Caymanians coming back from school who are denied opportunity because they say, "*they have no experience. They are qualified, but no experience."* We have used that line to keep many Caymanians in this country down.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders: And I'm happy to see that Member there.

Mr. Speaker, beside the Member for West Bay South, is the Member for Savannah. I have been in some corners and crevices of this country, and the Member for Savannah is the only person I can say that I see either coming or going, when I am coming or going.

[Laughter]

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders: Mr. Speaker, they always say that the measure of a person is how they treat people that they think they don't need. Mr. Speaker, the Member for Savannah has always treated every single person with love and respect and I'm happy to be working with her on this side.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for East End. Yes, he stumbled, but as I said at Prospect: an error doesn't not become a mistake, until we fail to correct it, and as simple as you want to see it, all that happened created the government today. You probably wouldn't have been in that seat if he had not stumbled.

Mr. Speaker, it gave the country the opportunity to see what this government was made of and you know what, I am glad that things worked out the way they did because we would not have had the opportunity to be tested the way we were tested. The public, and the world, got a chance to see first-hand, the power of the special-interests group in this country but you know what, as Machiavelli also said, **"the end justifies the means."**

Mr. Speaker, I look at the Member for Cayman Brac East. I am very happy she's on this side. She is one of the most dedicated Parliamentarians—I would say probably, in the Western Hemisphere. I feel much better, and I know the country is better served with this level of experience and knowledge serving this country. And regardless of what people may think, I can tell anyone this much: I have had my own disagreements, but her dedication and commitment to this country can never be questioned, because at the end of the day she has always allowed in her politics for it to never be tribal and that is a very commendable state to be in.

Mr. Speaker, I turn to the Honourable Premier. This is the first time he and I are on the same side politically. During the 2017 campaign, I never once said anything bad about him and there were two reasons for that:

1. Both of my sisters actually like him a lot; and
2. One of them actually had the privilege and pleasure of working with him and she said to me, *"Chris, he is one of the most hard-working persons I've ever met and when you have people with that level of work ethic, working for this country, and serving this country, it is one of those things."*

Mr. Speaker, when I think of the new Premier, who I'm happy to be working with, I recall a poem that my mother always instilled in me from an early age:

"Heights of great men, reached and kept
were not attained by sudden flight but they,
while their companions slept,
were toiling upwards during the night."

Mr. Speaker, I say that to say this: on election night, when we all should have been celebrating our victories, the Premier was able to assemble a team saying, *listen, there's work to be done; let's meet up, let's start.* Many of us, including myself, left people at our homes who were partying and happy for my victory.

Ten of us gathered at twelve, one, two, three o'clock at night when others were partying, the Premier—Designate at that time—was already at work; and it sets the tone. Up to this morning, when I even look at the chat group that we created, one, two, three o' clock in the morning messages were still flying, but yet, we're still here on time for this Parliament to start at 10:00am to set the stage of what the country can expect from this Government.

Mr. Speaker, when I look at my own journey here, the red tie that I wear, as much as everyone want to say, *wrong colour,* that was the last present my father gave me before he passed and he is one of the persons who encouraged me for public service and that red tie is what I wear in his memory.

I never had a political committee—I had one in 2013 and I lost. I didn't have one in 2017 and I won it and I sure as hell wasn't going to have one again in 2021. My committee is two people: my mother and my sister. My nominators are the same as in 2017 and 2021: my mother and my wife and the reason I actually do that is:

1. People know who they're going to vote for; and
2. I've always been fearful of political victimisation, of people exposing themselves, because we are aware that there are people out there who take politics like this.

However, Mr. Speaker, the one thing that I really feel good about is yesterday while we sat down there and were discussing, this Government made a commitment that we will respect every single Member

of Parliament inside of this House; inside this Assembly, including the Opposition; and the first thing we started with was the Public Accounts Committee's six Members—three from the Government's side, three from the Opposition's side.

The Government had the majority; we could have stacked it differently—we didn't. Because you know what, we do recognise that every single Member in this House has a role to play because every single Member was elected to represent every single Caymanian and we have decided we're going to do things differently. And for that, I am grateful.

Mr. Speaker, in the week of putting this together, I've had a first-hand chance to see another side of the Premier and I can tell you from right now, I'm going to go down on record and say, the Member for Newlands is going to be the best Premier this country has ever had and this group of people on this side, are committed to making that happen because if–

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders: He is the best Premier, it means we are the best country and as the Premier said in his inaugural speech, *"our best days are still ahead of us".*

Mr. Speaker, our people need to recognise that despite the global pandemic, the story of who we are as a people is still being written but look from whence we came to where we are and to where we're going, and there should be no doubt that the Caymanian people have the capacity to achieve any single thing that they have set their mind to.

Mr. Speaker, I have been in boardrooms as a result of working with multinational corporations, and I can tell you some of the best talent that I have ever engaged with globally, has been right here and the biggest thing that we need to stop doing is being fearful, and start trusting in ourselves.

I can tell you right now that this Government is committed to not using these overseas consultants as we have normally done in the past, because we have the talent here. We're not going to be spending millions of dollars bringing people here and then they leave with the knowledge when we have qualified, talented individuals in our own public service. We're going to invest in our own people and if we make mistakes, let our own people learn from those mistakes, because this is how we grow. This is what a country does.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has decided to remain in this Chamber, as opposed to everybody else. In all of my interactions with him, I found him to be a decent person.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders: It does now set the stage, at a minimum, that we know that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is not going to be tribalistic in his approach because Mr. Speaker, there are many challenges facing this country.

The Members on this side alone, do not have all the solutions; the Members on that side alone, do not have all the solutions, but I can tell you something Mr. Speaker: collectively, the people of the Cayman Islands will have the solutions because always, when the time has counted, we have counted on our people to do the right thing and look after each other.

The Premier ran with the slogan, *"Community creates Country"* and Mr. Speaker, we need to get back to the community level in this country. Measuring our success based on GDP and all of that stuff, cannot be the only measure. We need to start looking at the quality of life of our people—

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders:—and what it is that we need to do to make their lives better.

My campaign, Mr. Speaker, was on one central issue: *What is it that keeps our people awake at nights?* And those are the issues that I and many others on this side ran on. Here's the reality: we have an aging population, we need to start looking at health care. Our people are living longer therefore we need to make sure they are healthier. We have a fertility rate that is below the natural replacement rate; there are a lot of hard decisions that need to be made, but ageism in this country is real—the minute a person passes a certain age, they are trying to be forced out of the work force. *Why?* Because the health insurance premiums are too high; these are the issues we need to fix.

Mr. Speaker, we have inadequate pension. The public service has an unfunded pension, and the private sector has a *seriously* unfunded pension. We all know the 10 per cent contribution rate pre-COVID was inadequate to begin with, and the decisions we made during COVID, have made it more challenging.

Mr. Speaker, we have challenges in education, but I want to say one thing: our education system is not as bad as people make it out to be. It is a tool that is used to discriminate against Caymanians in the work force and to prove it, Mr. Speaker, when they come back from universities—having been educated in North America and Europe—they still can't get a job! So it can't be anything about our local education system; it's about people just not wanting to hire certain people and this is what this Government is committed to fixing.

Mr. Speaker, there are things that are on the roll in education that need to be dealt with and we cannot go through this cycle where every four years, four years, four years, we're changing this ministry, this ministry, this ministry. This is why it's important for us to start developing a national strategic plan for this entire country—it cannot be done in a four year cycle every single time. We started with Vision 2008; by the 2000 election every one campaigned on it and by 2001, every one forgot about it.

We need to start having a long-term strategic plan, and these are the kinds of things that the government must develop in tandem with the Opposition, so regardless of where the government knows people and the investors and everyone else who call the Cayman Islands know, at least have something of what they can expect is going to be done.

However, Mr. Speaker, this is serious business. Yesterday, the new Cabinet started the orientation process and we got an in-depth, and I can tell you the picture is not so rosy, but you know what Mr. Speaker? The public already knows that, so we are not here about blaming the previous Government. Every single one of us inside this Chamber is now 1/19th the owner of the problems of this country, and we have to fix it; so one of the things that you very rarely will ever hear from me, unless it's in defence, is blaming the previous Government because if there's a rule in politics is, *there is no future in the past, what happened has happened; it is where we are today, and where we're moving from there.*

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I didn't really plan on speaking, I wanted this to be about the new Members, but I just felt I had to get up and say something. We are still a Christian country. We believe in forgiveness. Mr. Speaker, as I said to you before, yes, I beat up on you in the campaign but at the end of the day, the people of West Bay West also have the democratic right to choose who they want to represent them and they chose you and every single Member in this House has to respect that.

You notice not once Mr. Speaker, have I gotten up and called anybody by their name, because there are no names inside this Parliament. It is the Member for Prospect, it is the Member for George Town Central, that is who is inside here, because that is who the people chose. There is no Chris Saunders. There is no McKeeva Bush. It is only the people that we represent that are reflected in this Parliament, and that is done to take out the personalities and all the personal stuff.

This building is not about individuals, it is about issues. It is not about personalities, it's about policies. This is what this building is for and I can say to anyone, when you do leave this building and you do go back to your names, I expect every single one to adhere to that Code of Conduct and carry their selves in a manner that is decent, and reflective—

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders: —of the people who we were elected to serve.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I really want to thank my family. I have been blessed that at least about 80 per cent of my family live in Bodden Town West, that's why I can refer to it as my home constituency.

An Hon. Member: That's where you get all the votes from.

[Laughter]

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders: Yeah, my family big too! But Mr. Speaker, I really and truly want to thank the people of Bodden Town West, that despite the personal attacks—my wife got drawn into this, my mother got drawn into this.

The temerity and the audacity of some of the individuals who were even calling my family names; if I were to really open up, but I said you know what, God bless them. That's all I kept, and the one thing I'm happy for is that I did not fall into the temptation to get into that mud-slinging and gutter politics, because the people that I represent in Bodden Town West are good, hard-working decent aspirational Caymanians and I said to them, the same thing I said to my mother and my Uncle George McCarthy: *I will never, ever do anything to embarrass the family* and I say to them, *I will never, ever do anything to embarrass you. Am I perfect? No. Do I make mistakes? Yes.*

The person standing here is reflective of second chances and I said it—my first year of university, Mr. Speaker, my GPO was 1.69 and it wasn't because I was stupid. It was because I was not motivated, I was not dedicated. I was not disciplined. They let an 18 year-old loose in the streets of New York and I had a good time. I had a great time. I partied and I partied well. I should have lost my scholarship, Mr. Speaker, but I didn't; I was told to go back and finish—which I did—and when I went back and the younger kids started calling me elderly, I knew it was time to get out.

[Laughter]

Hon. Christopher S. Saunders: Mr. Speaker, I am optimistic and I feel good about where we are today as a country. We have a lot of work. There are still a lot of challenges. Our people are hurting. That is not lost on any of us inside here and it sure is not lost on the Premier, because that is the work ethic that he has brought to this team. It is recognising that people out there have challenges.

We are tasked with making sure that the Cayman we leave today is better for the kids coming tomorrow, and the one thing he said to us yesterday was any decision we make, please ask ourselves: what will this impact in the next five and ten years? And if we see where it's going to be a problem, let us not do it; and Mr. Speaker, that is all I can ask for in a Premier.

There are three things that I ask of the team on this side:

First, I ask them to care—and I can tell you Mr. Speaker, I would not work with anybody if they were not caring. As the Member for Bodden Town East reminded me, which I always said, people do not care how much you know until they know how much you care. You have to care about people in this business.

The next thing I ask is to be committed. This morning, every single person was here on time. They have showed up to every meeting thus far, and the last week, following the election I got a chance to see everybody's commitment first hand.

The other thing I ask for, Mr. Speaker is competence. And I can say thus far everybody, in their own unique way is competent and I can guarantee you, with the diversity of this team put together, is going to be a very competent government and that is what we want to do.

In the end Mr. Speaker, we're not going to be remembered by the Cayman we inherited, we are going to be remembered by the Cayman we leave behind, but one thing I want to say: the things that are wrong with Cayman can still be fixed by the things that are right with Cayman.

With that Mr. Speaker, I want to say as the Premier said on Wednesday, our best days are still ahead of us and we're going to make the Cayman Islands the best place to live and work on this planet; and I'm looking forward to working with this team and the Leader of the Opposition and his team in moving this country to the next level.

However, make no joke about it, Mr. Speaker: we recognise now the power of the special interests group in this country. The people are aware of them now, and while many of them have earned their seats at the table, they can no longer own the table and every chair around it. The people of this country will now have their say and their seat at that table, because this is what we fought for and this is what this Government is committed to delivering.

Thank you all. God bless.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: The Honourable Deputy Governor.

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

Mr. Speaker, I shall be brief. First, I want to recognise the Progressive Alliance and thank them for their service to our country and for their support of the civil service during their administration and also to the Leader of the Opposition for his acknowledgement of the civil service in his contribution.

Mr. Speaker, I want to wish Savannah a Happy Birthday. I also want to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Ernie Scott, who is retiring this afternoon; I'm actually travelling to the Brac for his retirement celebration this afternoon. He is retiring after 47 years in the Civil Service and I would like to ask all Members of this House to join me in thanking him for his dedication to public service, and to the people of the Cayman Islands, especially those in the Sister Islands. He has done an amazing job for us, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, I too want to recognise the Elections Office, the Supervisor of Elections Mr. Howell, and his amazing team for delivering what, I think we all agree, has been a World-Class Election. I think they did an excellent job, and we certainly owe them a debt of gratitude.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me to be here, working with this government. We have a diverse government—a history-making government. Five women are with us today as part of our Parliament and that is historic; it is something we should be proud of.

Mr. Speaker, I got a message from two of the women in my life—my daughter and my mom—saying that they are watching me, so I want to acknowledge them, tell them how much I love them, and I cannot forget my dear wife of 38 years now, we've been together for all of her support over the last 38 years. She knows I love her very much.

Mr. Speaker, I am also very proud to say that five civil servants are here in this Chamber. Minister Bush served in the Civil Service. I don't think we actually worked together, but I know he's a civil servant. He did an amazing job at the Sports Office and at the Pirate's Week Office but I did have a really great opportunity to work with Minister Turner, Minister Ebanks, Minister Wilks-Ebanks; and I know that the Deputy Premier was also a civil servant.

Mr. Speaker, another proud moment for me Mr. Speaker, is that we have three members of the Class of 1981 here—the Premier, Minister Bush and I went to High School together.

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, you think about that. That is really something to be proud of. I'm proud to serve with my fellow classmates. It means the Class of 1981 will have three Members of Cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, that sends a signal to our young people that with dedication, with hard work, pushing yourself, being honest, having integrity, you can achieve a lot together. Three Members of one class are in Cabinet together. I would like our young people to really think about that and know that the Caymanian dream is still alive. You can still achieve a lot if you are willing to do the things that I said earlier. How you conduct yourself, having respect for others.

Mr. Speaker, public service is, I believe, the greatest job in the world. Having the ability to make the lives of those you serve better, is an amazing opportunity, Mr. Speaker. I've done it now for 39 years. I've worked my way up the Civil Service to where I am today and over that time I have dealt with thousands and thousands of people and seeing the look on the faces of our people, our Caymanians when we advise them that they have gotten a job, that they have gotten

promoted, that we have been able to assist them, are things I think that we will never forget.

I have people come up to me and say, "Mr. Manderson do you remember, in 1996 you helped me?" and I can't remember. I don't remember the occasion—but they do. People remember how you made them feel and that is something that we must always appreciate, and I think that was the message of the Deputy Premier earlier; people remember how we make them feel. Public Service gives us that opportunity to make people feel very special.

The Civil Service is committed to that—to make the lives of those we serve, better. As I told the new Government yesterday, the Civil Service is now ready, willing and able to serve them. That is our job Mr. Speaker; our job is to serve the Government of the day. We serve them by implementing their policy priorities and projects with pace, efficiently, and with care.

Mr. Speaker, I was changing gears. I was reflecting on my working experience with the Members here in the Chamber and I'm going to embarrass Mrs. Turner a bit, but she and I worked together over at the Immigration Department and as a young rookie she came in and I was immediately impressed with her. I gave her a very difficult assignment. I'm not going to go into any more details but I'm sure she will remember our incident with the Obeah man—

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Let's just say that Mrs. Turner was fearless. She was with us on all of our operations together. She was right there and I look forward now to working with her in Cabinet along with my fellow civil servants, Mr. Bush and Mr. Ebanks.

Mr Speaker, the Caymanian people have spoken. I said to the Government yesterday that listened to the theme of their campaigns individually, there were a number of things that came out that they wanted to be a priority which will now be the priority for the Civil Service.

There was a loud message from all Members that they wanted Caymanians to feel that they are first in their country—*Caymanians first.* They wanted sustainable development. They wanted cost-of-living to be reduced. They wanted excellent care for those persons who are vulnerable in our society. They wanted better protection of the environment. Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the Government that those will now be the priorities of the Civil Service.

Mr. Speaker, trust and respect are earned. I think we, in the Civil Service, did a good job of earning the trust and respect of the previous administration. It is now our job to earn the trust and respect and confidence of the new Government, but Mr. Speaker, I want to assure them that they have our support and we will work diligently and professionally to deliver on their priorities.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: I thought the Member for West Bay North had indicated. The Member for Cayman Brac East.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to go on record first of all to thank Almighty God, for hitherto has He brought me. He has allowed me the awesome privilege and indeed the responsibility of having been returned by the good people of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman originally and now, through the process of constitutional change, to be the Member for Cayman Brac East. This is my seventh election that I have been successful at.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Mr. Speaker, usually it was my father—who is now deceased of blessed memory—who caught my imagination and took me—being the policeman on Cayman Brac—to campaign meetings from the time I was a wee little girl and it was iconic persons like the late Captain Keith Tibbetts who allowed me to spend many long hours as a young child in Watering Place, at his store TibMart, telling me about the government, and why it was important to go to school and get an education.

Coming up, there were many good Cayman Brac politicians who I looked up to and admired; one of whom is the late Captain Charles Kirkconnell. Little did I know that back in 1991, when I finished my second degree in Law—Education having been my first priority—that I would get an invitation by the late Captain Charles Kirkconnell to go to Little Cayman, and it is as if it were yesterday, he took me to his property and asked me to look towards Cayman Brac and asked me what I saw. I explained the geographical out lay. That didn't satisfy him. I attempted to explain the sociological outlay. That did not satisfy him and he kept asking questions until he finally got the courage to say, *I no longer am satisfied with you young girlie*—that tells the era from which he came—*to be an aspiring young lawyer for your own ambitions, justified though they are, but I want you to see beyond what you explain and I want you to see a people in need of a representative.*

Of course, I had just come through six years of law school; excited to change the world, make a difference in the gender landscape for the underprivileged, to provide a legal voice for the people and I could not see how I could have just spent all that time and now go into a political atmosphere that had been one reserved for the men but with God, all things are possible and I took the leap. It's now going as I said,

to my seventh time. Each time has been different. Each time has been more challenging but, once we can stand the pull, Mr. Speaker, God always has that capacity to pull us through.

There's been none like this one—campaign or seven days of negotiation. God allowed me to see the good side and the bad side but there's a little song that says,

"Through it all I've learned to trust Him.
I've been to many places—indeed
I've seen many faces.
And had I not had a problem,
I wouldn't know that I could trust Him."

I thank God for the valleys. I thank God for the hills and I thank God for the opportunities that He allowed me to be His conduit and His channel.

Mr. Speaker, I want also to thank my mother who has never been involved in politics, and I don't know quite what energised her, because as I was contemplating whether or not I would offer myself yet for another term, my mother is usually the first one to discourage me because of the remarks and the onslaught of attack that she comes under and being now 77 years old, with many underlying ailments, I thought long and hard this time.

Without even knowing who my opponent would be, I did as I always did Mr. Speaker—I sought God for a word, and I sat in my bedroom on the Bluff, Cayman Brac, I was impressed to turn to Exodus 14:14 and having read the Bible many times, I still was not that good that I knew what Exodus 14 said, but I looked at it and it said words to this effect: *"I, the Lord, will fight for you; hold your peace"*. Words cannot adequately convey and—or indeed express— how significant that was an *(inaudible)* and strengthened me and gave me the courage and the confidence to go up against the opponent that I had, to go through the last seven days and to make perhaps what will probably be recorded in history as one of the most difficult decisions in my life.

I was given the mandate from my people as a current Minister to return in a Ministerial position. I fought as assiduously and as courageously as I could with my friends across and indeed, they are my friends. I spent the last eight years with them. I don't have a lot of family in Cayman and the PPM became my family. And I know that it was a political risk as persons who have not yet walked down the road of putting country first, and really being put to the test to prove that country is first, would perhaps have that capacity to have an illegitimate expectation that I was turning my back on a party that I ran with and encouraged other people to support but Mr. Speaker, less they be further misguided, may I now establish and embed it into the annals of the Hansard of this Honourable Parliament: once you're a human being, Juliana Yvonne O'Connor-Conolly does not ever turn her back on you.

I saw it as a set of circumstances that were so orchestrated because my God sets up Governments and he brings them down. It's not for me to question but I am mandated to pray for those in authority and all of those in authority.

When all possibilities, all matrices had been analysed, it came to a point that once you reach ten you could have a Government but a Speaker from outside; once you reach eleven and the Honourable Premier, the Member for Newlands was able to successfully navigate and submit that, I then made the decision: I, Juliana Yvonne O'Connor, without any special interest groups, without any pressure from any officious bystander, that my first duty and calling was to the people of Cayman Brac East, Cayman Brac West, Little Cayman, to ensure that we had a seat at the table in Cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, for me it would have been much easier being a grandmother, having had to wait for twelve years to have little Immanuel, to have sat on the back bench to meet perhaps three or four times a year with a lot of time to help raise him and steer him but I did not get elected for my own personal benefit. I got elected to build this beloved Isles Cayman. So, as I thought about the decision and I thought gravely, the scenario that flooded my mind was that elections are gone, it's over. It's time for us Caymanians to unite, because divided we most certainly will fall.

After all Mr. Speaker, we are still in a pandemic. A pandemic that was led successfully by the Hon. Alden McLaughlin and I'm not calling his name out of disrespect, but it ought to know who the person was and my colleagues across the way, with the support of the Opposition and the support of all of the people in the Cayman Islands because if the Cayman Islands go down we all go down, Mr. Speaker.

So I viewed it as election having been passed, the midnight hour fast approaching, the Governor issuing the proclamation and I stand weighing in the balance—would I go down in history as destroying the engine of the good ship Cayman because I could not be the Captain, or would I get on board to plug in a hose that I possibly could plug small though they may be. I took the decision, costed what it may, as Esther of old, when she said in Esther 3: *If I perish, I perish*, but I will stand on the side of keeping the good ship Cayman afloat.

That is why Mr. Speaker, I see no single Member here today as an individual, as an independent, as PPM. I see their heart and soul and I sincerely believe, Mr. Speaker, that every Member fought and gave it their best fight, hence they won the confidence of their individual constituency and they are here to do the very best that they can to make sure that we can get off the blacklist, the grey list, that we can reinvigorate and restart and be the catalyst to get our economy back and going.

Mr. Speaker, because of the good financial stewardship of the now Honourable Leader of the

Opposition, we have reserves that can perhaps take us through to the end of December. God forbid that we have an earthquake or a major hurricane—and we are overdue, we are past 10 years since Paloma—but Mr. Speaker, one thing I know, that though we pass through the valley of the shadow of death, indeed it is just that, it is a shadow. This too will pass and as my mentor from a distance, Michelle Obama said, when anyone goes low, it is my distinctive choice to go high and I will take that choice today, even though the lawyer in me would want to get up and defend the defamatory statements that were made during the campaign, the threats that were made and the abuse that my precious 77-year old mother, my son and my daughter had to endure, I took it on because burdens are still lifted at Calvary and Jesus is still the solution for this country.

I am indeed honoured and privileged to have been accepted on this side as an individual not just coming for the first time. Each and every Member here would have heard of me. I do it not of my own strength but I allow myself to be used as a conduit to express what my people want and in any form or shape; it is my *modus operandi* to lead this good ship Cayman, this term being my final term, a bit better than I found it.

May it please you Mr. Speaker; may God's blessing be continuous upon these wonderful blessed Cayman Islands, as we build this country together. The ship is about to leave anchor today. What you do during these four years, not *you* as Speaker, but you as each individual Member, will determine whether it is still afloat in four years' time—may God be with us as we make this voyage.

Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: The Honourable Member for West Bay North.

Hon. Bernie A. Bush: Mr. Speaker, I too had no expectations of speaking today and then some of my constituents said to me, *West Bay North better speak.*

[Laughter]

Mr. Bernie Bush: I too want to say that, I know personally, that I'm here because of God. The campaign that was run against me—the slander, the smudge, the lies—it was like none other, until the Member for Bodden Town West said that they called him a money launderer.

Mr. Speaker, I too learnt from the Member for Bodden Town West. Like he said, in 2000; the first time I ran, he was right there looking over what I was saying, saying *maybe you should say it this way, this way you won't offend anyone*. I had so many people call me and do exactly what the Member for Cayman Brac just said, take the high road and take the high road I did! In fact, I took plenty of roads. The favourite one, Mr. Speaker, was to drop the children of my constituents home when some of my opponents were dropping off pamphlets. I think dropping off the children was valued a little more than a piece of empty paper.

Mr. Speaker, I didn't have a committee either because of the same thing—the victimisation that could take place. In fact, a 21 year old former Youth Parliamentarian says to me that she would like to speak on my platform, only to get a call from a Member of my opponent's family telling her she better not. This was why when she WhatsApped me, Mr. Speaker, I said to her, *check with your parents first*. She came back and said *have you never sat down at the table with me, my mother and my siblings?* And Mr. Speaker it was true. I should've known she was going to speak, and speak she did. People volunteered to pay for the pictures for my sign posts; it was done by the little man.

Mr. Speaker, it would be remiss of me not to mention three people that in the first eight years that I have been here, gave me a lot of good, sound advice: Mr. Anthony Eden, Mr. Ezzard Miller, who I sat on the PAC with and also on the Oversights Committee for the Complaints Commissioner; and the man who had a lot, who talked to me—Mr. Arden McLean. They are not here, but for me they will never be forgotten. They all played their part.

Mr. Speaker, when the Deputy Governor spoke about the Class of '81; in 1980, I got in a fight at the Cayman Islands High School—I beat up two brothers—and I wondered whether they were from Bodden Town because Mr. Roy Bodden grabbed me up and he said something that I have never forgotten. He said, *"You shouldn't be doing this",* he said, *"you are a bridge—there are certain people in this class that will never be able to come down to the bottom here and if they do, they won't look real; and there are certain people at the bottom that will never go to the top. You can get along with both; you're a bridge".* I never forgot that and I have always reminded Mr. Bodden about it.

Secondly, on April 23rd 2006, today, a man passed away named Mr. Rudolph Willis. When you run [for election] and lose—those who have experienced it—it is not a good feeling. Some people want to go and hide, and when you lose no one remembers you; no one shows up except true friends. Mr. Willis showed up at my door and knocked. I have always told his children about this. [He] knocked on my door and put his hand in front of my face Mr. Speaker and he said, *"Can you see this?"* and I said, *"No"*. He moved his hand back and he said, *"The good Lord is drawing a picture, it's not your time yet. Your time will come and when your time comes, you will be a bridge between the Jamaican community and the Caymanian community and you will be a bridge between the younger people and the older people."* And here we are today, Mr. Speaker.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition is one of the nicest persons I have met since I've been in here. I said it last night, and I will say it again today on the Floor of this House, Caymanians first, Caymanians

second, Caymanians third. That's what I am here for. For too long, in every sector—private sector, government sector—you talk to Caymanians, they feel that they are not even second class anymore and this will stop right here.

It was a pleasure yesterday when we were being briefed that one of the biggest conversations that we had was about getting people with certain types of handicaps into the work place. I felt so good when I heard my colleagues all jump on with it. I know we have a team that cares. We have a team that I do hope continues to operate the fact that nothing is behind a wall, everything is transparent, because I do know this: our Caymanians must be put first.

The head of Barkers is a no-discussion zone—nothing. We have three Members in here on this side and if the three of us cannot get it done, *(inaudible)* then something is wrong; very, very, very simple.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to everyone, our Leader is quite capable and he has something that I have got to learn to acquire, and that is patience. He and the Deputy Leader have already spoken to me to not be so rough around the edges and Mr. Speaker, I am working on it, but I will be me and I will be truthful. It is as simple as that.

To the people of West Bay North, to my family and to people throughout this Island: when you hear people driving from other parts of this Island to come to West Bay, and speak to their family and friends in West Bay North, that should tell you. Thank you all for your prayers; thanks for everything. To my team: thanks for sticking together.

That was the important thing. Let me tell you all, my people feel better because of what we did those six or seven days. No one budged and the greatest feeling was to hear someone tell me that one of my teammates said, *"We don't have to worry about Bernie, because he's not for rent and he's not for sale."*

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: The Honourable the Attorney General.

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: Mr. Speaker thank you. I promise I'll be very brief; I recognise I'm standing between lunch and the colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to lend my voice in saying congratulations to all 19 elected Members of this honourable House and their hard-fought campaign. I understand that in the context of politics there's always the cut and thrust of the debate and emotions run high. Things were said and there are some raw wounds but Mr. Speaker, like all good people, once election is over, it is clear that Members were prepared to put all of those aside and coalesce around one common mission which is the advancement of this beautiful country.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend all 19 of them, because it is not easy to subject yourself to that sort of 'mission' if I might put it that way. It comes with personal sacrifice, both to themselves and their respective families and their supporters and so, even though I am not involved in the process Mr. Speaker, I do recognise what it entails.

Mr. Speaker I want to also say congratulations to all Members of Cabinet. I'm looking forward to working with them and I want to say thanks to the outgoing Government. The Honourable former Premier and the Members and thanks for their service and leadership, especially during the difficult and turbulent period that we had with the pandemic. It was understandably quite turbulent, but as the now Honourable Premier recognised in his inaugural address, we are the better for it in the sense that we are now here, able to greet, need no social distancing and no mask and all of that. So Mr. Speaker, congratulations to them and, of course, to our public health professionals who are also responsible for part of this.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Premier spoke on Wednesday night and I sat and listened, and I was struck by what he said. The tone was the right tone; the exact tone that you need after an election and Mr. Speaker, I was very confident then that we are on the right path because that is exactly what you expect of a leader and he displayed all of those attributes. I know the gentleman—I worked with him before; he has the right temperament that you would want in the Premier and so I am very confident that the country is on the right trajectory.

Mr. Speaker, I was struck by something else that he said on Wednesday night. I do not know how many of us really stopped to notice that, but that the passing of the torch Mr Speaker, there are no veterans or seamen left in this Parliament and Mr. Speaker, it's kind of difficult to imagine even though I was not around during many of those days but certainly during my tenure, there's always one or two who were here and who were standouts and who, of course, we owe the credit to for setting the template Mr. Speaker. To see the smooth transition as it is, from that generation to this generation Mr. Speaker, it must be a joy to our heart and our spirits. It was really good, really magnanimous of him, to recognise that.

Mr. Speaker, the challenges ahead of us are many. We have been… I'm trying to choose my words very carefully, Mr. Speaker because I want to speak about some of the international initiatives that we are facing, and I recognise that nowadays, before you sit down, everything you say is across the world.

So Mr. Speaker, let me just say it this way. We have some challenges. None of it has anything to do with us, it is all external and it requires vision go forward. It requires diplomacy and it requires commitment. I am confident that Members of the Cabinet have the necessary will. You can hear the

passion in the speeches that have been made and we are ready to continue the good work, roll up our sleeves and move forward with what needs to be done, with alacrity and commitment and—as all Members recognised—with the usual dignity and esprit de corps that we need as a country going forward. I want to say thanks and congratulations in the same breath.

Mr. Speaker, it is now time to continue the stewardship of this good ship Cayman.

I thank you.

[Pause]

The Speaker: The Honourable Premier.

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

Mr. Speaker, I said much of what I wanted to say at this point on Wednesday, but I think it would be remiss of me at this point to not acknowledge the great speeches, in particular the maiden speeches that the Members of the Government have made here this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of these fine Caymanians; I am very proud of the diversity. We are all very clearly understanding of the challenges that, as a Government, we face in running this country and taking it forward for the next four years. Irrespective of which Government it was Mr. Speaker, those challenges would exist. I have explained to them that there is a difference. The campaign is now over and there is a difference between being in Opposition, there's a difference between quantification, there's a difference between having the ability to stand out there and criticize and make observations when you have the awesome obligation of running the country, running the Government and making sure that we deliver for our people.

Mr. Speaker, my friend the Deputy Premier, when you talk with him, he absorbs everything and the only difficulty—I mean, it's true of going last at any time really, but with him in particular, going last means that he has already absorbed everything and he has already said just about everything there was to say. I did think that I had one last point that I would like to acknowledge and that was the fact that my classmate, the Member for West Bay North and my classmate, the Deputy Governor were here with me as well, but of course the Deputy Governor took that point as well, sir.

[Laughing]

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: I again want to thank the people of Newlands for giving me the right to be their representative; for putting their trust and confidence in me. I want to thank my colleagues for putting their trust and confidence in me and supporting me as Premier of this country. I also want to thank the thousands of messages that I have had from our wonderful citizens who have been encouraging and inspiring and supportive as well, many of whom I have not had the chance to respond to, Mr. Speaker, but I am confident that I will get back to them.

I am equally confident in this Government, Mr. Speaker. They have shown immense courage, strength of character and heart because, what they have been through over the past week, is how you forge steel, Mr. Speaker. I did not get the calls. I was not getting the pressure, but they did and it was incredible to me to watch the strength, in particular those people who were newly elected, who had not been there before, and had not faced the challenges.

I would really highlight the same individuals in the same manner as the Deputy Premier did so eloquently, for the exact same reasons, Mr. Speaker. They are a stand-up group of people and they will stand up and they will fight for the people of our country and they will fight to deliver for the people of our country, to ensure that at the end of the day their lives are going to be better and the lives of their children will be better and the futures of their children will be better, Mr. Speaker.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to my committee in Newlands, those two stalwarts of my community who nominated me, Mr. Dane Walton and Mrs. Elizabeth Whittaker; two incredible people, two incredible citizens who care about their country, about their community. The approach to our campaign was based on running a clean, issues-based campaign, not going after anyone, not getting down into anything which was negative, other than confronting the issues, and I am very proud of that. I am very proud of the colleagues that I ran with on the same team of "Community Creates Country", and therefore, I am very proud to acknowledge my friend, my teammate, my successful teammate, the Member for Savannah, who has as big a heart as anyone I have known.

Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge my friend and really truthfully Mr. Speaker, *my friends,* on the other side of the aisle. We have had a long relationship for a variety of reasons. We are in our respective positions today but I want to acknowledge that a man that I know to be a very decent man, a very capable man, has shown the respect of sitting in his chair as the Leader of the Opposition and he has remained there.

[Desk thumping]

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: So I thank you, Mr. Leader of the Opposition. I know that your job, and the job of your teammates, is to hold the Government accountable and I know that you will do that. I know that you will fulfil your constitutional responsibility. I do not think any of us have any doubt that you will be a formidable Opposition, but at the end of the day this is about all of us working together in the best interest of our country, in the best interest of our children, so that our futures and their futures are protected.

Yesterday when I was standing on the steps of this honourable Parliament, I was delivering an address and looking down the street which is named after my grandfather, Albert Panton. For some reason, I had not really thought about it very much until over the last couple of months. I thought about his brothers as well, who were engaged in public service. I thought about my uncle who served in this honourable Parliament formerly Legislative Assembly and my cousin, Mr. Ormond Panton. And I think it reflects upon me the innate desire that I have to serve the people of the country and the approach that I take of putting the country first.

There have been times over the last week in particular, that I have had to reflect very carefully on what my decisions should be based on, and I want to make it clear, in respect of the comment from the Member for George Town South that the answer to her question is still, of course, *she is supported.* But at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, we have an obligation to consider what our priorities are and our first priority is to our country. The second priority for me is to my constituency, and the third is my own personal views or feelings.

Mr. Speaker, you have issued a statement. You have acknowledged the issues and you have issued an apology for past transgressions. We are all human beings and I think you are to be commended for that. For us, Mr. Speaker, in terms of Government, our position going forward is going to be one which absolutely ensures that the standards that we expect from all of us are exactly what should be expected from the leaders of the country. We intend to try to set the best possible example, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, we recognise we're human beings and occasionally we may fail, but this is going to be our aspiration as much as it is an aspiration for us and a commitment and a desire from us to ensure that we take this country forward safely, that we address the concerns of people in the country, that we end up in a better position four years from now than we started off today. So Mr. Speaker, I am not going to keep anyone from lunch any further—I am sure they're happy about that.

I thank you very much. I thank the people again, of the Cayman Islands for putting their trust in us. I thank the Members of the Opposition who will no doubt do their duty and when it is appropriate, work with us. I thank the civil service for the great job that I know they have done in the past and they will continue to do, as outlined by the Deputy Governor and the Honourable Attorney General.

Most of all let me thank my team for being committed, for having the heart, for having the strength, to still be here and we are going to do this, together. For our beloved Cayman Islands.

[Desk thumping]

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

The Speaker: A few matters, colleagues, before we take the adjournment.

Our National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast will be a Thanksgiving Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast and is set for 5th May and you will be getting further notices on this as soon as possible. You will be made more aware, particularly the new Members, of what it is all about. That is set for the 5th May.

The second thing I want to say is that the remarks as made by the Premier on Wednesday, I will order that those remarks be attached to the Hansard of the House so the record of that speech is set here.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: It would not normally be because it was made outside of the Chamber but I'm going to order that that be attached to the Hansard for today's meeting. I am extremely pleased to hear my elected colleagues of West Bay say that we will work as a united force for ALL of West Bay.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Our district needs to be brought together; that is our duty regardless of those who want to, and are carrying on the election campaign. We cannot and must not be tempted to entertain those persons, but do as the Member for West Bay South said, work in unity together for the district of West Bay.

I like to quote Psalms and Psalms 133:1 says,

"Behold how good and how pleasant it is
for brethren to dwell together in unity"

Psalms 127 says,

"Except the Lord keep the city,
the watchman waketh but in vain."

Those of you that know me, know I love music, and there's an old Presbyterian hymn that says,

"I feel the winds of God today.
Today my sail I lift.
Though weary or heavy,
oft with drenching spray,
and torn with many a rift.
If hope but light the water's crest,
and Christ my bark will use.
I'll seek the seas at his behest,
and brave another cruise.
I feel the winds of God today,
today our sail will lift."

ADJOURNMENT

The Speaker: The adjournment has been made.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

This honourable House stands adjourned sine die.

At 1.35pm the House stood adjourned sine die.

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PARLIAMENT
OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

INAUGURAL SPEECH
by
The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton

Wednesday
21 April 2021

The Premier's inaugural speech was given on the steps of the House of Parliament after the Swearing-in of Members of Cabinet

≈≈ THE PREMIER'S INAUGURAL SPEECH ≈≈

[21 April, 2021]

The Premier, Hon. Gurney Wayne Panton: Protocol having been established, let me say good afternoon—probably nearly evening—to all of you. It is a wonderful afternoon to be here with you.

As I accept this awesome privilege of addressing you, the beautiful people of our Beloved Isle Cayman, as your new Premier, I can honestly say to you that your love, encouragement, words of support and unwavering belief have both humbled and inspired me through what has been one of the longest weeks in my life.

I wish to offer, firstly, sincere congratulations to all of the 18 Members of Parliament; each of us represents the will, aspirations, hopes and dreams of our respective constituencies and the people thereof and as you have taken your solemn oaths and affirmations, let us pledge, to never take our people for granted.

The Caymanian people have spoken loudly and clearly; we are charged with being their voice, their advocates and their representatives. I think of the words of former US President Franklyn D. Roosevelt who once remarked, "Let us never forget that Government is ourselves, and not an alien power over us; the ultimate rulers of our democracy are not our Presidents and Senators, and Congressmen, but the voters of this country."

I also want to thank God for the many blessings that he has bestowed upon the Cayman Islands. I want each of you to know that it is my honour and privilege to serve you as the Premier of our country, the Cayman Islands. It is also my honour and privilege to lead this Government, which will represent all of the people of the Cayman Islands. Similarly, it is my honour and privilege to specifically represent the wonderful people of my home constituency of Newlands. Thank you—for your trust and confidence.

I must also recognise my family today. My wife Jane, my son Cody, foster child Isaias and my mother, Cecile; my brothers and their families; and at this point I would also to recognise and thank another family member who, although not a blood relative, is family nonetheless—Leonora Smichael, otherwise known to us as Ms. Rose. You see, ladies and gentlemen, she is the CEO of the household; she is a Head zookeeper with five dogs, one cat, one parrot and an assortment of goodies to be responsible for. I say to all of them and all of you, that I will never be able to pay them back for those long, sleepless nights, or to thank them for being there in the front row of my meetings.

I also want to thank the families of all those who were elected, for sharing your loved ones with us. Their time away from you, while serving their country, can never be replaced and the country owes you a debt that can never be repaid.

I want to thank the Governor, his senior management team and the entire civil service for their service to our Islands. I want to thank the staff at the Parliament and the Protocol office for organising this event today, and doing such a wonderful job.

Ladies and gentlemen, we must also recognise that we are still experiencing the miracle of life without masks—a gift that few around the world can comprehend. This is no doubt a precious gift, so we should forever be thankful to our former Premier, the Hon. Alden McLaughlin, for his steadfast leadership during this period of the COVID-19 global pandemic and the contributions he and his administration over the past two terms have made to our country; but most of all, I want to thank you, the Caymanian people for giving all of us a life of purpose and service.

It is the Caymanian people why we are gathered here today to witness the peaceful transfer of administration as required by our Constitution. This represents the collective will of the Caymanian people and everyone who that was sworn in today has the constitutional and moral responsibility to ensure that the will of the Caymanian people is reflected and respected in our policies and priorities over the next four years.

This event could not have been possible without you, the people, coming out by the thousands to exercise your democratic franchise and for that, all of us who contested the general election are very thankful for your participation. And despite the events of the past week, where there was certainty and uncertainty, this is how democracy works and more importantly, it is how democracy was designed to work. The modern democracy celebrated around the world today bore fruit from the American Revolution; it recognised that as a people, we will always have differences, disagreements, discord and dissent but it also recognises that we should have debate, discussions and dialogue to arrive at consensus. This event today represents that consensus.

The campaigning is over. It is time for us to work together to build consensus, build our community and build our country. The story of our country, and our people, was never about doing what was easy, but about doing what is right. It was about our abilities to overcome these challenges that made us who we are. And because of these challenges we are better people, better citizens and a better community. It was this better community that created our rich culture and our rich heritage. It is this better community that allows us to be neighbourly, friendly, and tolerant of others.

It was this better community that created the economy we have today, that makes the Cayman Islands one of the best places to live and work on this planet—an economy that we must strive to support and continue to grow, in order to better serve our communities and country. In short, ladies and gentlemen—Community creates Country. The story of our country and our people is one that says we are too

rich to be poor, too talented to be denied opportunities, too blessed to have the daily stresses we do and too proud to be disheartened without pursuing solutions.

As a rather sobering testament of our changing times here in the Cayman Islands, it is believed that this may be the first time in the history of our Parliament that there is no sitting Member within these Chambers who has ever served as a seafarer. There is no doubt in my mind that our parliamentary predecessors, who served at sea in that great Caymanian tradition, developed a unique perspective on Cayman's place in this world. I therefore wish to pay tribute to their invaluable contributions to our society.

So today, this moment, this time, belongs to all of us who believe their government should be, can be and must be People-driven, Accountable, Competent and Transparent (PACT). I wish to thank every one of you for your unending support and belief in the PACT Government. The initial uncertainty following the election a week ago, rather than being a paralysis, empowered democratic voices to be expressed in many forms and showed the community spirit that creates country.

As noted earlier though, the campaign and the uncertainty of government is over and the songs, memes, posts, photos, dances and rants that filled up our social media space during the campaign and shortly thereafter, must now cease.

We must always ensure, ladies and gentlemen, that our behaviour reflects dignity and respect even for those we may disagree with and this, this ladies and gentlemen, contributes positively to our national discourse. Fifty people stood in this election, and only 19 could be successful. The independent candidates won the larger share of the vote; but most importantly than the larger share of the votes is the knowledge that despite our policy differences, we are united in our desire to make a positive difference to the communities we serve. Public service is still a noble cause, and I pay tribute to those who have served, those who are currently serving and those who yet to serve.

Over the past several months many of the independent candidates have been discussing our vision for a better socially, and economically fairer, Cayman. There are matters that can be addressed while protecting and promoting a strong and more diverse economy. We are not the only country dealing with socially corrosive issues like income inequality and wealth disparity, but we must work to find-together-the solutions for these problems, as that is the way to build stronger communities and a stronger country.

As independently minded as we all are, we share a common purpose: to uplift and better the lives of every Caymanian and those who call the Cayman Islands home. We chose to focus on the 95 per cent that we have in common, not the 5 percent in respect of which we differ. We chose to focus on what united us, as opposed to what divided us and the results are in today.

We have a Government that is led by independents. A Government that reflects the political will and wishes of our people; a Government that shows that despite the fact that we come from diverse backgrounds, like every Caymanian today and those that came before, we have the capacity to set aside our differences and work together to create a political community that will create a better Cayman and a better country.

I repeat, therefore, that it is my honour to be elected as Premier and to take us forward on with this new leadership, a leadership that will protect our greatest asset: you, our citizens; a leadership that will be kinder, yet unafraid to constructively address any vested interests that may be holding back our country. A leadership that will be creatively responsive to your daily concerns of rising inequality, stress on our quality of life, environmental concerns and rising cost of living.

A leadership, ladies and gentlemen, that will confront failure, liberate your aspirations and fight for opportunity for all; a leadership that will uphold our Constitution and promote the social and religious values that guide our islands; a leadership that will operate in the framework of good governance. A leadership that will collectively carve a path forward and work alongside the people to find employment and ensure affordable access to needed services.

This is our PACT to you, the people of the Cayman Islands, but as citizens, you too have responsibilities. We are only as strong as the weakest among us and our shared humanity must be the glue that continues to bind us together. (Clucking sound) Citizen chickens!

Over 180 nationalities, ladies and gentlemen, call the Cayman Islands home-and quite a few chickens.

[Laughter]

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: The uniqueness that this brings to our Island is largely responsible for our success, and we should not give a platform to division by focusing on skin colour, accent or whether we are Caymanian by birth, or by choice. We are one Cayman, ladies and gentlemen, and must continue to build on that foundation going forward.

The actions of many pioneering men and women have taken our Islands from ones that time forgot to the one that many want to share in its success story; but as with all foundations, we must not forget who built them and I would like to therefore congratulate the record number of five women who were elected to Parliament in this elections cycle.

[Applause]

The Premier, Hon. G. Wayne Panton: I am proud that we have four strong and capable females pledging to work with PACT and know that the compassion that they will bring, will serve as a blue-print of improving the working and daily lives of women, especially mothers. We know, ladies and gentlemen, that mothers are our first teachers, and as government, our job is to ensure that from cradle to grave we instil and provide that necessary pathway for life-long learning. Education remains the only route out of poverty and the cure for the many injustices committed in the name of ignorance.

Like many other nations, we too must confront our own ignorance on many issues. Our stance on the environment and limited regard for living more sustainably must be adjusted. Our need to over-consume, and our dependency on imported products must be reviewed. Our carbon footprint is too high. Our need is to quicken the pace towards clean, renewable energy, which is essential, as is our need to ensure that climate change resiliency measures are considered and implemented in everything we do. This, ladies and gentlemen, is an existential threat to our way of life. The loss of irreplaceable mangroves or the extinction of our marine life is a price too high to pay.

Each generation owes the next generation owes the next generation a moral duty to be good stewards of, and minimise as far as possible, any harm to this planet we all share. As a famous poem goes:

We build on foundations we did not lay,
We warm ourselves by fires we did not light.
We sit in the shade of trees we did not plant.
We drink from wells we did not dig.
We profit from persons we did not know.
We are ever bound in community.
May it always be so; this is as it should be.
Together we are more than any one person could be.
Together we can build across the generations.
Together we can renew our hope and faith in the life that is yet to unfold.
Together we can heed the call to a ministry of care and justice.
We are ever bound in community—
may it always be so.

May it also be so that we remember the fragility of our mental and physical health which was sorely tested during COVID. The fact that we are one of the few countries that has not had to go back into any form of lockdown speaks to our resilience, discipline and patience as a people, but when our borders reopen they will only be reopened when they are safe to do so. We cannot revert to the stress of worrying about being one medical or emergency from destitution or poverty. Access to good health care, ladies and gentlemen, is a human right and cannot be just for the privileged few.

Likewise, restoring our faith in the democratic process must also be a priority. There must be openness in the way Government business is done-that is the hallmark of good governance. You must not only be part of the process, but also know the actions being taken on your behalf or in your name.
Proverbs 22:1 remind us that,

"A good name is to be chosen
rather than great riches;
loving favour rather than silver and gold."

I can confidently say that every single member of the PACT Government will always choose to have your support and respect. I would like to say, ladies and gentlemen, that our best days are still ahead—our best life is still ahead.

Speaking of life, ladies and gentlemen, I want to take the opportunity to acknowledge a hugely significant day in the life of one of our virtually iconic and wonderful, Caymanian women: Ms. Ethel Ebanks of West Bay, who is celebrating her 103rd birthday today, so Happy Birthday again, Ms. Ethel. Of course it is also especially poignant that she shares her birthday with Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth. She likes to tell you that often, too, so I hope that I can get to see Ms. Ethel soon, and offer those birthday greetings in person.

In closing, ladies and gentlemen, and you will be relieved to hear me say "in closing", since it is (laughter) nearly dark, let me say that the Government that I am privileged and humbled to lead, is committed to serving you—the people—through strengthening our community one person at a time if necessary, because we recognise that community creates country and it will be our honour and privilege to represent all of the people and always put your interests first for love of you and love of country; so good evening, again; may God bless you all and may God continue to bless our beloved Cayman Islands.

[Applause]