



**RECORD OF THE MEETING
OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**HELD IN STANLEY
ON 31 JANUARY 2014**

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HELD IN STANLEY ON FRIDAY 31 JANUARY 2014**

The Speaker of the House
(Keith Biles, JP)

MEMBERS (Ex-Officio)

The Honourable Chief Executive
(Keith Padgett)

The Honourable Financial Secretary
(Nicola Granger)

Elected

The Honourable Janet (Jan) Lynda Cheek
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

The Honourable Roger Anthony Edwards
(Elected Member for Camp Constituency)

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

The Honourable Ian Hansen
(Elected Member for Camp Constituency)

The Honourable Michael James Poole
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

The Honourable Phyllis (Phyl) Mary Rendell MBE
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

The Honourable Gavin Phillip Short
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

PERSONS ENTITLED TO ATTEND

The Attorney General
(Mark David Lewis)

Commander British Forces South Atlantic Islands
(Air Commodore Russell La Forte CBE)

CLERK: Claudette Prior MBE

PRAYERS: Reverend Richard Hines

APOLOGIES: Overseas - The Honourable Michael Summers OBE
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

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**The Record of the meeting of Legislative Assembly
held on Friday 31 January 2014**

Prayers

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, I bid you good morning, and my now usual reminder please to turn off mobile phones, or at least make them silent.

Clerk of the Assembly

The election of the Deputy Speaker of the House.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, we now move to the election of the Deputy Speaker. Does anyone wish to propose a name or names for me please?

The Honourable Phyl Rendell MBE

I would like to propose Mr Speaker, Mr Anton Livermore.

The Honourable Jan Cheek

I would like to second that.

Mr Speaker

Thank you. Are there any other names? There are no other names. In this case, I declare that Anton Livermore is duly elected Deputy Speaker of this Assembly.

Clerk of the Assembly

Please cross the Bar of the House and take the Oaths.

Mr Anton Livermore

Oaths of Allegiance and Due Execution of Office for Deputy Speaker Mr Anton Livermore.

Mr Speaker

To mark your return to the House, the ties of the Assembly.

Clerk of the Assembly

Confirmation of the record of the Legislative Assembly held on the 12 December 2013.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, I have before me a record of our last meeting. Is it your wish that I sign this as a true record?

Honourable Members

Aye

Mr Speaker

For the sake of the record, and indeed since we are now being recorded in other formats in both video and audio, I would like to point out that the only official record of the proceedings of this House are the written ones.

Clerk of the Assembly

Papers to be laid on the table by the Honourable Chief Executive. Copies of subsidiary legislation published in the Falkland Islands Gazette since the last sitting of the Legislative Assembly and Laid on the Table pursuant to section 34(1) of the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance 1977.

- Payments on Account of Tax (Employees' Deductions) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The Honourable Chief Executive

Mr Speaker I hereby lay the aforementioned papers on the table.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Honourable Members, Mr Speaker, I would just like to say as we are being recorded, and people see legislation coming forward on Tax. I would just like to reaffirm that this is just a tidying up exercise, this is not new tax, and it is made with peoples' employers in mind, particularly to ensure that they deduct and do not charge people who are earning less than £15,000, MST. I would just like to say that.

Mr Speaker

Does any other Member wish to speak?

Clerk of the Assembly

Motion Number 1 of 2014 by the Honourable the Financial Secretary

That this House refers the on-going deliberations on the 2014/15 budget to a Select Committee on the Estimates for presentation to the Assembly in June 2014 and therefore for the Select Committee on the Estimates to be established at this time.

The Honourable Financial Secretary

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I propose this Motion today in order to commence the budget setting process for the 2014/15 financial year. As Honourable Members will be aware, for the last few years Budget Select Committee has been opened earlier than the historic time of year of May. This has enabled the extended budget cycle to take place in formal committee meetings rather than the informal meetings previously used. This has prevented repetition, to ensure that the extended time frame for the process was allowed, and decisions were taken with appropriate consideration. This year Executive Council approved the budget strategy principles, but referred this strategy to Budget Select Committee for further definition. I therefore recommend to the House that the Select Committee on the Estimates is opened at this time to enable early discussion to commence on the budget strategy, with a final report being presented to the June 2014 Assembly alongside the resulting Finance Bill and Appropriation Bill.

The Standing Orders provide that membership of the Select Committee is all Elected Members, the Chief Executive and the Financial Secretary and it is proposed that the Committee be chaired by the Honourable Roger Edwards. The purpose of the Select Committee on the Estimates will be to review the budget submissions from Government Officers, related fees and charges and capital requests in order to provide advice in the Finance Bill to be presented to Executive Council in June 2014.

Mr Speaker I beg to move that the Select Committee on the Estimates is established.

The Honourable Roger Edwards

I second the motion.

Mr Speaker

Thank you. Does any Honourable Member wish to speak to the Motion? Does any Member object to that Motion being passed? There is no objection, that Motion is therefore passed. The Select Committee can be established.

Clerk of the Assembly

Motion Number 2 of 2014 by the Honourable Michael Poole

This House believes that it is in the public interest for individual Members to indicate their initial views at the earliest opportunity, and prior to the final Budget deliberations, on the issue of Medical Services Tax and its possible abolition.

The Honourable Michael Poole

Thank you Mr Speaker. Honourable Members, it's quite a wordy Motion for really quite a simple concept. I personally feel that this Motion is useful for two reasons. Firstly, just to give the public a bit of background to how we got to the point we are currently at, and secondly, hopefully, for individual Members to express their views on the Medical Services Tax and what they currently feel about it. Just to talk through how we have come to this point. Clearly Medical Service Tax was a key campaign issue last November. It was discussed shortly after the election

in that we had asked the Financial Secretary at that point to look at ways that we could possibly remove Medical Services Tax. That work was done very quickly and very well. In December Executive Council reviewed some options for how that may be achieved, and looked at a few different alternatives to Medical Services Tax as well. It was decided by Executive Council at that point that it was sensible to look at Medical Services Tax in the whole budget process, so over the next couple of months as we start to get into that.

Medical Services Tax is clearly a very important issue. The projections show it raising roughly £9M over the next five years so in total terms about 3.5% of Government revenue, so it's probably one of the largest issues we will be looking at over the next few months. Some people may say, why bring this up at this point when it's going to be discussed in the budget round anyway, which generally will be public discussions. I feel it's useful to bring it now for a couple of reasons.

Firstly, I think it's useful for people to see where we stand today, and where our minds maybe changed during the budget process, either by colleagues or by officers input as well. I think that we all have personal objectives in terms of the budget, and hopefully, people will lay those out today. From my perspective, I would like to see Medical Services Tax removed and I would also like to see a budget that helps the lower earners in our community more than possibly previous budgets have. So that is a clear objective I go into the budget process with.

My argument for seeing Medical Services Tax removed has three elements to it:

Firstly I think the tax hurts those people that we want to help the most. It hurts lower earners, it hurts self employed people, and it particularly hurts small businesses as well. I think those folk would like to be given some support, so that is why I would like to see it go.

Secondly, I think there is also a community feeling that the tax was mis-sold to them. Not deliberately, I think it was just unfortunate that it was misrepresented slightly, and I think for that reason alone we should see the tax removed.

Finally, I believe that removing Medical Services Tax early on in this Government helps us to fill some campaign promises a number of us made, not all of us, but I think the majority. It also sends a signal to the public that this is a Government that is for helping lower earners, and is for helping businesses as well, something that I personally would like to be associated with. Quite rightly you may well ask whether we are willing to forgo this £9M in revenue over the next five years, and how we are going to bridge that gap. We are already in deficit, and clearly we do have quite a challenging budget situation, but I personally have some ideas of how we can do that. I won't go into those in any depth now, it's not the appropriate time, but those are the discussions we will be having in the budget cycle.

To conclude, whilst I clearly have a strong view that we do need to see Medical Services Tax removed, I understand there is a budget process in which to have these discussions. There is a chance, a small chance, that I will have my mind changed by my colleagues during those discussions. But, at the very least, I think it's in the

public interest that people know where we stand today, and they can see how our minds have been changed during that budget process.

Thank you Mr Speaker.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Mr Speaker, I second the Motion.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to support my Honourable colleague in this Motion. He is right. Medical Services Tax was a very emotive part of the campaign. People will know my views on Medical Services Tax. They will know I think it's a very unfair tax. It's unjust and it needs to be changed such that the majority of people do not pay it.

I am on Executive Council. I was persuaded by the Financial Secretary, as my Honourable Colleague on my right here has just said, that we should hold fire and not abolish Medical Services Tax straight away. We should wait and review it in the round during the Budget and that was logical, but I must say when I was reading out on the radio the summary of Executive Council, I almost choked on that, having made it very clear during my election campaign that one of my prime concerns was to get rid of Medical Services Tax. It was difficult to say, and I welcome this opportunity to tell the public that I am still committed to Medical Services Tax removal. I still believe it's an unfair tax, and I will be doing my best to make sure we abolish it or change things such that the vast majority of residents in the Islands do not pay this tax.

I think my Honourable colleague said it is unfair. It came in at a time when the Government of the day had to raise money as they were short of money. This Government, at the moment, is in a slightly different situation in that we are not struggling to balance the books as they were. There was a need from that previous Government to raise tax, but I think choosing Medical Services Tax was wrong. The natural way of raising more money for a Government is to adjust the income tax. No one likes income tax, and it was William Pitt The Younger, who introduced it to raise money for the Napoleonic Wars and then scrapped it after the Napoleonic Wars but somehow it crept back in. It's a longstanding way of Government to raise funds and to me the Government of the day should have used that. Now, perhaps, the fact of having to raise Income Tax levels by 1, 2 or even 3% was unpalatable and they chose to introduce it for whatever reason. Only those people who were on the Government at the time can really tell us why they chose Medical Services Tax, but it was a flawed decision. It meant that the poorest members of our society pay tax from the first pound they earn which is not would have happened had Income Tax levels been increased.

I hope to remove this tax during the Budget round and if not remove the tax, then actually take away the legislation. There are different ways, and as you are aware we have already introduced a threshold on Medical Services Tax which applies to Income Tax, whereas the poorer members of society do not pay Income Tax until they reach a threshold. The threshold is going to be £15,000 and we have now introduced that

same threshold for Medical Services Tax so you will not pay Medical Services Tax until you have earned £15,000, from the beginning of this tax year.

Our options apart from just abolishing the Medical Services Tax completely is to increase that threshold even more from £15,000 to maybe £40,000, £50,000 and that would mean the vast majority of residents would not pay Medical Services Tax. There are different ways to attack the problem but I hope during the Budget session that enough members will support the need to either abolish it or change the structure such that the vast majority of people do not have to pay Medical Services Tax.

I support the Motion.

The Honourable Phyl Rendell MBE

Mr Speaker, I would like to speak to the Motion. I associate myself with the words of the Honourable Dr Barry Elsby. We did, in a recent Executive Council, listen to the Financial Secretary and agree to take into account her comments, and to look at this issue in the round at Budget Select Committee, rather than perhaps having a knee jerk reaction following the election. I agreed to that, but I am still strongly opposed to this tax even though the threshold has been raised to £15,000 and many of the less well off fall out of it. To me it's an unfair tax and it hits the employer. It's an employment tax and furthermore it particularly hits the self-employed so I am mindful to see it removed completely. In respect to my colleagues who may have different views and taking into account I am not making knee jerk reactions, I was willing to look at this in the Budget Select Committee, but I do commend my colleagues to consider it carefully. I hope we can remove this tax and look at gaining revenues from other sources.

I support the Motion.

The Honourable Ian Hansen

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I too have not changed my views on this tax. During the course of the last Budget procedure I was very keen to abolish it or set it to 0% and I haven't changed my views. However, I do recognise the fact that it is something that we have to discuss in the entire Budget process and I am content to do that. I am in agreement with my colleagues who have spoken that it would be nice to see it gone, but it has to be addressed in the round.

I support the motion.

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Mr Speaker, Honourable Colleagues, I for one am absolutely astounded to see this Motion come before the House. It was discussed in Gilbert House, it was discussed at Executive Council and an Executive Council decision was made and it is going to be discussed during the Budget discussions. Why is it now coming forward? I do wonder if someone is not perhaps being a little bullied into putting this Motion forward. Everyone knows what I said during my Election Manifesto. I said I don't want to do away with the Medical Services Tax but perhaps we can reduce the rate to

zero. I am happy for it to be discussed in the Budget Select Committee. That is where it should be discussed, in the round, and quite frankly I am astounded to see this Motion before the House this morning.

The Honourable Jan Cheek

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I agree we need to make this decision when we have all the facts. I agreed with the recent Executive Council decision that it should be looked at in the context of the whole budget. Even after raising the threshold to £15,000 to match that of the normal tax threshold, it still raises a substantial amount of revenue. If we were to totally remove it then, as the Honourable Michael Poole has said, we need to find a significant sum to substitute that. We are nowhere near balancing the budget at the moment without it, so not to look at it in the round would be irresponsible.

If the aim is to help the less well off then that has been partly achieved by raising the threshold, and one of the options we may look at is raising that threshold further. I was a bit disturbed at the thought of raising it to £40,000. It might look as though Members don't want to pay it.

In my personal opinion, the best way we can assist the less well off is to complete the work on what is a genuine living wage, and then match the minimum wage to that. Self-respecting people don't want concessions or handouts. They want to be able to earn a decent wage and pay their way. For the record, as a small business owner I have no objection at all to paying Medical Services Tax on behalf of my employees.

The Honourable Gavin Short

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have made no secret of my stance on Medical Services Tax during the election campaign. I don't have a problem paying it. I was paying it probably before some of the Honourable Members were born, and even then, I had no problems as a young person in paying it.

I agree we have already made moves to stop the lower paid having to pay this. There is further work to be done on it and that will be brought forward to the Budget Select Committee where it belongs. I almost have the feeling that this Motion is something like what happens in Europe, especially England, where they keep asking the same question different ways before they get the answer they want. This will be discussed in the Budget session. I still think we are going to have to be very careful in getting rid of this. As I said, I don't think the hospital is going to cost us less as time goes on, it is going to cost more and be careful what you do, or you are going to have to start taking money away from other things you really want to do, as well.

I look forward to the Budget session and we will see what comes out of that. I say that this is where this debate really belongs.

Mr Speaker

The Honourable Michael Poole, as Proposer you have an option to wind up your side of things.

The Honourable Michael Poole

Thank you Mr Speaker, Honourable Members.

Firstly, thank you to everybody for responding to this Motion. Clearly it is a discussion for the Budget process, and that's already the plan. We will look at it there, and I am glad to hear that at least some of my colleagues agree with my stance on it. It is going to be a challenge. I completely agree with The Honourable Jan Cheek that we can't afford just to see this tax go and not replace at least part of it, but I think sometimes we are a little bit conservative in our budgets. Government do have a healthy bank balance and I think we can afford to give something back to the community. This is an easy and simple way to do it, if we were to set Medical Services Tax to zero from an agreed date hopefully at some point this year. I appreciate everybody's views and I look forward to those discussions.

Thank you Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members the Motion before the House is "That this House believes that it is in the public interest for individual members to indicate their initial views at the earliest opportunity and prior to the final budget deliberations on the issue of Medical Services Tax and its possible abolition".

Would those in favour of that Motion please indicate. There are four and those against are two. That is carried four in favour of the Motion two against the Motion is therefore carried. Sorry, my apologies, and one abstention.

Clerk of the Assembly

Portfolio Reports

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, just before we start, I understand that you have voluntarily agreed to limit the length of these reports to seven minutes and for responses and questions to five minutes. Is that the wish of this House?

Honourable Members

It is.

Mr Speaker

Fine, we start with this process.

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Thank you Mr Speaker, Honourable Colleagues. The Falkland Islands Government is dithering, and has lawyers coming out of their ears. "What tosh!". I have been

reminded by Mr Speaker that I cannot be critical of the Judiciary, but I would encourage all Falkland Islanders to read the front page of the Penguin News.

I will start my presentation on my particular portfolios with the Treasury and Taxation Office. I will return to the Attorney General Chambers, Legal Services, Regulatory Services and the Registry later.

We have heard many times in this House during the recent Motions for Adjournment of the many problems in the Falklands Islands Government, and very often this is due to the lack of engagement with staff. I myself have asked how do you show leadership by emails. I have even referred to emails in rather stronger terms and been censored by Mr Speaker.

Today, I am only going to cover staff and staffing aspects of my portfolios because these portfolio reports come around every two months. I am extremely proud to be able to say that across my portfolios staff are engaged, encouraged and endeavour to attain higher professional qualification leading to higher positions and higher pay. Walking around the departments, I find a workforce who appears happy and enthusiastic. At the Treasury, some 70% of local staff are undertaking or shortly starting some form of formal qualifications including CAT Accounting Technicians, ACCA Accountant and Pension Management Institute Certificate. Succession plans are in place for the majority of contract roles. Donna Henry should be congratulated on passing her Diploma in Accounting and Business, so her job title has changed from Trainee Accountant to Accountant. She is now progressing on to do her formal professional accountancy exam.

Jody Aldridge has recently been recruited into a succession planned role to Senior Accounting Assistant to run the Pensions Office. Jody, Tracey and Kirsty have all passed this first Accounting Technician exam. Sherilee her GCSE Maths and Felicity her ECDL. Very well done to all of them keep up the good work.

Sadly, Claire Mitchell our Financial Accountant will soon be leaving us. She will be greatly missed in the Treasury as her husband will be by the Royal Falkland Islands Police. I wish you well for the future, Claire, and hope to see you back in the Islands in the not too distant future.

With Claire leaving we are now actively recruiting a Capital Accountant, a Financial Accountant and a Senior Assistant Taxation Officer.

The directorate have six-monthly “away-days” to discuss projects, issues, review achievements and work together on Business Plan Objectives. The Business Plan for this year will be driven by whole Directorate priorities rather than those just put forward by the Senior Management.

Finally, very shortly we will see the first student group meeting of the South Atlantic Islands Accountant Association and Mentoring Scheme, which provides a forum for advice and support for students from Government and the private sector.

I will now move onto the Attorney Generals’ Chambers. Our current Attorney General: Mark Lewis, will be leaving us shortly to be replaced by Peter Judge. You

will all have seen an article in Penguin News about Peter. Preparations are in hand to hand-over from Mark when he leaves in March.

Mark has given us tremendous leadership during his time here. Especially during the referendum, and more recently at the election. Thank you very much Mark. Ronnie our Legislative Drafter will be leaving in February after four years. Not only do we wish him well for the future, but thank him for all the hard work he has put in. Often with a smile on his face and a glint in his eye when faced with a wall of eight MLAs who regularly put forward nine opposing views. His replacement will be joining in March. Justine Hoskins who has been working on Child Safeguarding Policies and Practices ends her secondment in February, and we wish her well, and thank her for the excellent work that she has done.

Executive Council approved recruitment of a Law Commissioner to drive the revised Laws project forward, a job description is drafted and following evaluation will be advertised. We now have an experienced Prosecutor filling one of the existing lawyer posts. That is Simon Rowe who is, at least initially, working exclusively on prosecution, both on the day to day workload and working together with the Crown Prosecution Service secondee, the Police and the other stakeholders in improving prosecution practice and procedures. Normal staffing levels will be back to normal when a new lawyer is due to arrive in February to pick up and continue Child Safeguarding, Social Services work and other general duties.

Regulatory Services are still two staff short: a Technical Assistant and a Regulator despite three rounds of advertisements. Terrienne Ormond has been succession planned into the Deputy Director of Civil Aviation Post and congratulations are due because only yesterday she passed her FISO examination. With three papers she sat they were marked out at 94%, 100% and 100%. I believe that is the highest achievement in this examination by anyone in the Falklands. So congratulations to Terrienne. We wish her well as she continues her further examinations and professional qualifications.

Finally Mr Speaker, I will end by speaking about the Registry. This has been managed by Beth Dent on her own. It was previously staffed by two full time officers and I feel that a special note of thanks should be extended to Beth for the exceptional work she put in for both the Referendum and the General Election. Both of which went off without a hitch and made the News worldwide. Thank you Beth, and thank you Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker

Does any member wish to comment or raise a question upon that report?

The Honourable Phyl Rendell MBE

Mr Speaker, thank you very much for that report and it is really good to hear about staff attainment and achievements. I would just like to say how pleased we were in Executive Council on Wednesday to approve the position of Trainee Internal Auditor for the Treasury for two years. This was funded from existing resources, which didn't require new funds, and I think it's most satisfying to see the progression and planning

in the Treasury for Falkland Islanders to take on some of these key positions. That is really welcome

Turning to the Attorney General, we will have plenty of time to say thank you and so on. He is not leaving until March but I would like to just comment here that I think Mark has done us a fantastic service. There have been some very difficult times for him in the Attorney General's Chambers. I think with nearly everything we do these days there has to be legal advice given on everything, and it all seems to funnel through the Attorney General's Chambers. So thank you very much for working with us through some difficult issues, and some fun things too, and thanks for bringing Archery to the Falklands. I am sure that I will have the opportunity to say more about you before you go. Thank you.

Mr Speaker

Any other Member wishes to speak? No. We will move onto the next report by the Honourable Michael Poole.

The Honourable Michael Poole

Thank you Mr Speaker. Honourable Members, my portfolio is Policy and Public Diplomacy so it's quite wide ranging. It includes the Policy Unit, Environmental Planning Department and I also chair the Tourist Board at the moment and Public Diplomacy obviously as well. With these report being a new element to Assembly meetings I think it will develop over time how we approach these briefings. As with everybody's portfolio there is a lot going on. Lots of moving parts at the moment. It would be impractical to try and cover everything so I am really limiting myself to a couple of key areas at this stage.

I will begin by noting that Executive Council this week approved the Government's broad approach to Public Diplomacy for the next four years. We are committed to continuing the excellent work of previous Governments in this area, about getting our message out to a wider audience overseas, and inviting people in as well, to see what the Falklands is all about. I think a lot of it is really just a continuation of really what's gone before. There are a couple of key changes. Firstly, people will see over the next week or two advertisements in the Penguin News and in other areas inviting a wide range of the community to get involved in Public Diplomacy. To put their name forward, to be part of the list that will be held at Gilbert House to become involved either for overseas trips for with helping with visitors as well.

The second change to the strategy at a broad level is that, yes, we are still to get our message of self determination out to a wider audience. We are also looking at wider areas in terms of business interests, commercial interests generally, looking at creating educational links, that kind of thing, so it's really quite a broad programme and is not solely about getting that single message out.

The second area I would like to cover briefly is really the policy element of my portfolio responsibilities. We are currently updating the Islands Plan as some people may have heard. Some may roll their eyes at this, but I personally feel that it is fundamentally important document. It's a great mechanism for agreeing priorities as

a Government and getting them out to the public. The Islands Plan has been around for quite a number of years now in different formats and different looks and feels to it. I think that the broader approach we have agreed to the Islands Plan is that, yes, we need to look 10, 20 years on, and think a broad vision, but we also need a practical element to that. We have got four years as a Government and we need to try and achieve the things we want. So this final document that we hope to publish this year, hopefully before the 1st July, will contain some longer term aspirations, but also a practical focus that we can be held to, Government as well, so that the public can see that and hold us to account at the end of each year.

A piece of work that really links into the Islands Plan is that we have informally agreed that we should review the Economic Development Strategy for the Islands. The Policy Unit will be kicking that work off shortly. The Economic Development Strategy was only completed relatively recently, but we are now two or three years on. Things have changed. The oil industry is in a slightly different place. Other industries have moved on as well, and whilst I think there is a lot in the Economic Development Strategy that is still relevant and we should still be following, I think it's always worth refreshing that piece of work and that is something we intend to kick off shortly.

Finally, I would just like to thank the Environmental Planning Office for their work across a number of areas currently. Public consultation will shortly commence on some proposed changes to the Planning Ordinance. These changes include giving people the right to speak in Planning & Building Committees, and also to speak at Executive Council as well if there is an appeal, or if there is a need to. In addition some wording is to be included in the Ordinance giving the Falkland Islands Government the scope and the right to potentially introduce developer contributions and environmental impact assessments for certain types of development. This needs wide discussion, and I encourage people of the community to take a look at this once it is published, and to give input.

I would also commend the Environmental Planning Office for their recent move to remain open over occasional lunch hours and also later into the evening as well. They are not the only department that does this. I think it is really good practice to try and make themselves as accessible as possible to the general public and that is a really good step for them. Thanks to them for that.

On that positive note I shall wrap up.

Thank you Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker

Does any other Member wish to raise a question or comment?

The Honourable Phyl Rendell MBE

Thank you very much for that report. I found that very interesting, particularly on the public diplomacy front. I would very much welcome the approach to look for special advisors that might travel with us overseas. I think it is really critical that we spread

the load. I really don't feel that eight of us do justice to the amount of work that is required and I think we should be targeting all ages. I think that has been looked at previously by the Assembly looking at youngsters. I think we are looking for all ages across the spectrum of people that could contribute and accompany MLAs and go overseas.

I would just like to ask my Honourable Colleague when is that advertising process going to take place?

The Honourable Michael Poole

Thank you Mr Speaker. The advertisement should be in the Penguin News next week. Some of the paperwork has already gone out to, I believe, students, into the schools and a couple of local organisations. The intention is very much to advertise it publically but also send it through to organisations such as Chamber of Commerce, the Rural Business Association etc. I think it will be widely distributed from the end of next week.

Mr Speaker

Any other comments or questions?

No.

We move to the next report.

The Honourable Phyl Rendell MBE

My portfolios include Fisheries, Agriculture and Natural Resources Department and I am also going to comment on Falkland Islands Meat Company because Falkland Islands Meat Company has just kicked off its export season at the beginning of this month, and also I chair the Rural Development Strategy Steering Group, so I am going to address Rural Development as well.

Regarding Fisheries, currently applications for Illex licences have been processed. Applications exceeded the number of licences available which is very encouraging, and payment for licences is already underway and I am advised that we have received some £5.6 M for those licences, and we received that amount from 15 vessels so it's very encouraging. Of course, everyone is aware that Illex is subject to the climatic conditions and the oceanographic conditions so we are not there yet. We are hopeful that the squid swim into our zone and we can retain that money and there are no repayments, but we will have to see. The Director of Fisheries advises me that we are anticipating some more funds over and above that £5.6M, but that is the position we stand at currently.

There is always uncertainty over our Illex, and this could be mitigated somewhat if we could enter with Argentina into the South Atlantic Fisheries Commission process again. Up until 2005 these meetings were held very successfully on a technical level and we do regret that bi-lateral discussion and debate has gone away because of political reasons. I think we would like to make it clear that the Falkland Islands

Government and the Fisheries Department would very much welcome entering into those discussions at any time if it were possible to do so. It could happen now, we could get back to exchanging data. It is really a massive issue that we are not sharing data and protecting the whole of the fisheries in the South West Atlantic.

Falkland Island flagged fishing vessels are beginning to arrive now for the Loligo season, and in many cases, they are undergoing inspection by the Veterinary Section to ensure they comply with standards set for freezer factory fishing vessels.

Turning to ITQ, those who would have been listening to the last Executive Council round up would have heard that Executive Council have requested a review of the Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ) process or system. The Director of Fisheries is working on the Terms of Reference for that together with the Head of Policy, Jamie Fotheringham. We look forward to receiving those Terms of Reference and seeing that work going ahead. The fishing industry will very much be engaged in that. We look forward to having an analysis of the ITQ system which has been really active since around 2006 for some of the fisheries, and 2008 for other parts of the fishery.

The Fisheries Department also addresses marine issues and maritime issues, and there is ongoing work on maritime policies and legislation in conjunction with consultant Fishers Associates as part of the oil readiness review. A large piece of work being undertaken, and I believe there is a meeting about this in the coming week.

The Department of Natural Resources has a responsibility for Falkland Islands Meat Company in that it provides veterinary and meat hygiene inspector services. Falkland Islands Meat Company is “the abattoir”, for information of those who are listening. The Falkland Islands Meat Company started its export season in early January and there are a lot of people down there. People working extremely hard processing Falklands’ meat for export and the domestic market.

I visited the abattoir last Friday, and I was very impressed with the processes and how the teams are operating, and what a good spirit there was down at the abattoir. I was also very interested to see how added value has been made from the product; such as salting skins and the sale of skins, and also quite a lot of the offal is now being processed. Everything that is processed means we get more value from the stock. That is always important to try and ensure that this is successful.

Looking at Agriculture next, I went to the Ram & Fleece show at Fox Bay for the first time on the 28th December, and my colleagues the Honourable Roger Edwards and Ian Hansen were there too, so we had a little bit of a get together as Camp Elected Members. I was very impressed with the display of sheep and fleeces at the show, and I would like to congratulate Nigel and Keith Knight for the work that they put in over the years to keep that show going. It’s really part of the calendar now in December.

It was good too to see a lot of people from the East: farmers, and not only farmers, it’s a community event, coming across on the ferry and attending Fox Bay. It’s a great opportunity for farmers to share ideas and to compete against each other in competition.

The Department of Agriculture advises us that some farmers this season reported strong growth of forage crops, particularly forage oats. In other instances, horticulture and forage sweet crops are being impacted by the poor summer conditions, with crops losses reported due to frost and wind erosion. If you have got your own vegetable garden you will know about that because I think most peoples potatoes have been frosted at some point this month.

Furthermore, we have to be aware that we are impacted on by the global economy and that there is resurgent British economy and a struggling Australian economy which are interacting to place downward pressure on the Falkland Islands wool prices. Farmers are currently being urged to plan for income reductions in the order of 15-25% for the season's wool production, with potential for further reductions so it is helpful for the industry to have these warnings so we can plan and work around those.

A review by the Department of Agriculture on historic data shows that those farmers that changed their sheep genetics over the last 10 years have made a remarkable change really in their farming. Having retained their greasy fleece weights, they have also managed to reduce their clip in some cases to as much as three micron. This is equivalent to £1 to £3 per kilo if wool is reduced by that micron, so most encouraging to see that many farmers have gone through that genetic change and they have got that added value to their wool.

Many farmers are responding to Falkland Islands Meat Company's request for more beef, and a high quality of beef is going into the domestic market at present. We are not exporting beef, but certainly the beef in the shops is of considerably higher quality than it was four or five years ago, and most of the beef going into the retail market is under three years old. That is continuing and farmers are investing in finishing crops and so on to improve beef production. While mentioning beef, there was a national beef herd sale at Saladero on the weekend which was very encouraging. Farmers were buying Angus cattle with calves, and also bulls, and that spreads the genetics around the Islands more quickly and improves even quicker the quality of beef. The next sale at Saladero is on the 8th March which will be the National Stud Flock ram sale and we are expecting a good crowd of farmers to be present there.

Turning to the Rural Development Strategy, the steering group has been very active in the last few months trying to deliver the action plan that we are working to, and the co-ordinator Nuala Knight has been extremely active. We are now looking at recruiting a mechanic for Fox Bay to be based on the West for the West Falkland farmers, and we are also looking at an Energy Advisor post to advise on alternative energy.

We are nearing budget time and we have to start thinking ahead, so Nuala is now looking at what might be in our longer term three year action plan, and she is holding quite a few workshops. We will be having discussions with our Camp constituents at a public meeting in March when we go to Goose Green and Fox Bay. We will briefly be calling at Port Howard as well.

I would just like to ask my colleagues, the Honourable Members, that whenever they are working with their portfolios to always remember the Camp and the services that

those departments are providing, and that we don't forget that we are one country, and those services should be provided at high standards to every part of the Falklands.

Thank you.

The Honourable Jan Cheek

Firstly, just to thank the Honourable Phyl Rendell for the very interesting account of agricultural things. Going back to the fisheries information that she gave us, it's my understanding that what we used to call Loligo Gahi is being renamed so that it is not confused with other Loligo squid produced in other areas, and perhaps not of such fine quality as our own. Can she tell me whether marketing and information in the future will use the agreed new name? Has that new name been formally adopted?

The Honourable Phyl Rendell MBE

Thank you for that. That is an extremely important point. I couldn't answer you today if that has been made policy, but I certainly will bring that point up with the Department of Fisheries and give you a reply.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsbey

Mr Speaker, I too would like to thank my Honourable Colleague for her information, but I wonder if I can ask her a question related to Falkland Islands Meat Company. During the election campaign a man and wife who were pensioners came up to see me in the West Store and asked about the price of meat. They felt it had gone up an awful lot, and they were struggling to make ends meet because it was part of their staple diet. I wrote to the Manager of Falkland Islands Meat Company and asked him what had been the price increases over the last year. He told me that the price of meat, as sold to the public here, had increased by 40% over the last three years and the recent visit to the Chandlery shows me that it's cheaper to buy imported Uruguayan beef than it is to buy local beef. I wonder how my Honourable colleague would respond to the couple who were concerned about the price rises?

The Honourable Phyl Rendell MBE

Indeed, if you want better quality beef and not old eight and nine year old cattle, if you want beef that is under three years and of high quality, unfortunately the price does have to go up. We are trying very hard to reduce the subsidy that has been paid in some years, not every year, to Falkland Islands Meat Company. To do so we have to look at the actual cost of the domestic kill and try to meet the sales price with the cost price, so unfortunately, yes, some cuts of beef, I am told by the General Manager John Ferguson, have increased as much as 40%. I am told that in actual fact beef has reduced in price, sorry beef mince, has reduced in price, and certain cuts have certainly not risen that much, so it depends on the cut. I think it's a matter of choice. If we are to, as I say, improve standards of the meat and have a regular standard in the shops, and not have a good cut one week and an old cut, not so tasty, the other week so customers don't have that confidence in the product, we have to pay for it. Farmers have to grow crops or find extra fodder to bring their animal up to standards now for Falkland Islands Meat Company, and that costs money. They won't be in the

business if they cannot make a little bit of money from it, so I think it's an inevitable issue. There are other ways, I guess, for people on lower incomes. They can still access meat directly from the farms. I take the Honourable Dr Barry Elsby's point about the fact that possibly, in cases, some of our beef might be more expensive than that imported from Uruguay, but it is a fresh produce you are buying. A frozen one if it comes from Uruguay. I think that is going to be the case with many things. We cannot compete with the mass scale of the beef industry in Uruguay or Brazil or wherever. I think you will probably find the same thing with potatoes and carrots if produced locally. You are buying and paying for something that is a fresh product that has probably been grown organically.

Mr Speaker

Does any other member wish to comment?

The Honourable Gavin Short

I thank the Honourable Lady for her report. Can I just ask one question please before I forget. Did I understand you correctly when you said that the domestic meat market must wash its face, in other words break even and pay its own way, whilst we continue to subsidise the world market?

The Honourable Phyl Rendell MBE

I didn't actually say that. I said that we should be endeavouring to make the domestic meat market wash its face as well as the export market. We don't want to subsidise either of them if we can help it. We are not looking at making money from the domestic market when the export market is being subsidised. I think Falkland Islands Meat Company is looking at everything in the round, and trying hard to make and cost out what it costs to process each carcass, and has to charge accordingly. It's a difficult situation when globally prices can suddenly collapse like they did last year, but I am told that prices are looking better overseas.

The Honourable Gavin Short

I thank the Honourable Lady for clarifying that. I wasn't quite sure if I had heard correctly or not, I do apologise. I actually enjoyed your report so I thank you very much for that, especially the fisheries, obviously. Being post holder last time I actually have quite a liking for the old Fisheries Department, and I agree, when it comes to Illex I am afraid it normally is feast or famine. There was a time of the year I actually used to find my nervous system going slightly wrong, and becoming slightly more cantankerous than normal, because you just did not know what was going to happen.

I fully concur with your thoughts and expressions about the South Atlantic Fisheries Commission. It is, as I have said in this House before, almost criminal that some fish stocks are being driven to the point of extinction simply because our neighbours wish to make a political point. They aren't going to hurt us, it's those poor beasties, as I call them, that are going to be really hurting, and it has become history I guess. It is rather hard when I believe the Government or the department in Argentina that

accepts the total allowable catches, don't actually listen to their own scientists anyway. We are probably on a highway to nowhere, but we must keep trying for the sake of sanity to try and get some sort of agreement and control over some of those fish stocks.

I did have one question please though. The Grenadier fishery, do you know how close we may be to finally getting that licensed?

The Honourable Phyl Rendell MBE

I am afraid I don't know where we are with the Grenadier, but I will certainly get that information for you from the Director.

The Honourable Ian Hansen

Thank you Mr Speaker. I will just very briefly touch upon a couple of things.

I would like to thank the Honourable Phyl Rendell for her report, and just to add to the discussion on Falkland Islands Meat Company, I think great credit does go to Falklands Islands Meat Company and also the continued commitment of farmers. Without that commitment there wouldn't be the Falkland Islands Meat Company. We do have to remember, and the Honourable Phyl Rendell did touch upon it, that the cost of bringing animals up to standard to go to the abattoir is quite considerable to famers. Also the value of new season lamb and old season lamb and old wethers is also part of a conscious business decision farmers have to make on a daily basis when they are deciding on whether to look at wool prices and prices of meat. It can happen on good years that a good hogget or good shearling will continue year after year to produce a good fleece and that may be up to £20 per annum per fleece. Once it goes to the abattoir, you've lost that.

The other thing, if I could just perhaps have a point of clarification on the Rural Development Strategy, you spoke about the alternative Energy Advisor and I am correct, am I not, in thinking that that advisor is not just for the Camp but is for the whole of the Islands

The Honourable Phyl Rendell MBE

Just for clarity, I think the Rural Development Strategy Steering Group came up with the concept, and I believe we are now looking at the Director of Public Works taking on the role for recruitment for that post, and they will give advice not only to the Camp but to Stanley residents as well.

Mr Speaker

Any other comments or questions? No.

The Honourable Gavin Short

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as is normal, the Public Works Department comes in last. We don't actually take this as a slight, we are a department that doesn't like

attracting attention to ourselves because normally if there is attention being directed towards us it means something is going wrong somewhere.

This is my first ever formal report on the Public Works Department in this House. When the portfolios were handed out I happily took the PWD. It may not be seen as being sexy by some, but it is. We are a large department, involved in nearly all facets of life here in the Falklands in one way or another. Indeed, if you are born here, live your life and end your days here you will have contact with us, probably without even realising it, just about every day of your life.

In the time given, I cannot hope to cover everything and will attempt to do department specific reports as time goes by. This time I will keep it general and give some snippets about what has been happening out and about.

As a department we are feeling the effects of the flux that is taking place in the labour markets here. We only had about enough people to do what we were tasked with when we had a full complement of staff. As of today, we are about 20 people short across the Directorate. Just about every department is affected in one way or another, some severely, some less so, but it is most certainly shaping what we can and can't do.

The Camp Road Gangs are badly affected. This has had the meaning that the re-aligning work on the West Falklands will have to be deferred, and everyone but two people pulled back onto the East to do works on the Port Louis section.

The Water Section is also suffering quite badly from labour shortages which are putting pressure on those who remain. Should we have a major mains fail we do have a Plan B and will be able to rectify any faults. Tenders are being sorted through as I speak for the preparation of the impound for the new water source. We had intended to lay the pipelines from that impound ourselves, but due to a lack of manpower this is now having to be contracted out. We are very much in the hands of being able to find somebody who can do that. Likewise the new main to Gordon Lines is also affected and somewhat delayed, but given the slippage in having rigs etc here, we should still have it in place before the next oil exploration round kicks off.

As things stand, we still have enough people to do asphaltting this season. Works have, I believe, already started on laying curbs and the like on the piece of road up to Mink Park and it will be black topped shortly after those works are finished. Other works to be done by the black top gang will include a small section of the car park by the Fire Station and further works up on the Sapper Hill housing development.

The Power and Electrical section soldiers on. Again, they are short staffed. Pressures on them are mounting as the low voltage system in Stanley ages, more houses require connection to the main grid, the power system is pushed ever further away, if you like, from the centre of Stanley etc. I believe colleagues are now persuaded of the need for a new power station to be designed, built and commissioned, so I look forward to seeing that being put into the submissions for the Capital Budget this year. We have a team from Enercon here at the moment in connection with the MPA wind farm. Foundations are all but finished, cabling is in, and we hope that the towers/generators themselves will be here soon, if all goes well.

We are world leaders in the production and utilisation of wind power. I am happy to report that Glenn Ross is at present out of the Islands on Ascension, attending a forum on wind power that involves the Atlantic Islands. There are plans in the future, I believe, to visit another country to disseminate his expertise. We should be truly thankful that we have such talented people here in the Falklands.

I am happy to report to this House that the new primary crusher is at Mare Harbour, and we will now finalise arrangements and timing for the engineer to come down and commission it. This will obviously strengthen our position in terms of both potential output, but also in providing backup in the event of the existing primary crusher suffering a major failure, not that we are planning one. Although certainly given the amount of work and the hammering it got the year before last I was expecting it to probably give in at any stage. Thanks to the dedication to the people out at the quarry, I think that keeps that thing ticking along nicely. Again, it was one of the areas that we were one machine deep. If that failed, things would have got rather serious.

The new mobile home park is a “work in progress”, with a certain number of cabins on site and occupied. The idea is that this site will be made up of owner/occupier cabins, owner/rented units and of course Falkland Islands Government/Falkland Islands Meat Company units. There have already been people expressing an interest in placing cabins down there, and we hope to have adverts out on the radio and Penguin News regarding how to apply for a plot etc. This should be happening in February.

Although, for what I think are obvious reasons, I do not sit on the Housing Committee, I do very much keep an eye on housing needs, and it is fair to say that we do have a crisis both in housing incoming contract officers and especially local people at the moment. The new housing development up on Sappers Hill should see the first houses coming on line in April, and the completion date for all being around July/August time. This should cater for the immediate needs, but we are very much aware that there will be a requirement for more housing to give us some slack. To this end, we will be bringing a paper with a proposal for possibly 30 additional houses to Honourable Members as soon as we can. I would ask Honourable Members to look favourably upon these proposals. Otherwise, we can almost certainly say that we are going to see another crisis and shortages again, especially for our own people.

I would certainly like to pay tribute to the Housing Officer. It’s never the nicest of jobs, but at the moment it must be truly hideous.

Work on Stanley roads will start with re-surfacing the section of Ross Road from the West Store junction up to Villiers Street, and I believe that is due to start in April or May, if all goes well.

Finally in this rather bitty and brief report, I will return thought to the matter of our denuded labour force before sitting down. We have to make sure somehow that we either backfill posts that are vacant or find other ways of making sure that works get done.

Yesterday afternoon MLA Rendell and myself met with the Chief Executive, Director Public Works and Director of Human Resources to start a process to examine ways of

getting labour into the Falklands to backfill posts, so that I hope, come next Summer, we can make meaningful progress again, especially on the Camp tracks.

Mr Speaker, I thank you.

Mr Speaker

Does any Member wish to comment, any questions?

The Honourable Jan Cheek

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, just a brief question. You mentioned more than once the number of vacancies within the department. Unless I have missed something I don't see a list of 20 Public Works Department vacancies in Penguin News. Perhaps they should be there every week and everywhere else until they are filled. It's a bit dangerous to make the assumption because you think there are no electricians or plumbers, or whatever the unfilled post is, in the Island. You never know who came on the last plane as a spouse or partner of a contract officer, or for some other reason. I just wonder if, apart from the other problems that I am aware of in terms of retention and recruiting staff, whether perhaps the department isn't being quite pro-active enough?

Thank you.

The Honourable Gavin Short

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank the Honourable Jan Cheek for that suggestion, and it is one I will happily take back and ask at this time.

The Honourable Ian Hansen

Thank you Mr Speaker. I was very pleased to hear the Honourable Gavin Short's closing remarks about the meeting yesterday, and the possibility of backfilling posts or backfilling jobs that need to be done. As of course we are all well aware of what happened on the West roads just recently where there wasn't enough, and I know he doesn't like the word, but not enough resource, enough labour to continue with the programme, and therefore the programme has been slipped by a full year I believe. So I was very, very, pleased to hear that timely remark.

Thank you.

The Honourable Gavin Short

I thank the Honourable Ian Hansen for those remarks. I am afraid I actually find it embarrassing that we cannot complete those works on the West. I have yet to set foot on the West. I shall be there in March for my world tour of the West roads. I am at a disadvantage, as I have not seen the section of road that is being spoken about, but from what everyone tells me it is an appalling and dangerous piece of road and there is going to be an accident. It is tragic and it is embarrassing that we just did not get it done this year. Also I think there is some doubt as to whether we can actually finish

the work on the Port Louis section as well, simply because of timing and lack of people. We really have to get our act together and make sure we have enough people for next season.

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was going to raise the Camp tracks in my Motion for Adjournment, but as it's being discussed, I will raise it now.

I was very saddened to hear the removal of the West Falkland road gang, and the stopping of the improvement works on Wall Stream and so on. It is a very dangerous track, and tracks in general are not getting the attention that is needed to improve them. We are barely holding our own, if indeed we are. It is a sad note that we have not had a Transport Advisory Committee since about last August. I would urge that that Committee meets early and gets some long term plan and forwards the appropriate funds request to the Budget Select Committee so that it can be taken properly into account. I think we are failing Camp in this respect and whatever we can do I would urge the Public Works Department Transport Advisory Committee to hold an early meeting and get those funds rounded up.

The other thing that I was appalled about was the removal of the road gang, is that it first had to come from the cook to the road gang on West Falkland. When I queried the portfolio holder as to if this was true or not, not only was he not able to give an answer, but took several days, and I find that quite staggering. Perhaps the portfolio holder could actually advise us when the Transport Advisory Committee will be held, long term planning will be done, appropriate funding will be put forward and perhaps the reasons to why the head of Public Works Department did not know that the road gang was being withdrawn.

The Honourable Gavin Short

Yes, it is slightly embarrassing that I was not in the picture as to the change in tack on roads. Transport Advisory Committee: I have been urging that we have a meeting as soon as possible because I am a new boy on that Committee. There are also a lot of things I want to see on that Committee. The first thing is the fundamental question: is Transport Advisory Committee doing what it was set up to do? I have some doubts about that. I think there has to be an integrated approach to transport in the Falklands, not just road, not just ferry, they are all interconnected as well as FIGAS. I do want a meeting of that Committee as soon as possible, and as I say, I do want us to start asking ourselves the fundamental question: are we doing what we were set up to do?

Mr Speaker

Does any other member wish to comment?

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my Honourable colleague Gavin Short raises some very interesting points. I think we know there is a shortage of labour in the

Islands and that Government is losing people to the private sector because they are paying a little bit more money. You can't blame people for that. The fundamental problem is that we are not able to complete the Capital works programmes we want to do because of a shortage of labour. Falkland Islands Meat Company solution to a period of intense activity is to import a group of people from another country, they work for the season, and then they go home. Does my Honourable Colleague think that recruiting a road gang say from South America just for the Summer season to really crack on and do the things he has talked about would be a suitable way forward?

The Honourable Gavin Short

I thank the Honourable Dr Barry Elsbey for that. Did you have a listening device stationed in the Chief Executive's Office? This was exactly what we were talking about yesterday. I am of the opinion it can be done very easily and indeed should be done.

Mr Speaker

Any other Members wish to speak? No.

Clerk of the Assembly

Motion for Adjournment.

The Honourable Chief Executive

I bid to move that this House stands adjourned *Sine Die*.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, I understand that it is your wish that speeches are limited to three minutes in this section. Is that the case? I am seeing lots of no's. To the nearest half an hour perhaps? We will proceed on that basis.

Who wishes to speak?

The Honourable Gavin Short

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was actually going to speak on this very subject. As I understand it the working group did look at the rules governing this House and perhaps how we could modernise them and make them jazzier, and there was what I thought an informal report back. There are parts of that report I do not like and I would like to see it actually debated in this House because at the moment everything is once again behind closed doors. I would like to see it opened up, debated in this House and we will take it from there.

Believe it or not Mr Speaker I do not have anything else to say for the Motion of Adjournment, so thank you.

The Honourable Phyl Rendell MBE

In rising to support the Motion Mr Speaker I just wanted to touch on what has now become quite a topical subject. We are just on the cusp of starting the Government Budget process: the 2014/15 budget, and Directors I think are submitting their budget proposals as we speak, and I know every year it is a challenging time for MLAs. This is going to be my first experience of being on the other side, having to make difficult decisions, but I think they are going to be particularly difficult this year. I think there are a lot of expectations out there as there always are following an election. Also following some windfall funds from oil exploration, and there is a long list of things that our constituents want to see happen. I think we will have some very difficult discussions during Budget Select Committee as to what we can achieve and what we can't achieve, and I am certain that some things will get pushed into the long grass. I am pleased to see that we are working on what we are calling a National Infrastructure Plan which will set out, over potentially 20 years, the various projects that we address and feel should be completed in the Falklands. I think that when we share that with the public they will see that their project has not been forgotten, but that it might not have had the priority that they would like it to have, but it is still there, and it will happen in due course, but we really can't get everything done in the life of this Assembly.

What concerns me is that we may well approve funding for quite an ambitious capital budget, but as my Honourable Gavin Short and my Honourable Roger Edwards pointed out, if we don't have the people to carry out the works it's a somewhat redundant exercise. This is not new to the Falklands. I can recall in years gone by when we have had a very ambitious Capital budget and we haven't been able to achieve it so I think we have got to be realistic about it. We will have to look at ways of achieving our priorities, and I am very disappointed to hear from the Honourable Gavin Short having consolidated the road gang to the East to complete the Port Louis works, which is bad enough that we are not able to carry on, on the West. I am very disappointed to hear there may not be enough people to even complete that piece of work, and that really is disappointing when the funds are there and available.

I think the general public will see some changes here. We need to outsource, we need to prioritise, we need to give companies longer contracts so they have the confidence to buy the machinery and do these projects for us, perhaps not just one year contracts. We also have to look at bringing in a workforce. I believe when Fairclough Miller built the hospital after the fire, that was very much: a gang came in, built the hospital and left. I know the cost had to be made greater by doing so, but at least we got the project done. We have been there, done it before. I think we need to look at this again to move these projects forward.

I think we will be guided by officers on how we might achieve our objectives.

Mr Speaker, I support the Motion.

The Honourable Ian Hansen

Thank you Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in rising to support the Motion for Adjournment I am still in a slight state of shock in the length of the Honourable Gavin Short's speech.

I think the format that we have just seen of portfolio holders reporting to this House is a good format, I think it has worked well, and it is my turn at the next Assembly, and I think it gives the general public a much better idea of the size of the portfolios and the involvement of Members.

As I say, it is my turn at the next Assembly so I won't speak about my portfolio other than to just mention the privatisation of the Information Technology Department recently. I would very much like to take this opportunity to thank the staff who have been moved to other departments. They have worked there for many, many years and even though perhaps some of those relocations aren't ideal for them, I would like to thank them very much for all the work they have done there.

I was very privileged to be invited on Sunday last to Liberty Lodge to celebrate the 5th anniversary of its opening. This is one of the things that I think Falklands Islands Government, along with veterans from '82, has been a great achievement and I think it has been a huge success. As I say, I was very privileged to be invited, and I would like to thank Tony Martin and "Smokey" Cole for that invitation.

And finally Mr Speaker, I would like to welcome the Deputy Speaker to this House.

I support the Motion.

The Honourable Michael Poole

Thank you Mr Speaker. Firstly I would just like to echo the Honourable Ian Hansen's sentiments regarding the Information Technology Department, and our thanks to the team there who have now moved onto different fields.

I would also like to thank you Mr Speaker and the Clerk of the Assembly for the work that has been done with FITV over recent weeks and months in getting this meeting televised. It's a positive step and thank you very much to everybody who has been involved in that.

Having been inspired by a recent article in the Penguin News, I took an hour last weekend to write a hundred year vision for the Falkland Islands. I certainly won't be sharing it widely, it was just a bit of fun and quite poorly written, but it does make you think about the place and how we are structured, and what life is like down here. With the recently cancelled visit from Members of the UK Parliament, I think we regularly should stand up and thank the UK Government for their unequivocal support to the Falkland Islands and Parliamentarians in particular. It is great to see the Falkland Islands Government Representative here in the Chamber this morning, and I would like to thank her and her team in London that do such excellent work in working with the Parliament to get our message across and make sure we have got that broad across parties. So, thanks to them.

Mr Speaker, I support the Motion.

The Honourable Jan Cheek

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I too, like the Honourable Gavin Short, was a little disturbed by the assumption that we could change Standing Rules and Orders of this Assembly without formal decision of the House, for example by putting a new time limit on adjournment speeches. It doesn't affect me because I am always brief, but it may be thought to infringe the freedom of speech of those who wish to speak for longer, and who might range widely through a whole lot of issues. The other changes fit into existing Orders and Members may encourage others to speak for a shorter period, but at present they are not bound to do so.

I wanted to use this forum as well as I have already used my column in Penguin News, to remind members of the public that for those who want a more detailed discussion than they can have at a public meeting where many people want to speak, with one or two members and away from cameras and microphones, they can do so each Thursday afternoon. The names of the two members available will be in Penguin News each week. We only had one taker yesterday, but we hope interest will grow.

Finally, I would like to endorse what the Honourable Michael Poole said about what a pleasure it is to see our London Representative Sukey Cameron in the audience, and obviously, we much appreciate all the work done in London on our behalf, and I would like not to forget the regular praise that we hear for the care and attention given to medical patients overseas and the great help they get from that office on flight bookings and other matters.

I support the Motion.

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Mr Speaker, obviously getting to speak last in front of the television cameras is very important. I too welcome Sukey to the House and it is sad that she is not accompanied by the MPs who were due to come down. I also welcome Anton Livermore to post as Deputy Speaker.

I welcome the television cameras into this House, but do you know already this morning I have noticed there has been a slight shift and a change in the way some members have responded to those cameras. I am pleased that we have passed the Motion for the Budget Select Committee to get it up and running. We have a huge task ahead of us to match priorities with funds available. I know that meetings with Government at Goose Green, and on the West at Fox Bay with David Smethurst, has increased both the length of the wish list and possibly peoples' expectations. I went to one meeting where we assumed that items were critical, essential or a wish, and the essential items alone were something three times the annual budget. That was at one meeting, so goodness knows what else the other meetings were like. I really do believe that the figure quoted from me in Penguin News this morning of 1057 different priorities on the list, is probably about right. It could be a long hard hike to satisfy all Member's wants and wishes, and we will have to be extremely careful not to spend money we do not yet have.

We have seen little movement regarding fuel stocks, petrol, gas and kerosene on West Falkland, and I look forward to the return of Simon Fletcher and to hear the outcomes of his discussions and deliberations with Stanley Services. Hopefully, we can get something underway now Simon is back.

I was going to mention roads, but I have already done so, so I will not repeat that.

I would now call upon the Nation to assist with the economy of the Falkland Islands. It's a bit off the wall, but during my walk around the Treasury the other day I discovered that to produce a penny, it costs three and a half pence, and I would assume to produce a tuppenny bit would be greatly in excess of two pence. I would ask that everyone look out their coppers, their pennies, their tuppences and bring them back into circulation, rather than leaving them on the sideboard like I tend to do. I have a whole jar of pennies and tuppences, and it's time I bought them back into circulation and I would urge the rest of the population to do the same.

Mr Speaker, I support the Motion for adjournment.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have just had visions of that pot of tuppences and pennies on your mantle piece. I thought that was your pension fund.

I really want to touch on Safeguarding issues regarding children, but before that I would just like to respond to something the Honourable Roger Edwards said in response to the Motion proposed by my Honourable colleague Michael Poole and seconded by myself. The Honourable Roger Edwards seemed somewhat shocked that we should be talking about such things, and suggested either the Honourable Michael Poole or myself had been bullied into doing this. I do not share his concerns. I certainly was not bullied. I cannot speak for the Honourable Michael Poole. The reason I wanted to debate it in the House now is so that the public are aware why we did something in Executive Council that seemed to go against what many of us wished and supported during the Election campaign.

I would just like to talk on Child Safeguarding for two reasons really.

One, because my Honourable Colleague the Honourable Michael Summers, is out of the Islands at the moment. As many people know, we are going to have, instead of a monthly changeover of chair within the MLAs, we are now having a three month chair and each chair is encouraged to take up an activity, to take up something they wish to push forward in that three months. The Honourable Mike Summers very much wants to push forward Safeguarding, as do I, so it's an opportunity for me to speak on his behalf and my behalf today. Safeguarding, as I see it, is safeguarding our children against abuse and as a society we have been perhaps, well not perhaps, we have been very slow in recognising the problem that lay within the Islands. We always used to believe our children were safe, there were no dangers, they could go out and play without any concern. They still can, but we now see the problems that have been lurking within our society, and we see that by the number of men who are in prison at the moment for offences against children. That is not the end of it. There are more cases to follow.

What we don't see is the harm that those men did to the children, and I think as a society we have to respond to that. We can't just ignore it anymore. We asked for an organisation: the Lucy Faithful Organisation, to come down and help us decide how to address the problems, to see what sort of problems there were in the Islands that have lead to this. The report was a very good one, it is a public document. It didn't say we were an awful society it said we were an average society, and that most societies have these sorts of problems lurking away. What they did say was that we as a society did not have the robust organisations in place to recognise and to deal with this abuse before it became a serious matter. So the Government has taken very much on board the recommendations from the Lucy Faithful Report. We have increased the capacity of the Police to respond. We have altered the way the Social Services is structured, and have strengthened that so we can help to prevent this, and also help those people who have been abused. We are introducing an updated Children's Ordinance and we have organised a Safeguarding Board to try to pull all these strands together.

The latest Safeguarding Board has recommended that we start a publicity campaign and we develop publicity to help not only children, but also their parents and society as a whole, so that we can better understand where the dangers lie. We have probably all thought in the past of a child being picked up by someone in a Landrover and taken away, and that still happens. That "spinning" attitude that some people have, where older men wait to take out younger underage girls, still happens. But much more the danger lies with texting or sexting, where people are persuaded to send compromising pictures over the internet to someone else, and before you know it that child is drawn into a situation they don't know how to handle. They are threatened with exposure if they don't go to the next step. The publicity campaign we intend to run is to inform the parents, inform children how to say no and how to ask for help. The thing that came up that surprised me was sleepovers. We all think sleepovers are part and parcel of growing up, but the police are very worried that sleepovers, in many cases, happen at a time when children are perhaps not supervised by their parents in the use of the internet or their mobile phones, their smart phones, and at a time when the internet is free. There seems to be some dangers that children are accessing the free internet when both their parents are asleep, and also when it is free so the parents don't notice the cost. We are looking as much as we can across all these areas to try to protect our children.

I have been asked with my Education hat on to act as a sort of a Child's Champion. By that I mean to look at all departments and say: "OK, your department is doing something, but have you thought about how that might affect our children", and to think about making sure that nothing we do across Government puts our children at risk.

As I said at the very beginning, the Honourable Mike Summers will be using his three months as a Chair to raise these issues, to push forward the Safeguarding issues that we know exist there, and I fully support him in that and I am sure all Members, indeed I think the whole country, will join with me in that.

Finally, I would like to echo one of my Honourable colleagues said earlier that we owe a debt of thanks to Justine Hoskins who was seconded to work in the Attorney General's Department to help us with the new Children's Ordinance and to help to

guide us in the other ways that we need to change to help protect our children. She is due to leave soon, but I would like to express all our thanks to her for all the good work she has done.

I support the Motion, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker

The House is adjourned accordingly.