



Hansard No. 4

of the

18th Parliament

Monday, 7th April 2025



MONTSERRAT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Meeting No. 4 of the 18th Parliament
Monday, 7th April 2025 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room, Cultural Centre, Little Bay

ORDER OF THE DAY

1. Prayers
2. Welcome Remarks by The Honourable Speaker
3. Address by Her Excellency the Governor
4. Address by The Honourable Premier
5. Address by The Honourable Leader of The Opposition
6. Adjournment

**MONTSERRAT
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY MEETING**

**Minutes No. 4 of the 18th Parliament
Held on Monday, April 7, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room, Montserrat Cultural Centre, Little Bay**

PRESENT:

Honourable Marjorie Smith	Speaker
Honourable Reuben Meade	Premier/Minister of Finance & Economic Management
Honourable Veronica Dorsette-Hector	Deputy Premier & Minister of Buildings, Utilities, Infrastructure, Labour, Transportation, Energy, & Ecclesiastic Affairs
Honourable Ingrid Buffonge	Minister for Education, Health, & Social Services
Honourable John P Osborne	Minister for Agriculture, Land, Housing, Environment, Youth Affairs & Sports
Honourable Crenston Buffonge	Parliamentary Secretary
Honourable Dwayne Hixon	Parliamentary Secretary
Honourable Paul Lewis	Leader of the Opposition
Honourable Donaldson Romeo	Opposition Member of Parliament
Honourable Sheree Jemmotte-Rodney	Attorney General
Honourable Kenya Lee	Financial Secretary (Ag)

ABSENT:

Honourable Nyota Mulcare	Opposition Member of Parliament
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1. PRAYERS

Fr. Fidelis Armin said the prayer.

Madam Speaker said:

Good morning, everyone. Before we proceed any further with the business of today, I would crave your indulgence in observing a moment's silence in recognition of Ms. Teresina Bodkin, who has contributed as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, so a moment's silence, please.

Thank you.

And I'd just like to alert you that on the adjournment, the floor will be opened for Members who may wish to give a brief tribute on behalf of Ms. Bodkin.

2. WELCOME REMARKS BY HON. SPEAKER

Madam Speaker said:

Her Excellency the Governor, Mrs. Tucker, Honourable Members, other officials, and support staff, good morning again, and welcome. I wish to thank the Honourable Members for agreeing to facilitate this special sitting of Parliament today, especially considering that we will be back here tomorrow to conduct further business. Thank you all.

Section 62 of the Montserrat Constitution provides the Governor with the right to address the House, and I cannot recall if she has done so previously, but she has opted to do so today. Although quite different from the norm and from what we will expect tomorrow and the days following, today's sitting is no less significant. We are here to bid farewell to the Governor and, by extension, her husband, Mr. Tucker, now that they have reached the end of their three-year tenure on Montserrat. Today may be a bittersweet moment, may be happy feelings to see you advance to the next stage of your life, whatever that may be. It could be career progression or retirement. But irrespective of what it is, like any journey, another one has come to an end. It is hoped that memories of your sojourn on Montserrat will be forever etched in your mind, be it successes or challenges faced in your professional capacity. It may be encounters at social events or even posing on stage at a Calypso show, and that one will forever remain with me. It is always hard to leave until you have left. But do

remember that every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end. In other words, Your Excellency, your journey on Montserrat began at the end of your predecessor's tenure. And your successor's tenure will begin at the end of yours, and the cycle will continue.

So, Your Excellency, on behalf of the Montserrat Legislative Assembly and on my own behalf, may God go before you and may he also remain behind you and beside you to steer you in the right direction. And with those few words, I now turn the floor over, not literally, to the Governor. Your Excellency, the time is yours.

Her Excellency the Governor said:

Madam Speaker, Honourable Premier, Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Members of this Legislative House, good morning. It is a privilege to stand before you as Governor this morning for my final time on Monday, the 7th of April, as it was just over three years ago that I was before the House and sworn in to serve the people of Montserrat. My visits to the House in between have been for the sad occasion of the passing of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and for the happier occasion of the ascension of His Majesty King Charles III. Both of these events were marked here in Montserrat with ceremony and love, and I was honoured to have represented Montserrat in London.

I extend my gratitude to His Majesty for allowing me the incredible privilege of being his representative here in Montserrat, a territory I know he continues to take a very keen interest in. Madam Speaker, when I was sworn in on April the 6th, 2022, I made a pledge then to serve the people of Montserrat to the very best of my ability for every minute I am here, and it is something I have consistently sought to do.

It has not always been easy, and of course, some decisions one has to make are not always popular at the time, and we do all make mistakes and learn. But I can say with my hand on my heart that everything I have done has been with the intention of supporting this island and the wonderful people who live here.

Madam Speaker, Montserrat is an exceptionally special place. It is one that has known great challenges and change, and yet has retained its warmth and friendliness and its very best asset, its people, both those that are here and those that live overseas. I believe that Howard and I will now join so many others who have spent time here by having a piece of

Montserrat in our hearts forever. Madam Speaker, I committed on arrival to uphold the good governance of this island and to strive to strengthen it. I promised to both support His Majesty's Government and to hold them to account, and I gave my commitment to making and supporting changes that would help towards the continued advancement of this wonderful British Overseas Territory. Change is for some a joy and for others something they fear, but change is inevitable and necessary if we are to thrive. Of course, as Governor, I am only a small part of the change, and I would like to pay tribute to our public service who have not only accepted the challenge of change, but embraced it and forged ahead for the betterment of Montserrat.

Madam Speaker, our police force continues to go from strength to strength. We have seen the implementation of Women in Policing Network, the promotion of many of our younger officers, our first and second female superintendents, and this year we'll see the introduction of new codes of conduct and performance regulations. I am grateful to the FCDO, who is providing us with new technical and forensic equipment, two new police ribs and two modern ambulances, all of which will be arriving in the next few weeks and will continue to build our frontline services capability to protect Montserrat and its people. Our safeguarding capability has increased, and whilst I recognise, Madam Speaker, the challenge for Montserrat as more cases come forward, it is to the credit of all of our frontline workers, our teachers, our health staff, social services and police, that people now have the confidence that they will be heard. I would like to especially thank Commissioner Mark Payne, Deputy Commissioner Andy Lewis, PS Camille Gerald, and Head of Social Services, Mrs. Teresina Fergus, for their commitment and continual drive to ensure that all of our vulnerable people, young and old, are indeed safeguarded in the future.

Staying with security, Madam Speaker. During my tenure, I had the honour of commissioning our first female RMDF officer, Ms. Carmencita Duberry, and I have been grateful for the support and work of Lieutenant Colonel Alvin Ryan, BEM, and the entire Royal Montserrat Defence Force during my tenure. I also thank Captain Colin Fergus and Captain Glenroy Foster for their work with the service and with the cadets. His Majesty's Prison continues to receive support from the Ministry of Justice in the UK to ensure we can provide the care and rehabilitation to our inmates, which will help them return to society after their sentence in a better place. We have launched an internal library, recruiting a full-time

teacher, a mental health support worker, and have increased the prison guard complement, as well as providing new equipment and security. Madam Speaker, I am grateful to His Majesty's Ministry of Justice for providing additional resources to support the prison development, and I thank Superintendent Bennette Kirwan and his entire team for their hard work as we continue to improve the facility.

I would like to recognise the judiciary on island, Madam Speaker. It is not an easy task, and our laws require modernization. The work of all of the judiciary is exceptional, and I'd like to thank everyone who supports justice here in Montserrat, but especially the DPP, Oris Sullivan, and the Honourable Attorney General, Mrs. Sheree Jemmotte-Rodney, who has the task, some would say unenviable task, of being legal advisor to government, of which I am part. As government has made changes, the AG and her chambers have responded, and I'm incredibly grateful to her for the support she and her team have given both to me and to this House. And of course, the role the Attorney General has played with the CFATF last year, which now sets out a solid framework for our international finance, protecting Montserrat, Madam Speaker, from money laundering and terrorist financing. We are now in good standing within a global framework, and I'd like to recognise everyone that continues to work hard in this area, the FSC, chambers, finance, customs, immigration, the FIU, police, and my office.

Madam Speaker, one of the most challenging and yet rewarding parts of my responsibilities is the public service. In every public service in the world, there is always the need to improve, to modernize, and to better serve the people. Here in Montserrat, it is no different. There is a need to work apace to ensure we have the right capability and capacity to deliver the work of His Majesty's elected government. And, Madam Speaker, this development of the public service is hard for those trying to design it, for those trying to work through it, and for those who need to change as part of it. I know, Madam Speaker, that there are some in the public service that have and continue to struggle with the transition, and I would like to commend the Honourable Deputy Governor, Mrs. Lindorna Sweeney, for the work she has embarked on to ensure that all of those that are able and willing will get the support and training they need. Progress is positive, and I recognise many of the public service who have taken the challenges we have set them and pushed forward, stretching outside their comfort zone to be the best they can be. When I depart Montserrat, Madam Speaker, tomorrow, I will leave behind a public service of which I am ex-

traordinarily proud of every civil servant, and I offer my absolute best wishes for their future and the future of the Montserrat public service.

Madam Speaker, I have been fortunate to work with two administrations, and both have set out ambitious plans for Montserrat and its future, and I have done all that I can in my role as Governor to support the government in its ambitions and to use my voice within the UK Government to assist in accessing both funds and expertise. Madam Speaker, leadership is hard, and partnership is even harder. For all concerned when there are keyboard warriors and experts in every field available to tell the Governor and the government what they should do and to seek divergence. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the Premier and his team for their support in my constitutional areas, and I hope that they will reflect that I have done all I can to support them in their endeavours, and that together we have worked closely, recognizing and respecting differences, Madam Speaker, but never losing sight of our collective purpose, which is to serve the people of Montserrat to the very best of our collective ability. Just last week, Madam Speaker, it was with this mutual desire to entertain the children in Montserrat that a certain honourable minister and I took to the bouncy castle in competition for all to see, although I would say that I was at somewhat of a disadvantage being vertically challenged.

During my time here, I am pleased to see all that has been achieved by the Government of Montserrat, my office and the UK government, working together in close partnership through a range of projects. Last summer, we were able to obtain the additional funding for the hospital project with the UK Treasury, which has led to the recent signing of the contract, and I am grateful, Madam Speaker, to be able to attend the ground breaking of this much-needed building later today. Montserrat now has new and modern hospital equipment, such as the CT scanner and mammography machine. In other areas, the program has delivered a management model and design study for the future of social housing, upgrades to the sewage treatment facilities, maintenance of the geothermal wellheads, procurement of road equipment, among other successes. But of course, there have been some challenges, Madam Speaker, but the teams will, I know, continue to work together to overcome any difficulties. I am especially conscious of the need to complete the redevelopment of the port, and I know that teams in both governments with support from my office are working hard to reach a resolution on the way forward.

I would like to thank the Premier again. We came in together six months ago, working together, and it's been a very busy time, and I think we've achieved a lot together. And despite, as I say, the keyboard warriors, it's been a wonderful partnership, so thank you, Premier. I would like to recognise Honourable Lewis and Members of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition, who play a critical role in this House and in government, ensuring the open debate of key political and legislative issues. This is a role that is essential in all democracies and should be upheld at all cost.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I hope you'll indulge me in just a few more thank yous. I would like to thank my team in the Governor's Office, who work with government and private sector in support of Montserrat, and without whom no Governor can do their job. Their commitment to this island is second to none. I leave behind, Madam Speaker, an exceptional team in the Governor's Office, and I am grateful to each and every one of them. I would like to thank my husband, Howard, for his unwavering support, his incredible energy, and his enthusiasm for music in all guises. His dedication to this island and to me, and of course, with this, his humour and his never-ending patience. Madam Speaker, finally, I would like to thank the people of Montserrat, whose passion, feedback, kindness, hard work, and remarkable warmth have made every single day of the last three years to be an honour to serve. Madam Speaker, I can tell you I will depart tomorrow afternoon with Montserrat in my heart forever. I have learnt so much from so many. The last three years will never be far from my thoughts. This Emerald Isle of the Caribbean really is a hidden treasure. Safe, full of wonderful opportunity, and full of opportunity to grow and develop. Madam Speaker, I wish everyone in this House and across the island a bright and wonderful future. May God bless Montserrat, and may God bless this House. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

3. ADDRESS BY THE HON. PREMIER

Madam Speaker said:

Recognise the Honourable Premier.

The Premier said:

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, may I just request one thing of you and the Clerk. Today is the day to say adieu to Her Excellency. We're meeting again tomorrow. So, could we allow on the ad-

jourment any other Member who wishes to say adieu to the Governor and her husband to do so, and tomorrow, or at the meeting which starts tomorrow, that we will then do the honours for the former Speaker.

Madam Speaker said:

That's reasonable.

The Premier said:

Thank you very much. Madam Speaker, I rise as the new kid on the block. Been around just six months with this wonderful team. I can say one thing for certain, and the Governor is aware of it, that I was one of those keyboard warriors before I knew her. The first time I met her was actually after the elections. I had all sort of negative thoughts about the Governor before I knew her. But once I got to know her, I realized that we both had the same objective in mind, looking after the best things for the government and people of Montserrat. We have worked very closely. We have had mutual discussions and we have had mutual respect. And that is what's very important, being able to have mutual respect. As I said to the Governor when I met her in our first meeting, we will have our disagreements in private but once the door opens, we smile for the camera and the rest of the world. We've had challenges in government, we've had challenges on projects and wherever we needed assistance from the FCDO or elsewhere a simple phone call from the Governor sometimes was sufficient. And I'll give one example. When we were trying to get Winair here, the Governor happened to be in the UK. We had some challenges, the Hon. FS made one phone call and the Governor within a very short time came back with a yes from the FCDO. That's only one of many. Governor thank you very much.

We have challenges on the port, the Governor has been there with us all the way. We've had challenges on the hospital project, she has been there with us all the way. We've had challenges on water and sewage, she has been there with us all the way. It's very, very important that sometimes yes, we listen to the public and the public who does not know her may very well be wishing to see the last of her. She has her way of doing things but whatever or however she does it is in the best interest of Montserrat and as I said I was one of those who thought she was something else until I got to know her. I have worked with and just this morning in

the little room in my house I was just reflecting and I realize this is the seventh Governor with whom I've worked.

There was one Governor who has the historical record and I don't think you've broken it. You've been on stage with a young calypsonian but that Governor was on stage with one of our national heroes, the Mighty Arrow and when we went to London there was an argument in the House with my good friend from Anguilla who as usual did his thing and they looked to me for guidance and I said allow him to speak. When he was finished speaking, they asked if anyone else had anything to say about their Governor and like a petulant school child I jumped up me, me, me, and the Governor went red face. I said the problem I have with my Governor is he can neither sing nor dance and that's a quality which affected both of us because I can neither sing nor dance. I'm a Meade. I can say the same thing for Her Excellency, she tries everything. But as you go Your Excellency, wherever you're going we wish you and your family all the very best. We know that you will be looking out for us. We know that we will be in a position to make a phone call to you, and if you're in a position to help we know you will. The level of respect which I've had for you over the past six months, I think you've earned it and I don't say that lightly. You've earned my respect and the respect of the entire team in Cabinet. The settlement which we received from HMG is to a great measure your involvement in the process as well, and we'll speak to that again tomorrow. I am very, very pleased to have been able to arrange for you to be present at the ground-breaking of the hospital because of the tremendous amount of work which you have done for us to get there thus far. The good thing about it is that when the hospital moved from Plymouth, I was there; now that we are getting a new hospital, I will be there, so these are the transitions which we make.

To this Honourable House and to those hearing my voice, let us say a big thank you to Her Excellency and her family for the contributions, the major, major contributions that she has made to the people of Montserrat during her short tenure. So once again, Governor, thank you very much, and I trust that we will continue to work together no matter where you are. Madam Speaker, with these few words, I rest.

4. ADDRESS BY THE HON. LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Madam Speaker said:

I recognise the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Paul Lewis said:

Madam Speaker, I recognise the Honourable Speaker, Her Excellency the Governor, Honourable Premier and all other Members of this Honourable House and our officials present today. Today, as we listen to Her Excellency Sarah Tucker bid us farewell, we in turn say farewell while wishing Her Excellency safe travels and best wishes. During your tenure, no doubt you experienced and enjoyed our culture, festivals, our way of life and traditions. You will have fond memories of our island. I'm sure it was not always easy sailing manoeuvring through the Montserrat experience. I trust you've already highlighted what you've considered your greatest achievement over the tenure that you governed Montserrat. And I also trust that you would have identified the challenges that you did not manage to conquer because no one is perfect.

Every person in authority will be remembered by their style of leadership. Your hands-on approach is different and was different from the ceremonial approach or role that we have become accustomed to from Governors in the past. Naturally, your style generated various public opinions on what role should be played by a Governor. Despite the opinions, you maintained your style throughout your tenure. Interestingly, where funding negotiations were concerned, both the former Premier and present Premier, who testified of his keyboard skills publicly, expressed their gratitude for your assistance during their negotiations with FCDO. The people and the Opposition welcome all achievements in the best interest of Montserrat, including those where you were instrumental in influencing a positive outcome. Fixing the public service is a work in progress that will span over the tenure of several Governors. We are aware of the many issues still unresolved in the public service. This is perhaps an area you would have liked to advance further and now leave, and may even give advice to your successor. It is a sector that cannot be fixed piecemeal and would only be successful when all stakeholders are fully on board.

The GRID, which was before your time, was the only funded program aimed at advancing the public service. Unfortunately, despite its good intentions, the GRID ended in a gridlock. The program eventually lost the funding, and the results were another failed attempt at fixing the public

service. Yet we are confident and optimistic that one day we'll get it right. As we transition from Your Excellency to your successor, governance reform and institutional development within the public service should remain a priority. As Your Excellency steps into the next chapter of your journey, whether it be continued public service, private endeavours, or well-deserved rest, know that your tenure as Governor will not be forgotten. In fact, you made sure you were well documented through Calypso. A popular line from one of your favourite Calypso songs, "Mother Tucker, I need an explanation". Perhaps we did not get all the explanations, but you were the first Governor to form part of the props on stage in the Calypso finals for that same song, and interestingly, you were seen packing your Georgie bundle to go, depicting the lyrics of the song. And today, I have the opportunity to address you as you leave us at the end of your tenure. I'm sure you will always remember the Mother Tucker Calypso whenever you think of Montserrat. And just in case you attempt to construct a Calypso, I'm sure that your husband would give you a classical version of the Calypso.

On behalf of the Opposition, I extend best wishes. May your future be filled with new opportunities and good health. Thank you.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Madam Speaker said:

I recognise the Honourable Minister of BUILT.

The Minister for Buildings, Infrastructure, et al said:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will be very brief. H.E., I have had the opportunity as a legislator of working with two Governors, and I've worked with other Governors as a public servant and as a student growing up because they were very involved in our education system, and perhaps, diplomacy is not mine today. And I would say, during my tenure, you have been the most impactful. We have been challenged by many things. We have learned some harsh lessons. But we want to say thank you today for your contribution and for the lessons learnt. As the Honourable Premier has said in my recent encounter with you and working with you, you have been extremely supportive of the port project. We couldn't ask for more, and I know that if you have the opportunity to continue, that you will certainly do so. I also want to thank you for your contribution in

supporting our health transformation and our gaining of important critical infrastructure for safeguarding our young people, in particular, and also looking out for our vulnerable. And you know how dear the elderly is to me, and I may need some support in ensuring that they can sleep at night.

Madam Speaker, Her Excellency, and Mr. Tucker have been excellent patrons for the New Beginnings Steel Orchestra, and I want to register my greatest gratitude to both of you in that area. You have supported them financially, and Mr. Tucker has supported Mr. Francis in honing and polishing their skills so that today, I can say from the recent performances, I see diamonds glittering. We are indeed proud that even now, for which you have contributed, they are at a world-class workshop in Antigua, where they will engage with world-class artists and perform. We want to thank you enormously for your contribution, and we will seek to continue our support for the New Beginnings Orchestra. We're giving youth an opportunity, and indeed, we can be very proud of what our youth and children are achieving, and we know as well the importance of music and what it does for the development of our young people, and also our country.

Madam Speaker, as Her Excellency says, the public service is the engine of this country's development, for its growth. Our most important asset is our people. They are part of this, and so I commit to continue the work for efficient and effective service delivery and excellence in our public service and as well as our private sector, to look after their well-being, their development, and their advancement. And I pray wherever you go, whatever opportunities for our development, that you will remain, as you have said yourself, a friend of Montserrat. The Bible teaches that if two of us agree upon anything, it shall be done for us, so I will not pray for you today, but reiterate and come in agreement with the Reverend Galbraith's prayer that he prayed for both you, your husband, and your family. I wish you Godspeed, health, and well-being be yours as you continue to sojourn on this path. I know as well your commitment to God, and so as Ecclesiastical Affairs Minister, I will also continue to ensure that we work together to build a wholesome Montserrat based on the value of love, which is one that God stands for. By our love, they will know we are His. Embracing all and being tolerant, recognizing that we are all different. H.E., I again say Godspeed, His well-being and good health be yours, Mr. Tucker, and your family.

Madam Speaker said:

Recognise the Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

The Minister for Agriculture, Land, Housing, et al said:

Madam Speaker, through you, I'd like to address the Honourable Governor. I see the smiles on her face as I stood up. Yeah, we'll talk about that. I had the pleasure of actually knowing you prior to my tenure as Minister. I want to believe, and maybe I should ask you now, if you had a feeling that I would be in this position one day, because almost every time you had an event, I remember you invited me to those events, and not only that, but introducing me to the whole FCDO team and making sure that I got very well acquainted with them. I also heard from your staff that I may be your favourite Minister, so I wonder if that's why you're smiling when I got up. I know we've had our ups and downs, but I think that I've probably made you smile and laugh the most out of everyone in Cabinet, especially when we brought the Bill on oranges and citrus, because I know that made you very, very happy. I often enjoyed seeing you run pass the gas station because I was very amazed that you and Mr. Tucker could actually run up St. Peter's Hill, so you got more than adapted to Montserrat, because not many people I know in Montserrat can actually run that hill, so it was often good to see both of you. I actually saw a young man running in Woodlands the other day, but when I passed, I realized it was actually Mr. Tucker and not a young man, and when I reached out to him, he said to me that he's sure that I could keep up with him, but I'm really not sure that I could but again, our relationship has been good.

I like the fact that you are a very determined and strong woman, and I like the fact that when you set out your mind to do things, you get it done, and that is a very good quality that I think you should keep also. I would say that I enjoyed my time with you, and I could have always reached out to you for anything that I needed help with, whether it was resources or even my time in the UK, three days into being a Minister, when you actually introduced me to everyone and took your time out to make sure that I got acquainted with my role. So, thank you very much, and I'll keep my speech short because I'm still disappointed that you didn't have that bush rum with me for my birthday in March, but I wish you all the best going forward, and it was a good time being here as a Minister with you.

Madam Speaker said:

I recognise the Honourable Minister for Education and Health.

The Minister for Education, Health and Social Services said:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Sorry for being late. Somebody in the Ministry lent me a shawl, as I wasn't really prepared for this morning. Governor Tucker, what can I say that hasn't been said already? Just to thank you for the support that you've given to me personally over these several months. Obviously, quite a horrific start to my being a Minister of Government. I was a bit petrified and wasn't really enjoying it, but your words of encouragement and the fact that you always had hope for the country made a huge difference to me. Montserrat has this awkward relationship with the British Government, a sort of love-hate relationship where, publicly, we act like we hate the British, but that's where 60% of our recurrent budget comes from, and all of our capital budget, so I don't think hate should be a thing here. Obviously, history has made it uncomfortable, and I think, in particular, for Montserrat, the fact that we have failed to actually have a successful economy over the last several years has put us in an awkward position. Personally, I don't like the fact that we elect government after government to simply beg the British for more money and then curse them in Calypso by the end of the year. I don't think that's right. I think as a people, we need to be moving towards generating an income for the island, and there are various ways of doing this, which we have gone over and over again. For me, I love the idea of the financial services sector, which seems to keep many countries alive, so I think if we did that, we would have more national pride and there'd be perhaps less hate. I have no hate. I am extremely thankful. Thankful in particular for the new hospital project that I have just walked into.

The only thing I have done is not say no, which I think perhaps has been a mistake in the past for other governments. This afternoon, you break ground, and I'm excited about that. Surely, you've put in a lot of work for that. Going forward, I'm excited about having a new Governor. I hope she is as effective as you are. I hear she likes parties, so I'm quite excited about that. What else can I say? That, as a woman, I have truly respected your approach. You have not been feeble or cowardly in any way. People in Montserrat and people in some Ministries may not be in agreement with some of the decisions that you have made, but from my point of view, the strengths from which your decisions came and your determina-

tion in pushing for certain things, I truly respect and honour as a woman. I think you have done women on the planet proud. I won't say the word badass in here, but basically, you have been it and very awesome.

Mr. Tucker, thank you for supporting her new belief in the role of a husband. I think you have done a lot for Montserrat and a lot for Mrs. Tucker in terms of support, which I think is necessary for anybody who has to come to this island and do a job like that. Just in closing, thank you again, honestly, from deep down in my heart. Going forward, I'm looking forward to more successes for the Government of Montserrat's collaboration with the British Government, and for you personally, I hope you go on to an equally exciting and rewarding life. I'm wishing your successor luck in her adventures on Montserrat. Thank you.

Madam Speaker said:

Recognise the Honourable Parliamentary Secretary, Buffonge.

Mr. Crenston Buffonge said:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Good morning, H.E. Welcome to Parliament. Today, we are here to bid farewell to you, whatever the word farewell means. I do want to wish you the best, and after three years, sometimes it feels like it was actually five or even more, especially with the amount of stuff that we had to undertake. But I can say up front right here, you came in, you rolled up your sleeves, you got to work, though not popular sometimes with your decisions. I remember one of our more heated conversations I would use, where you threatened to get your lawyer. I wouldn't say why, that's between you and me, but at the end of it all, I think it's because, and I would say it's water under the bridge for me personally. I would say it's because we have the same passionate interest in Montserrat, and to see it actually thrive and become more than what it actually is, and that's what drives you, and that's what drives me. I could say it was said before that we have at least one thing in common. Well, you have the edge because you made it on stage, but we both were in a lot of Calypso songs together, so that's that one thing we have in common. But governance is a hard thing, trying to please possibly everybody, which is impossible, and still balance the unique nature of moving any country forward. That sometimes is not very popular, and I want to make sure that you know I appreciate you for your efforts and, of course, for the backing of Mr Tucker because you need that sort of thing.

You came in at a time when DFID and FCDO were being merged, and that took the conversation from bureaucracy and diplomacy to that of development, to that of moving a country, and that could not have been easy, and I want to recognise you for those efforts. New territory for all of us, of course. We saw four different overseas Ministers; we saw four Prime Ministers in a very, very short time; the decline of the pound and of course, the passing of the Head of State. May her soul rest in peace. But I want to say through it all, you remain very strategic and very steadfast in accomplishing our shared goals, which is, again I say, moving Montserrat forward. Your role is not easy, of course, there are always tough decisions that might not be popular when you make them, but that I said before was the nature of public service. I want to publicly acknowledge some of the things that you've done. There's a long list of things I'm sure that you have, goes to your resume going forward. I'm sure you know it will do you some good. But of course, in achieving some of the funding that we got, we could not have done it without you. I'm speaking, I mean specifically of the last administration; 27 million critical infrastructure, the hospital which we're going to ground break today and the transformation, I think Honourable Dorsette said the transformation of our health sector. I really, I'm a little bit sorry that we didn't do the same thing for education, and that's something I want to hope that the next Governor or the new administration or our administration can take forward. That's the only part that's lacking.

There are still some things outstanding and I have to say them. Our Medicinal Cannabis Bill is still on your desk, so we want to get that somebody will take that up a little bit later on, and of course, I'm always passionate about my lands in Zone V or around the Zone V area. Something again for ENDEPRAC, something again I really want to see happening for this country going forward. As you prepare to leave, as you prepare to leave Montserrat to whatever awaits you, I want to publicly say to you that Montserrat can be your home whenever you choose. We will welcome you, I will welcome you with open arms to be a part of our community. I admire your passion for children, the work that you've done surrounding, of course, Guernsey, and the musical you said before, but I do have to mention. I see kids walk in for the very first day, and at the end of a week, I think it was a week or so, they were playing music. I have a violin, but I can't play it, and I'm jealous. But again, on behalf of this House and the people of Montserrat, I want to bid you farewell to Mr Tucker and yourself and wish you all the best in all of your endeavours. Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker said:

I recognise the Honourable Parliamentary Secretary, Hixon.

Mr. Dwayne Hixon said:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. May it please you for me to address H.E. the Governor. Mrs. Tucker, I want to thank you on behalf of the Government and people of Montserrat for the things you have achieved for us and one of the promises that you know in that meeting we had the other day that I realize that the children are a future for Montserrat and children are close to your heart and rest assured that some of the projects that you've started especially the playground in five years' time, rest assured that when you come back to Montserrat to visit you will see them in different parts of the island. I want to wish you the best of endeavours in whatever you choose to do after you leave here. I wish you and your husband a good time thereafter. Thank you.

Madam Speaker said:

I recognise the Honourable Attorney General.

The Attorney General said:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker and H.E., I have the unique privilege of being the one who has worked with H.E. for the past three years in the same role for those past three years, and it has been a privilege. H.E., I've worked with many Governors over my time in the public service, and each Governor brings something different to the Montserrat experience. You came to Montserrat with a vision, and you spent your time working towards that vision. You have seen the potential of Montserrat as a jurisdiction. You have seen the potential of the people, and because of that, you have worked hard, you have championed for us, you have fought, and you have ensured that we got support for the critical areas that we need support for and as a nation, we thank you.

Your approach to some matters and decisions has not always been palatable, and you have been criticised bitterly for some of the things that you've done, but you've taken it on the chin. It's part of leadership, and you have embraced it, and you continue to do what you have to do. You expect efficiency and high standards, and as I've mentioned to you before, you cannot be faulted for that because after all, we can attain the

high standards, and we will continue to do so. As you move on, we will continue to uphold those high standards that you sought to inculcate in us. We can do it. We know how to do it as a nation; we can. It has not always been smooth sailing between us. I know that I have annoyed you and frustrated you on a number of occasions where my advice or guidance has caused you to stop or change course or slow down the speed with which certain things may be progressed but we have always worked professionally through all of this and we have always sought to find a means to get what needs to be done, done and I thank you for that.

I've grown over the three years having worked with you, and I am very appreciative of that. I appreciate the support that you've given to the AG's chambers and the work that the AG's chambers do. I've appreciated the fact that you've pushed me at every opportunity, one in mind being the hosting of the OT's AG's conference, which I would not have taken up on my own had it not been for you. We got thrown in on the deep end, and it was a resounding success, and I thank you for that. I hope that you've grown during your time here in Montserrat, and as I've said, you've left an indelible mark on this jurisdiction. As you leave these shores and as you and Mr. Tucker go on towards new adventures, I hope that you will keep Montserrat in your hearts and in your minds, and you will continue to support and champion for us wherever you go. I wish you and Mr. Tucker good health and Godspeed, and all the best in all of your future endeavours. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker said:

Recognise the Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Financial Secretary said:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker and Your Excellency. I haven't worked with you very long in the capacity of the Acting Financial Secretary but I've worked with you over the last three years as the Deputy Financial Secretary and I'll be saying thanks and farewell not only on my behalf but on behalf of the staff of the Ministry of Finance who you've always taken a special interest in. We have a young team in the Ministry of Finance and I've said it in many forums and I'll say it again that the team that we are now, is largely due to yourself and the former FS who is now the Deputy Governor and the confidence that you've placed in not only my capacity but the capacity of all the young staff that I have within

the Ministry of Finance. The budget director and the various directors in the Ministry of Finance headquarters and the wider Ministry of Finance. I've found you challenging in the sense that you've challenged my perception of my own capacity. I don't think I would have been in the mental, it's never an issue of intellectual capacity, but about the mental strength to take on the role of the Financial Secretary, three years ago. I didn't think that was in my horizon for probably another 10 years but yourself and I will keep mentioning the former Deputy Governor would have placed, current Deputy Governor sorry, would have placed tremendous faith and trust in my ability to lead the Ministry of Finance at a technical level and my team to support us.

The marriage of FCO and DFID was a challenge both in how we related to the Governor's office on the ground and the FCDO in the UK, but I think the way you were able to marry both roles and encourage us to have not only a professional but amicable relationship with our colleagues in the FCDO has been the reason for such success in terms of funding, the ability to manage projects, being able to get assistance when we need it, be able to take up a phone rather than send an email or send a formal letter, just being able to have that real-time connection and I think that's mainly because of the way you dealt with us in the Ministry of Finance and encouraged us to deal with our colleagues and I keep stressing the word colleagues in the FCDO because I think if we, when you meet these individuals on that level you see that they're working in partnership with Montserrat for the betterment of Montserrat and it sometimes feels like they're asking for too much information but when you have an understanding and appreciation of what it takes to fight for the funding that we do get, the work that we've done over the past three years, when you hold it up, I don't think that anyone would be able to see that as anything but a success and I think you've laid the foundation for further success.

I'm really looking forward to meeting the Governor, what they call it, designate Mrs. Cross and or Ms. Cross, I don't know which one it is, but I think if she follows your footsteps, I mean in her own way, that it would lead to continued improvement for the Government of Montserrat and the people of Montserrat. So, I'd just like to say thank you on a personal level, thank you on a professional level. Mr. Tucker, I've worked with the Governor professionally and, as my colleague AG would have said, she expects you to rise to the occasion and she's not I wouldn't say she's not difficult, she's just exact and that I recognise her strength in being able to

deal with that 24/7. I go home at the end of the day, but thank you, H. E and I wish you the very best wherever you end up. Hopefully, it's somewhere that can continue to help the Government of Montserrat and see you in five years. Thank you.

Madam Speaker said:

Are we having any other intervention? Well, it seems not, but before we entertain a motion on the adjournment, we'll allow Her Excellency to leave.

Recognise the Honourable Premier.

The Premier said:

Madam Speaker, I rise to move a motion for the adjournment of this Honourable House, sine die.

Madam Speaker said:

Recognise the Honourable Deputy Premier.

The Minister for Infrastructure et al said:

Madam Speaker, I rise to support the motion moved by the Honourable Premier for this House to be adjourned sine die, if it pleases you.

Madam Speaker said:

Members, it has been moved and seconded that this House be adjourned, sine die.

The question was put and carried.

Madam Speaker said:

This Honourable House now stands adjourned sine die.

Assembly adjourned at approximately 10:08 a.m.

Sgd: Fiona Meade
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly (Ag)

Dated this 24th day of June 2025

Sgd: Marjorie Smith
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

