

REMARKS BY THE HON PREMIER ON THE OCCASION OF THE SWEARING IN
OF MINISTERS
GOVERNMENT HOUSE
16TH JULY 2020

Your Excellency, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen; good afternoon.

Just three years ago Bermudians were preparing to go to the polls to cast their votes for the future of their choice. No plan for that future included the drastic change that Covid19 has brought to every aspect of our lives. The change has been wholesale; we work and worship differently; we shop and socialize differently; and we interact with each other mindful of appropriate physical distancing. But this pandemic has tested our resilience as a community and our ability to manage change. The Government is no different.

The circumstances that have made today necessary caused me great disappointment and the former Ministers whose portfolios are today assigned to others of their colleagues continue to have my gratitude for their hard work while in office – and I welcome their continued support for the government from the backbench.

But today, like every day in 2020, is about change and I am pleased to invite the Governor to appoint two new Ministers to the Cabinet.

MP Neville Tyrrell will be the Minister of Transport, assuming responsibility for all aspects of public transport and the airport. He brings to bear a career of private sector experience and periods of temporary service in Cabinet that will give him a head start on the critical infrastructure and operational issues that exist within the ministry. He has been a long a faithful servant of the people of Bermuda and of the Bermuda Progressive Labour Party. I am grateful that he has accepted this invitation to serve and I am looking forward to the benefit of his wisdom and counsel in this new role.

MP Renee Ming will be the Minister of National Security, assuming responsibility for the uniformed services as delegated under our Constitution, including key areas of border control, the disaster Risk Reduction and Mitigation Team, and gang violence reduction strategy. With the exception of her support of a certain Cup Match team MP Ming has brought a studied and critical eye to service on the backbench that has demonstrated a work ethic to be envied.

Her work as a part of the immigration reform group brought a dimension to that difficult task that has set us on the correct path to immigration reform. I am thankful that she has agreed to take on this challenging role that is pivotal to the strength of our community. MP Renee Ming will be a strong voice to ensure that we have an enforcement in this country that is fair and balanced and takes into account the historic biases that have existed over the generations to the detriment of black people. Some may question her fit for this role, but knowing her and her character and her commitment to community healing – I am confident she will excel in this role.

Finally, responsibility for tourism will be moved under the Office of Premier and will be added to my existing responsibility for economic development. The need for the growth of tourism is more complex than ever and demands a renewed focus on the economic potential it represents for Bermuda. The new paradigm for tourism is more than the traditional leisure getaway that has represented our mainstay for decades. In a crowded marketplace where our competitors are not confined to any one region or defined by any single product offering, we must drive a demand for Bermuda that leverages more than our pink sand and blue water.

In the coming days I will share more of a vision for a renewal in tourism that will defy the traditional and will give us a fighting chance to return Bermudians to work in all areas that depend on the tourism industry to make ends meet. Bermuda must become relevant again – and I welcome the challenge and know I will be ably supported by the team at Bermuda Tourism Authority, the Junior Minister for Tourism Senator Crystal Ceasar, and the Cabinet Office team.

Before the Governor swears in the New Ministers, and they give their comment – I just wanted to share with the people of Bermuda that I continue to be grateful for the kind words of support, thoughts and prayers of so many people across the Island. As we embark on new challenges in these new and uncertain times I remain hopeful for this country. We have demonstrated that we can come together in times of crisis – and I know we will continue to remain united as we work together to rebuild our future.