
THE SENATE DEBATES

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2008 – 2013

THE SENATE

Wednesday, August 18, 2010

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, on Wednesday, August 18, 2010, at 11.10 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour SENATOR Dr. Branford M. Taitt, B.A., (Hons.), M.P.A., LL.B.(Hons.), D.H.L.(Hon.)(President)

Her Honour SENATOR K. F. Ifill, B.Sc.(Hons.), M.B.A. (Deputy President)

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, M.A., M.B.A. B.Sc.(Hons.), (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade) (Leader of the Senate)

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN, E.M.B.A. (Marketing), J.P. (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development)

SENATOR the Hon. D. W. BOYCE, B.Sc. (Econ.), M.B.A. (Fin.), CMA, F.C.A. (Minister of State, Ministry of Finance, Investment, Telecommunications and Energy)

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER, CIM, Dip. Mng. M.B.A. (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Health)

SENATOR J. INCE, BB.A., M.B.A., Dip. (Mgmt.) (Parliamentary Secretary, Prime Minister's Office)

SENATOR H. A. HUSBANDS, M.L.I.R., B.Sc. (Public Administration)(Hons.), Ed. Cert. (U.W.I.) (Parliamentary Secretary, Prime Minister's Office)

SENATOR P. W. B. GILKES

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE, J.P.

SENATOR Rev. Dr. D. L. DURANT, D.D. (Hon.)

SENATOR A. R. WORRELL, B.A.(Hons.)

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER, B.Sc.(Hons.), M.S.W., LL.B.(Hons.), L.E.C.

SENATOR Sir ROY TROTMAN, K.A., M.A.

SENATOR the Hon. Prof. V. E. NEWTON, S.C.M., B.A.(Spec. Hons.), M.A., LL.M.(Hons.)(U.W.I.), F.L.A. (Gt. Brit.), L.E.C.

SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLAW, G.C.M., B.A. (Hons.) Dunelm

SENATOR Dr. F. L. CHANDLER, Ph.D., B.Sc. (Hons.)

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE, B.A.(Hons.), M.A. African Studies, M.B.A.

SENATOR R. G. CAVE, C.B.E., B.C.H.

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah.

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Senate is in session.

PAPERS

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to give notice of the following:

1. Duties, Taxes and Other Payment (Exemption (B's BottleDepot) Order, 2010.
2. Customs Tariff (Amendment) Order, 2010.
3. Duties, Taxes, and Other Payments (Exemption) (Courtesy Garage Limited) Order, 2010.
4. Duties, Taxes, and Other Payments (Exemption) (International One Metre World Championship) Order, 2010.
5. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) Haiti: Barbados Loves You Relief Concert) Order, 2010.
6. Reports on the Social Investment Fund for the years ended March 31, 2008 and March 31, 2009.
7. Barbados Economic and Social Report 2009.
8. Annual Report of the Barbados Port Inc. for the year 2008.
9. Health Services (Prohibition Tobacco Smoking in Public Places) Regulations, 2010.
10. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (University of the West Indies) Order, 2010.

11. Value Added Tax Order, 2010.
12. Duties, Taxes and Other Payment (Exemption) (Civil Aviation Personnel Licensing) Order, 2010.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 22(1) and 45(2) be suspended for the remainder of the Sitting.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to give notice of the following:

Customs (Amendment) Bill, 2010.

BILLS READ A FIRST TIME

On motion of Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN the following Bills were read a first time:

1. Income Tax (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2010.
2. Betting and Gaming Duties (Amendment) Bill, 2010.
3. Value Added Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2010.
4. Income Tax (Amendment) (No. 3) Bill, 2010.
5. Final Appropriation (2009-2010) Bill, 2010.
6. Customs (Amendment) Bill, 2010.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to give notice of the following Resolution:

Resolution to approve in accordance with Section 5 of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225, the vesting in the National Housing Corporation of parcels of land, the property of the Crown, situate at Constant in the parish of St. George in this Island for the purpose of housing development.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 1 – INCOME TAX (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL, 2010

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Benn.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Mr. President, it is an honour to be given the opportunity to lead this debate on this Bill before this Honourable Senate today, the Income Tax (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2010.

Sir, the amendment is to provide for a rebate to be given to farmers who import agro-processing machinery. This rebate was enunciated way back in August 1999, on the advice of the Ministry of Agriculture, and was to come into effect that same year but the enabling Law was never passed. It has taken just over 10 years, but I am sure that our farmers will be happy, and I am confident that they will benefit from the passage of this Bill.

Mr. President, I am looking forward, in the not too distant future, to have other pieces of legislation, namely, the Sustainable Agricultural Development Bill, the Agricultural Protection Bill, as well as the Praedial Larceny (Amendment) Bill brought before this Honourable Chamber for debate and passage.

Mr. President, we have some challenges but we must work past those challenges to bring these instruments, which are important to agriculture in Barbados.

S/A34/11:30 Sequence 3

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SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: A number of good incentives have been made available to the agricultural sector by both Governments over the past years, but without the requisite legislation to promote and protect the sector, the incentive programme will be meaningless.

Mr. President, this Bill was discussed a few weeks ago in the Other Place and Members of that Chamber grasped the opportunity to extend the debate into a full debate on agriculture to give the country the benefit of such an exercise, and also to give themselves a better understanding of things in agriculture.

On the following day, I heard on one of the Call-In programmes on the radio station, a regular call, a former Senator, taking this Government to task for spending an entire day on an amendment which, in his opinion, should have taken less than an hour to wrap up.

Mr. President, I am looking forward to some robust debate and rich contributions on this matter in this Chamber this day. Such debates help us to benefit from the wider view of persons present. There will be some criticism of what is not happening in agriculture and I welcome the constructive ideas, which can only serve to make the sector and indeed the country a better place.

Mr. President, Barbados is a high cost producer of food. Our cost of production includes the cost of all the inputs including seeds, insecticides, fertiliser, labour, water and electricity. In the case of livestock, feed, fuel, machinery and other farm equipment, this country does not

have the financial resources at our disposal to subsidise our agriculture as is done in some of the developed countries of the world. Our Governments have, therefore, recognised the value of the sector to the overall development of the country, and have put in place a number of programmes to provide incentives and encourage the farming community.

I am, therefore, making an appeal to all farmers, all agriculturists and all persons practising food production at any level, be it in the backyard or on a commercial level, to obtain a copy of that document called the "Agricultural Incentive Scheme".

Sir, only yesterday at our Senior Management Meeting at the Ministry we had a careful look at that Scheme with a view of making further amendments and recommendations. It is possible on the Ministry's Website, www.agriculture.gov.bb. So I encourage more farmers to avail themselves with a copy.

Sir, incentives are available for a common development, irrigation systems, spraying and weed control equipment, pasture development, orchard development, land cultivation and livestock development. For those interested in exporting produce, there is an export promotion programme where a rebate on 30 per cent up to a maximum of \$10 000 per year is available on the cost on transport and freighting for primary agricultural products.

Sir, there are incentives that have been in place which are geared to assist farmers in getting part of their monies back once they spend their money and have proof of purchase.

Sir, I recall that since this Government came into office, our Prime Minister has spoken to me a lot about up front concessions. There are times that farmers would want to access the programme but, because of limited funds available up front, they have to spend first and then claim back. If we embark on a policy of providing up front incentives where the farmers will bring in their studies and information to show that the equipment is required, our officers will do a due diligence test.

We can provide farmers with the tools to get their equipment duty free, machinery, such as ploughs, harrows, sub soilers, rotorvators, planters and trans planters, fertiliser spreaders, dairy equipment and machinery. The dairy equipment, including machinery, milk coolers, poultry keeping equipment, including incubators, just to mention a few of these, the kinds of equipment we are talking about that will allow farmers to qualify for rebates and to move towards up front concessions.

Sir, there is a Technical Assistance Fund available to assist producers and marketers in the conduct of feasibility

studies, as well as access to new technology relating to the export of fresh agricultural produce.

Mr. President, the Incentive Scheme is broad but it is very workable. What happened in the past, farmers complained that the Scheme had not worked for them well enough. Prime Minister David Thompson has been relentless in his pursuit to have the Agricultural Incentive Scheme work for the benefit of farmers in the country. He has, on a number of occasions, insisted that my Ministry work closely with the Government Information Service to advertise and promote the rebate programmes that are available to farmers.

Mr. President, I am pleased to report that over the past two-and-a-half-years since this Democratic Labour Party Government came into office, the Incentive Scheme has gained some momentum. We have sought to clean up some of the grey areas. A greater number of farmers are accessing the programme and the period of time farmers have had to wait for rebates has been shortened, with a few exemptions, of course, where some farmers will still insist that they should have the rebate quickly, even though all of their invoices are not available, or even though there is no real proof of purchase, but they want to argue that because they have spent the money, they should get it back. I want to report overall that the Scheme is showing tremendous improvement.

Sir, there were 246 new registrants in the year 2007 - 2008. There were 308 new registrants for that Scheme for 2009, and 369 new registrants for the financial year 2009 and up to the end of March, 2010. The main categories for which the rebates apply are the duty-free concession, vehicle concession, farm rebates, grants and land tax.

I want to mention that because farmers must also be aware that they can obtain rebates on their land tax once they are using this land for agricultural purposes. I also want at this point in time to encourage persons in the Land Tax Department and other departments where farmers seek to access these debates to be more understanding and to be more cooperative.

Sir, I have a situation where I recall recently a farmer, a large farmer, where he applied for the rebate on his farm. An officer went out to the farm, saw about 180 head of cattle, zebra running among the cattle and came and suggested that the farmer should not access the rebate because he saw a zebra, 180 cows and one zebra.

SA 34 11.40 a.m. Sequence 4

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Senate A34, sequence 5, 11.40 a.m.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: A zebra is not a farm animal, so do not give the farmer a rebate because I saw a zebra.

I also had to call, Mr. President, the Land Tax Department myself and speak to senior people there because a farmer had called me to indicate that having submitted all the relevant information for his rebate on the Land Tax, an officer of that department had gone out and visited and had determined that grass is not agriculture. Sir, this farmer produces acres of grass for livestock development. He sells to the Barbados Turf Club, and to large and small farmers, the grass that he grows, cuts and bales on the farm but the department, those people who sit in their nice offices, who have not seen farms before, or who do not recognise that grass, the African Star, the crisscross one, the Tifton 68, those grasses are considered agricultural items, so he was almost deprived of the opportunity of accessing the rebate.

I believe that there is an opportunity and I will try to champion that, that at some point in time, as I did when I was at the Barbados Agricultural Society, once or twice a year, get people who are indirectly related to agriculture because the people in the Customs Department, the Income Tax Department, the Land Tax Department and anybody who has any connection with agriculture and take them out to visit, vegetable and fruit farms, poultry, pigs, sheep, dairy, goats, any area where food in this country is produced, so that they get an opportunity to see the kinds of activities that happen on the farms and they get a chance to see the kind of work that goes on the various farms, so that when these requests for rebates come to their offices and to their desk that they will have a greater appreciation for what the farmers have to go through.

Sir, so far for the first quarter of this financial year, April 1, to June 30, 2010, \$206 000 in rebates and grants have been honoured for 114 new registrants. I want to take this opportunity, Mr. President, to express my thanks to Dr. Dennis Blackman and his team in the Ministry of Agriculture for their work and commitment to this process. We have given a commitment to the farming community, as we put these wonderful rebate programmes in place.

Mr. President, a lot of very good programmes have been placed by the former Administration and developed by this new Administration. I want to take my hat off to all of those who were able to sit down and to think of these things, and we intend to make them work to the benefit of the farming community.

Mr. President, the agricultural sector in Barbados is always under the microscope. Up to last Sunday, one of the radio stations in Barbados had a call-in programme, where Barbados was under the microscope. Often when things appear not to be going right, you get the occasional call

from a radio station asking you to respond to certain statements, or to certain things that are happening in agriculture.

I do not like, Mr. President, to respond when the radar or the microscope is blurred. The radio stations do not usually call when the Central Bank's Report speaks goldenly of progress in agriculture as they did last year, indicating that the sector performed, not necessarily credibly but it was one of the sub sectors of the economy that showed a positive side. Nobody called to say to you, "Congrats, I am happy to know that while other sub sectors appear to be struggling, agriculture is able to hold its head above the zero line."

The new Report, the Central Bank reported further progress. Again, there is no call to say how did you get it done, but somebody created a little bit of hiccups yesterday, or the week before, and you get calls saying, "I want you to come and join me in a radio programme to put agriculture under the microscope." There is no need to put agriculture under the microscope because of a negative call.

Mr. President, this sector has the greatest responsibility to provide healthy and wholesome foods for our citizens and our visitors alike. This agricultural sector, Mr. President, is charged with the responsibility not only to feed our people but to provide opportunities of employment as well. This sector has an opportunity to create linkages with other sectors like tourism where we will work very closely with the hotel association and the hotel industry to ensure that we provide wholesome foods at good times, particularly during the peak tourism season to enable our hotels to provide locally produced food for our visitors.

This sector also has the opportunity to work very closely with the Ministry of Education as we seek to do further agro processing, as we take our primary products like breadfruit, sweet potatoes, cassava and add value. We will go to the schools and work closely with the home economic teachers to seek to introduce our young children in primary and secondary schools to things agriculture and that is why I want to take the opportunity to encourage primary schools in this country to look for every opportunity to develop any fertile area around their schools. They do not do it to the level that we would want to see it done.

I want to also encourage the primary schools, as they continue to establish 4-H Clubs in their schools that they would want to do some practical things. In addition to growing vegetables and herbs, they would also want to rear livestock like poultry and rabbits on the compounds of the schools, also to encourage the youngsters who have the available spaces in their backyards at home to practise it, and then as they produce the foods, we can get persons like

Miss Hart and those other persons to join forces with the schools on a regular basis to improve their culinary arts and add value. These are things that this sector is responsible for and we will continue to do our best.

Mr. President, who in the world will have predicted that there would have been a food crisis in 2008? When we came into office in January, 2008 or even when we were campaigning in 2007, leading up to the General Election of 2008, we did not foresee that there would have been a food crisis.

Sir, that came upon us in 2008, followed quickly by the oil crisis in 2009 and you know the little ripples that caused, where inputs in the livestock field like corn, soy and those other things became very expensive because there was a need to convert them now into energy, and we know that affected the cost of our production, because there were times when the feed companies then had to access these inputs at a higher cost.

Senate A34, sequence 5, 11:50:07

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SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: We need to mention these things, Mr. President, because oftentimes we have short memories and we do not want to remember those things that affected us a year or two ago.

I recall when we first came into office that there was this challenge to keep the price of poultry down and this new Government moved swiftly to make available an amount of money to stop the feed companies from carrying up their feeds to a level that would create problems in the poultry industry and the other livestock industry. We recognise though, Mr. President, that that was not sustainable and we put other measures in place to make sure that things were okay. Mr. President, in spite of those sorts of ripples, I am happy to report that livestock production is kept at a very good level.

Mr. President, if that was not enough, there was the food crisis of 2008, the oil crisis of 2009 and the economic downturn in late 2009 and into 2010, three major crises in quick succession having an adverse effect not only on the farming community, but on the overall economies of the world. Every country of the world, Mr. President, is grappling with this recession. Small island developing states like Barbados are more vulnerable than the bigger and more developed countries which are also struggling.

Mr. President, what is common to all countries of the world is that they are paying much more attention to their agriculture. It seems to have taken these major crises for countries all over the world to recognise the importance of agriculture. Agriculture, which was once seen as very

important is once again being seen as that sector, which has the potential to lift countries out of their economic woes.

This sector in Barbados, which was once a significant economic activity, has over the years been increasingly marginalised and neglected as the country moved towards becoming a more service-oriented economy. I want this morning, Mr. President, to let you know that the agricultural sector has a significant role to play, especially in ensuring that the country's food and nutrition needs are met.

Permit me, Mr. President, to give you an idea of what has been done as we sought to achieve our objectives. Mr. President, before I go on to that, it pleases me a lot, as I refer to the Microscope Programme on Sunday, when on Sunday one of the contributors to the programme, a Mr. Neilands from Super Centre, in his opening remarks made a very significant point that sought to steer the programme in a more positive direction. He said, "I want to report from my end that agriculture is working".

He was in that position as a Director of one of the largest food chains in the country because he is in a position where he has been able to provide an opportunity for farmers in this country to produce and to bring their produce to them. Over the years I have heard persons say that as long as a farmer has an opportunity or a place to market his products, there would be no problem.

I want to tip my hat off to Super Centre Limited, if I may call the name with your permission, Mr. President, for the work that they continue to do. I know that Senator the Honourable Francis L. Chandler has worked very closely with Super Centre in ensuring that the farmers in this country are given a look-in. Farmers that produce sugar have a market for their sugar, the factories. The poultry processing plants, the contract growing system, have provided farmers that produce chicken, the broilers, with a sure market. Farmers that produce milk have a contractual arrangement with the Pine Hill Dairy so they can take their milk there. Apart from the fresh pork market which continues to grow, there are two agro-processing plants, HiPak and Perone, which take pig farmers' produce and convert them into other processed products like bacon, ham and all of the rest of it.

The point I want to make, Mr. President, is that as long as there is a market available anywhere to take the farmers produce, at the end of the line farmers in this country will produce. Towards the end of last year and into the new year, we were faced with some tremendous challenges where the drought situation adversely affected us. Farmers once given a little opportunity to just clear a hole would put a seed in and hope for the best. That is not what they do on a regular basis because they do plan their production, but farmers would respond favourably.

I want to take this opportunity, Mr. President, to tell you some of the things that we did. Firstly, this Government set about strengthening those institutions, which we have to depend on not only now, but in the future, to ensure sustainability and progress in agriculture. Everybody knows the success story in the 4H Movement where we embarked on an aggressive programme that is sustainable.

I came in and found nine 4H clubs and we were able, in less than a year, to increase that to 30 clubs with a membership of over 900 mainly in the primary schools. It blessed my heart last year January 24 using the facilities of the number one trade union in Barbados at Solidarity House to have our Prime Minister join with the 4H Movement in inducting those 900 persons with their parents into the 4H organisation. We will continue to work with them to ensure that the future of agriculture is assured.

I want to give my regards to a number of persons who have helped to bring this 4H Movement along, including a good old friend of my mine Ernest Payne, whose daughter is...

Mr. PRESIDENT: I do not like interrupting the Senator but I think the Senator is as familiar with the Rules as I am.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Thank you very much, Mr. President, I am, so I apologise for calling his name but I tip my hat off to him.

The Youth in Agriculture Programme that we continue to develop is very important to this country. The BADMC has embraced some young farmers. Their "Agro-preneurial" Programme is kicking in. They are training the farmers in some business practices and the millennium programme as well. They are operating out of the compound of the Animal Nutrition Unit there at the Pine. This is the third group of persons. Presently, there are 35 persons being trained. I am seeking opportunity as well, Mr. President, to take them and have them do some work on various farms to expose them to the rudiments of agriculture.

Senate A34 Sequence 6

12:00 noon

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SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Sometime this week, Mr. President, we also saw in the newspapers young people sitting down at the feet of the Governor-General. He also has an agricultural programme. Again, I want to take my hat off to those persons who continue to champion that

cause on a yearly basis, bringing agriculture to the minds of the young people in this country.

We looked at strengthening the BADMC, that is another Government Statutory Corporation that was neglected for a number of years. There was no subvention to help them with the programme. The 'M' in their acronym is marketing and the 'D' is development. We believe, Mr. President, that if we were to "politics" out of the Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation and strengthen that institution and make sure that the mandate is adhered to and there is a system in charting a course forward, I am confident that the future of agriculture would be more assured.

The Barbados Agricultural Society was another institution that this Government sought to embrace and continue to support. We have seen some progress, as the good Lord continues, Mr. President, to crown our labour with success, farmers and householders have responded to our call to increase food production. Mr. President, a glance at the figures coming out of the Central Bank of Barbados Report, 2009, and the Barbados Economic and Social Report, 2009, confirms this good picture that I am seeking to give to you.

Let us take a look at the root crop production in the last two years and perhaps compare some of them with the previous year. In relation to cassava, I am happy to report, Mr. President, that in 2007, we produced 448 000 kilogrammes. In 2008, this increased to 466.2 thousand kilogrammes and in 2009, it increased to 690.5 kilogrammes.

Let us look at sweet potatoes. In 2007, the production of sweet potatoes was just under 1 million kilogrammes as recorded. That increased to 1.202 million in the year 2009. In 2008, yams produced 279.6 thousand kilogrammes; in 2009, it increased to 824.3 thousand kilogrammes. In 2008, onions were 423.6 thousand kilogrammes; in 2009, it increased to 626 thousand kilogrammes. In 2007, peanuts were 9 000 kilogrammes; in 2008, it increased to 23.7 thousand kilogrammes, while in 2009, it rose to 50.4 thousand kilogrammes. Mr. President, the Ministry of Agriculture, therefore, must take some credit but we must also take our hats off to those farmers. Sir, I want to thank them personally for responding to what we recommended.

Let us look at the livestock sector, despite the challenges that we faced with the increased cost of feed. Mr. President, I want to look at mutton production. In 2008, we produced 1.8 million kilogrammes. This fell slightly in 2009 to 1.4 million kilogrammes. In 2008, pork production was 1.14 million kilogrammes and this increased to 1.121 million kilogrammes in the year 2009.

Poultry did exceptionally well, moving from 1.3 million kilogrammes to 1.7 million kilogrammes in 2009.

Mr. President, we are very self-sufficient as far as egg production is concerned. Sir, milk producers also held their own. Sir, any time in this country you hear the farmers not complaining, any time you are hearing no concerns coming from the dairy producers about challenges in relation to the Pine Hill Dairy, any time you know that the pork producers are finding their markets and going around, you can be assured that things are going okay. Mr. President, despite these successes, there are still some challenges that are ahead of us. There is still tremendous room for improvement in the sector.

Sir, let me say, as I boasted about those figures just now, we are still way below the mark in self-sufficiency in some of those areas. For instance, I mentioned that there was a tremendous increase in the production of onions in 2009 over 2008 but, Mr. President, that amount that we are producing is only about 23 per cent of the total consumption that we use. Therefore, there is tremendous room for improvement in the production of local onions. Despite the increases we are seeing, we are only doing 23 per cent of the onions we consume.

As far as pumpkins are concerned, we are only doing 23 per cent production. Our cucumbers are in the 90 per cent; we produce 97 per cent of what we consume as far as cucumbers are concerned. Sweet peppers, we do 74.9 per cent, hot peppers, 98 per cent. We are producing 90 per cent of our tomatoes. Only 38 per cent of our cabbages. Sir, there is tremendous room for improvement. We are only doing 28.9 per cent of our melons, Mr. President. We are doing 99 per cent of our consumption of cassava. We are doing 100 per cent production of our sweet potatoes and we are doing very well, as far as yams and other crops are concerned. Sir, there is room for improvement with regard to farmers.

Mr. President, I am sure that with the availability of the rebate programme, with the availability of the incentive scheme that is working on the farmers' behalf, the fact that farmers are now able, through this Bill being discussed and hopefully passed, to be in a better position to keep their cost of production to a low level, as we seek other areas to help them to improve.

Mr. President, there is also the fisheries sector. We have not left out the fisheries sector. I cannot tell you that I would have done anything in the sea to cause more flying fish or dolphin to be produced. Perhaps, I cannot even swim.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: I am not the only person in this room who cannot swim, Mr. President.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am not sure I like the way how you paused as you said Mr. President.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: I am sorry, Mr. President, because I know that you are at the sea every morning, 365 days a year and 366 days when it is a leap year, but I am happy to report increases in the various species of landings of the different fishes during the past two years. I have sought to encourage the various landing sites to record their landings accurately. I have seen some positive reaction to our call.

Sir, when people do not report the catches, as they seek, perhaps, sometimes to avoid the toll, for example, if they brought in 40 000 flying fish, they may want to say that they have brought in 25 000. I said, "No, fishermen should simply report the full amount and pay whatever toll there is to be paid." When fishermen report those figures, those figures find their way into the Reports of the Central Bank, which enables the Central Bank to be able to report in a more meaningful way the contribution of the fisheries sector to the overall development of our country. Sir, I am happy to report that fishermen have responded to that call.

12.10 p.m.

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SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: They have also responded favourably to the call to address the discriminate use of water at the areas, and I want to take my hat off to those persons in the market. Sir, very shortly we will be addressing other areas where we can discuss with our farmers and our fisher-people ways of organising themselves.

Mr. President, the year 2010 has not started with the same robust way that 2008/2009 started. I want to say to ourselves, not making any excuses at all, but, Mr. President, during the first quarter of 2010, the sector experienced a slow start for local food production, and most reported commodities showed a decline in production qualities.

This would have been somewhat expected due to the prolonged dry spell experienced during the latter half of last year. If you remember, those of us who have reasonably good memories, that October, November and December 2009 were very, very dry and this adversely affected the germination of a lot of our seeds and a lot of our livestock farmers were struggling. Sir, even as it extended into the new year, into January, February and

early March, there were a tremendous amount of cane fires and some of us were wondering what would have happened to sugar and non-sugar agriculture. Sir, that resulted in kind of a sluggish start, but we have been able to pull ourselves together, get our thoughts and provide ways to solve the problem.

Mr. President, we have continued to examine ways to assist farmers in their harvesting water and there is a rebate programme in place to assist farmers. I am sure that one of our colleagues on This Side will speak to that as well, water harvesting techniques. There are rebate programmes in place for that and that is why I encourage farmers to gain access to that entire package and see where they can benefit.

Mr. President, I am not going to read out all the figures of the production for this year, but suffice it to say, while I can stand on my feet and report progress for 2008/2009, I want to say that there has been some falloff in the early part of 2010 brought about by the dry spell that we have experienced in the dry part of this year 2010.

Sir, not all commodities suffered, but those root crops like yams and sweet potatoes people were complaining when they went into the supermarket that the yams were small and that they could not find sweet potatoes, and that they were expensive, not recognising that when the earth is dry and hard and farmers cannot till the soil that would be the result. We have been able to rectify that as the rains came in and we now seem to be back on our feet.

Mr. President, before I close, I want to say to you that as we go through looking to make agriculture more meaningful to our people, that we look at ways of ensuring greater food security and greater food sovereignty in this country. I want, therefore, to be able to call and meet with those persons at the AMC, BAMC, that agency that manages the sugar plantation and the sugar lands because I believe that a system has to be put in place for them. Sir, not going back to the 1942 Food Crop Ordinance Act, but to say to them that we should plant a percentage of our arable acreage in food and plant the production. Sir, there is tremendous potential for cotton. There is tremendous production for cassava production and processing and let us plant adequate acreage of sweet potatoes and yams. The smaller producers will continue to plant okras, carrots, beans and those crops that have a "bending-and-back-breaking" nature.

Sir, large farmers scarcely like to plant beans because when you have to pick an acre of beans, you have to go to a doctor to look at your back. There is room for all and those commodities that we know that the larger farmers will manage, they will do but I want, therefore, to

look at that very seriously where a percentage of the arable acres will be planted in food and cotton.

Mr. President, I want to look at a greater role for the BADMC, as we seek to campaign our greenhouse production and our greenhouse technology, to look at our feedlot system for our black belly sheep and to look at other areas of development in agriculture.

I want to be able to encourage the management of BADMC to prepare themselves to look at playing a greater role as we examine the role of the state-owned Corporation in this country. We need to be able to bring the cost of our food to a level where people will stop having to call the call-in programmes to complain. We have to be able to regulate the marketing of our fresh produce and look at the role of the private sector, and I want other supermarkets to emulate what is being done by the Super Centre chain.

Mr. President, with those words, I want to suggest to you that we are on the right path and, therefore, I ask that this Bill be read a second time.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Chandler.

SENATOR Dr. F. L. CHANDLER: Mr. President, I rise to support the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill, No. 2, although, as I have said so many times before, we should not be bringing the legislation to Barbados so long after the fact, but we seem to continue to do this.

Mr. President, I congratulate the Government on the incentives, et cetera, given to farmers. There are many and they are very useful but to think that the administration of the incentives needs to be less discretionary and more objective.

Sir, also the length of time although Minister Benn did say that the time has been reduced, it is still too long, in my opinion. I do not think it is acceptable. Sir, recently a farmer had a problem with accessing a rebate. Sir, many months had elapsed, he was asking many question and had not received any answers. I visited his farm while on a tour and I was really impressed with what he was doing. He told me of the problem and I said that since I was familiar with the staff at the Ministry, I would try to understand what the problem was. I called the officer in charge of incentives and started to speak about the problem. I was told, and I quote, "It is none of your business." He told me to turn on my tape recorder and that he would repeat it, "It is none of your business," and put the phone down in my ears.

Sir, I cannot say for sure, but I doubt whether any more action has been taken on this matter. The farmer has actually said to the officer that there was not anything in the claim that the Ministry did not agree with that they should remove it and give him the rest because it was a

considerable investment but nothing continued to be done. I thought that as some sort of representative of agriculture that I might be able to help to understand but that was the reaction, so I do not think things are absolutely okay in the Incentives Department.

Mr. President, I have another related concern. Sir, agricultural inputs have been and are, as far as I know, duty-free but now I understand that every input whether they are things that could only be used for agriculture...

S/A34/ 12:20 Sequence 8

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SENATOR Dr. F. L. CHANDLER: There is no doubt about it. They have to go to the Ministry to redeem agricultural inputs which puts another layer of bureaucracy in the industry. The industry is struggling and it really does not need another layer of bureaucracy so I was wondering if anything could be done about that.

Sir, with regard to the rebates, I am also asking again about the fuel incentive for the farmers, which was promised two years ago and which has been given to the PSVs, they were offered it the same time, but the farmers never got it. The farmers seemed to have remained very quiet, but farmers are very peaceful people.

Sir, I have to congratulate the farming community on the strides they have made in spite of many difficulties, most of them due to what Minister Benn spoke about, the drought followed by the heat and the wet. One minute you have too little rain and the next minute you have too much and both can be just as harmful to agriculture.

I would also like to congratulate Super Centre, as the Minister has done, on what it is doing with import substitutions. They have substituted over a million dollars in 2009 in just a few crops, also, their willingness to make contractual arrangements with farmers. Obviously, if you have a contractual arrangement you feel more secure. You can produce a certain quantity. You know what price you are going to get for it in advance.

I think that more supermarkets need to follow them. With the imports substitution programme I have encouraged others to go into this programme and I have been told: "Sorry our Directors are importers". I think we need more loyalty to our farmers and not just this easy way of saying that they import.

Another thing is, the farmers need to organise themselves a little better. When the Minister talked about cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli and that whole family, cabbage is produced much better in the St. Thomas, St. John, St. Joseph and St. George areas which are cooler, but

everybody wants to grow the same thing, so you have people growing okras which could be grown in St. Philip, Christ Church and lower areas, and up in the higher areas which could be taken advantage of their slight climatic differences, so we need the farmers to understand.

Sir, recently I did a little take, which I sent to BAS, saying which areas are best suited to which crops to try to get their farmers to comply with that. I do not know if there are any incentives that could be given by Government to say if you are in St. Thomas and you produce cabbage, you will be given some additional price. If you produce carrots, no, because carrots could be grown in lower areas. I do not know if there is anything that can be done in that regard.

Mr. President, with regard to the linkages between agriculture and other sectors, obviously, it is very much needed. I was wondering if the Minister could tell us whether there is any further word on the proposal by the National Agricultural Commission on the restructuring of the industry which involves these linkages and the coordinating of all of these linkages and the managing of them. I am sure this would have a significantly positive effect on agriculture if it were introduced.

Again, I would like to say that I do support the Income Tax (Amendment)(No.2) Bill.

I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Worrell.

SENATOR A. R. WORRELL: Mr. President, I am rising to support this Bill because I see it as an opportunity for the agricultural sector, a very important sector within not only the Barbados economy, but any economy. It is important that agriculture has prominence as the sector continues to grow, because there is tremendous growth potential in agriculture.

Sir, when you look around the world and you see the impact of the global recession, which mainly affected countries focussed on financial services and other services, you will recognise, countries who had a strong base in agriculture are coping better with this recession.

One aspect I was proud of in terms of looking at recent economic reviews, not only the one for this year, but years before 2009, and I believed possibly the one for 2008 as well, showed that there was an increase in agriculture. Particularly in one of the reviews a number of sectors started to show signs of decline as a result of the recession. The only sector which showed a 1 per cent growth or a slight increase was agriculture. At that time it was highly attributed to the sugar cane because we did well in sugar cane production in that year, but non sugar cane agriculture also increased that year as well.

I believe agriculture would have performed tremendously last year as well, which would have been recorded earlier this year, but for the drought which affected quite a number of the sugar production and resulted in low yields in sugar cane production.

Sir, there are tremendous potential and opportunities in agriculture, not only in the growing of the agricultural product but also in utilising the incentive from this rebate, in terms of the processing of the agricultural products within Barbados. I would like to highlight and to emphasise that.

In Senator Benn's introduction he made mention of the fact of strengthening the 4-H Movement and so forth in Barbados. I caught on to that because, recently, I was at a meeting and the person was speaking on a more global perspective in terms of declining numbers of young people within agriculture. While listening to that person, I recalled in my mind the work that was done to strengthen the 4-H Movement and also programmes as The Youth in Agriculture. I said to myself, this is not going to be the case here in Barbados. The person was making the statement that a lot of young people are turning away from agriculture, and it was important to get them more interested and involved in agriculture.

Sir, you will recognise that a lot of societies such as China, India and so forth, persons are moving away from the rural areas to find a life for themselves in the urban areas, which would result in them moving away from their farming and going into jobs within the urban areas.

I am glad that in Barbados the importance of agriculture has been recognised and the importance of strengthening institutions such as the 4-H Movement and The Youth in Agriculture Movement, so that we have young people in Barbados who are recognising the potential in agriculture for their own development and self-employment. If they continue along that trend, we will also see the output in agriculture continue to increase in Barbados, not only sugar cane farming but livestock and vegetables. There are other areas as well which I will mention further on.

I can actually speak of one young person that I know of, who recently recognised that he needed to find some way to earn additional income. They need to find some way to help themselves. They may be at university now, with a clerical job, but it might not be enough to get them all the way, or may be able to get all the things that they want, so that young person took the very bold step of acquiring a set of land to cultivate and he is working very hard.

I am very proud of that person to see what he is doing for himself, recognising the importance of a

university education which would help to manage the finances, rather than using that university education to take him from Cave Hill into an office. There are other things he can follow to earn money. One of the things that person turned to was agriculture.

Sir, right now they are beginning to cultivate the land.

SA34 12.30 p.m. Sequence 9

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Senate A34, sequence 10, 12.30 p.m.

SENATOR A. R. WORRELL: They have some things already planted and they are hoping that they will be able to reap this produce within a couple of weeks and get them sold, that way, earning themselves additional income which will help them with university expenses and ordinary expenses. This is a way that more young people in Barbados can go because right now, there are quite a number of plantations or farms which may have idle land and may be willing to lease some of the land to persons.

I have noticed that in an area I pass on my way home that a number of persons have taken up that opportunity to lease the land from the larger farms, which were waiting for the opportunity to subdivide the land to build houses, but that is not necessarily going to happen so they decided to take the opportunity to lease the land and put it back into agriculture. They may not necessarily do the work themselves but get other people who are interested to do that work.

I am hoping that the Ministry, BADMC in particular, would make it known, highlight and publicise the avenues and the opportunities which are available because agriculture in Barbados gets a fair share of assistance and a fair share of help and many people do not know about it.

We have an unfortunate thing where the people who are reaping the success and rewards from it, often try to give you the impression that there is not a cent in it and it is not worth it, but I would like the persons whose interest it is to promote agriculture, to find more creative ways of getting that information out there so that the general public would know that, maybe there is an opportunity here for them with this thing, maybe let them try to do a bit of vegetable farming or livestock farming as well.

The persons who are doing well with it, should stop sending the horror stories and stop complaining so much, giving people the impression there is no room for opportunity and there is no growth. At least as Senator Benn said, when things are going well, commend the Ministry of Agriculture, the BADMC and the Barbados

Agricultural Society for doing a good job and for offering good assistance. We need to let it be known that this is something to get ourselves involved in, Sir.

When we are complaining about the current economic situation, the information is already there. The policy is already set. All we need to do now is to turn the policy into action, work on it, start getting out there and investing in these things.

I notice that there are quite a number of incentives for things such as greenhouse farming and organic farming which, if people would tap into these, because agriculture as you know it, people may have a hindrance and a mind set against it and say that my great-grandmother worked on the farm and I am not going back on the farm, but if you try to utilise the technology and equipment that are available out there and try the greenhouse farming, organic farming and try fish farming, it is a lot different from what it was in the past.

You would find that through things like the greenhouse farming, you would reap greater rewards and you have higher yield than if you do the normal agricultural farming. These are ways of making it more interesting and appealing to the average farmer and also to young people as well.

It is also noted that in Barbados we are almost self-sufficient in terms of our poultry production, in terms of eggs and the rest of poultry so that is good. I am wondering, probably put the question out there that if we are supplying our own domestic market, is there any room or opportunity for us to go outside of the Barbados market, especially in terms of eggs and poultry? Are there any opportunities and what would be needed for us to be able to tap into that market, to take agriculture in Barbados to another level, where we not only supply our own needs?

We eat a lot of chicken here in Barbados but even if we do not get it sold, it would not spoil so there will be room for it and it would also help to bring down the price of the chicken in the supermarkets as well, if we are able to produce not only for our local market, but look for opportunities to produce outside as well.

Fish farming is another area as well and I am looking forward to the day to see more people get involved in fish farming. We have been doing well in terms of the actual catches of flying fish and other fish products in the markets but there is still tremendous opportunity for fish farming which, to some extent, you would be able to control and be able to have an estimate of what would be your output.

One thing I would like to see farmers in Barbados do, would be to make more use of the resources and be more sustainable in the way they handle their business.

Coming on to the dry season, you would hear cries in terms of not being able to get water and so forth, but you have to make opportunities to make sure that you capture the water that you need to use on your farm. I recall an experience having visited a farm in China which every single thing that was used on that farm was put back into biogas. I know there is one farm in Barbados which makes use of biogas. I believe there is opportunity for more people in Barbados to make use of that technology.

We also have the calls for composting and so forth. This is not something that can only be done by the farmers but the average Barbadian can get involved in that as well, in terms of making sure that you sort your garbage and develop your own compost. Then you can use that as mulch, fertilisers and so forth to help in crop production. I would like to see farmers in Barbados tap into that kind of farming so that every single thing that is used on the farm goes back into reducing their expenses. Make sure that you find a way of collecting your water so that in the dry season you have a water supply for your livestock and also for your irrigation as well.

Sir, what this incentive does, is that there are also opportunities for smaller areas such as plants for medicinal purposes. When I speak of this there is a company in St. John not too far from where I live and I had the opportunity to visit them last year, when they had an Open Day. The name of the company, if I can mention it within the Senate, is Earth Mother Botanicals and they utilise a number of herbs and so forth to make soaps and creams. They also do insect repellents, so there is also potential for their lot.

The point I am trying to put over is that to get through in farming, to get through in agriculture processing, you do not necessarily need to have a large expanse of land or a lot of sophisticated high-tech equipment but there is a lot of work that can be done, in terms of spending a little more time learning about the foliage that we have around us and how we can utilise it for our benefit, in terms of medicinal purposes, creams, beautification and so forth. These are things that through this incentive, you can get into that business.

I commend the Minister of Agriculture and the Ministry of Agriculture. What I would like to say is that we have to find ways of getting that information out there so that the facilities are there. We need to start making use of them. Agriculture is a very important sector and should always remain a very important sector in the Barbados economy because it has tremendous value. I would like to see more and more people take opportunities of the areas that they have in agriculture.

Mr. President, with those few words, I support the Bill.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Husbands.

SENATOR H. A. HUSBANDS: Mr. President, like the former speakers, I rise to support this Bill. Unlike the former speakers, however, I am a town boy, a very proud town boy at that and speaking as a proud town boy, I want to pay tribute to the farmers of Barbados.

Asides.

Senate A34, sequence 10, 12:40:14

Wednesday, August 18, 2010

SENATOR H. A. HUSBANDS: Speaking as a proud town boy, a boy born in Bridgetown, I want to pay tribute to the farmers of Barbados and to the Minister of Agriculture for the work that has been done over the last number of years, and as the Minister said, not only in the last two and a half years but before that, to promote agriculture in this country. Again, speaking as a city boy, agriculture is an extremely difficult and labour intensive enterprise. In this time, I think that the society needs to pay or give absolute tribute to the people who are so engaged.

This time last year, Mr. President, I had some time on my hand - some people would say that I was unemployed but I prefer to say that I had some time on my hand - and I used that time to go around and visit the various markets in the city and in the countryside and I noticed the tremendous amount of agricultural products on sale. Wherever I went during that period it seemed as though all the trays of all the people selling agricultural products were overflowing.

Mr. President, I sought the advice and counsel of an official involved in agriculture, deliberately not the Minister because one would expect the Minister would say, oh yes, things are lovely, but someone I considered to be trained, knowledgeable and independent to find out if what I was observing on a daily basis as I went around to these markets was in fact true, so I was not surprised at the Report of the Central Bank which spoke in some positive terms of some sectors of the industry. I was extremely impressed and that is the context in which I rise to support this Bill and also to pay tribute to those persons involved in agriculture.

Mr. President, I am a lover of mangoes and this year is probably the first year that I have not had to eat an imported mango. It seems that every household in Barbados has a mango tree. You are giving your neighbour half of a dozen and he is giving you a dozen. Mr. President, that, as small as it may seem, is a tribute to work that might have been done in the Scotland District several years ago. I think there is a growing consciousness of the role of

agriculture, the need to eat local and the need to eat fruits and so on.

Sometimes we make progress but we do not actually recognise the extent of the progress we make because it is not sudden, revolutionary and so on, but is slow progress. My experience with the mangoes this season is testimony to some work that has been done and so on. I hope that in similar areas that kind of work would continue.

Mr. President, my main point and a rather brief one that I want to make is to the farmers and the agricultural officials. I recognise that there is an opportunity now, amidst the economic crisis, for our farmers. The general theory on agricultural production up until quite recently was that what we needed to do was to corporatise farms, have intensive farming and make use of economies of scale, that is, have farms as big as possible so that we can reduce cost and produce cheap agricultural products to consumers.

While that may be sound and the economists may actually be right, they can probably produce several models to justify that argument, in the real world though what has happened is that after a number of incidences, particularly in the United States of America where there have been significant recalls of agricultural products...

As we speak, I notice in the news this morning on CNN that there is a major recall of eggs in the United States of America because a number of people somewhere have died of salmonella poisoning. The idea that an egg is a product like a motor car to be recalled is really the epitome of this idea that farms should be corporatised. The new theory emerging now says that you are better off eating agricultural products from farms that are in your community, farms that you walk past every day, farms that you drive past every day.

Mr. President, there was once a view, and I may have held it at some stage, that Barbados is so small, why do we need agriculture, that some of these products could be imported. The very eggs that I spoke about can be imported very cheaply. Today, the advantage in agriculture seems to be to those farms that are near communities, that communities have access to, that communities actually know their farmer and the methods that these farmers are using to produce the various products. I think this represents a tremendous opportunity for the farmers of Barbados to combat the view that agricultural products produced on a mass scale in developed countries are cheaper and therefore better suited to our local customers.

Sir, we have an opportunity to take advantage of to promote local production. Mr. President, that is not to say that you write the local farmers a blank cheque to say produce these products at whatever cost and under

whatever conditions and that we the consumers are bound to purchase them because they are produced locally. The advantage our farmers can take hold of, Mr. President, is having the consumers fully aware and knowing what they are purchasing.

Mr. President, I want to say to those who promote farming activity that they have to take these issues into consideration in their promotion. I underlined it by saying that it is not an opportunity however for a blank cheque for farmers to do whatever they feel like doing or charge whatever they feel like charging but that they should be cognisant of this changing reality in farming.

Let me finish, Mr. President.

Asides.

SENATOR H. A. HUSBANDS: My apologies, Mr. President. I know that some people use this as a dress rehearsal to go elsewhere but, Mr. President, I would never do such a thing.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Just be careful with your language. You are addressing this Honourable Chamber and if you say some people use it, that would fall afoul of one of the Standing Orders of this Chamber. No one gets to use this place.

SENATOR H. A. HUSBANDS: Very well, Sir. Suppose I say some people accused others of using it.

Asides.

SENATOR H. A. HUSBANDS: I want to close on a personal note. Having had some time, as I said earlier as an unemployed city boy, to visit markets and so on and to do the shopping in my household - the employed spouse gets to do all the house work - I have some difficulty, Mr. President, in understanding how UHT milk could be classified as fresh.

Senate A34 Sequence 11

12.50 p.m.

Wednesday, August 18, 2010

SENATOR H. A. HUSBANDS: Mr. President, I use a simple, unemployed city boy's definition of "fresh". Sir, I have a difficulty understanding how a product like milk that sits on a shelf for three months, not even being refrigerated, could be described, promoted and sold as fresh.

When I spoke earlier about farmers taking advantage of the new theory in farming, about eating products

produced as close to your home as possible, I said that farmers or people processing farm products should not use this opportunity, the fact that we are proud to drink milk that is produced from cows that we see on a daily basis, to make sport or to mislead, in my view, the consumers of this country.

With these few words, Mr. President, I am pleased to support this Bill.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Ince.

SENATOR J. INCE: Mr. President, I rise to support the Amendment of the Income Tax (No.2) Bill, making reference to agricultural incentives in this country. Sir, agriculture plays a very pivotal role in both the social and economic development of Barbados.

Sir, having been born in the parish of St. Philip, which compared to many other parishes is considered to be very dry and is opened to the sea but when we look at understanding agriculture and what it has contributed to the families within Barbados, we can only say that both Governments have done well in ensuring that we have a stable agriculture industry, particularly in the sugar industry, where we have seen families have been able to educate their children. Mr. President, at the primary, secondary and university levels, we have seen where families, friends and others have used this industry for economic development.

Let me say at this point, Sir, that I want to thank all hardworking Barbadians who have built the agricultural industry over the years. I also want to thank those persons involved in the Trade Union Movement, especially those persons who are involved with the Barbados Workers' Union. I say that because my father worked in the sugar industry at Carrington Factory.

I can remember those days where the union crossed swords with the plantation owners, in ensuring that sugar workers in this country receive what we would call an acceptable pay for the hard work that had to be put into sugar production. Sir, that hard work not only spans from the present members of the Barbados Workers' Union, it also goes to the former members, including the late Sir Frank Walcott, who has done a tremendous job in shaping the sugar industry of this country.

I also extend congratulations to the present General-Secretary, Senator Sir Roy, who has also done tremendous work in shaping the sugar industry. I say that because I am a product, as I said before, of a father who worked hard in the sugar industry and has devoted much time to seeing that the sugar industry is a success.

Sir, I will always make reference to some people, though it may sound like a broken record or a continuous statement. Sir, between 1991 and 1994, the Democratic Labour Party and this present Administration was in office. Sir, at that time, we faced some challenging times in the agricultural sector. We, therefore, took a number of decisions to restructure the entire agricultural sector. Sir, out of that, in 1994, the agricultural sector grew from 6.4 per cent.

Mr. President, Beyond that, it went into a decline and here we are, 16 years later, having to make decisions again, as well as bringing to this Senate, looking at the Amendment as far as the 1999 incentives are concerned. Sir, it has always been an objective of this Administration to ensure that our productive sectors are viable, by making decisions to the benefit of all Barbadians.

Mr. President, we need to see agriculture as a profession in this country. Despite all of the incentives and all of the measures, we are still not looking at farmers as professionals. For too long, we have seen farmers as high school “drop outs”. We have seen farmers as individuals who have little or no common sense, who see farming as an alternative and not as a profession. Sir, I am saying that one of the main objectives of this Administration is to change the way people think about agriculture. That is important.

Mr. President, as was outlined by Senator Benn, this Government wants to change the whole perspective of how individuals see agriculture and not just as a person who is a high school “drop-out” or someone who has nothing else to do, who is going to work in agriculture so that he or she could earn some funding. Sir, it goes beyond that, there is also a link between agriculture and tourism.

Mr. President, the Barbados Development Plan clearly outlines that link between tourism and agriculture. There are many hotels and restaurants that are now embarking, as part of their entire menu, this whole concept of the environment and producing meats, milk and vegetables, what we term organic farming. In North America they are calling it free-flowing plain production or free-ranged production, where fowls are now produced outside of chemicals.

Sir, we have been producing free-ranged meat production in Barbados for the longest time, what we call the yard fowls. We have been producing yard fowls for meat and I smile when I see in the magazines and on television, they are talking about free-range chicken. We have been at the forefront of production of free-ranged chicken in Barbados. Sir, what we call yard fowls are what the North Americans and persons in the United Kingdom are calling free-ranged chickens, where you prepare a fenced-in area, where chickens are only fed grass and

naturally-produced corn. We have been doing that in Barbados.

Asides.

1.00 p.m.

Wednesday, August 18, 2010

SENATOR J. INCE: What it says to me is that the world, including what this Administration is doing, is embarking on something called specialised farming. Sir, we are embarking on specialised farming where persons now walking into hotels and restaurants are asking where the meat was produced, where was the chicken produced and what type of chemicals were used.

These are the questions that are being asked and what we are doing here in Barbados is embarking on that area. Sir, specialised farming is necessary because out of specialised farming, you get innovation, you get economies of scales and you get how best to use your water resources. Sir, these are types of things that would come out of specialised farming.

Sir, not only that, it also gives your farmers and opportunity to have a consistent supply of vegetables, so you plant based on what the cycles of the years would involved rain, as well as dry and wet weather, and farmers then would have a conduit to constantly supply the vegetables that are necessary.

Mr. President, based on the reports on how the agricultural industry performed in 2009/2010, we have seen 69 per cent in the root crop sector, that onion production increased by 88 per cent, livestock increased by 2 per cent, milk and egg production increased by 5 per cent and that pork and beef increased by 4 per cent. Sir, these are very good indicators that are heading in the right direction.

Mr. President, one of the other things that I am impressed with is that the whole idea of identifying a percentage of our land to be maintained in agriculture and food production is important and when we look at the whole idea of food security, food security is necessary and is important. Sir, building homes is important and building large offices are important but, at the end of the day, we need to secure our food, we need to identify strategic areas in which our food production is protected.

Mr. President, persons involved in agriculture also need to be protected. Sir, over the years, the unions in this country, especially the Barbados Workers' Union has been calling for better facilities for agricultural worker and the agricultural worker is just as important as what we term financial capital.

Sir, the agricultural worker is important and an environment that is conducive to work would yield high production. Sir, an individual going into an environment where his tools or her tools are not available to get an adequate level of production, you would have discontent. Sir, sometimes it bothers me as I drive from St. Philip to St. Michael passing the cane fields and the agricultural land in Barbados to see that there are no adequate toilet facilities for agricultural workers.

Sir, sometimes you pass and see that these persons are working three days and four days in a particular area and when you look around I do not see the facilities available. Sir, I am saying that in this age of technology that sometimes even when it gets hot, you do not see an area where the workers in the agricultural industry can go during their lunch time and have lunch in cool conditions. Sir, these are some of the challenges that our agricultural industry face.

Mr. President, it is not just about how many vegetables we produce. It is not just about what we import. It is not just about the level of chemicals or whether we are investing in organic farming, it also has to do with the environment in which the workers function. Sir, it is very important.

Mr. President, these concessions are necessary. The concessions are wide and they actually cover most areas in agriculture and I encourage farmers to make use of the concessions. There are concessions for those involved in livestock, those involved in vegetable production and I must say that as one of those persons who is very much interested in livestock production, especially when it comes to the rearing of black belly sheep, I have learnt my lesson not to mix politics with sheep rearing because it does not work. Sir, the reason why I say that is because I was a black belly sheep farmer living in St. Philip and I decided for a representative within that area and using the lands of Government for my sheep farm, I received a little note that my sheep were destroying the grasslands, so I have learnt how not to mix politics and agriculture because politics in agriculture does not work. What we must do is to look at the benefits for the country and look at the benefits as a whole instead of having to create a balance with what is Party and what is country.

Mr. President, with those few words, I support this Amendment and, Sir, I am obliged.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Sandiford-Garner.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Thank you, Sir. Mr. President, following on from the previous speaker, that means I should warn my dad because if we are not going to mix politics with sheep rearing, he may have to get rid of his.

Mr. President, as I rise to support this Bill, I am hearkened that the farmers of Barbados can now thank the Government for acting after 11 years in seeing that their incentive programme is on stream and on stream to work. Sir, after saying that, I also need to say that throughout the time that I have been involved, and by extension, my family has been involved in agriculture, there has always seemed to be a disconnection between the Ministry of Agriculture and the farmers of Barbados.

I think that these issues would have been addressed earlier, so I would not wish to go into detail, but I would wish to say here on this Floor that I would hope, as some speakers have said earlier, that this disconnection is addressed and that the farmers can feel that they have an ear in the Ministry among the technocrats, who understand what they are trying to do and who would facilitate them at every level.

Mr. President, the incentives cover a myriad of areas, cotton development, export production, spraying, orchard development, weed control, irrigation systems, pasture development, land and livestock development and even the Scotland District. I say even the Scotland District because, Sir, the Scotland District is so often omitted whenever we speak of the development of Barbados and if for that reason only, I commend the Ministry of Agriculture for recognising the importance of the Scotland District.

Mr. President, I speak, specifically, also of the parish of St. Andrew, the home to Haggatts Station and the Greenland Livestock Station. Sir, earlier, one of our speakers would have spoken about the mangoes that he has enjoyed in Barbados this year and I am sure that speaker knows that many of those mangoes would have originated at the Haggatts Station in St. Andrew.

S/A34/13:10 Sequence 13

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SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Many years ago Haggatts was the home and the headquarters and Barbadians, who would wish to get mangoes and other fruit trees headed straight to Haggatts, St. Andrew to get those fruit trees. I am sure that the majority of mangoes consumed by our previous speaker would have come from Haggatts, St. Andrew.

Sir, within the Ministry of Agriculture's plan, they have designated the Scotland District as a Special Development Area. In 2002, the Ministry of Agriculture prepared an Agricultural Development Plan for the Scotland District. Now this plan identifies a number of strategic activities to be pursued for developing the district, including land conservation, water resource development,

infrastructural development, as well as increasing productivity.

The Ministry is continuing, through the Soil Conservation, at Haggatts, to preserve the land in the Scotland District to prevent slippage and to ensure that the land is protected for increased agricultural production.

The Ministry is also pursuing the establishment of a Scotland District Development Authority - which I think is a good thing and will be responsible for ensuring the coordination of all projects across all sectors, as well as creating an environment conducive to private investment in the area.

Sir, I want to say here that I would wish one day to see a more comprehensive development plan done for the Scotland District, and not just specifically an agricultural development plan. We recognise the potential that the Scotland District has, so I would wish not only to focus, or for the Government to focus on just an agricultural plan. I want to see a comprehensive plan done for the Scotland District in Barbados.

I want to see that plan done so that it takes into consideration all the infrastructural challenges we have. I say we, because I have one foot still in St. Andrew and the other part in Barbados.

Sir, taking into consideration, not only the land conservation challenges. When I speak of other challenges, I am speaking about the road network challenges, because if we are going to speak about preserving the land for increased production, you must have roads for trucks to get in and out with the produce that you would wish us to produce.

At present, you cannot access the Scotland District without crossing a bridge. If you come into St. Peter to get into the Scotland District, you have to cross a bridge. You have to cross a bridge from St. James. You have to cross a bridge from St. Joseph, as we so well know. You have to cross a bridge from St. Michael. You cannot get into the Scotland District without crossing a bridge, and at present every single bridge is in jeopardy of breaking down, every one.

Sir, we have had the situation in St. Joseph, which has been rectified. I would wish all other areas of the Scotland District to be addressed as well so that we do not have that challenge. As I said, if you encourage the people in the Scotland District to be farmers and to produce, they have to be able to get out with their produce. It is often said that if we are to leave those bridges as they are, you may soon not be able to get into the Scotland District.

Mr. President, I will like to see a situation where we move to a place with at least one safe and secure road coming in and out of the Scotland District linking it to the neighbouring parishes and to the rest of Barbados.

We also need to be assured of a safe and secure water supply. Plants and crops cannot grow without water. Sheep and cows need to drink water. Yes, we could speak about the preservation of the area but we also need to be assured of safe water supplies.

Sir, the Scotland District is one of the few in Barbados with a plethora of rivers and springs. We have them at Porey Spring and we have them at Bawden. There are rivers and springs throughout the Scotland District. Turner's Hall actually has a boiling spring which could be an agro tourism attraction.

If we have a commitment for a safe water supply, there is a limitless opportunity for plant production. Of course, our sheep, goats and cows would welcome a situation where you do not have to be rushing to collect rain water in some very primitive circumstances to ensure that you can produce your plants and keep your stocks.

Sir, if but a few of these issues are addressed, I am sure that the plan and the document the Minister would have read from today, and the ideas that the Minister would have put on the Floor today, would have the wholesome support of the people of the Scotland District.

I would like to close by congratulating the Ministry for the initiative shown, and look forward for these initiatives from paper to implementation.

I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Holder.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Mr. President, I rise to support this Amendment that is before this Honourable Chamber, but in so doing I wish to express a number of concerns. While it is all agreed that agriculture plays a most important role in the economy of this country, the role of sugar production cannot be underestimated and ought not to be divorced from agriculture.

The Honourable Senator Benn spoke at length about the increase in production of various food items, et cetera, but no mention has been made of the contribution of the sugar industry to the gross domestic product and the revenue of this country. The question must be asked that in all of the incentives that are being offered, what incentives have been given to the sugar cane producers? What incentives have been given as it relates to any price support mechanisms? If in truth and in fact sugar production is on the increase or it is on the decline? If it is on the decline,

what are the factors that have contributed to the decline, albeit non agriculture that would have contributed to the rapid demise of the industry?

Sir, it is a fact that less acreage is being devoted to sugar. That is a fact. There must be a reason for that. It is a known fact that a significant amount of land is coming out of agricultural production and going for other programmes whether or not it is housing.

Sir, what is also of importance is the cost of production per tonne and what is being paid to the farmers. It is a known fact that the cost per tonne is greater than what is being paid to the farmers. I think that the cost per tonne is approximately \$96, while farmers are being paid \$56.

SA 34 13.20 p.m. Sequence 14

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Senate A34, sequence 15, 1.20 p.m.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: They are on par with the production cost so that in truth and in fact, there is no incentive to produce.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Mr. President, on a point of order, the Senator is misleading the Senate. The price is not \$56. That was the price that was proposed but he and his leader knows that the price is now \$70 and that is what he should say.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: I stand corrected, Mr. President, however, if the cost per tonne is \$96 and the cost being paid is \$70 you are \$26 in the red so that there is no incentive to produce. A policy must be put in place to assist the sugar farmers, so that given the fact that there was preferential treatment as it relates to the European Union, it is important that this Government sees that sugar production continues and must continue to play an integral role.

This Government has also said that within the first 100 days of coming into office, it will introduce an Agriculture Protection Act to ensure that taking land out of agricultural production must have a 2/3 majority in both Houses. This was said because it is very obvious that land is being taken out of good agricultural production so that 100 days has elapsed.

Asides.

Senator A. E. HOLDER: Yes, but none has come before this Senate.

I also wish to express another concern. It is all well and good for farmers to produce products for local consumption. However, unless we put in place an amendment to the Praedial Larceny Act to assist farmers there will be no incentive. The Act, as it stands, is outdated. It is woeful and it needs something being done to assist farmers. I would therefore urge this Government to treat it with a degree of alacrity and bring it to the House so that it will assist farmers who want to help in food production.

Additionally, I would like to ask the Honourable Minister what is being done for our cotton industry, if there are any incentives that will induce farmers to put more of their fields in the production of cotton and it should be examined from the perspective of the earning of foreign exchange.

Another concern that I have is the marketing arm of the BADMC and whether or not enough programmes are being offered to small farmers to assist them in how to market their products because we can pass the Cheapside Market, for example, other than a Friday or Saturday, the market is almost empty. I am saying that while there is an incentive for an increase in production the marketing element must also be added. I do not think it will cost the Government a great deal to put on programmes for the small farmers, to assist them in their capacity to market their products.

Those are concerns also expressed by some small farmers who use the markets so that we must create the environment conducive for those persons and we all understand the importance of agriculture as it relates to food sovereignty and being able to feed their country. I am sure that if the correct incentives are offered that it will create the environment which will assist in a reduction in our food import bill which, given the continual phrase being used of the global economic crisis, any time we can earn foreign exchange and at the same time reduce our dependence on imports, must assist in our balance of payments and reduce our foreign debt.

Sir, I would wish the Minister, the Honourable Senator Benn to see agriculture much more than the increase in fisheries catches or the production of cassava, et cetera, but adopt a holistic approach and encompass what has been the traditional saviours of the agricultural sector because it is not long that we sought reliance and we continue to have reliance on the sugar industry as the main plank of our foreign exchange.

Asides.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Incentives to assist the sugar cane farmers. Use the price support mechanism and if you so do, I am sure that agriculture would be given its

correct place and importance in its contribution to the gross domestic product.

With those few words, Mr. President, I am obliged to you, Sir.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, as I rise to wrap up the debate on the Income Tax (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2010, I want to suggest that there are a number of critical issues in relation to agriculture and I just want to preface my comments by saying that in agriculture, as in manufacturing, and even in debates in relation to agriculture, there is something called, just in time systems and I congratulate the Honourable Senator on the Other Side, or rather his courier for delivering his speech in the nick of time.

Senate A34, sequence 15, 13:30:10

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SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: I trust also that he had enough time not only to use the system but to probably internalise and present but I am not so sure.

Sir, I want perhaps to start by correcting one of the things that the Honourable Senator said. It was not much that I could speak to. The Honourable Senator spoke about sugar. There was an intervention to try to correct his suggestion that nothing is being done for the sugar farmers. It is interesting that nothing has happened in the last two and half years but, certainly, nothing happened in 14 years prior to the last two and a half years and, therefore, what we need to recognise is that we have to deal with the neglect of 14 years and come forward.

Mr. President, in terms of sugar, we are also functioning in the context of a changing world regime as it relates to sugar and sugar prices. We would have seen reductions in the vicinity of about 30 per cent in recent times, that is, the price being paid by countries in the European Union. Mr. President, notwithstanding that reduction in price, the support to farmers has remained pretty much constant, to around 72 per cent, I think. Government has provided this price support as asked for by the industry and as has been promised. We are continuing to address those things.

Mr. President, I believe I could go on to talk about the restructuring. We heard a lot, Mr. President, as we discussed the matter of incentives. Lots of incentives, certainly in the context of sugar, do exist. As we are looking at the restructuring of the industry, we are looking to improve the factory situation at Andrews and there is a proposal to invest a significant sum of money, about \$200 million at least, to bring that factory up to the requisite

production, capacity, capability and standard. As part of this programme, the Ministry of Agriculture is working on a scheme to provide support, and I could go on to talk about that.

I am trying to speak quickly, but I believe that I have to do justice to colleagues and certainly, Mr. President, to this issue because, unlike the previous Administration, this Administration takes agriculture and agricultural production very seriously. We appreciate the notion that services must constitute a significant part of our economy and our society but as was pointed out, I think, by the Honourable Senator Worrell, we have also a lesson to draw on, that is, that in these hard times facing the entire globe, those countries that have a strong agricultural sector, even though many of us cannot feed ourselves entirely but we can address issues of security and sovereignty, are fairing better.

We also recognise that an economy has to stand on several legs and this is what we are trying to do, so the note or the message that was received did not, perhaps, target the right issue.

Mr. President, I want to reiterate that this Administration is doing substantial work in the area of sugar. It recognises too that we have to move away from selling sugar as a commodity to make it a specialised product and there are several initiatives being looked at.

Mr. President, I think the Minister of Agriculture, the Honourable Senator Benn, in his contribution this morning in leading off the debate would have touched on the many incentives that are being offered to farmers. The reality is that a lot has not been done to facilitate the process of making those incentives easy to access. I appreciate Senator Chandler's contribution in respect of that. As somebody who is very close to the sector, she understands very well the challenges that we face.

Mr. President, I want to focus my comments from the perspective of my responsibility in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade for an initiative, which was put on the Table by our Honourable Prime Minister, David Thompson, when he recognised that as we look to build this economy, we have to do it in a manner that draws on the several elements to any particular issue or phenomenon that we want to address. In other words, to put it simply, Mr. President, when we talk about economic initiatives, whether it is in tourism, agriculture or manufacturing, these things do not operate in silos, they have cross-sectoral implications, et cetera.

Within the context of the task of addressing two things, foreign exchange generation and foreign exchange savings, the Council for Investment, Exports and Foreign Exchange in the Diaspora has been created and falls within

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. In that Ministry we are required to collaborate with our various ministries as we seek to ensure that our business activity or trading, whether it is in agricultural products, services, et cetera, are done within the framework of current foreign trade rules and regulations, mainly those largely shaped by entities such as the World Trade Organisation, our agreements with the European Union.

Sir, agriculture is one area in which we have worked and are working closely with several Ministries, particularly the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Youth, Family and Sports. Mr. President, if we talk about incentives and if we talk about building an agricultural sector, we have to focus on the youth. I can tell you, Mr. President, that in looking at those incentives, a critical set of initiatives relate to encouraging youth in agriculture.

Sir, I want to move away from the gloom and doom situation that we hear. We are too often ready to say we do not do this, we cannot do this or we do not like to do this. My experience, Mr. President, very much in my own household and in interfacing with young people...

My son would get upset about this. He does not like me to speak about him, but a year ago he said to me that he wants to get involved in agriculture, that we have to eat. This was in the context of all of the issues that we were facing with rising prices, et cetera, and the discussion of unhealthy eating practices of this society.

Mr. President, I told him that if he wants to get into agriculture there are two things he has to recognise, that it is hard work but it is one in which if he takes the right approach, he would be making a significant contribution to his country. Mr. President, he is not an exception because I have come across many young people who are coming to the business of agriculture with a very serious approach.

Mr. President, we talk about the back-breaking aspects of it, the labour intensive nature, et cetera, and we have to ask ourselves, do we as a society necessarily have to find ourselves looking to provide all the labour at that level, or do we seek to capitalise on our investment in our educational system.

I can speak, Mr. President, of a young female Barbadian who, having started a Masters in Chemistry, decided that she was going to apply that knowledge to agriculture. She went out there, she borrowed money, she went and did the training in Israel and she got involved in the agricultural sector. The recent thing she did over a year ago was to lease 25 acres of agricultural land and she is now a farmer. Her job is not simply farming. She is also using her experience, practical, academic and otherwise, to encourage not only young people in Barbados but young

people across the Region to get involved in agriculture, and that is what we need to support.

Mr. President, as part of that whole effort to generate foreign exchange, to reduce our imports, particularly of food crops, and to certainly generate exports in several areas, particularly in agriculture, we have been looking at a number of projects. As was pointed out, agriculture is not only about food crops, it is about medicinal crops, et cetera.

While I am on my feet, Mr. President, I would just want to say, as was indicated, that our technocrats also have to come to some of these projects with the urgency that the entrepreneur is coming to them with. I am happy to report that we have been working and the project now is awaiting some response from the Ministry itself.

There is the Bullens Agricultural Station, which I know some people had their eyes on for things other than agriculture. What we are contemplating and what the Council for Investment, Exports, Foreign Exchange and the Diaspora (CIEX) has put on the Table is an attraction which would allow us to get involved. I am happy that I am seeing the document. It would allow us to create a botanical garden and a research centre, which allows us to engage in a number of things.

Senate A34 Sequence 16

1.40 p.m.

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SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Currently, there is some activity in relation to horticulture taking place but as we talk about these twinning of initiatives and those are the things that we look at. Whether or not it is suitable, the technocrats at the Ministry have to help us to determine that. It is considered a priority. Sir, for me it is a priority because, as I said, to explore within the context of the mandate of the CIEX, some of the benefits that are out there. It allows us to transform the ideas of our young academics and their students. There is a project that has been conceptualised at the Barbados Community College. It has, from my reading and my little experience in business and business development, a very sound opportunity for Barbados.

Beyond that, Mr. President, as we look to use these incentives, there are incentives already existing and those which we can tap into. As I said, I speak from the perspective of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, where under the Economic Partnership Agreement with the EU, provisions are made for us to undertake a range of activities which are intended to compensate for our loss of our guaranteed markets of sugar, et cetera. Therefore, we are also looking at opportunities to twin with

other countries. Right now we are exploring with Suriname and Belize, for example, opportunities to engage in agriculture production.

There are issues, of course, of transportation, et cetera, within CARICOM. We have to address those because we have been talking about increasing production but I find, Sir, and it is something that I have been championing in the regional arena, the need for transportation.

In fact, Sir, as I talk about incentives, I want us, as stakeholders in this process, as the political directorate, as members of the private sector, as individual citizens and as unions, to look at this issue of transportation as a necessary facilitating mechanism for the growth of the agricultural sector.

I will not, because I think I have spoken about it in the past, go into the details again. Sir, I believe that we can come up with a solution which would address the problem that we face as a country and as a region when it comes to the business of maritime transportation, in a way that is profitable and in a way that draws on the investments of those sectors that I said before, public sector, private sector, individual citizens, investing in something which seeks to ensure that when we talk about production of agricultural products and agro business development, et cetera, that we can move the products that we produce in that process and in that way we can address the issues of food sovereignty and food security.

I believe, Sir, that when we talk about incentives, we need also to look at the approaches of the people in the sector. I want quickly to speak to the matter of fisheries. Prior to assuming this position, I was working on a project with the Cooperative Department to engage persons in non-financial cooperatives. The fisheries sector was supposed to have a cooperative or a couple of cooperatives which were not very productive. I am perplexed, Mr. President, that whenever there is a significant increase in the catch of, let us say, flying fish, we hear the boat owners complaining, et cetera. It simply requires those stakeholders to come together in a cooperative, to look at the incentives that exist to purchase equipment that would allow them to process that fish and really take advantage of the full value chain. In other words, they catch the fish, they are part-owners of a cooperative which will process and distribute that fish and, therefore, they would be in a position to capitalise or to maximise their earnings from that situation.

One other area, Sir, as we talk about incentives that are important, is the matter of reporting. Many of us would have had the experience recently of going into the supermarkets. Certainly my weekend experience was one where I saw a sign in my supermarket saying they were out

of onions. We have a situation where we have gluts and we have shortages.

I had a late teacher, God bless her soul, who used to say that it does not take more than a grain, a brain and an ounce of commonsense to do certain things. I have been wondering where that grain, brain and ounce of commonsense has gone. We have utilised solar technology in this country, albeit to heat water, but I know that in many countries in the agricultural sector, we have solar drying technology. It is nothing new or it has been tried here. I have been encouraging and I am happy to say that there are some young farmers who are looking at doing that in relation to onions. I am sure those who are in the sector...

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss. M. P. O. McCLEAN: I cannot say I plant anything, I have things planted around me, but I do not take care of them on a day-to-day basis, so I cannot take credit for that. Sir, believe that those are the opportunities that are available to young people. In fact, I suggested to a young person the other day that perhaps what you should do, even if you do not plant the onions, when they are in abundance, go and buy them and dry them. Sir, if I were not prohibited from engaging in business activity, I would be doing it now myself. I am very serious about that because we really are not capitalising.

Sir, I want to say that we have a range of activities out there that people can take advantage of. We need, as a society, whether it is the Barbados Agricultural Society, the Fisherfolk Association - and I am seeing a lot of those people talking about things - to start thinking about the opportunities that exist. Therefore, in thinking about the opportunity that exists, they must identify the challenges they face and seek solutions. We are very quick to say it cannot happen and I have grown tired of it. I have been trying to encouraging those people around me to adopt a very different approach.

I am very comfortable, Sir, that as we talk about agriculture and incentives, there is a cadre of young people with whom we are working and with whom I will ask. I know I have the support of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Youth, Family and Sports. We are fetching out some programmes. What I would say, Mr. President, in terms of opportunities, about two months ago, the three of us: the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Youth, Family and Sports and I, along with a senior officer from the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, who is responsible for agriculture, went on a drive around the property at the Ministry of Agriculture, Graeme Hall. This property at the time was ploughed up, I guess to keep the grass away. Sir, we have identified that property as part of the initiative to work with the young people.

There are many young people who came out of the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, the Barbados Community College and the St. Augustine Campus of the University of the West Indies with qualifications in agriculture, only to find that one of the critical challenges is land. It is not that the land is not there, it is not that the incentives are not there, what we do not have, Mr. President, is a situation where those persons who sit in positions to make decisions cannot appreciate the need for speed in terms of facilitating these young people. I can tell you, Sir, that the Minister, myself and our colleague are seeking, with the assistance of the officials, to break the back of that problem, because we know the potential that is there.

I want also, Sir, to speak about the matter of the Scotland District and the Greenland area, because there are some young people - and there is one young man in particular. I did not ask permission to use his name but if it is not in a negative light and I trust, Sir, that if I call his name you would forgive me.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss. M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President has not responded but I can tell you there is a young man in Barbados who has been involved in several areas. I am happy to say, Sir, that he is from Black Rock, like both of us, who has worked with young people for a long time. He has just been able to receive permission from the Ministry of Agriculture to access 20 acres of land in the Greenland area. Sir, he was working with some young people, some of whom are at-risk young persons.

1.50 p.m.

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SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: I have identified a number of advisors under this same initiative and we have been working with him to identify some non-traditional areas of agricultural, in other words, areas in which his group does not necessarily have to compete with other farmers but where they will be producing some high value-added agricultural products. Sir, that is how we need to go.

I believe that when they reap success as in the case, hopefully that young lady would realise, and others would be inspired to do so. Sir, incentives exist but we have to lift those incentives off the ground. Sir, it took, unfortunately, from 1999 to now, to get this piece of legislation dealt with which suggests, perhaps, how important or otherwise it was to another Administration, but I can tell you, as you would have heard from the Minister, we are turning it around.

Mr. President, the reality is, as we turn it around, we have to recognise that the methods of engaging in agriculture have to be such that the vagaries of weather, et cetera, are minimised to the benefit.

I see a good future in agriculture and all the points made about proper health care and so on, those things are important. I know that we have talked about yard fowls and so on, and I guess that we have political free-range yard fowls too, and we have seen them moving around but, Sir, that is not the one we are looking at.

I believe that incentives, once they are properly administered along with the initiatives being taken by the Minister, his Ministry and the collaborative approach that we are bringing to bear to youth and agriculture, in particular that agriculture in Barbados has a good future.

Mr. President, I will not pretend that the sector would be transformed instantly overnight but also believe that agriculture is such that in a six-month period, we can see substantial transformation. Sir, in those areas in which I am involved, I can commit to you, to my colleagues and to Barbados, that we will make a difference, certainly, in six months and, certainly, by the end of this term.

Mr. President, with those words, I beg to move that the Income Tax (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, the SENATE resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

MADAM CHAIRMAN: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1 - 3, inclusive, were called and passed.

On the motion of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, Madam CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Income Tax (Amendment) (No. 2) Act, 2010.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 3.00 p.m. today.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

S/A34/13:58 Sequence 18

Wednesday, August 18, 2010

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT This Sitting is resumed.

ORDER NO. 2 – FIRST READING OF THE BETTING AND GAMING DUTIES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2010

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, the Betting and Gaming Duties (Amendment) Bill, 2010 seeks to correct an issue that has been outstanding for over five years. If I could put the need for the amendment into context, the Barbados Cricket Association, back in 2004, made representation to the Comptroller of Customs to increase the number of lottery games available for use and also - to have a particular piece of equipment is the best way to describe it. I think there were video terminals or something.

The intention was to deploy or to install almost 350 terminals across this little 166 square mile island. Now based on the configuration and perhaps the description and the actual makeup of this particular piece of equipment, it created some challenge in terms of probably defining what was considered to be the type or category of equipment.

In essence, the equipment differed from what already obtained. We are familiar in Barbados with slot machines where you inserted cash, et cetera, so the issue of taxing or levying duties on these pieces of equipment became an issue. The basic problem was, given the request from the BCA, Government through Customs and its other officials would have been challenged to categorise that equipment. There was an existing regime in force which spoke to the classification of those gaming machines already on the island. Therefore, there was the difficulty of classifying these pieces of equipment.

Traditionally, what we probably called slot machines, or that type of machine, was one in which there was an aperture in which you inserted money, played your game in whatever form or fashion it took, then you would receive your winnings, or the machine would have eaten up your chance, so they tried to come to some agreement to modify this equipment. Then that would have created some

other challenges in terms of the classification. One suggestion was that if you close the aperture, then you did not have a machine which looked like the others.

Sir, at the heart of this was gambling, or betting and gaming. Whether it was a slot machine or a machine which deferred payment or whatever, you were actually having a situation where the end result would have been pretty much the same. People were taking chances with the hope of winning some significant winnings.

The other reality, unfortunately, was permission had been granted to allow these machines into Barbados. They were on the ground and a decision had to be taken to address them. It is in the amendment that we are contemplated, efforts are being made to determine, at least to regulate, these pieces of equipment, so effectively, what is recognised is that whether it fits one description or it fits the other, the equipment is a piece of machinery for gaming purposes. That is the genesis of what we are trying to address, the amendment of a regulation to categorise those in a way that puts those pieces in a similar position to those already on the ground.

As we talk about this issue, it gives need to talk some more about gambling or games of chance, et cetera. I want to say very early that the State cannot legislate morality. That is something we have to do. We can seek to influence in significant ways by our actions or lack of actions, by our legislation for some particular phenomena or against some phenomena to influence morality and behaviours, but at the end of the day self-regulation and self-legislation, if there is such a term, is what will influence how citizens see these things.

I am a person, as you know, who would have been brought up in the Anglican tradition and I am still an Anglican. As you know, I serve in a very high position within the Anglican Church, therefore, I cannot tell lies. If I told you that I would not be tempted now and again that something is going to probably give me \$10 million for \$2 that I might not spend \$2. However, years ago I learnt very quickly the dangers of gambling. Perhaps it might be useful to share this anecdote.

I started my career as a Clerical Officer in the Welfare Department, in the Accounts Section, which was in the Old Eye Ward, on Bay Street. I think that is what you call it. I remember that was in the 1970s and at a time when slot machines first came to this country. There had a little restaurant next door and one of my colleagues and I decided we were going to go over there to buy lunch. We saw this machine and curiosity got the better of us. We got some quarters and we started to play and the quarters started to disappear. Quite a few came out and I said to my colleague to let us go. She said "No". She decided she needed to win some more.

Sir, the long and short of the story was, my baptism into the dangers of gambling and the clear demonstration is, you cannot win at gambling. The long and short of it is, we bought our lunch but we also lost all the money that we won, and probably she lost some more because she was trying to get back the one that we won, and lost, and there was a moral in that story for me.

Sir, the truth is, games of chance have been with us and I believe they will be with us in several forms and fashions. They have already existed and I believe that they will continue to exist. Each of us has to examine ourselves and ask ourselves where do we locate ourselves in relation to this. I remember some time ago observing some youngsters and this particularly bothered me. These were youngsters probably not yet 13-years-old stooping in a “ling”, as we might say, and they were gambling. I asked myself, where did that come from? That obviously came from observing other persons.

Sir, that is problematic, but the question is, how do we get them to see that is problematic in a society, not a society only, but in a world in which we have these things happening.

SA 34 15.20 p.m. Sequence 20

Wednesday, August 18, 2010

Senate A34, sequence 21, 3.20 p.m.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: I also would say that because something is present, does not mean that we have to participate in it. I think sometimes it is the very presence of things that help us to test our moral fibre and you may ask yourself where does the Government fit in all of this. I believe that as Government we have choices. We also need as a society to help people to exercise those choices, therefore, I will not pretend that gambling and games of chance exist among us.

We are quite willing to participate in a raffle for a worthy cause for a Governmental organisation providing services to the community, decide that they want to raise funds and instead of simply asking people to contribute knowing that people will be less willing to do so, they give you some incentive to use a euphemism, they give you an incentive to participate. I certainly have participated on several occasions. Other people would say I do not participate but I will give you a donation and that is the reality.

The reality is that we have citizens who subscribe to all kinds of moral norms, et cetera, therefore these things exist. One school of thought, Mr. President, would be that if there is in existence such a situation, it will not go away unless we exercise dictatorial powers and band these

things. They will go away officially, but you will hear about the unofficial games of chance.

I am walking around and I do not see it too often now, people engaging in dog fights, and they are persons who do not own dogs, or even one of the dogs in the fight, but they are participating in betting and gambling around the outcomes of those things. These are things that will stay with us. Some people will see, therefore, there is that tendency, but some form of regulation of those things is important.

I believe, Sir, that in looking at this particular piece of Legislation, when I recall that particular issue when it was topical and I remember seeing the suggestion that these pieces of equipment would have been deployed in communities, it bothered me because I believe that persons, especially in poor communities, et cetera, persons whose financial circumstances are not very good or bleak and so on, are the ones who perhaps would be most attracted in ordinary circumstances to trying their luck so to speak, and those are the ones who have the most to lose.

Therefore, while one can argue that there will be gambling and games of chance and people would want to engage in that activity, we still have a responsibility at the level of the Government to find ways to regulate and minimise the fallout of those things, Sir, therefore the efforts to restrict access is important.

On the other hand, I want to say and I have made that point before, that self regulation is important. Many of us would have had the experience of cruising. Many of us would have had the experience of visiting hotels in which there were casinos, in situ, as part of the complex, but the presence of those, does not mean that we have to participate.

I recall being on a cruise with some school mates of mine and we were commenting on the strategic location of the casino to get from one side and I remember the two technical starboard and the port in Scarborough to get from one to the other, the short cut was through the casino and we had to walk through there, morning, evening and night but you saw them when you left. Of course, I saw one Barbadian gentleman parked there for the whole time. Every time I passed I saw him. He could not participate in that particular setting at home so he did it there. What I am suggesting is that he was the exception, not the rule.

The basis point, Sir, as I move to support the amendment so that we can have better regulation, is that there will be a moral decision on this. I believe at the level of the individual, we have to come to our personal positions. The Government recognises that its citizens need to be protected but, at the end of the day, some people will also argue that in seeking to protect citizens you also have

to observe their right to do things which may be deemed harmful.

Sir, if I may use an analogy, the issue of smoking is one which we all know is harmful. It is also very costly to society but again, unless we adopt a dictatorial approach and ban these activities, the norm that we can exercise is some control over the impact of that negative fallout at the end of the day providing that choice but constraining that choice in a way that seeks to protect the citizen from himself and herself.

I feel, Sir, that as we talk about these things we have to ask ourselves when we seek to regulate and control, where do we start to address this issue, at the level of Legislation which says we cannot or we should not. At least we should prevent you or should we seek to influence at a much earlier stage, our values which speak to what we deem to be right or wrong. Some people may say that we will equivocate on some of these things.

The truth is, my values are shaped, Sir, by a number of things. It is shaped by what my parents taught me. It is shaped by what I saw as I engaged with other children in school but what is more important, it is shaped by the decision by my parents to send me to Church and Sunday School where my values were very much shaped.

I say to people this is important I am a parent myself and as the Aunt of more than two dozen nieces and nephews and generations following them, as a great-aunt and so on, I realise that at the end of the day, as a member of that family, I have an important role to play in instilling certain values because, as I said, when I think of certain things, my notion of right and wrong was instilled in me and started to grow in me not because the Law said A or B but because my parents felt that these were the parameters ethical, moral and other ones that their children were supposed to operate within. This in turn is passed on by the siblings to their children and shared as a family.

The key point I am making is that we can come down hard on the issue and suggest that Government eliminate certain activity. My argument is that the elimination of that activity would be in a formal setting but at the end of the day whether that activity goes underground or Government's position is brought into it, it is often shaped by your socialisation, moral, spiritual and other value-sets that are shaped through that socialisation process. I believe that there is a place for free will and, to me, that is something that we have to help people to exercise in a positive way. Government can seek to do that but the other agencies of socialisation must be brought to bear on these.

I can tell you that on the issues I mentioned, youngsters gambling, school children and so on, people

will ask where is the Church. My response to them will be what is the Church? The Church is not some edifice set up there to guide us through some magical means or whatever. The Church is about a body of people drawn from the society who influence. In other words, the Church is you and I.

Sir, I know that you do go to Church and we happen to share the same faith, if I remember correctly.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: There really is no need to abuse the Chair.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Sir, I thought that speaking about your moral grounding was praise rather than anything else.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Now that you have said it is praise, I accept it.

Senate A34, sequence 21, 15:30:14

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SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Sir, I am not going to be very long on this Amendment. As I said, I believe that it was introduced several years ago to address a problem that we had. In addressing this problem, it brings back to the fore the issue of gambling which, as I said before, exists in this community both through the formal mechanisms that are identified and observed and also in the living rooms and back rooms of homes and other places of entertainment, some of which we hear of in whispered tones.

Mr. President, at the end of the day, I believe that these issues are between the individual and his or her God, and where there is an absence of such a belief, it is about that individual.

Government could go a long way in seeking to minimise the opportunities for persons who exhibit addictive tendencies because gambling can lead to an addiction. It is for some people an addictive behaviour and, therefore, I believe that as we seek to regulate these, we also recognise that we do have gambling in our midst. I would therefore call on our citizens, particularly parents of young children, and the institutions which contribute to the rearing and raising of children, et cetera, to engage young people in these things.

Sir, I believe in a positive approach. For example, people would tell you to say no to drugs but my response would be to say yes to a healthy body, a healthy mind and a healthy spirit and, therefore, a person who is committed to

that would not engage in the use of substances which are detrimental to those three things.

Sir, I recognise the need to continue to regulate an activity that is in our midst, but I believe that in the same way that we do that, we also have to commit to showing our citizens the alternative. Sir, that role rests with each of us individually and collectively.

With those few words, Sir, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Holder, you have the Floor.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Mr. President, I wish to contribute to this debate in relation to the amendment to the Betting and Gaming Duties (Amendment) Bill, 2010. I do so cognisant of the fact that when we sit in this hallowed Chamber we do so to assist in the creation of public policy. Emanating from that, I do believe that any amendment that is sought relative to betting and gaming must include a debate relative to gambling in our midst.

I think that we do so with the knowledge that there is a downward trend in society relative to moral standards. The time has long past to hide our heads in the sand. That there is an increase in gambling within our school system is widely known and it runs throughout our secondary school system and even more so at our tertiary institutions.

Mr. President, I have examined carefully the amendment being sought and I have also perused the principal Act, which authorises the Minister responsible, that is the Minister of Finance, to make regulations relative to the persons who are permitted to enter arcades or facilities, which house these machines.

With your lead, Mr. President, Section 39 subsection (1) of the principal Act speaks to the Minister having the authority to make regulations in relation to persons who are allowed entry. Section 7 subsection (1) of the regulations - with your lead, Mr. President, I shall refer to it - states that subject to this regulation, no person under the age of 18 years shall be admitted to or allowed to remain on any registered premises. That is what the regulations speak to, so it is quite permissible for a young man or a young woman who has attained the age of 18, but is still at school, to enter these premises called the one-arm bandits as he or she sees fit even if that person is clad in a school uniform.

Sir, something needs to be addressed relative to either the permissible age and/or a prohibition in relation to persons who are at school otherwise this regulation, in my humble respect, is lacking. Mr. President, given the fact that it is known that gambling is rampant throughout our society, it needs to be addressed in a holistic way.

I was shocked, appalled and saddened quite recently when I had an occasion to interview an aspiring young man in this society with a wealth of cricketing talent who found himself, Mr. President, on the wrong side of the Law. Sad to say up front, he admitted that he had a problem, an addiction to gambling, which landed him before the Law. He said up front that it started at secondary school, gambling, throwing dice, playing cards and the like, and that he had become addicted and that he actually sought assistance in the form of Gamblers Anonymous to assist him in his problem, it was so intense. This is but one example of what exists in our society, so unless we put systems in place to address some of these issues, the moral standards in our society will continue to decline. Senate A34 Sequence 22

3.40 p.m.

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SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Technology is always a sign of progress and we give kudos to this technology where we can go on the Internet but we ought to be reminded that on the same Internet, you can learn the art of gambling for free, so that as you develop the expertise in it for free and you are so enticed, oftentimes you then use that skill to seek adventure for a return, money.

In addition, Mr. President, we need to also ask ourselves how many of our school children who are caught in this web of gambling do that out of need. We really need to sit down and ask ourselves if some of these same persons are not coerced and/or forced into the realm of gambling in order to feed themselves at lunch. Sir, that is but again the stark reality of some things we are facing.

Mr. President, our young people ask themselves, importantly, if the Church can engage in a form of fund-raising, whether it is bingo games or whatever, which is also a form of gambling, what makes the Church so sanctified and holy to tell the other persons in this society that they ought not to engage in gambling, even though it might be done in the Church for fund-raising. Mr. President, gambling to some people is a means of survival. Sir, we are caught in a dilemma, on the one hand, the registration of these premises account for a licencing fee and a significant and important aspect of revenue for a Government. While we might not be able to Legislate morality, there is still a duty in these Chambers to set limits and to create an environment for our young people that is wholesome and that we do not approbate and reprobate at the same time, one thing for Peter and another thing for Paul.

Sir, we have to be very careful when these Resolutions and/or measures are tabled that we set in train a situation that is beneficial to our young people because

leading from gambling to money, there is a conduit for crime. Sir, if you cannot obtain money from gambling and/or you lose your money, you must find an alternative to get that money that you have lost and for persons whose morals and tendencies might not be wholesome within society, like drug addiction, the next course is gambling.

Mr. President, it has reached the stage where the same young man who professes to the addiction, sought the alternative of taking from his parents. Such is the power of addiction, so it matters not whether it is tobacco smoking, drug taking, alcohol consumption, et cetera, it is an addiction and we need to address this problem urgently.

I, therefore, would ask this Honourable Chamber to look at an amendment as it relates to Section 7 of the Regulations, to encompass not only persons whom we restrict under the age of 18, but to encapsulate a reference to persons in uniform. Sir, it is a known fact that some of our school children enter these premises and participate in gambling. Sir, if we are seeking to address the issue and this Amendment, I respectfully ask that this Amendment goes further.

With these few words, Mr. President, I support this Amendment.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Marville.

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: Thank you, Mr. President, it is not that I did not want to thank you but I forgot. I agree entirely with the Leader of Government Business that we cannot legislate for morality. In fact, I do not think we should even try. However, there is the question of what we do in the face of a problem of this sort. I should point out that gambling is universal, whether it is in the form of the throwing of dice in a street alley or betting on derivatives on the stock market.

The point I am making is that this is not something that is completely new in any sense. In fact, I must bluntly say that we are a bunch of hypocrites on this issue. At every level of the society, gambling is condoned but if you hear an outcry, for instance, against casino gambling, it is like, my goodness, this is something from hell. Sir, every game that occurs in a casino occurs otherwise in the slots and other machines that we have around the place.

I am not saying that it is not a problem but I recognise that dealing with it, even in any form of legislation, is not a simple issue. I have had my own experiences, but then I am a little bit different from Senator McClean, in the sense that if I go into a place of gambling and I decide that I am going to play something, I set myself an immediate limit and if I win to begin with, I disappear.

Asides.

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: It is not called being cowardly, it is called being sensible. Anybody who sensibly thinks that they are going to gamble is doing it to win. Anybody who goes beyond that is addicted and there has to be some means of treating this addiction that is put in place. I am talking about everybody. We have bingo halls in Church, we have raffles, we have the slot machines, we have video machines, et cetera.

In the cases that I remember, I went into one of these big casinos in another country and I put something on 23 red and 23 red came up and paid a mass of money. I took it and I walked out.

3.50 p.m.

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SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: At another time, I discovered a poker place on the top of an establishment that I went to all the time. I played, I was going to play to a certain limit, when I was back to zero, I wanted to leave, they told me I could not leave, so I played for one hour and on that hour I left with a hell of a lot more money that I had started off with at the beginning of the night.

Asides.

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: Mr. President, the point I am making is that it is something that is not part of a greed that drives me, so I am not likely to get into that sort of addiction. However, we have to recognise that it is a serious addiction for a number of people.

Sir, the solution to that is centres for treating the addiction. You are not easily going to prevent those people from going into gambling places. They are not usually people of 18 years or 19 years, they are usually older people, not with a lot of money who sometimes gamble away everything that is needed for the running of the household.

Mr. President, I agree with Senator Holder that we should relook the age of 18. It would not be the first time that we had an anomaly of 18 being the age of majority and another age being set for anything else. In the United States of America, for instance, you cannot drink publicly, if you are not 21 years old. I do not have any difficulty with the age of 21 because if the person is in an institution at the age of 21 by then they would have certainly reached a maturity that you are not going to question.

Mr. President, I can put out some other ideas. If Government is going to have to create a centre for treating this addiction, we have to increase the taxation level on all

forms of gambling, whether it is a bingo hall in a church, or it is a video poker game or slot machines. This is likely to push the industry into something of a problem situation. I am quite frank about this.

Mr. President, I support the legislation, but I think we should go even further. I do not think we are going to tackle the issue morally from the position of the Law. This is something that has to be done in homes and in schools. Sir, nobody is setting an example, so we have to make laws that in some ways restrict the process, or make it pay sufficient to support the remedial actions that we need to take.

Mr. President, with those few words, I support the legislation.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Trotman.

SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN: Mr. President, this is not an easy matter to speak to because although it seems to be a simple piece of legislation, I think that those of us who go back to 1995/1996, would remember that when the major effort was made at that time to introduce casino gambling, there were a number of major institutions in Barbados that opposed it.

Mr. President, at the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Association of Barbados, (CTUSAB), I was the lead spokesperson for the trade union in opposing casino gambling but I think that my Senator colleague, who just spoke a minute or two before me said that the question really has to do with, when is gambling not gambling, when is gambling a good thing and when is gambling a bad thing and, regrettably, there is not any answer to that, that I can think that anybody can properly address.

Mr. President, it seems to me in all of the experiences I have had that those who should have led the way for us in terms of our moral standings and the way of living, that they are the ones who have led in the charge towards further gambling. Sir, I mean the Church, and so it makes it particularly difficult for us.

Sir, I do not want to differentiate what I mean by the Church or what denominations. I say the Church and I leave it like that for those of my Senate colleagues who may want to speak to it. Sir, it does leave a major problem for us.

I recall in 1995/1996 that we were opposed significantly by members of the Church who thought that our thinking was archaic, that we were not sufficiently progressive and much more with it. Yes, it would seem to me, as I reflect now 15 years later on, that there is somewhat a contradiction in the positions which we took and which we are taking because casino gambling was a

big thing but I think that in every place we go, we have been able to recognise the movement from the playing of bingo to other forms of a chance in the Church, in the home, in the village and even if we were to go to what the Leader of the Senate said, the dog fighting. Sir, not just the dog fighting, I think the cock fighting is much more the one that is closest to the village.

Mr. President, we do have a problem. We do have a problem in that we cannot legislate morality but it would seem to me, Mr. President, that all of us have a responsibility to regulate the provisions which would protect the citizenry and though we cannot tell a man or a woman, young or old, what direction he or she must go in, we must recognise that the matter of free choice was there from the days of the garden and that is not to say that we must not ourselves seek as much as we can to protect the conditions under which the garden experience will or will not be made less or more facile to those who have to make a decision from time to time.

Mr. President, the intention of this piece of legislation we are told is to regulate gambling, regulate betting and gaming and I have a concern with understanding what that means. It is not that I wish to be a purist, or that anybody else wishes to be a purist, but I saw initially, and one of my colleagues just confirmed with me that it seems to me that in this regulatory arrangement provision is made in paragraph 2 to the allowance for the use of one's credit card in the exercise.

Sir, at 2.(c), it seems to me, if we were to read what is provided for that, we would see that the machine does not credit money to a person in respect of a game played on the machine. I would think that we, on all Sides, need to understand what that is saying because one of the problems we have had in developing communities like ours is that the facilitation that is provided by the credit card is at one and the same time the greatest challenge which we have for most consumers who own a credit card.

The credit card does not tell you where and when you draw the line or do not draw the line. I think that the Senate can speak to what this says and perhaps we can get the benefit from the Leader of the Senate on what exactly is intended by the reference to the credit card.

S/A34/ 16:00 Sequence 24

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SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN: If you can satisfy us that you do not leave persons with a chance to find ourselves falling outside of what our Senator colleague has done with his wisdom, where you start with a limit and you stay within, you start with a time frame and you stay within your time frame, then there is no question.

I have been noting that a number of people are now wishing to have a second look at this matter and I certainly would wish to hear what the thinking is behind it, because ...

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: On a point of order. There seems to be a misconception or misinterpretation, and I am therefore at a loss where there is a reference to a credit card. Perhaps the Honourable Senator, for my clarification, can point to where that is. Otherwise, there seems to be some misinterpretation or something here.

SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN: Thank you very much Mr. President. I appreciate the intervention of my colleague. I do not think we are into a confrontational arrangement. We are seeking to have a clarification. At 2 (a), on Page 3, where it says, Section 2 of the Betting and Gaming Duties Act, and this Act refers to the principal Act. This is amended by deleting Section 2 and substituting the following:

“For the purposes of this Act, a machine is not used for gaming where:

a. There is no opportunity afforded by an automatic action of the machine for the player to play one or more games on the machine without the insertion of money or tokens.”

Sir, that is where we start the discussion. Then we go to (c). I may be wrong because not understanding gaming machines, not even slot machines, I am at a misunderstanding regarding what is intended, but I would wish to be satisfied that we are not finding ourselves in the position that exacerbates the problem which currently exists in our community, where people have free access to credit cards and the credit cards do not tell them what not to buy. When they go to the stores, they end up getting things purchased that they subsequently find difficulty in paying.

I myself am not a believer of casino gambling. I am hypocritical, I would have to say, that I recognise and I do not walk the streets with a placard every day opposing other forms of gambling which are taking place.

Secondly, I have openly supported a plan which the Government is making towards ships remaining in the Bridgetown Port for longer periods which, in my view, may be giving cause to this piece of legislation.

The position I have taken and the position many of my colleagues in the Trade Union Movement have taken, is that we recognise the presence of gambling. We recognise that we cannot have legislation, through the move of it all,

and to some extent we are in the tobacco industry, as the Leader of the Senate has said.

What we are trying to do in this regard is to protect the locals from the evils of casino and other serious related gambling. I said “seriously related,” but I am not sure when gambling is not serious, so are other forms of gambling. What we are trying to do is to accept the argument that on the ships, part of the cruise excitement and entertainment package is to the matter of the gambling, therefore the ships leave Barbados earlier than they would normally because they want to open the casinos to the travelling public.

If we can keep the ships in our Ports longer, then we have the distinct possibility of having more business with the stores in Bridgetown or other towns in Barbados, restaurants and those people who are making local produce, which is sold in our handicraft centres. wherever they appear across the country.

It is with an understanding that this is part of the overall aim of the initiative that I would think we in the labour movement would be bringing a different approach to what is happening here. That does not however mean, that we do not recognise that starting with bingo we have moved to other more esoteric and more dangerous and problematic games of chance. It does not tell us that we do not find ourselves, even now, with situations where people work all through the week for their hard earned money and on Fridays before they can get home to their families, leave it all in the betting shop.

It is a problem we have, a problem we cannot easily escape, a problem that the leaders and the Church find difficulty in addressing and a problem the leaders in the Trade Union Movement find difficulty in addressing. We are very concerned with building the family and anything that leads to a situation where the protection of the family is compromised, because there is a social activity that is a given social approval, which at the same time undermines the capacity of the family to cater to the needs of the young ones and to the householder who takes care of the family, while and expecting the income earner in that family faithfully to bring home the income. Anything that compromises that is a social concern for us.

Sir, our big question, and I do not wish to take on the role of the Senator Preacher or Reverend who is with us, either one of them, but any time that this problems comes us, clearly we are going to have difficulty, and we in the labour movement are very concerned about where we are supposed to draw the line.

How do we address this is our big final problem. What is it we prefer against what the urge for money demands on the part of the country as a whole?

Regrettably, as a people we have felt that the best thing to do is to sell the idea that money is easily gained, so we now have arrangements where gambling takes place in about 17, 18 or 20 different forms in this little country all in the, say, 24-hour basis. Sir, for me that is not satisfactory.

I do not want to be purer than anybody else, but I do not know where a poor country battling to have survival of those people who are under privileged or less privileged, how are they going to build when we tell those same people, who are the most disadvantaged, that the way out of their poverty is through gambling. That is a major problem we are faced with as a people. It is not mainly a problem of our morals, it is a problem of what makes good sense to us. Regrettably, when once you open a system you cannot then close the door to privileged groups, because discrimination is not part of what is entertainable.

Sir, our problem, it would seem to me, therefore, is going to be how even in a regulatory arrangement, how are we going to protect our people from themselves. Though I do not have enough grounds on which to oppose, and even if I did, I do not think it would do an awful lot to the well-being of this exercise. Though I do not have enough grounds to oppose, I wish to say that I am very critical, very concerned about the nature of what we are building in this community when the values seem to go on the fast acquisition of wealth, rather than by the sweat of our brow as we have been taught to do through the Good Book.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Durant.

SENATOR Rev. Dr. D. L. DURANT: Mr. President, I rise to say my bit as well on the Amendment on the Betting and Gaming Act. Let me first begin by saying that anything that has the propensity to become an addiction that would negatively impact our society should not be encouraged, even though it may be for economic gain. To my mind, economic gain should not take precedence over our social and moral values.

SA 34 16.10 p.m. Sequence 25

Wednesday, August 18, 2010

Senate A34, sequence 26, 4.10 p.m.

SENATOR Rev. Dr. D.L. DURANT: It is a known fact that the games of luck and chance in any form can be very addictive and, as was said earlier, gambling is an addictive force.

Today in Barbados gambling is so widespread all over, in St. Andrew, Christ Church, rural and urban areas. We go into the gas station, mini marts, bars, grocery stores,

supermarkets and there are gaming machines and the worst thing about that, Mr. President, is that our young children have very easy access to these machines.

I remember one day standing in the line at a service station after filling my car to just get an item. There were two lines. I was in a line and only when I got up to the top, they told me I was in the wrong line. I was in the line for the lottery numbers. I had to shift quickly and I felt so ashamed and I said that maybe people saw me and said that the priest is in the lottery line. Sir, every time I go now I make sure I am in the right line to get my items.

Asides.

SENATOR Rev. Dr. D.L. DURANT: The fact that gambling is so widespread is an indication that it is growing. It is becoming a culture within our society, an addiction, as a matter of fact. If it was not successful, it would not be spread in the way it is and I wonder if a comprehensive detailed study was ever done in Barbados on the impact of gambling on our society and if it has not, I think one should really be done.

This small island of 166 square miles is too small to be covered with a cloud of gambling. Gambling is an aggressive addiction that can increase poverty and I am glad to say that this Government's vision is to alleviate poverty. It can also increase violence, crime, causes hurt and also destroys the quality of family life and family life is something that we need to give much attention to, in our nation. It begs the question being asked, Mr. President, why is it in a society where dirty lyrics, the PSV culture and the "wuk up" culture are not being addressed? Why is it that the severity of the danger of gambling is being ignored?

I believe that signs or posters explaining the dangers of gambling should be posted in every place where gambling machines are located in our island.

Asides.

SENATOR Rev. Dr. D.L. DURANT: People will have the opportunity to read it, yet you cannot tell them how to spend their money but at least you know you have warned them, there is a sign or a poster put up there, then let them make their decision. As was said by our Leader, we cannot legislate morality, that is a fact, but at least we can put things in place to help to really control gambling.

Gambling addiction can result in outrageous debt, psychological problems, financial indiscipline and especially among our young people, it can result in declining grades at school. It must be noted that gambling is a problem among our school children and this was even alluded to by our Honourable Acting Prime Minister last

week Tuesday in the Lower House. It has increased here in Barbados in recent years and even in today's news, it is said that in Jamaica gambling among school children is on the rise and it is creating problems in that nation, Jamaica.

Other serious social and personal harms arising out of gambling are domestic abuse, assault, bankruptcy, family break-up, theft and even homelessness. As a matter of fact, some people can go so far, especially in the three stages. There is the winning stage, the losing, and the desperate stage. Some people when they come to the desperate stage will put up their house and then eventually lose it.

It must be remembered that a tragic outcome of compulsive gambling is also suicide and we hope we will never reach that degree in this island. If it is allowed to develop though more seriously in Barbados, it will attract drug cartels, prostitution, money laundering, and the list can go on. Also, this get-rich quick mentality can develop in our young people, which could result in a serious negative subculture.

This is why I would recommend to every Church to desist from entertaining any form of gambling because we are sending the wrong signal to our young people and they are looking at us. For example, gambling may start out as innocent fun, but it will grow on you steadily and then become extremely dangerous in the form of an addiction. Gambling is an addiction but even worse, Mr. President, it is a hidden disorder, something no one can easily, physically detect.

In other words, there is no scent on a gambler. Why I say that, on a smoker there is a scent. You can smell the tobacco. While I am on that, I want to applaud the Honourable Minister of Health on banning smoking in public places, which is long overdue. A drunkard also you can smell, as well as a drug user. You can scent and you can see the drunken stupor but in gambling there is no scent.

As a matter of fact, persons could be in the best suit or in a lovely long dress and he or she has an addiction and you do not know because it cannot be easily, physically detected. This thing creeps on you slowly and it grows steadily and you are not even aware that you have become a compulsive gambler.

Our foreparents sweat in this island. They worked hard to lay a foundation that resulted in us having a beautiful Barbados. We must not sit back and allow those traditional values to be eroded further, breaking down the moral fabric of our society. Games of luck and chance did not bring us to the place where we are internationally and so high on the United Nations charter. We are people of vision, pride and industry, people of ambition and good

working ethics. Let us continue to promote those values in this small society.

Two factors seem to play a major role in driving gamblers into addiction and death and I just want to mention the two of them. One, is the idea of hitting the big jackpot. When that idea is there, there is a passion and an enthusiasm, Mr. President, that is worked up inside of you to go for it and you want to win. Right now I think the jackpot is \$10 million so you could imagine this weekend, the amount of money that will be spent on gambling. You could imagine the many children that will be destitute, maybe of something proper on the table, school fees to be paid, school books and uniform to be bought, and so forth because we have a very high jackpot at the moment.

This illusion of winning drives people to keep spending and this keeps you playing the game over and over with the hope of winning, resulting in more losses and the potential for psychological and emotional damage.

The second factor is equally dangerous in that gambling addicts are trapped by the concept of chasing losses.

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SENATOR Rev. Dr. D. L. DURANT: Compulsive gamblers lose their hard earned cash and feel compelled to go and gamble again and again with the hope of winning back that money thus suffering greater loss and digging a deeper financial hole for themselves. This could also cause more psychological problems.

I want to make it very clear that gambling is designed to work against you, not for you. Nobody in their right senses would set up something that will cause them to be broke. They will set it up because they know they will gain. I will go as far as saying that 99.9 per cent of the time you are not going to win, yet you would keep spending.

In view of that, just like we have the Alcoholic Anonymous Club for alcoholics and drug rehab centres for drug addicts, I would want to suggest the establishment of a Gamblers Anonymous Club for those who would want to go to a club and interact with other people of like situation.

I would also want to suggest the establishment of a Gamblers Anonymous Help Line where you have trained counsellors at the end of those lines to help people who do not want to go into the club but may want to just call in and have a trained counsellor help them through that addiction so that they can be free from it. I am not saying that the Government should do this, but maybe the Church and other social partners should get together and do this

because the Government cannot do everything but I think this project should be undertaken.

The easy access that people have to these machines and the seeming social acceptance of gambling in our country has made it very easy for them to continue chasing after losses. The seeming social acceptance is what is also worrying me a lot because there seems to be a silence.

I am not saying that gambling will not continue to exist. It has been here from as long as we know when, but some form of education on the dangers of gambling must be embarked upon in Barbados. I would even suggest that this should begin from the primary school level and go right through to the tertiary level of education. Education on the dangers of gambling must be introduced in our schools. Since at present our schools are being infiltrated with that kind of culture, I think now is the time to do it. Our children should be educated on the dangers of gambling and every Barbadian should be told that gambling is not a way of life, it is just a bad hobby or a bad habit. It is time that we look at preventative measures to help our people cope with this addiction because we can talk about it but then if we do not offer any solutions, we are just going around in a circle.

Mr. President, I just want to offer three suggestions at this level, I am sure there could be more. First, we should deglamourise gambling advertisements, especially during prime time on our television station.

Secondly, we should shift the televised lottery draws from prime time to another time, maybe to earlier in the day or later in the night. The mere idea that you have it in our prime time session in the face of most of our populace, we are just spreading it and continuing to feed our people with it.

Lastly, I think we must aggressively publicise the dangers of compulsive gambling through posters, billboards, television and newspaper advertisements, seminars, workshops, and town hall meetings. I think that we have to become a bit more aggressive. There is too much silence right now on this issue.

As was said by most Honourable Senators in here today, we know it is a problem. There is a subtle social acceptance that is really bothersome. Millions of dollars are spent every year on games of chance in this our island. I think that the Barbados Turf Club boasted of a \$21 million profit last year, if I am not mistaken. That is a lot of money.

Mr. President, my concern is also for the children of our nation who are caught up in this gambling habit and to me that must be stopped. I believe that we, parents and adults, owe the children of our society an apology for throwing open wide the floodgates and leaving them to do

whatever they want to do without proper care, without proper discipline and without correction. Proverbs 23 verse 13 says, and I quote:

“Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.”

Mr. President, I want to say that licks do not kill. I am sure that every Honourable Senator in this Chamber today got some lashes in their childhood days and it did not kill us, it helped us to be better men and better women today. The Bible also speaks about training up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it.

Asides.

SENATOR Rev. Dr. D. L. DURANT: That is flogging. I do believe that as parents we have moved from one extreme to another. Many of us came up under strict discipline and maybe got a few lashes like I got. It did not cause me any problem, and we have decided that we are not going to allow our children to go through that kind of discipline and strictness and so we have moved from one extreme to another and have not struck middle ground to balance things.

We have gone to the other extreme where we are not doing anything and we are just leaving our children to themselves. Many parents go to bed and leave a child watching television, or on the computer. Imagine your child is coming into bed at 2:30 in the morning when you were in your bed since 10:00 the night before. That could not happen in our day. As a result of this, morality is on a serious decline in our island. Last weekend alone there were three murders.

Children are being exposed to drugs and gambling. As a matter of fact, there is a new thing now. Some children are selling drugs in order to get money to gamble and that is a serious combination. Drugs are out there available so if they could get their hand on it and sell it and get the money, then the gambling machine is the next thing they go to. That will continue to impact negatively on our society. Drugs and gambling is a serious combination.

Mr. President, we also have to look at sexual activity. As a matter of fact, lesbianism and homosexuality are strong in our schools. We need to address these situations in our primary and secondary schools. There are some children today who are afraid to go to school for two reasons: the spirit of intimidation and the whole culture of bullying. I know what I am speaking about. I counsel with children. I have to say to them, make sure you get there, make sure you go to school and if anything to talk with the teachers.

Senate A34 Sequence 27

4.30 p.m.

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SENATOR Rev. Dr. D.L. DURANT: Mr. President, let us look at Junior Kadooment, let us look at what we are allowing our juniors to do in our recent Kadooment celebration. Mr. President, as parents in this country, we have to know where to draw the line. Why should we allow our children to be exposed to a lot of sexual activity at ages five, six, seven and eight year old? The things that they are doing today, we could not dare do when we were young, we were disciplined or scolded. That is why I said we really need to make an apology for throwing the flood gates wide open. There are filthy expletives coming from the mouths of our young children.

Mr. President, about four young children passed me the other day. They could not see where I was but the expletives coming out of their mouths. Sir, almost every other word was a curse word and these children were between 12 and 15 years old. I could not believe my ears. I was in shock, but that seemed normal to them.

As a parent and an adult in this nation, I want to apologise to our young people for leaving them to do what pleases them. I want to apologise for throwing the flood gates open and leaving them to be flooded with pornography, drugs, gambling, sexual molestation, lesbianism, homosexuality, and not monitoring them carefully to instruct and guide them. I am not here to condemn the youth, the young people of our nation but I am here to say, sorry on behalf of every parent, every responsible adult, every leader in this great nation of ours.

I apologise, and whatever can be done to pull things back into proper prospective to bring some semblance of decency, good manners and good behaviour again, we will endeavour to do. I think more sessions on parenting, more education in that area should be done because the leaders of tomorrow, our fragile and very important young people need us more than ever before. Also, in relation to the gambling, a culture that is developed and is so widespread, we need to bring guidance and balance to it.

With that, Mr. President, I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Newton.

SENATOR the Hon. Prof. V. E. NEWTON: Mr. President, I rise to make a contribution in relation to this Amendment to the Betting and Gaming Duties Act. Sir, I have some difficulties, in that I do not quite understand why Section 2(a) is drafted in the way it is. It is not absolutely clear. It could be the use of double negatives in

the provision, in the introductory clause and in clause 2(a). Mr. President, I would like to move a motion that we seek the advice of the Chief Parliamentary Council in relation to that clause because to me it is not clear.

In fact, if you look, Mr. President, at the section which it replaced, the original section is clearer than the one that is now provided here. The drafters replaced “cash,” which was in the original 2(a) for money, which according to the Interpretation Section of the Act includes cheques, bank notes, currency notes, coins, postal orders, money orders or other valuable securities. In other words, the use of money widens the concept of what can be used in relation to gambling. I am not sure there was any need for it but certainly, Mr. President, I think that we should seek to have clause 2(a) interpreted, or we should seek to find out whether it could be drafted to make its meaning clearer.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am sorry to interrupt you but the matter you are raising is one that ought to be raised in the Committee. Under the Rules of the Senate, you can only speak in the Second Reading of the Bill on the general principles of the Bill. Any specifics, as you are outlining, ought to be dealt within the Committee stage of the Bill. I would appreciate it if you would therefore not indicate specifics in your speech.

SENATOR the Hon. Prof. V. E. NEWTON: Thank you, Mr. President, I will raise the matter at the Committee stage.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Crichlow.

SENATOR the Very Rev. H. E. CRICHLow: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to speak on the Bill that would amend the Betting and Gaming Duties Act, Cap. 68, to provide for:

- a. the use of money in gaming machines;
- b. electronic credit to persons who play those machines.”

When I received the Bill, I found it difficult to understand. In fact, it actually quoted amendments. I am very glad that Senator Newton has pointed out the difficulty and I was hoping that the Leader of Government Business would have explained it in her opening speech but she did not, and so I hope to hear more about it in the Committee stage.

Mr. President, I tend to prepare speeches to do with what is being debated as we receive it but sometimes I hear matters that are so very far from what is being debated and I have a problem with that. The matter in question does not

deal with addiction, because there are people who are addicted to food.

This is a massive problem especially in very highly developed societies. If you think of the number of obese people around, especially in very wealthy countries, many people are eating themselves to death. At the same time, there are other countries where millions of children are starving to death. I did not sort of understand, really, the need to discuss addiction in a matter like this. There are evils in society, there have always be evils in society and there will always be evils in society.

Some years ago, more than 25 years ago, I was invited by the Government to chair the Gambling Commission. I accepted it because the Bishop had expressed publicly his wish to chair it, but he was not asked, and so I accepted the invitation since the Bishop would have been in a more difficult position than me since the Bishop is a symbol of unity.

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SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLLOW: Mr. President, we in the Anglican Church discussed this matter in the Synod. I think I was the only one in the Synod that disagreed with it. The matter was that all forms of gambling should be abolished in the Church, for example, that all forms of gambling in the Church should be abolished. I was the only one who did not support it.

Mr. President, a Commissioner of Police was a member of the Synod at the time, and he supported it, that all forms of gambling should be abolished. I pointed out then that I did not think that we should make children who enjoyed lucky dips and such innocent games, I did not think that we should make them feel that they were criminals because lucky dips and guessing how much marbles are in a jar and so on, all those come under the name of gambling, so the decision was taken that all forms of gambling should be abolished in the Church.

Sir, nothing came out of it. I do not even think that the Churches knew about it, but nothing came out of it. They continued to have lucky dips, raffles, little things and so on and there is a denomination that plays bingo and so on.

Mr. President, at the Gambling Commission, we interviewed the Commissioner of Police and he said, "Mr. Chairman, when I talk about gambling, I am talking about hardcore gambling, not petty things like raffles and so on because we would not be able to police all forms of gambling." When I took him outside, I asked him why he did not say that in the Synod some time ago when the

matter came up for debate. He said that he did not want to go against the Bishop's wishes.

Mr. President, having the laity in bodies like that is meant to help the Church to come to proper decisions. His duty as a member of the Synod was to get up and say that, as he was responsible for policing these matters, that he did not think it would be sensible to talk about petty forms of gambling and so on. Sir, the point is, as has been said earlier, you cannot legislate morality.

Mr. President, I remember one day at an old school, not here in Barbados, at a grammar school in Jamaica, two young children about 12 years old or so came to me and one of them asked me if I knew they were 12 apostles and, Sir, they were betting and you could bet on anything, anywhere, any thing. They would bet you that the next car that passes that way would be an N car and they would bet on anything.

Mr. President, I think that we all know the dangers but I would not have thought that the Barbados that I know was built on gambling. Sir, Barbadians, unlike many other people, tend to take better care of their money. Sir, our Church's position on money is that a person works, receives a salary, or a wage. The first duty of that person is to see that the house bills are paid, rent, utilities, food and clothes and if there is any money left, which would be a small part, there is nothing wrong with spending it on games of chance. Sir, that is because you have paid all the necessary bill, so it is not a matter of persons going out and spending his or her whole salary or wage on games of chance. Sir, that is our position.

Mr. President, I am not a betting man. I have never played one-arm bandits. When I was the Chairman of the Commission, a picture was taken with me playing the one-arm bandits and somebody blamed me for his addiction to it and so on. I think I remember winning one bet and that was after I left sixth form. The headmaster asked me to come back and act on the staff and the first day I was in the staff room, the staff room jester said, "I bet you that you do not call him 'Colly'." Frank Collymore was playing dominoes and he bet me 25 cents that I did not call him "Colly". Mr. Collymore said to me, "Go ahead and win your bet, Crichy". I called him "Colly", and won the bet and since then I have been calling him "Colly".

Asides.

SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLLOW: The aside was that I shared the bet with Colly. Sir, I think that most people in Barbados really spend their monies wisely and I do not think that to dramatise this would help. I am really waiting for the Committee stage because I would really like to know what this is about.

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SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLAW: ...I have not seen these gaming machines in all those years nor before. I do not know if there is a different kind of machine that is being talked about, but there is certainly something that is quite wrong about this Amendment. I hope that we can straighten it out in Committee, or that we should postpone the debate on it until we really know what it means.

Asides.

SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLAW: Mr. President, I should wait until the Committee stage. I cannot say that I support the Bill because I do not understand it. When I do understand it, I am sure in time I will support it.

Thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Chandler.

SENATOR Dr. F. L. CHANDLER: Mr. President, I will be short. I would like to say that I agree with the last two speakers that, in my opinion, the Bill should be saying what a gaming machine is, rather than what it is not and that would make it a lot clearer where, as I take it, a gaming machine you play for money, whereas one that is not a gaming machine is one where you are not playing for money. I think that if you put it in a positive way it would be clear.

Thank you very much.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Cave you have the Floor, Sir.

SENATOR R. G. CAVE: Mr. President, I was hoping not to have to speak on the subject of gaming because I am not clear on its position. I am a member of the Barbados Turf Club and have been forever, and I am a very keen horse racing person. I noted that Senator Durant mentioned that the Barbados Turf Club made \$21 million last year. To the best of my knowledge, the Turf Club never made more than a few hundred thousand dollars in any one year, but the Government granted them bet free status, and that might have appeared in the accounts as though they made money. They did not make \$21 million.

In fact, the running of horse racing, just for your knowledge, is a very big losing proposition in Barbados. Maybe 5 per cent of the owners may come out on top, but certainly 95 per cent come out below and that is just to

keep the horses alive, so it is not a big proposition in Barbados.

Sir, I speak on this because every day - my two daughters are quite religious, they challenge me that I am a gambler. I told them that horse racing is not gambling. Horse racing is a game of skill and if you take a bet on horse racing, and it was referred to the court, I am sure it would be considered a game of skill.

Asides.

SENATOR R. G. CAVE: If you are in a lottery and you threw things in a bag and you chose one that is a lottery, but the game of horse racing is not gambling, in my opinion. I do not think it was ever tested in the court, but I believe it is a game of skill.

Sir, that goes further in the sense that in Barbados, before time, the only gambling really was on horse racing. There was a lottery associated, as far as I remember, "If you did not have a ticket, you did not have a chance", and that helped the Club to balance its budget. Then, as time passed, it has widened in Barbados to include slot machines and also other forms of lottery. There is no doubt now that anywhere you go you can play a slot machine or you can choose lotteries. I have been guilty at Cave Shepherd. We have sold lottery tickets there as a matter of support to the Barbados Cricket Association or the Barbados Turf Club. By doing so I plead guilty.

Sir, the subject of the widening of gambling in Barbados, in my opinion, is not good. If it can be curbed and I do not know it can be. A slot machine is a straight gamble and everybody who plays it is going to lose. It is a game that will eventually draw people's money away, so if it is allowed to continue, then I think the protection can be brought in the form, like we do with cigarettes - that is gambling and risky, if not just sweep in all of them and get rid of them from off the shelves. That will cause a big furore.

There is no doubt that the lotteries which help to keep sports alive, for cricket could not survive without that support and many other sporting organisations could not survive without the support of the lotteries. You can look at it in that way, but there is no doubt that the widening of gambling in Barbados is not a good thing. I do not necessarily support the Bill, but I would say that as far as horse racing is concerned, I do not consider that to be gambling. I consider that a game of skill.

I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Hunte, you have the Floor.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Mr. President, I will be very short. I rise to support the Amendment on this Bill. I do not, from a moral perspective, support gambling myself but in buying a lottery ticket, which I consider to be a game of chance, that is gambling, then I plead guilty in that regard, because I do buy a lottery ticket. Outside of that, I do not know anything about gambling. I have never been involved in gambling to the extent that we talked about, the throwing of the dice and the cards. I grew up and saw it but it never really played on me.

Sir, there are two things we have to look at in this country based on all the morality, you either will encourage gambling or you get rid of it. It has to be one or the other. The point is, no Government cannot allow people to import machines or whatever, to make money and the State does not. It cannot and it will not happen. We cannot have that. With these machines, I saw that an application was made in 2004 to have these lottery machines installed and operated in Barbados, but the applicants had stated that they were not gaming machines, the "Bandits", as we call them, are. From 2004 to 2010, the Amendment, between the applications by the persons who were supposed to manage these machines, in 2010 this Amendment has just reached Parliament.

Sir, I wish to say this. I think a lot of politics play in these things. I think that during this period of time you usually get people who no longer have the responsibility of administering the affairs of a country, they always try to play on the fears or whatever of persons in society that this should have been done, that should have been done, or why have you waited so long?

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Senate A34, sequence 31, 5.00 p.m.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: I have to face reality and even though these things might be wrong in the sight of a lot of us, we have to do things to keep this economy afloat.

Sir, with those few words I wish to say that I support this Amendment because it is doing what it is supposed to do. If people bring things in this country to make money, the State must get some in the coffers too.

I thank you, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator McClean.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, as I rise to wrap up this debate, I want to go back

to some of what I said to, perhaps, clarify the intention of the Amendment, as I indicated, not at last, Mr. President, but to reiterate some of what I said.

These machines were brought by an agency with the intention of deploying them around the island as machines of chance or whatever. They were Video Lottery Terminals (VLTs). In essence, I did not use these words then but a newer machine. These were machines that were doing essentially what other machines were doing but they were applying new technology. On the basis of that new technology, an attempt was made to treat them differently to other gaming machines, therefore it became necessary to classify them because the Act did not speak directly to those. The Act sets out a definition of not is what a gaming machine. In essence it also implies in the existing Legislation and the proposed Legislation, a definition of what is not a gaming machine therefore implying what is, in fact, a gaming machine.

Based on the classification of these, as you would have heard from the last speaker, the Honourable Senator on This Side, by modifying the definition it ropes these machines into the net, so to speak in terms of tax and allows for equal treatment. Therefore, the intention of the Amendment, as it successfully does, and as it sets out in the same form and we will speak to this later in Committee, you will see that nothing substantial has changed in terms of the form of defining what is not a gaming machine, because what was suggested was that these machines brought in as they were, a proposed modification would qualify them as different.

I would want to sum up, Sir, by suggesting that these machines are essentially, as I said, more advanced in terms of technology but, nevertheless, they possess the essential characteristics of gaming machines. The advancement in technology to all intents and purposes should not change the designation of gaming machines and, therefore, should lead to their regulation as older models of gaming machines.

When we explore in detail the definitions based on the existing Legislation and the proposed legislation, we will see that the proposed legislation speaks to the issue of money as opposed to cash but what that does, Sir, is to capture in the definition of what is a gaming machine, all of those things. In other words, it reduces the opportunity for people finding loopholes or getting around the designation. Sir, removing apertures, as I said earlier, does not change that designation because people are still able to play these things as games of chance.

On that basis, Sir, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, the Senate resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Madam CHAIRMAN: The Senate is in Committee.

Clause 1 was called and passed.

Clause 2 was called.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Senator Newton.

SENATOR the Hon. Prof. V. E. NEWTON: Madam, because of the explanation the Honourable Leader of Government Business in the Senate gave to us in relation to the Bill, I think that Section 2(a) should be sent back to the drafters to be written in a simpler and more easily understood form.

Ten years from now when anyone is reading this Bill, they will not know the background. We certainly did not know until it was explained to us. It is probably a very necessary Amendment, but it should be in a simple form that anyone reading it would know exactly what is intended.

I would like to move a motion that the Bill be returned to the Chief Parliamentary Council for the drafting of Section 2(a).

Thank you.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Senator Trotman.

SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN: Madam Chair, I rise to support the motion and I would wish to say in doing so that I am very indebted to the Leader of the Senate for coming back to her original presentation and to clarify the intention that she had sought to put to us in the submission of this particular Bill.

I would wish in passing also to appreciate the comments of my friend Senator Hunte because that is information which, to a very great degree, speaks to causing me personally to recognise that there is some positive intention regarding the protection of the gaming consumer in Barbados. Until now, I did not understand and now I am beginning to think that I more clearly understand that we are trying to protect the public and it has nothing to do with whether we ourselves believe or do not believe. It has to do with understanding the legislation and making sure that it satisfies what we perceive to be the intention.

Madam Chair, even with that clarification, I personally am in the same position of Senator Newton,

where I am not sufficiently satisfied that what is being said meets my simple mind of understanding how this varies the intention of the original and the extent to which it protects in the way that it is clear the Government wishes to protect the consumer, wishes to protect the exploiter, that is the businessperson who may have tried by whatever means possible to avoid his or her responsibility and commitment to the Treasury of our country so I support the motion before us.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Senator Chandler.

SENATOR F. L. CHANDLER: Madam Chairman, I would like to support the motion that this clause should be sent for redrafting. Thank you.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Senator McClean.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Thank you, Madam Chairman. In order to oppose the motion, I want to read the provision of the existing Act. The proposal is to amend section 2 of the Betting and Gaming Duties Act. I am reading the existing section and it says:

“Section 2.

For the purposes of this Act, a machine shall be deemed not to be used for gaming, if it is used in such a way that no game played by means of the machine can result in a player or a person claiming under a player, receiving or being entitled to receive any article, benefit or advantage other than one of the following:

a. an opportunity afforded by the automatic action of the machine to play one or more further games without the insertion of any cash or token;

b. the delivery by means of the machine by one or more coins or token as a prize in respect of a game where one or more coins or tokens of an equal or greater value or aggregate value, inserted into the machine by or on behalf of the player in order to play that game.”

The key thing about that definition in the existing Act is that it speaks in the negative. It says: “...it shall be deemed not to be used and that no game...”

I want, Madam Chairman, to read what is proposed in the Amendment. The Amendment seeks to delete what I just read and substitute the following. Again, the intention, Madam Chairman, is to define, at the end of the day, what constitutes a gaming machine or what does not constitute a gaming machine.

It says:

a. For the purpose of this Act, a machine is not used for gaming where there is no opportunity afforded by an automatic action of the machine for the player to play one or more games on the machine without the insertion of money or tokens.

b. There is no delivery by the machine of money or tokens as a prize in respect of a game where money or tokens of an equal or greater value or aggregate value were inserted into the machine by or on behalf of the player of the game.

c. The machine does not credit money to a person in respect of a game played by the machine.”

Madam Chairman, in looking at these two definitions, the proposed Amendment recognises something which, I think, concerns Honourable Senators who support the Amendment or otherwise. To be specific, Senator Sir Roy Trotman, Senator Newton, Senator Chandler and Senator Crichlow. I want to stress that the intention is to define what constitutes a machine for gaming, and the other side of the coin as it sets out what does not constitute a machine for gaming.

Madam Chairman, I am not a linguist but I think I understand enough about the English language to recognise similarity in structure. They both set it out. Madam, if this is not the correct term, somebody can help me here. They - to use a negative...They say it is not a gaming machine where there is no opportunity.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: It is not that, so it is a machine where there is an opportunity. If I were a legal drafter... The legal drafter did it like that in the previous legislation. I am saying that is unfortunate.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: The key thing here is, and this, perhaps, addresses a concern that I heard Senator Sir Roy expressing. Nowadays, you can gamble with something other than cash, for example, they could have got around this if people inserted a credit card. Therefore, it is widening the definition to ensure that those possible loopholes are covered.

Asides.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: I am just saying it says for credit. You can credit something, you can credit an account or whatever the case maybe. It is not simply putting in 25 cents. Madam, I see absolutely no difficulty in the structure or definition of it, and it does not

need the context of the Amendment to help you to understand the Amendment.

I am reading the existing definition as set out in the current Law and I am reading the proposed Amendment and I have no difficulty with that either. Therefore, Madam Chairman, on the basis of the existing and proposed legislation, I cannot support the proposal of Senator Newton.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Honourable Senators, the motion is before the Committee to have Clause 2 of the Bill sent back for redrafting. The proposal was made by Senator Newton and supported by Senator Trotman, Senator Chandler and Senator Crichlow.

The question was put to the Senate.

A division was called for. The Senate divided as follows:

Ayes: SENATOR A. E. HOLDER; SENATOR R. G. CAVE; SENATOR Dr. F. L. CHANDLER; SENATOR the Hon. Prof. V. E. NEWTON; SENATOR Sir Roy TROTMAN; SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLLOW - 6

Noes: SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN; SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN; SENATOR the Hon. D. W. BOYCE; SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARDNER; SENATOR J. INCE; SENATOR H. A. HUSBANDS; SENATOR P. W. B. GILKES; SENATOR Rev. Dr. D. L. DURANT; SENATOR A. R. WORRELL; SENATOR R. O. MAXVILLE; SENATOR R. A. HUNTE - 11

Clause 2 was called and passed.

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Clause 3 was called and passed.

On the motion of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, Madam CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Betting and Gaming Duties (Amendment) Act, 2010.

ORDER NO. 3 – VALUE-ADDED TAX (AMENDMENT)
BILL, 2010

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I rise to speak on the Value Added Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2010, and I ask that given the relationship between that Bill and the Income Tax (Amendment) No. 3 Bill, 2010, their relationship in respect of the provision of tax allowance for housing construction, that they be treated as a cognate debate.

Mr. President, again, I ask that, given the similarity of focus and intent of the Value-Added Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2010, and Income Tax (Amendment) No. 3 Bill, 2010, that they be treated as a cognate debate.

The question that the two Bills be treated as a single debate was put to the Senate and agreed to.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance made a proposal in 2008, certainly, in the Manifesto Pledge to Barbadians, that the Democratic Labour Party made a commitment as part of its desire to ensure that Barbadians are able to benefit in the best way possible in respect of home ownership and home construction and there was a proposal to provide a tax concession. Sir, the intention is to cater to a cross section of people in terms of our commitment to housing and facilitating the housing of Barbadians.

Mr. President, specifically the initial proposal was that a house up to the value of \$150 000 would have been subject to the debate as the first step.

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SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Sir, anyone reading that Manifesto and hearing of those pledges, and hearing previous debates in relation to the \$150 000 would know that the intention was to raise that bar to a higher number.

Sir, the figure of \$400 000 is where we are now and recognises that in moving the value up would provide that allowance to a wider cross section of people. I want to focus in terms of that cross section of people on what I would call the lower middle income to middle income home owners, young couples who are probably pooling their resources to acquire a house for the first time.

Sir, we have had and we will continue to have in this Honourable Chamber debates on housing, because as I stated a few seconds ago, housing for this Government is seen as an area of important intervention, because for the average Barbadian a house is perhaps one of the greatest

assets any individual, he or she would strive to own. Therefore, this piece of legislation is in keeping with a commitment which we started last year. I am growing a little tired or maybe that exercise just now was one that took my mind a little way from the next step we are at right now. Anyhow, let me press on.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, bear in mind that I was here for the exercise, so I do not know what it is that has tired you out.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Sir, exercising my brain about gambling. Well not the gambling but the definition of gaming machines. I am not going to game. I am going to get down to some serious business here. Sir, investing in a house, or we are expecting people to gamble? We expect to make a lifetime commitment that is near and dear to all Barbadians, and certainly to working class Barbadians, young professionals et cetera.

Therefore, this is the intention, of course. As I said, we have had significant debates on housing and I want to say that this is but another step along the way. In addition to providing units, et cetera, there are lots of Barbadians who - many of us would have heard at least one individual in the political arena, speak to this on several occasions. Many Barbadians want to have access to land, and once they do that, they want the freedom to construct their dream home according to their own specifications, their own notion of what it should look like as an expression of their individual taste, individuality and so on. In order to assist them along the way this is what we are looking at.

Sir, a tax incentive of the type that we are talking about, a rebate on value added tax on a property for \$400 000, the maximum, if my maths are correct, if I am not my colleagues here will quickly correct me, would work out to approximately \$14 000 or \$15 000 based on the average kind of construction cost, et cetera, in terms of getting that value added tax rebates. That figure is by no means a small sum. Such a figure could go a significant way to assisting the individual or individuals who would be investing in that property as a first time homeowner to contribute to doing something else, maybe to help furnish the property and so on.

I think that as we would have...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, please.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Thank you, Sir.

As we would have debated in the past, what this Administration has sought to do and is very much in the process of doing and delivering to Barbadians is a mix of options of support in relation to home construction. This

particular benefit will certainly be attracted to a group of Barbadians who by and large are in the middle of things, literally and figuratively. We are talking about lower to middle income persons who do not qualify for some of the benefits targeted, for example, rent to own property, or some of the lower cost housing, and who are therefore quite happy to receive these benefits.

I believe that with this incentive, over the next couple of years we will see the significant benefits of these. Barbados, as I said before, is a country in which if people have to prioritise their needs and wants, housing and shelter are important. I have said on the Floor of this Honourable Chamber in the past that Barbadians see this as a primary goal and any Administration that does not appreciate the contribution that owning a home and having good acceptable accommodation will make the general quality of life of Barbadians, anybody who does not understand that is missing out on a fundamental truth when it comes to people in this society.

It is the place from which our very existence is manifested. Our children are able to comfortably participate in other activity, school and recreation, et cetera, because they are comfortable in their home situation, or adults in the workforce can look forward in many situations to retreating, literally and figuratively, to their home for relaxation and rejuvenation. Therefore, any strategy to do this must be seen as important. In fact, if you talk to Barbadians you will hear that for them, this is one of the many important initiatives that have been put on the table and are being delivered to Barbadians.

Sir, as I said, I have spoken on our housing initiatives. We are seeing the results. If we travel along the area clear to the City, Passage Road and Bank Hall, Country Park Towers, we see the success the Government has achieved in terms of a category of housing for lower income persons.

Sir, I happened to be a resident in an area which would have been provided, in terms of land, which I would have purchased from the National Housing Corporation a couple decades ago, if I am to be honest. I really would have welcomed such an initiative if it existed at the time, but as I drive around my neighbourhood I can visualise people benefiting from this. I will show exactly how.

My Member of Parliament and colleague in St. James South has been able to identify in that very neighbourhood in excess of 100 house spots. I believe that if and when the National Housing Corporation is able to transfer ownership of those lots to Barbadians, a number of persons will be able to - sometimes I have a little difficulty concentrating. I am not supposed to hear asides but sometimes they get a little bit too loud for me. I am aging a little bit, so concentration sometimes starts to lapse.

Mr. PRESIDENT: It happens to the elderly all the time.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Sir, I am a proud member of BARP and they will probably be happy for the advertisement, so if that means that I am elderly, I am there or getting there.

Sir, I was suggesting that I can envisage the effecting of this concession in my neighbourhood. As I pointed out before, recently I was shown some areas where there are some fill-in lots which totalled about 100 and something, in St. James South where I live. It is an area that was developed by previous Democratic Labour Party Administrations. I am hoping that given the keen interest and extremely high demand, those units can be turned over quickly so that young people, single people, couples, not so young people and persons who are looking for the opportunity to acquire such land to build such houses will be able to take advantage of this.

SA 34 17.50 p.m. Sequence 35

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Senate A34, sequence 36, 5.50 p.m.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: I indicated that we have units across several of our parishes in the last 2½ years, which have very much demonstrated this Government's commitment to making a dent in the high demand for housing. Sir, this measure can go and it will go a long way to ensuring that demand is met and, more importantly, that the commitment made by this Democratic Labour Party Administration will be realised and Barbadians at the end of the day will feel a greater connection as they are able to achieve what for many of us is a lifetime dream, that is, owning a house, whatever modest or however luxurious on this little beautiful island.

With those words, Sir, I beg to move that the Bill, the Value Added Tax (Amendment) Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, the Senate resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Madam CHAIRMAN: The Senate is now in Committee.

Clause 1 was called and passed.

Clause 2 was called.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Senator Newton you have the Floor.

Senator the Hon. Prof. V. E. NEWTON: Madam Chairman, I would like to say a few words in relation to Clause 2, Section 55A (2) (c) (ii) which says that the application by anyone for a rebate on the building of a house up to \$400 000 must present their application along with a valuation by a registered valuer.

Madam Chairman, nowhere in the Statute Books of Barbados is there a definition of a registered valuer, not under the Business and Professional Persons Act or anywhere else. To the best of my knowledge, the Barbados Estates Agents and Valuers Association drafted legislation last year, which provided definitions of a registered valuer and various categories of persons engaged in the real estate industry. A copy of that Bill was sent to the Minister of Housing and Lands.

I am also aware that recently, another agency has sought to draft a Bill, which it is hoped will have the support of the valuers in Barbados, which would provide for a Board of valuers - I think they call it an Evaluation Board - which the Government would support and in which valuers would sit on the Board and provide educational opportunities for persons who are practising their professions.

The problem, Madam Chairman, in relation to valuers in Barbados is that some of them have qualifications from England, Canada and elsewhere. There is no local qualification available and many real estate agents, some of many years' experience, and some of not so many years' experience, have been practising as valuers. They do not have the formal qualifications but the banks accept them as valuers, I guess based on experience and depending on the companies with which they work.

While this is a good piece of legislation, the objectives I agree with. I have no problems on this occasion with the language used. The point is that if we are going to be passing this legislation very soon, I would hope that the Government is already making plans to bring Legislation in which it defines what is a registered valuer.

I would also say that if that legislation is going to be making special provisions for valuers, care has to be taken to make sure that legislation providing for real estate agents accompanies it. Remember that real estate agents also practise as valuers and valuers practise as real estate agents.

If the Government is going to regulate one section of the industry, those who do valuations, it should, at the same time, seek to provide for the needs of the other branch,

those who practise real estate and who are a larger group, and who probably contribute more to the economy of this country than the valuers who are the smaller group.

I would also hope that in its discussions, the Government involves the Barbados Estate Agents and Valuers Association - but it still has the name valuers in it - in the preparation of legislation to regulate the industry.

Thank you.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Madam Chairman, in response to the concern expressed, I want to assure the Honourable Senator that currently the Ministry of Finance and related agencies within Government are looking at the matter of legislation for valuers because it is critical that be the case. The evaluation of property, et cetera, is a technical task. It is also critical for several inputs into the whole process of acquisition for financing, for disbursements of funds, et cetera, and that is being looked at.

Certainly, I am sure that the recommendation about real estate agents should be taken on board, but in the context of valuation, the registration and clear definition of a valuer become very important.

Senate A34, sequence 36, 18:00:14

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SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: The role of a real estate agent who may, in fact, be certified or registered as a valuer based on what any registration requires, would permit that person to function as a valuer, so there is, perhaps, a case also for addressing the matter of real estate agents. Madam Chairman, I just want to reassure the Honourable Senator that is the case. That was obviously made very clear when we looked at these kinds of provisions.

Clause 2 was passed.

Clauses 3 and 4 were called and passed.

The Schedule was called and passed.

On the motion of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, Madam CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee to Mr. PRESIDENT, and Mr. PRESIDENT, resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Value Added Tax (Amendment) Act, 2010.

ORDER No. 4

INCOME TAX (AMENDMENT) (No. 3) BILL, 2010

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, when I rose to speak to the Value Added Tax (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2010, I signalled that the Income Tax (Amendment) (No. 3) Bill, 2010 was related to the Value Added Tax (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill. In my presentation then I indicated that in order for the prospective homeowner taking advantage, there had to be a necessary amendment to the Income Tax Act. It is a simple amendment to facilitate the prospective or the homeowner claiming this value added tax and therefore I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Hunte.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Mr. President, I rise in support of the Income Tax (Amendment) (No. 3) Bill because we are doing a combination. It is interesting because the combination of these Bills is to give one and take the other. Of course, the giving is to provide that incentive on one hand for new homeowners and, on the other hand, to those persons who would make those houses become a reality, the persons who are in construction.

I see this, Sir, as a Government that is taking its responsibility seriously in respect of providing an incentive to make it easier and more comfortable for people in this country to become homeowners and for those persons who are going to do the construction.

Mr. President, I consider taxes and duties as important for the coffers of the Government in any country. Wherever Government gives an ease here, they have to collect there but in Barbados we seem to have created this mendicant mentality whereby everything should be free, "gimme, gimme, gimme", that is all we hear.

We have that problem now with the persons who are in the Crop Over programme. They feel that Government should give away everything, the tents should be free and everything should be free. Sir, I see in the last Crop Over where thousands of persons supported a number of events. Do they feel that Government should give all and receive nothing? I have a difficulty with that.

Recently, I made a contribution through the Press where I questioned a person and challenged them to show to me where all of our expenditure comes from the same direction or through the same source. Constitutionally, yes, technically speaking, yes, but in truth and in fact that is not always the case.

The National Insurance Board has been the upkeep of a lot of programmes in this country over the years specifically more so in the last five or six years of the past regime. I have not seen a report out of the National Insurance Board since 2003. This is seven years later and you cannot see a report out of the National Insurance Board.

Senate A34 Sequence 37

6.10 p.m.

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SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: When you look at the trustees and persons who have been involved, who have served in the National Insurance - as we would say in Barbados, all the bigheaded people - but we cannot get a report for seven years.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am not familiar with bigheaded people.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Mr. President, bigheaded is a local term, whereby we mean brilliant people like you, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am not aware that my head was big but now that you have explained it to me, I am fully seized.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Mr. President, I appreciate your appreciation. Sir, I will say this, the National Insurance Fund, which is backed by Government, is a Government statutory setup. It has its own rules and regulations. Mr. President, the funds of the National Insurance Scheme have been used in a lot of areas, especially to prop up the finances of Government and more so, Sir, the last Administration.

Sir, the thing about this is that Government borrows or has been borrowing out of the National Insurance Fund but would not pay back one cent. Sir, I repeat, when Government borrows from the National Insurance Scheme, the National Insurance Scheme does not get back any of that money. Government can repay that money in a number of ways, in Treasury Notes and other things but Government does not pay back that money that was borrowed. Sir, that is what has been happening in the last five or six years in this country.

Asides.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Mr. President, just for clarification, whenever the Government of Barbados borrows money from anybody, the Government of Barbados pays it back. Some people are quite happy often

to roll over their investments in the sense that when one investment matures, they will buy another investment. If you have a debenture and that matures this year, you will often seek to replace that debenture by one of a similar nature, and you will buy another one of that sort, but it a repayment and technically, it is repaid and you renew your investment. Any person within the National Insurance Fund who does not wish to renew to buy another debenture is free not to buy the debenture but Mr. President, we cannot say that the Government of Barbados does not repay the National Insurance Fund, or any other person that the Government borrows from, the Government of Barbados, whichever Party forms the administration of this country, is thorough in repaying all of its debts.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Your point is made, Senator.

Asides.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Mr. President, a technicality is not a reality.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Could you say that in a language that I can understand?

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Mr. President, being technical does not necessarily mean something is real. It is only a language used. It is only a language conveyed, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am sorry but you are causing me some degree of stress because here am I presiding over the Senate, a Senator has just made a point of order which I understood, because he spoke in the language to which we have become accustomed and now you say it is a technicality. I am not sure I understand what is the point.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Sir, let me move on.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Please do.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: We have had in this country, Sir, some challenges over the years with income into the Government coffers. I am saying, Sir, there are a number of draw-downs that were made, particularly during the last Administration, out of the National Insurance Fund. Those draw-downs assisted in doing a number of things in Barbados, in whatever form it went to the Consolidated Fund, including paying wages and salaries. I am making that charge.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, on a point of order. I rise reluctantly because I am unsure, based on the explanation of Senator Boyce what exactly is...

Sir, we need to be very careful in our comments. I want to say that Government's reputation as a borrower is

one that is above reproach. Our ratings internationally and so on depend on an evaluation of us, that is successive Governments servicing their debt. Sir, I do not know of any evidence of the Governments of Barbados at any point reneging on its debt commitments and, more specifically, in relation to the National Insurance Scheme.

The Honourable Senator on the Other Side would need to clarify two things (1) within the context of the debate on the Income Tax (Amendment) Act, but also in relation to the lending policy and the rules governing National Insurance and investment of those funds, what is being suggested there?

I just want to reiterate, lest there is any confusion, that successive Governments in Barbados have, in fact, been exemplary in the servicing of their debts. Sir, we have to be careful that the wrong message is not sent, especially in the context of a discussion on housing, where, for example, this Administration has invested funds of the National Insurance into projects, where given the restrictions in terms of investment where National Insurance is required to invest substantial portions of their money within the confines of this jurisdiction, Government will look for opportunities to do so.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Hunt, you may continue, please.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Thank you very much, Sir. Mr. President, the National Housing Corporation has been a utiliser of tons of Government money over the years. It is a Government entity, but the administration has been one where it has been difficult to have followed. There are a number of loans that were pursued as far as that Corporation is concerned. Those loans have had to be paid off by the substantive Government. They have not been able to meet their needs, particularly, during the last Administration.

It is unfortunate that the current Administration has to be faced with these kinds of attacks, Sir, in respect of financing. I have heard all kinds of comments, such as that there is no money available in the National Housing Corporation to do anything; there is no money to pay wages and that there is low morale. Mr. President, I have been hearing all these things. I have been hearing about what has been and what has not been happening at the National Housing Corporation over that last two years.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: I rise reluctantly on a point of order. If my memory serves me correct, we are dealing with the Income Tax Act, Mr. President, and not the National Insurance. Mr. President, are we not dealing with the Amendment to the Income Tax Act? What is the relevance as it relates to any issue to the National Housing Corporation?

Mr. PRESIDENT: The point of order is well made. Senator Hunte, you may continue.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Mr. President, it seems to me that I have created confusion in the mind of this Chamber. Sir, I will move on and will come back again, maybe not in this debate.

Mr. President, I support the Amendment to the Income Tax Act for what it stated it will do, which is to create opportunities for persons who are going to be involved in the construction of houses for those persons who will stand to benefit in the future, as far as housing development is concerned.

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SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Sir, with those few words, I thank you very much.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Boyce.

SENATOR the Hon. D. W. BOYCE: Mr. President, just a few words on this Income Tax (Amendment) Bill. Sir, in 2007, when the Housing Incentive Act was passed, there was a consequential amendment to the Income Tax Act, which permitted that persons who had permission under the Housing Incentives Act to construct 15 houses or more and to sell them to first-time home owners to be used as the residences of those first-time home owners would then pay a tax on the profit of those houses at the rate of 15 per cent rather than the traditional corporation tax rate which, I think, is 25 per cent.

Sir, since we have now brought the standard for these houses up to \$400 000, excluding land, and it is, therefore, important that we make sure that there is no anomaly between the Housing Incentive Act, the Value Added Tax Act and the Income Tax Act, so that a person who now gets permission under the Housing Incentive Act, as an approved developer, constructing 15 or more houses for sale to first-time home owners, who are going to use their homes as their residences, would then pay corporation tax or income tax on the profits on the sale of those houses at 15 per cent, which would be a preferential rate as compared to what the current corporation tax rate is.

Mr. President, this is what this Amendment seeks to do, to harmonise what is happening in respect of the home owner getting a rebate on his VAT, and encouraging developers to provide housing for low income or low middle income persons.

Sir, it is very important first, to encourage those young professionals who have come out of university, who

have come out of school, who are working and who are beginning to get a family, who want to have a little bigger house, a house with a little bit more finishes, a little bit more land and so on, to encourage those people because they, after all become the people who are going to carry forward the country in many ways.

Sir, the same way that those of us now have been working in the profession for several years, we have to make provision for those who come after us and who are going to go forward with their profession in other areas. We have teachers, we have artisans and so on and so that they also have a chance to make a good life for themselves.

We must not only seek to provide housing opportunities for low-income persons, we have to seek to provide opportunities for them, but also for those who may consider themselves low-middle income or middle income. We need the whole society to be able to share in how we are moving forward and this is one other attempt to make sure that the whole society shares in the progress that this country makes.

Therefore, Mr. President, with those few words, I wish to explain the Amendment and to give my support to the amendment.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, as I wrap up the debate, I would end as I have started indicating that the debate of the two pieces of legislation, the Amendment to the Value Added Tax Act and the Amendment to the Income Tax Act, has to do with Government's efforts to ensure that it makes as significant a contribution to the acquisition of homes.

Sir, certainly, there is one element of the Value Added Tax Act, which I did not explicitly articulate and I believe I should do so before my final conclusion.

In addition to catering to persons, the Amendment recognises the need to address another issue, which was provided for and that has to do with encouraging local craft persons who produce locally made items and craft items. Of course, this would be of particular benefit to the tourism sector, items being sold at the Grantley Adams Airport and the Bridgetown Port. Sir, what this, at the end of the day, is doing is to provide a tax incentive not only in the case of owners but persons in the area of employment.

Mr. President, having said that, I just want to be clear. I think there might have been some confusion on the part of the Honourable Senator on the Other Side, who at some point objected to a contribution from my colleague Senator Hunte and it may have to do with the earlier discussion of the National Housing Corporation by the

Honourable Senator but, indeed, any discussion of the National Housing Corporation falls squarely in any debate on housing. Therefore, I think that particular contribution would have been missed, given some confusion there.

Mr. President, we know what our intention is with this housing. The National Housing Corporation is charged with ensuring that these things happen, but this piece of legislation speaks to contributions in relation to approved contractors building houses - that is the Income Tax component - of 15 units or more for sale to first-time home owners, and that was clearly amplified by Senator Boyce.

Mr. President, however, I want to, in my wrap-up to make an appeal to such contractors. In the case of the value-added, the homeowner who oversees the construction of his house or her house, clearly sees the cost and deals with the cost, but when a person purchases a house, I want to appeal to such contractors that they pass on the savings because there is a difference between the 15 per cent and the standard corporate tax rate which may be about 25 per cent, Sir, that the differential is passed on to the homeowner otherwise they would not have benefited fully. Of course, it is for Government and those charged with administering this to monitor this to make sure that such is passed on to those homeowners.

Mr. President, overall, these Amendments to the Value Added Tax, in terms of the rebate to persons, as we would have approved earlier, the exemption of VAT for persons producing locally manufactured items of art and craft for the tourism industry is important because we know that visitors look to purchase indigenous mementoes and souvenirs of the country.

Finally, the Income Tax Amendment, which we are now focussing on specifically is intended to contribute to that savings for first-time home buyers, in this instance. Sir, certainly, I would assure Barbadians that I would do my part to monitor such projects to ensure that the builders do pass that tax savings on to Barbadians.

Therefore, I ask that the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill be read a second time.

The question that the Income Tax Act be amended in Section 49 (f) was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, the SENATE resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Madam CHAIRMAN: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

On the motion of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, Madam CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Income Tax (Amendment) (No. 3) Act, 2010.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 6.50 p.m. today.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

S/A34/18:30 Sequence 39

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Senate A34, sequence 42, 7.00 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Senate is resumed.

ORDER NO. 5 – THE FINAL APPROPRIATION (2009-2010) BILL, 2010

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, the nature of this Final Appropriation (2009-2010) Bill, 2010 is such that it does not require debate. Basically, Sir, the House of Assembly would have voted on a number of Supplementaries 2009-2010 and following on that the Minister responsible for Finance is required to aggregate the various Supplementaries that would have been introduced in the House of Assembly and prepare a Final Appropriation Bill, which would cover the full sums that would have been approved by the said House of Assembly.

Therefore, the Appropriation Bill recognises and addresses that and all that is left for me to do, Sir, is to move that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Following on my comments, Mr. President, this Bill does not go into Committee because it is certified a money Bill and I beg to move that it be read a third time.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I take it that all Honourable Senators recognise that having been certified as a Money Bill, there is no debate in this Senate.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Bill be now passed and cited as the Final Appropriation (2009-2010) Act, 2010.

ORDER NO. 6 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE CROWN LANDS VESTING AND DISPOSAL ACT, CAP. 225, THE VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION OF PARCELS OF LAND THE PROPERTY OF THE CROWN SITUATE AT CONSTANT IN THE PARISH OF ST. GEORGE IN THIS ISLAND FOR THE PURPOSE OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENT.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I rise to speak to the Resolution which seeks to vest a parcel of land in accordance with Section 5 of the Crown Lands Vesting and Disposal Act Cap. 225, of a piece of land at Constant in the parish of St. George, in the National Housing Corporation.

Prior to our short suspension, Mr. President, I would have spoken to another component of this Administration's housing programme, the provision of tax incentives, either to first time home owners, constructing houses up to a value of \$400 000 or a tax rebate for approved contractors building 15 or more units, where there are able to use a special Income Tax rate of 15 per cent.

Those measures, Sir, along with this and several other vestings that we would have debated in this Honourable Chamber, are part of a comprehensive programme of housing initiatives, either to provide house lots for first-time homeowners or to provide units for rental.

There is a plan, Sir, to provide rent-to-own homes and housing lots, not for first-time homeowners but to others and the construction of a mix of housing in several price ranges and this, Sir, is but such an example.

I would want at this time to report, almost two and a half years plus into the life of this Administration that to date the housing programme has been quite successful. I certainly would have cited the number of units completed. We have seen, Sir, the actual handing over of keys to persons and overall, the programme continues. I want to emphasise that the success to date is against the background of constrained financial circumstances for not only homeowners but for Government and, more particularly, for the National Housing Corporation.

The National Housing Corporation has the responsibility for overseeing some of these initiatives and in a quest to ensure that the programme is able to meet its targets over the life of this Administration, the first five years of what I anticipate being more than a five-year term of office, the National Housing Corporation, under the policy guidance of the Government, is pursuing a multi prong strategy, as I articulated just now. The acquisition of land and the vesting of that land in the National Housing Corporation is part of that process. We have debated other vestings, as I said, and this is one that will go a long way.

I do not believe, Sir, that at this point in time, I need to list all of the units. What we will see though is that in addition to a number of houses, which would have been completed in St. Philip, we have projects in Christ Church and we have programmes in St. Michael. I made reference, Sir, in my early contributions on another Bill to the completion of a long stalled project, not only the completion but expansion of what was a long stalled project in Country Park Towers.

We have seen also in the urban corridor in the area of Carrington's Village some units go up, Stuart's Lodge to be specific. Really and truly I believe that this Administration and, certainly, more specifically, the Minister of Housing has been overseeing an excellent programme of housing.

Senate A34, sequence 42, 19:10:13

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SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: I emphasise how important home ownership, home occupancy and access to housing is for all Barbadians from all social and economic strata and, therefore, this is but another initiative to address that.

I believe, Sir, that as we engage in this process we would see a level of transformation in the area of housing. As a Barbadian who was fortunate to have purchased a house lot from the National Housing Corporation in the 1980s and some years later to construct my home, I remember distinctly the pleasure and the feeling of almost empowerment and control when I moved into my house on Christmas Eve. I remember saying to my son, he was about four years old at that time, this is ours. There is a distinct feeling that comes with that.

Barbadians are sometimes described as house proud, and I think they should be. A house is the most important single investment that many of us would make in our lives. The feeling of accomplishment, the feeling of satisfaction and the sense of personal achievement is one that is difficult to describe.

Anybody who has gone through this process, particularly when they have been waiting for quite some time, would understand the significant contribution that this makes to building our communities and our family structures because we know of the difficulties of multi-family homes where living under one roof are parents, children, grandchildren and so on, and the stresses and strains that can put on a family.

Sir, I therefore believe that I do not have to spend a lot of time convincing you or anybody else for that matter who may be within earshot, including my honourable colleagues here, that this vesting at Constant is another vital step in the process of enfranchising Barbadians. That is a word I have heard used and certainly a word that I championed in another context when we talk about economic enfranchisement.

I believe that this in itself is also a form of economic enfranchisement because ownership of a home creates a very tangible and important asset against which persons can achieve a number of things. I have spoken about the social and the psychological benefits but there are also economic benefits as well.

For many people, the acquisition of a home allows them to create their first step on the ladder of wealth accumulation. I therefore believe that this vesting of land at Constant will create another option for the National Housing Corporation, the Minister of Housing and Lands and certainly this Administration to offer, to use the term that is very current now, housing solutions to Barbadians.

I am therefore positive that the vesting and the handing over of this real estate to the National Housing Corporation is a very important step. I therefore support that move and beg that this Resolution do now pass.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Holder.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Mr. President, I rise to contribute to this debate relative to the vesting of land, the property of the Crown situate at Constant, St. George in the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. President, I do so fully cognisant that when one enters public life, it is done fully cognisant that you would be subject to close scrutiny. Indeed, one aspect of Government deals with transparency, good governance and accountability. It is therefore most important that when you seek to give of yourself that you do so with the utmost integrity and the knowledge thereof.

The issue relative to the vesting of this parcel of land has evoked debate in Another Place and also in the public arena, particularly so in relation to the dismissal of the former Chairman who indicated that...

SENATOR J. INCE: On a point of order. Senator Holder is seeking to mislead the Senate. This Resolution has nothing to do with the dismissal of the Chairman of the National Housing Corporation. He is seeking to mislead the Senate.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Mr. President, with all respect I never said that this Resolution had anything to do with the dismissal of the former Chairman. I said that public debate was evoked and that the former Chairman made mention of Constant and of a contract between the National Housing Corporation and CLICO Holdings.

With all respect, the Honourable Minister of Housing and Lands responded to that in the other Chamber. It is related to the vesting of land and also any legal ramifications thereof because it relates to a contract and, therefore, who is authorised to make contracts on behalf of the National Housing Corporation, if the Minister has the jurisdiction to sign on behalf of the National Housing Corporation in relation to Crown's land, which is most important.

SENATOR J. INCE: On a point of order. Senator Holder is seeking to mislead this Senate.

Mr. PRESIDENT: It is only when he misleads the Senate that your point of order would be an order. If he is seeking to do so, you cannot rise on a point of order to say he is seeking to mislead. He is either misleading or he is not misleading.

SENATOR J. INCE: Mr. President...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Holder, you have the Floor, continue.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: I am obliged, Mr. President. All I am seeking to do in this Chamber is to seek elucidation on who can sign contracts.

SENATOR J. INCE: On a point of order. Senator Holder is misleading the Senate. This Resolution is vesting in the National Housing Corporation parcels of land at Constant, St. George that relate to housing development. It says nothing about a contract between CLICO, Chairman or Minister, so he is misleading this Senate.

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Mr. PRESIDENT: I am going to allow him to continue because he is entitled to discuss the question of

the National Housing Corporation and any matters relating to it.

Asides.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: I am obliged and most grateful, Mr. President. As I said before, the question as it relates to vesting is most important to this country because as per the DLP Manifesto of 2008, which is a document of this Honourable Chamber, they spoke at length of what they were committed to providing: 500 lots of land in the first five months, 25 house spots for sale to lower and middle income, building 2 000 housing solutions per year. Mr. President, according to their Manifesto, so this is part and parcel of their pledge to the country, so that this vesting of land at St. George must be examined and any implications thereto.

Asides.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Mr. President, it is for you to determine when I am out of order. Mr. President, in relation to the vesting of this land in St. George, the Honourable Minister has reported there is a contract between the National Housing Corporation and CLICO Holdings, in relation to this same vesting of land. Mr. President, works have already begun on houses in relation to Constant. Sir, therefore, the question I am asking this Honourable Chamber, the lands are Crown lands, the Minister of Housing is authorised to sign contracts as the Minister of Housing on behalf of the Ministry of Housing. The land as this Resolution seeks to do is not yet vested in the National Housing Corporation, so they remain the property of the Crown. When this Bill is passed, then it is vested.

Mr. President, what is important here is whether or not there is a contract in place as it relates to this land and who signed the contract. The question is whether in truth and in fact, as reported, the Minister of Housing did he sign the contract? He said the contract was signed by the ex-Chairman. He said that in the Other Place and that is known.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, please.

SENATOR J. INCE: Mr. President, Senator Holder is misleading the Senate. This Resolution states clearly that Crown land is being vested in the National Housing Corporation and as far as I know, as far as my knowledge serves me, the vesting of Crown lands to the National Housing Corporation has no relationship with the former Chairman or with any entity outside of the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, your point of order is made.

Senator Holder, you may continue.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: The question, therefore, Mr. President, is if there is a contract in place for the building of houses? If it was signed on behalf of the National Housing Corporation by the Minister?

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, you are familiar with the fact that Ministers do not sign contracts? You must be aware of the fact that contracts in the Government sector are signed by officers who are not Ministers.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, please.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: I am most grateful, Mr. President. Mr. President, what is the purpose of this vesting of land? Is it to build affordable housing for low income people? Is this the purpose and intent, to build now income houses? What is the value of the contract? Was this contract entered into earlier, prior to the land being vested?

Mr. PRESIDENT: If I must explain, which I do not think is my responsibility, the purpose of this Resolution is for the vesting to occur. Presumably, when this House votes, it will determine if the land is vested or not. It is not for me to explain to you or to anybody else what the Resolution says. It reads very simply and it is written in the English language.

“A Resolution to approve in accordance with Section 5 of the Crown Lands Vesting and Disposal Act, Cap. 225, the vesting in the National Housing Corporation of parcels of land, the property of the Crown, situate at Constant in the parish of St. George in this island for the purpose of housing develop.”

That is what the Resolution says and that is what this Senate is concerned with. Please continue.

Senator A. E. HOLDER: I am fully cognizant of that, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I wish to be able to assume that you are fully cognizant.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Sir, I am fully cognizant and that is the purpose of it being here. What I am querying is even though the lands have not been so vested, there is a contract as it stands now between the National Housing Corporation and CLICO Holdings, in relation to the building and construction of houses. How

was that contract entered into? Who was the person responsible for overseeing the contract?

Mr. President, it is in the public domain that not only is there a contract for the building of houses here, which was not authorised by the former Chairman...

Asides.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: I do not know who signed it.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Sir, on a point of order. The Honourable Senator is misleading the Chamber. The Honourable Member is speaking about what is in the public domain. Sir, it is in the public domain that the National Housing Corporation has financing that was agreed to and signed to by the General Manager and the ex Chairman.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Holder, you may continue.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Mr. President, I am most grateful for that because I was not aware that was legally permissible.

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SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, on a point of order. The Honourable Senator is misleading this Chamber to suggest that it is not legal. I want to clarify this using an example with which he and his Party, as a former Administration should be aware. There is a complex constructed several years ago, called London Bourne Towers, in which several Barbadians have resided. The property is, certainly, not new and to this date, Sir, that land has not been vested in the National Housing Corporation, so to suggest that this seems to be some aberration or deviation...

That is the National Housing Corporation. Sir, I think we need, at this stage, to be honest. Sir, reference was made to public life, so let us deal with those kinds of facts in that way. It is not an aberration as is inferred by the comments, which leads to a set of misleading conclusions to be drawn by those present here and within earshot of this broadcast.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I want to draw to your attention that so far as the debate goes, any matter relating to the policy concerned with the vesting of lands at Constant will form part of this debate. Nothing outside of that policy

regarding the vesting of that land will be allowed in this debate. Please continue.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Mr. President, on a point of order, I was reliably informed by the Honourable Senator, Irene Sandiford-Garner, that part of the policy was that the ex-Chairman had signed the contract. I think she said that on a point of order...

Mr. PRESIDENT: I do not recall that and we can send for the record. Please let us have some order in this Chamber. We can send for the record if there is a point to debate. Senator Irene-Sandiford, you are able to contest anything which he said that you said, if you did not say it. I will hear you.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: I am most grateful for the interjection. I was only seeking to ascertain whether or not the ex-Chairman had the capacity to sign. I only wanted to know if she had the capacity to sign...

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am not part of the debate but I will tell you this. If there is an ex-Chairman, the fact that the Chairman is ex, the Chairman is not able to sign anything at the moment because that Chairman is ex.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Sir, I am sorry. I mean that the ex-Chairman signed as Chair. Sir, that is the point of clarification I was seeking. If in her capacity as Chairman, it was legally permissible for her to sign as the ex-Chair, given the fact that lands were not yet vested in the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Are you asking me to give a legal opinion?

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: No, Mr. President, this is more for the Leader of Government Business.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Let me make sure that this debate does not go off track. The position is that if the land is not yet vested no one can sign for the Government of Country A, to do something with land that has not been vested, if it is the National Housing Corporation.

The National Housing Corporation would be the only competent body to sign a document, if the National Housing Corporation was assured by the processes, which we go through in both Houses of Parliament and the signature of the Head of State that the matter has been properly passed through the relevant Houses of Parliament and at that time the land would be properly vested, and at that stage, having been properly vested, any contracts could be entered into.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Mr. President, I am most grateful for your interpretation and elucidation.

Therefore, no contracts that have been signed can be deemed legally enforceable.

Mr. PRESIDENT: When it comes to what is legal and what is not legal, I will accept your version because you are properly qualified to tell me what is legal.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Sir, that is what I am saying. Therefore, unless and until the lands are vested, any contracts hitherto entered into and signed can be deemed void ab initio, void from the beginning, null and void, of no use.

Mr. PRESIDENT: That is correct. You may proceed.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Therefore, Mr. President, if that is said and that is the Law, therefore, it means the contract, as it relates to building and construction of houses at Constant, is not legally enforceable and that it would conflict with the established principles of the Law and the contract.

Mr. President, if we are speaking about good governance, transparency and accountability, these things are an issue here, that the cart has gone before the horse, so that we have a problem here. We are coming after, Mr. President, and is this part of the need and/or the rush, and/or the desire to, in truth and in fact, make the public believe that it is trying to adhere to what is contained in this Manifesto document?

Mr. President, I would wish to ask also, as it relates to the housing policy of the Minister who is being touted by persons on the Other Side, with all respect, as the only Minister that is working...

Asides.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: If, in truth and in fact, what they have ascribed, and prescribed, and subscribed to, as it relates to providing housing for low-income Barbadians and middle-income Barbadians, if, in truth and in fact, it is being met. Sir, we have a public facade of keys being handed over all across the length and breadth of Barbados...

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, at this late hour I regret having to rise and interrupt the Honourable Senator, but to speak of a facade...

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: On what do you rise?

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Sir, I rise on a point of order. He is misleading by using the term "facade". Sir, a facade suggests something that is not

real or true, a public facade of handing over keys. We had a public exercise of handing over keys where the owners would have consented to do that publicly.

Sir, a facade suggests that it is not real. A facade suggests something that appears to be but is not real. Sir, the handing over was very real and it is not an illusion. Sir, a facade is an illusion, so to suggest that it was an illusion is to mislead, and it is too late to play those kinds of games.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Point made.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: I did not know that the word "facade" was speaking to an illusion and not real.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am going to rule for you so that you are under no doubt. In the context in which you used the word "facade", what the Honourable Leader of the Senate said is perfectly acceptable to the Chair.

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SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Sir, all I would like the Leader of Government Business to do, is to produce numbers relative to the pledge of the Manifesto as it relates to housing, because we are dealing with housing, and to do a comparative analysis as it relates to what has been pledged in their Manifesto as it relates to the building, of house spots, and to produce the numbers, not a facade now, Mr. President, but the real numbers so as to enable the public of Barbados to see in truth and in fact what has been done as it relates to housing in relation to what they pledged in this Manifesto at Page 9, so that we do not leave with any impression of statistics or statistical dancing to produce numbers.

I am sure that the Leader of Government Business must have...

Asides.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: I have been asked to read Page 9. With the greatest of respect I will read the entire page.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, please.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: "Provide 500 lots in five (5) months at \$5 per square foot for first-time homeowners..."

Provide 2, 500 house spots for sale to low and middle-income wage earners...

Commit to building 2, 000 housing solutions per year in the first term of a DLP government.”

Asides.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Mr. President, I am sorry. That was not for your ears.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Can we have some order, please?

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: That is why I am asking that we debate this housing Resolution. I am asking the Leader of Government Business if she can indicate to the House what has been done. Given the fact that we are debating housing in general...

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have to interrupt you again. We are not debating housing in general. We are discussing and debating the vesting of...

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: It is a Resolution to approve in accordance with Section 5 of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Chapter 225, the vesting in the National Housing Corporation of parcels of lands, the property of the Crown, situate at Constant in the parish of Saint George in this Island for the purpose of housing development.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Mr. President, I am guided and I will restrict my discussion on this and nothing else but this.

Asides.

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Mr. President, I will commit to this destiny and I will not seek to speak on Coverley. I think that is outside of this debate and it will be done another time when we come to the vesting of land at Coverley.

Sir, all I am asking this Chamber for in relation to the vesting of land to clear the air and to tell the people of Barbados if there is a contract between the National Housing Corporation and CLICO Holdings as it relates to transparency; the basis and terms of that contract; what the land was sold for to the developers; the conditions of the contract and who is expected to benefit thereto. Also, when it is anticipated that the construction of the houses will be completed so that persons can move in and just bring it in the public forum so that any or all anxieties are cleared. That is all I am seeking to ask this Honourable Chamber.

Sir, as I said before, I will be most grateful if the Leader of Government Business would respond to the questions I am asking.

With these few words, I am obliged to the Chair.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Ince, you have the Floor.

SENATOR J. INCE: Mr. President, I rise to support this Resolution, the vesting of lands in the National Housing Corporation, lands at Constant in the parish of St. George.

Sir, this Administration, the Democratic Labour Party, can be proud of what has been achieved to date as far as housing is concerned. Sir, we came to office with 26 000 applications for housing at the National Housing Corporation. The Barbados Labour Party held office for 14 years. Senator Holder spoke about the numbers. Sir, the numbers show that they built 62 houses. All of the housing projects failed. If you divide 62 by 14...

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Mr. President, on a point of order. If the good Senator is speaking of facts, he should produce these facts to the Chamber.

Mr. PRESIDENT: What is your point of order, please?

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: Sir, there is no evidence to substantiate what Senator Ince is saying relative to the 61 houses being built in 14 years.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, you may continue.

SENATOR J. INCE: Mr. President, this Administration made a decision that we were going to put systems in place to answer the challenges or the challenge for housing in Barbados. We came and we found projects that were discussed and not started, work in progress. We came and found London Bourne Towers not vested. We came and we found Country Park Towers rusting in the ground, and as a result what happened to Country Park Towers? The financing for Country Park Towers was supposed to come from lands that were being sold at Kent.

Sir, those lands disappeared from the land bank of the National Housing Corporation. They were sold and, to this date, there is no trace of that \$16 million which was supposed to finance Country Park Towers. This Government took it upon themselves to find the financing. Sir, if you pass by Country Park Towers - I am going to give you a story to that.

Sir, about two weeks ago, there were some business persons who came into Barbados to look at some investments and I decided to carry them for some lunch on the West Coast. We passed by Country Park Towers and one of the individuals in the vehicle asked me this question.

“Jepter what is the cost of one of those condominiums?” I was not thinking about it. Although I was on my way to Country Road, I said to the individuals that we are not building any condominiums. He said, “Jepter you are joking?” He said, “Give me the price of the condominium.” I asked, “What condominium?” When I realised what that individual was talking about, the businessman, I told him that those buildings are for low income earners. Sir, he almost jumped through the car window.

SA 34 19.50 p.m. Sequence 46

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Senate A34, sequence 47, 7.50 p.m.

SENATOR J. INCE: He said to me, “Jepter, the Administration or your Government is doing a tremendous job to produce facilities like that for poor people, or low income housing.”

Asides.

SENATOR J. INCE: He also said that not only in his country, North America, that quality of a product is produced for low income homeowners.

Sir, the Barbados Labour Party, the previous Administration, failed in their initiative to provide housing for Barbadians and they have to live with the fact that the Democratic Labour Party, this Administration, has made a success of their failure and we have done it well to date with challenges in a recession.

We have completed houses at Marchfield. We have started infrastructural work at Parish Land. We have started putting in the infrastructure, Sir, at Lancaster Phase 1 and Phase 2. We have started houses, almost completed, at Tweedside Road. We have started to look at Deacons. We have identified high-rise housing for Valerie at Brittons Hill in St. Michael. We have identified Mason Hall Street. Sir, I could go on and on.

We have even looked at having those persons who live in housing estates for 25 years and paying rent and what we said to them that it is time enough that you had that place in which you live and paid rent for 25 years, as your home. Sir, we are transferring titles to those persons. We are not only transferring titles but we are upgrading those facilities. Sir, that is what we have done.

The Barbados Labour Party has to live with the fact that we are progressing. It is a robust programme. We are doing it under the theme, “Housing Every Last Person” because we clearly understand what it is to own your home. We have made adjustments, as discussed earlier, Sir,

incentives as far as Income Tax and Value Added Tax are concerned. This Administration is on the right path.

Asides.

SENATOR J. INCE: We are focussed and the Opposition is not going to set our agenda as far as housing is concerned.

The Minister of Housing and Lands has clearly outlined, in the Other Place, the plans for Barbadians. We have identified major housing projects, Sir, at Bushy Park and that project is supposed to come on stream. We have identified Pickering, another major housing project. The Opposition took time out to try to convince Barbadians that Bushy Park and Pickering are not anything more than just talk, and they are going to be failures, but we have not failed.

Sir, the recession has created some challenges not only for us in Barbados, but if you look at the Economic Report from the United States of America, as well as the UK, both countries have challenges with housing and the recession has made, what I would term, capital available for housing as a challenge, but we are persisting and we are going to meet the demands of Barbadians. We have outlined what we are going to do in our Manifesto so when Senator Holder is huffing and puffing, because that is what the Senator is doing, theatrics, trying to cover the failure with theatrics, it is not going to work.

Sir, Barbadians are seeing the success. Barbadians know that this Administration has a plan in place. We are not going to invite thousands of persons to Queen’s Park, saying to them that they are going to have a house called, Dovetail, a Bumble Bee, all different types of names and to this date not one house. We are not going to promise them hardwood housing, only to find out that they have wood that is full of holes and no housing. We are not going to promise them houses that cannot be built. We are not going to put up billboards.

Sir, they went to Tweedside Road and put a billboard in place. I cannot forget it, a lovely billboard. Many of us have seen that billboard that houses were coming. It was about in 2003 or 2004. Sir, 2008 and not a house. Sir, the Democratic Labour Party came into office and within eight months, we started the project that they were supposed to start at Tweedside Road and it is almost completed. Sir, that is success.

Asides.

SENATOR J. INCE: Sir, we are not going to play dance to their music. It is not going to happen. We are focussed and I am saying that the Democratic Labour Party’s housing programme is on track. We have nothing to

be ashamed of, and everything to be proud of and to date, we are successful, amidst all of the global challenges and the financial crisis globally that have confronted us. We are a success.

Mr. President, I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Crichlow you have the Floor.

SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLLOW: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to support the Resolution to approve in accordance with Section 5 of the Crown Lands Vesting and Disposal Act, Cap. 225, the vesting in the National Housing Corporation of parcels of land the property of the Crown situate at Constant in the Parish of St. George in this island for the purpose of housing development.

Mr. President, I think that this is a very important Resolution because I hope that out of this debate, we will have a change in the way that Barbados is being governed. As I understand the Resolution, we are vesting lands in the National Housing Corporation so that houses can be built on and I take it that this is the legal way to go about it, and I am glad to see that we are doing this, Sir.

What confuses me is that projects were set up and so on, and someone quoted the London Bourne Towers, built by the National Housing Corporation, and the land was not vested, or has not yet been vested in the National Housing Corporation, so that this Resolution seeks to do what was not done in the case of the London Bourne Towers.

Asides.

SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLLOW: This is what Senator Holder was saying.

Senate A34, sequence 47, 20:00:14

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Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Continue Senator, you have the Floor.

SENATOR the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLLOW: I think that we should be glad that Senator Holder has drawn this to our attention so that we would have better governance in the future. I think that any Government should set the example in keeping the Law. If it was not kept in the past, I hope that it will be kept in the present and in the future.

The Government cannot call on the citizens of Barbados to do what the Government itself is not doing. I am glad that Senator Holder raised this point because what is happening is that we are following customs really. The Other Side did it when they were in office and it was accepted by everybody and, therefore, we should continue that. Mr. President, two wrongs do not make a right, so if he is now forcing us to do things the right way, I think we should be grateful.

I would like, therefore, to give my support to this Resolution. I thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Benn, you have the Floor.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to support this Resolution to approve in accordance with Section 5 of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap 225 the vesting in the National Housing Corporation of parcels of land, the property of the Crown, situate at Constant in the parish of St. George in this island for the purpose of housing development.

Mr. President, this is not the first time that we have come into these Chambers to do a vesting. Mr. President, you would recall that we have spent a lot of time over the past months validating a number of Bills, including the Barbados Water Authority Bill. We must remember that there are a lot of things we had to come in here and validate that the previous Administration had done without doing the proper validation and that there are times when these things will happen. A lot of vesting had been done and I am sure that this is not going to be the last time that a vesting is done in this way.

Mr. President, I am urging Honourable Senators on the Government Side not to allow situations like this to get under their skin. Senator Holder was having fun as he presented his speech. I am sure we were having fun as well because it was a little bit of comic relief for me as well after sitting in the Chamber since 11:00 this morning. Mr. President, I find that whenever this Democratic Labour Party Government seeks and is continuing to do good work, the worst in the supporters in the Senate and in the Other Place of the Barbados Labour Party comes out. They do not like apparently to see anything good happening for Barbadians.

Mr. President, we put in our Manifesto some ambitious proposals, for instance, the Agricultural Protection Bill. We said we were going to do it in 100 days because we thought it was achievable. Over 800 days have come and gone and it is being held up. We have to take responsibility for that but one could determine whether it was ambitious or over ambitious.

We put in our Manifesto that we are going to find housing solutions to get a number of Barbadians who have been on the waiting list for so long... One would have thought, Mr. President, that the supporters in the Senate and in the Other Place would have been pleased.

Mr. President, I am not going to waste any time talking about what the Barbados Labour Party did not do, it is not my custom, I would not do it. What they did not do, they did not do and they were put in the scales and measured by the public and found wanting, so I am not going to go down that line talking about what they did not do. What I thought that they would be happy for is to join with any progressive thoughts and ideas and help to point this country in a direction, because this is Barbados... These people are getting on as though this is Timbuktu, Zimbabwe or Cambodia. This is Barbados.

I find it very distressing, Mr. President, that people from time to time attack or seek to attack things that are progressive and things that are reaching down to the benefit of Barbadians. We are seeking to provide houses for Barbadians. This Minister of Agriculture sat with the Minister of Housing and Lands and have gone around the country from time to time looking at marginal lands that we can seek to make available for housing rather than having to look at a situation where we are tempted to take land that is productive and arable and put it into housing.

The BADMC that is the owner of a lot of Government land, some that is owned, some that is vested, some that is managed and some that is tenantry, is a Government statutory corporation and we are sitting down and talking with the National Housing Corporation and the Minister of Housing and Lands how we could take some of these lands.

Mr. President, I can guarantee you that each time we take keys, whether in public or private, and hand them to ordinary Barbadians, it sickens the minds of the Barbados Labour Party's people. It makes them vex.

We provided free bus service for our school children to ease the pockets of those parents who would have had three or four children going to school and they get vexed with that. We allowed people who were renting National Housing Corporation houses for over 20 years to own the houses they were renting and these people got vexed because of that. We came two years ago, last year and this year, and provided a summer camp opportunity for parents to let their children go to summer camps paid for by the Government...

SENATOR A. E. HOLDER: On a point of order. Mr. President, I thought the debate was confined to a vesting but I am hearing all these things about school bus fares, et cetera.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I understand your point of view, but the Honourable Senator is merely giving instances of the point he is trying to make.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: He has met me on the road of ramble. He was rambling so badly that he feels that I am rambling as well, so thank you, Mr. President.

I want to, therefore, please the Honourable Senator to indicate to him not to come into this Honourable Senate Chamber and oppose every time for the sake of opposing. I am telling you this Democratic Labour Party Government has put a housing programme... We said it in our Manifesto. We have not reached all of our targets but I am guaranteeing you that the public is very satisfied with our performance as it relates to housing. I want to say to the Minister of Housing and Lands in Barbados that he is doing an excellent job, despite the various attacks, and not be distracted.

Mr. President, every time that I hear the Barbados Labour Party Senators and the people in the Other Place seek to create a public storm, I know it is something good we are doing. When they keep quiet, you have to wonder, but when they keep noise, we know it is something good we are doing.

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8.10 p.m.

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SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Sir, whether we plant more food and we make more food available to people in Barbados, they get vex about that because they believe that Barbadians by now, under this economic recession, food crisis and oil crisis, that we should have been on our knees dragging before the IMF and they would have been beating their chests and saying, "I know, I know."

Mr. President, Barbadians are more educated than people think and I have warned about that already. Barbadians read the Internet, they know what is going on in Greece, in Spain and in the economy of the United States of America. Barbadians know about a lot of things that are happening in the world. Barbadians cannot be fooled by coming on a platform and telling them any foolishness. Barbadians read and they were listening to you today. Barbadians are marking you down.

I just received a text message from somebody who is listening to you and gave you zero out of 10. I do not want that happening to you. You are my good friend. I want you to do an excellent job.

Mr. PRESIDENT: If you continue with this “you”, they would think that you are speaking to me.

SENATOR the Hon. H. LaV. BENN: Mr. President, I am sorry about that but seriously, I want us to lift our level of debate in This Place and to give support to the good programmes, because this Democratic Labour Party is on the right trajectory and I can guarantee you, Mr. President and Senator Holder that we will continue with our proper housing programmes.

Mr. President, with those few words, I beg to support this Resolution.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Sandiford-Garner, you have the Floor.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Thank you, Mr. President. I did not intend to speak tonight because I did not want to draw the evening out too much but, Sir, I feel that we needed for the record to bring some clarity to this debate. I too enjoyed the comic relief from the Opposition Senator. It lightened the heavy load today because it was a long day.

Sir, I wish to draw to the Senator’s attention something which I had clarified through an eminent QC, who is also a colleague of the Honourable Senator. Sir, the only contract required in writing is a contract for the conveyance for the sale of land under the Law Property Act. He said contracts can be made by performance and by conduct of both parties. Sir, I do not know if I am right or wrong. Sir, you have done Law.

Mr. PRESIDENT: That is a proper statement of the Law.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Sir, I am at a loss to understand why the Honourable Senator would have carried us all around the world this evening speaking about contracts. I would urge the Senator to go back to Lower Burney, where under the Administration which he now represents, houses were built for people without any contracts at all.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Nobody came to tell us to tell the people of Barbados that they had to vest the land. We are doing it now, but I am saying that the Law states what is required in cases such as these. The Law is very clear, Sir, so I am very disappointed that the Senator would have gone down that road at the time.

We talk about Lower Burney where you hear that those houses were built without the contracts being in

place, I would also like to draw the Senator’s attention to another matter where his Administration would have built houses under contract, with the Barbados Mortgage Finance Company in Husbands, in 2004, in circumstances where they would have told those persons those houses would be sold for 250 000 but those houses ended up being sold for \$415 000.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: The people of Barbados and, by extension, the National Housing Corporation suffered a massive loss under that contract because the National Housing Corporation had no supervisory powers in that project, none whatsoever. Sir, when we talk about contracts, there are contracts and there are contracts. This Government is trying to build houses for poor people in this country and it seems to be burning the bellies of the Barbados Labour Party Opposition. I really do not understand why because we are all Barbadians, we would wish to see that list of 20 000 persons reduced. I would hope that other right-thinking Barbadians would wish to see the same.

Sir, the Opposition Senator asked about numbers. I wonder if the Honourable Senator remembers these numbers, that the Barbados Labour Party promised 1 000 primary homes between 2004 and 2008? How many did they build? Sir, in four years they built 80 primary homes, out of 1 000.

Sir, let me give you the figures of the Democratic Labour Party and this was only to December last year, where the Democratic Labour Party has been in office for only two years:

Work Hall - 43,

Marchfield - 33,

Greens - 51,

French Village - 17,

Four Hill - 44,

Constant - 64,

Coverley - 1 500.

Mr. President, 80 per cent housing is completed to date. Today, Sir, I was able to listen to the news and I wrote it down. There was a ground-breaking ceremony today at Parish Land under the Housing Every Last Person (HELP) programme. Sir, 122 houses are to be built there.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Mr. President, there will be three-bedroom, two bathroom houses and not Lady Bird houses. There will be real-real houses with toilets and bath. There will also be 30 starter homes for people making less than \$3 000 a month, because I remember you talked about low-income earners too, for \$70 000 to \$100 000 per house. Mr. President, this is being done in a time when we do not have any money. If we had money, the Lord knows what we would do. Sir, there is a time for everything and everything in its time.

Mr. President, I would, therefore, wish to add my support to this Bill and wish the National Housing Corporation and the Minister of Housing God's blessings and strength to do what he has to do for the poor people of this country, who have been neglected and maligned for the last 14 years. I thank you, Sir.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, after that, Sir, all I need to do is to beg that this Resolution do now pass.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 7 – THE CUSTOMS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2010

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, the Customs (Amendment) Bill, 2010, is a very simple Amendment which I believe will elicit very little debate, certainly on my part. It is a straightforward Amendment which seeks to ensure that the legislation reflects the list of provisions made for updating the list of prohibited and restricted imports and exports of a range of substances. It is intended to address matters regulating chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) and hydrofluorocarbon imports.

As you know, Sir, as a country among other countries we are very concerned about protecting our natural environment and safeguarding our persons. This Amendment will essentially equip the necessary authorities with the requisite legal support to do this. There is a list of items which will fall under these. We are talking about a range of substances which, in several ways, are harmful. It is also in keeping with what is considered to be best practice in this area.

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SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: There is a list of items which would fall under these. We are talking about a range of substances which are in several ways harmful, and it is keeping with what is considered to be best practice in this area.

Sir, the previous legislation, in terms of this restricted list of imports, failed to offer the requisite coverage or protection due to an error and this Amendment, therefore, seeks to remedy that error. As such, it is intended to ensure that the Customs Department and other officials are clear as to what is prohibited or what is restricted as far as what can be imported or exported from Barbados. Therefore, Sir, I believe that these Amendments will, certainly, on my part, elicit no queries.

Mr. President, I am in full support of those protections in this country. Sir, many of us have, from time to time, argued that there should be greater control over a range of substances including chemicals used in a range of products, insecticides, herbicides, et cetera, and the direction in which the country has to go is one in which adequate regulation of these substances is clear and definite.

Sir, as such, I believe that we can all agree that such an Amendment is timely. It serves to protect the consumer and it serves to protect all parties in that matter and, therefore, I unreservedly support the Amendment.

Sir, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, the SENATE resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, MADAM DEPUTY PRESIDENT in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Madam CHAIRMAN: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1 - 6, inclusive, were called and passed.

On the motion of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN, Madam CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Customs (Amendment) Act, 2010.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be adjourned sine die.

Sir, I want to speak on the Adjournment and take the opportunity to thank, first of all, the Staff and the Clerk of Parliament who have facilitated our several Sittings in this

Session. Sir, I want to thank, specifically, the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force and other security officers who have ensured our safety at all times. Sir, to the caterers, we thank them for ensuring that we are sustained during and after our robust debates, where appropriate.

I want to thank my colleague Senators for their contributions to these debates and to you, Sir, for your able facilitation as President, of our efforts. I would also want to invite my colleagues, as we go on a break to spend a little time as they continue their other task, reviewing our procedures to ensure that we come back sharp as nails or fit as fiddles to participate in future debates, as we address the business of the people of Barbados. May you have a productive, where possible, restful break. Sir, to you and to all my colleagues, I say thank you.

SENATOR A.E. HOLDER: Mr. President, it is not often that I am in agreement with those on the Other Side, but at this time, I would wish to endorse and echo the sentiment of the Honourable Leader of the Senate. I wish all persons God's blessing and I hope they have a most enjoyable vacation and a rest, ready to return to combated debate.

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SENATOR A.E. HOLDER: I would wish also to thank the staff for the provision of services given to us during this period and hope that when we come back we will return once more and engage in, not pugilistic or fistic combat, but in warm and wholesome debate.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Crichlow.

SENATOR the Very Reverend H.E. CRICHLAW: Mr. President, I beg to endorse the sentiments of the two Senators who spoke.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Can I have some order, please?

SENATOR the Very Reverend H.E. CRICHLAW: I thank the Honourable Minister leading Government Business in the House and the Opposition Senators and to wish all of you every blessing during the break.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Durant you have the Floor.

SENATOR Rev. Dr. D. L. DURANT: Mr. President, on behalf of all the Churches, I want to thank His Honour, the President of the Senate, and all Honourable Senators who attended the National Prayer Service, since this is the

first day we have met since then, in honour of the Honourable Prime Minister for his healing and speedy recovery.

I want to thank the Acting Prime Minister and all the Ministers of the Cabinet and other Members of Parliament, the Chief Justice and other High Court Judges and all the national leaders who attended, as well as every Barbadian and resident who came.

I received a letter from the Prime Minister who expressed his heartfelt gratitude for the Service, along with his family. He said that he was really uplifted in spirit at hearing the praise and the songs and all that was done that evening. I want to thank all of you for your participation and continued prayer for him. On behalf of all the Pastors, Bishops, Superintendents and Priests, I want to express our sincere thanks to all of you.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I think all that is left for me to do now before I adjourn the Senate, is to say to all of you, I wish you a restful, peaceful and inspiring break from the hard work that you have performed over the last session.

I know there are persons who would wonder why I would describe that which we have done as hard work, but I know that preparation for Senate Meetings cannot be easy. It is fraught with some kind of trepidation from time to time.

I want to make a little statement before we go and I want to admonish all those who have not yet done so to make sure they read that document which is given to all Senators at the time they joined this Senate. From the time you become a Member of the Senate, I know that you are given a document. It is euphemistically the Rules of the Senate. It is called Standing Orders.

I sometimes get the feeling that not everyone has read as carefully as I would like them to the Standing Orders of this Senate. This is a document that is very user friendly and I will like you to get accustomed to using it. I speak not for myself only, but I speak on behalf of my colleague the Deputy President.

It would be remiss of me if I did not thank Senator Durant for his very warm and friendly utterance concerning the inspiring ceremony which he put together, he and his fellow Pastors. Those of us who have been trained to understand the ways of the world as visited by our Sunday School days, according to what the Leader of Government Business said earlier today, we have been trained in a particular methodology of worshiping God, and the prayers which have been offered on behalf of the Prime Minister of

Barbados are prayers which were readily accepted, I know, by the Master.

To those who would wonder how I know that, it is only because those of us who know that the Master listens to prayer that is fervently and honestly offered. We could not help but accept that on that occasion the prayers were fervently and honestly offered, and I think we want to record our thanks to the goodly Senator for that inspiring evening.

The question that the Senate do now adjourn sine die was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly.

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

Prepared with the transcript; for checking against the recording and the Minutes.

EDITORIAL QUERIES

Points noted while preparing this report from the edited transcript. The text has not been altered except where stated.

Q1. Masthead. The session is not stated in the source, so no session line is printed.

Q2. Committee, Betting and Gaming Duties (Amendment) Bill. The source file carries two reporters' versions of the same passage, from the end of Senator R. A. Hunte's speech to Senator Sir Roy Trotman's remarks in Committee (take-slips Senate A34, Sequence 31–32, about 5.00–5.20 p.m.). The more complete version is printed here and the second version (about 1,070 words) has been left out. Please confirm.

Q3. Heading, Order No. 2. The source heads this debate 'FIRST READING OF THE BETTING AND GAMING DUTIES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2010', but the debate is the second reading. The heading is printed as it appears in the source.

Q4. Division on Clause 2. The division list spells two names 'SANDIFORD-GARDNER' and 'R. O. MAXVILLE'; elsewhere in the report they are SANDIFORD-GARNER and MARVILLE. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Papers, items 1 and 5. The titles of items 1 and 5 have unbalanced brackets in the source ('(Exemption (B's BottleDepot)' and 'Exemption) Haiti:'). Printed as in the source.

Q6. Take-slip, about 5.00 p.m. One take-slip reads 'Sequence 330', presumably Sequence 30. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The Senate met on Wednesday, 18th August, 2010 at 11.10 a.m., with the President, Senator Dr. B. M. Taitt, in the Chair; prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah. The Leader of the Senate, Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean, laid twelve papers, among them the Value Added Tax Order, 2010, the Health Services (Prohibition of Tobacco Smoking in Public Places) Regulations, 2010 and the Barbados Economic and Social Report 2009. Standing Orders were suspended for the rest of the Sitting and notice was given of the Customs (Amendment) Bill, 2010.

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Senator the Hon. H. LaV. Benn, led the debate on the Income Tax (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2010, which extends tax incentives to agriculture. Senators Dr. Chandler, Worrell, Husbands, Ince and Sandiford-Garner supported it, Senator Chandler regretting how late such legislation reached Barbados. Senator Holder supported the Bill but pressed the economics of sugar cane: after a point of order from the Minister correcting the price paid to \$70 a tonne, he argued that against a production cost of \$96 farmers were still \$26 a tonne in the red and needed a price support mechanism. Senator McClean replied on the opportunities in non-traditional agriculture for young people, and the Bill passed all its stages.

On the Betting and Gaming Duties (Amendment) Bill, 2010, the Government's purpose was to redefine 'gaming machine' so that newer video lottery terminals brought in by an agency would fall within the duty. Much of the debate turned on gambling itself: Senator Marville agreed with the Leader that morality cannot be legislated; Senator Rev. Dr. Durant warned of addiction and of what was allowed at Junior Kadooment; Senator the Very Rev. Crichlow recalled the Anglican Synod's discussion; Senator Cave argued that horse racing is a game of skill rather than gambling; and Senator Hunte supported the Bill as necessary revenue. Senator Sir Roy Trotman and Senator Prof. Newton questioned why section 2(a) defined what a gaming machine is not, rather than what it is.

In Committee, Senator Prof. Newton moved that clause 2 be sent back to the drafters, supported by Senators Sir Roy Trotman and Dr. Chandler. Senator McClean opposed, reading the existing and proposed definitions side by side and noting that the new wording covered credit as well as cash. On a division the motion was lost by 6 votes to 11, and the Bill passed.

The Value Added Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2010 and the Income Tax (Amendment) (No. 3) Bill, 2010 were debated together. Senator McClean explained that the housing rebate, first pledged for homes up to \$150 000, was being raised to homes valued up to \$400 000 so that a wider cross-section of Barbadians would benefit. Senator Prof. Newton asked about the valuations applicants must supply, and was told that legislation for valuers was under consideration. Senator Hunte's remarks on the National Housing Corporation drew points of order, and Senator the Hon. D. W. Boyce explained the consequential amendment made under the Housing Incentive Act of 2007. Both Bills passed.

After a suspension, the Final Appropriation (2009–2010) Bill, 2010 passed without debate as a certified

Money Bill. The Resolution vesting Crown land at Constant, St. George in the National Housing Corporation produced the sharpest exchanges of the day: Senator Holder questioned a contract between the Corporation and CLICO Holdings and who could sign it, and was met by repeated points of order from Senators Ince, Sandiford-Garner and McClean; the Resolution was supported by Senators Ince, Crichlow, Benn and Sandiford-Garner and agreed to. The Customs (Amendment) Bill, 2010, which corrects the list of restricted imports, then passed all stages.

On the motion to adjourn sine die, Senator McClean thanked the staff, the police and the caterers, and Senators Holder, Crichlow and Rev. Dr. Durant added their good wishes; Senator Durant thanked those who had attended the National Prayer Service for the Prime Minister's recovery. The President urged all Senators to study the Standing Orders during the break, and the Senate was adjourned sine die.