
THE SENATE DEBATES

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2013 – 2018

THE SENATE

Wednesday, August 2, 2017

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Wednesday the February 2, 2017 at 11.15 a.m.

PRESENT

Her Honour Senator Miss K. F. IFILL, B.Sc. (Hons.), M.B.A., (President)

His Honour Senator the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLLOW, G.C.M., B.A. (Hons.) Dunelm, (Deputy President)

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

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO, M.B.B.S., (Minister of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development) (Minister of Commerce and Trade)

Senator the Hon. D. W. BOYCE, B.Sc. (Econ.), M.B.A. (Fin.), CMA, F.C.A., (Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for Energy, Immigration, Telecommunications and Invest Barbados)

Senator the Hon. P. M. T. TODD, B.Sc., (Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister)

Senator Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER, CIM, Dip. Mng., M.B.A., (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and International Transport)

Senator H. A. HUSBANDS, M.L.I.R., B.Sc., (Public Administration) (Hons), Ed. Cert. (U.W.I.), (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation)

Senator J. INCE, J.P., B.B.A., M.B.A., Dip. (Mgmt.), (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs)

Senator R. A. HUNTE, J.P.

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

Senator Miss V. A. G. DE PEIZA, B.Sc. (Hons.), LL.M. (Merit)

Senator Dr. J. X. WALCOTT, J.P., M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S

(Edin.)

Senator W. A. ABRAHAM, LL.B. (Hons).

Senator Sir Roy TROTMAN, K.A., M.A.

Senator Professor Emeritus Sir Henry FRASER, K.A., G.C.M., C.M., B.Sc., M.B.B.S., Ph.D., F.A.C.P., F.R.C.P.

Senator Dr. Sir Trevor CARMICHAEL, K.A., L.V.O., Q.C., B.Sc., (Econ.), M.A., Ph.D.

Senator A. A. ADAMS, J.P., B.A., Ed. Cert., M.Sc. Ed.

Senator J. A. WATSON

Senator Carol Lady HAYNES, M.B.B.S.

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah.

MADAM PRESIDENT: The Senate is now in Session.

MESSAGES FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HER HONOUR THE PRESIDENT

MADAM PRESIDENT: I am in receipt of an excuse for absence from Senator Professor Emeritus Sir Henry FRASER who is out of the country and Senator V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER who will be joining us later this morning. I am further in receipt of the Minutes for 19th July and 23rd June, 2017. There being no errors or omissions let those Minutes stand confirmed.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

Senator M. P. O. McCLEAN: Madam President, I am commanded to lay:

(1) the Police Complaints Authority Annual Report 2016

(2) the Duties, Taxes and Other payments Exemption University of the West Indies (UWI) Errol Barrow Centre for Creative Imagine Film Club Order 2017

(3) the Duties, Taxes and Other Payments Exemption Barbados Tourism Marketing Incorporated Order 2017

(4) the National Housing Corporation 38th Annual Report 2010 to 2011

(5) the Loan Contract Number 3843/OC-BA between the Government of Barbados and the InterAmerican Development Bank Development of Cleaner Fuels and Renewable Energies in Barbados June 14, 2017

(6) the Registration department Reports on Vital Statistics and Registrations 2014 and 2015, and

(7) the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Accountant General for the financial year 2015 to 2016.

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Senator M. P. O. MCCLEAN: Madam President, I beg to move that Standing Order 45(2) be suspended for the remainder of the day's Sitting.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Senator M. P. O. MCCLEAN: Madam President, I beg to move the First Reading of the Value Added Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2017.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER No. 2

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Boyce, you have the floor.

Senator the Hon. D. W. BOYCE: Thank you, Madam President.

This Bill that will amend the Offshore Petroleum Act seeks to do three things essentially. The first one, Madam President, is to permit a longer period of time between the award of a license and when the environmental impact assessments by the awardee has to be presented to the Ministry of Environment. The second thing that it seeks to do is to amend that part of a block that is relinquished by the licensee from 50 per cent to 25 per cent in the first phases and third it seeks to make sure that where a licensee seeks to change control itself that it has to present that matter to the Government of Barbados for consideration and for an approval if that licensee is to continue to hold and operate that license.

Madam President, the vision of energy and telecommunications has taken a very strong position on the matter of the environmental impact assessments that have to be done before a license can become operational. We had in the previous Act a 90-day period for the submission of the Environmental Impact Assessment. We have found that this is not sufficient time to allow a licensee to prepare an environmental impact assessment in this kind of situation to the level which we would require and that level of which we have been advised by the Commonwealth Secretariat on this matter of the environmental impact assessment and the quality that should be presented to us before we can move forward with it.

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Madam President, the matter of the Environmental Impact Assessment is particularly important for a number of reasons. First of all, that the waters off of Barbados are, I am advised by my people, quite deep waters. I think I am correct in saying that I have been advised that the waters that we contemplate our offshore operations to be in are at least as deep as the waters where they had that unfortunate accident in the Gulf of Mexico some years back. That therefore, Madam President, puts us on notice that we should be very careful with the environmental impact assessment. We all know the results of that blow out in the Gulf of Mexico and the impact that had on tourism and fishing and on the wildlife in those states that border the Gulf in the United States of America.

Secondly, Madam President, Barbados has an economy which depends considerably on tourism. Quite apart from the direct contribution of tourism to the economy, it of course drives activity in several other sectors of the country. We therefore have got to exercise all due caution to make sure that when we pursue the exploitation of the offshore oil resources that we do so without threatening our tourism sector and the assets which enabled us to have a competitive advantage in tourism.

Madam President, we are also east of a number of other islands in the Caribbean that depend upon tourism in

large measure, Tobago, St. Vincent, Grenada, St. Lucia and so on, and therefore we have to be extra careful when we look at the environmental impact assessments to make sure that we do it right and we do it as safely as we possibly can with the knowledge at our disposal.

Madam President, in our discussions and negotiations with BHP Billiton who as you know was awarded two blocks in Bimshire and Carlisle Bay... The licence was signed in 2015 and the blocks were awarded in 2008. We have had very vigorous negotiations and they have found themselves that it has taken quite some time to present their first draft of the environmental impact assessment. That first draft has been signed by our people. We have referred it to the Commonwealth Secretariat. We have had help from them and we have submitted to that company some requests for additional work to be done on the environmental impact assessment. Based on all of that, we feel that it would make better sense for us to extend the period of time that the licensee or awardee has to work on his environmental impact assessment to nine months rather than the 30 days which they now have. Secondly, Madam President, the licences are for eight years but they are divided into three phases. The first phase is three years, the second phase is three years and the last phase is two years. Now, at the end of each of the first two phases, the awardee or licensee is required to return to the Crown a portion of that block.

Madam President, Barbados is seen as being a frontier territory for offshore oil and gas. We do not have any as yet. We have it in very difficult conditions and it is very costly for the awardees, the licensees, to develop their programmes. They have therefore asked that we permit them a little more flexibility in this matter of how much they give back in trying to make sure that they are not rushing things too fast and then putting us at some danger. Madam President, the 25 per cent that we are moving to from the 50 per cent is a minimum amount that you would have to give back and as we do each licensee negotiations we would then negotiate the exact amount. Of course, at the end of the licensed period the whole thing comes back to the Crown unless they move forward into an operational phase to get oil and gas. That seems reasonable, Madam President, if we wish to encourage companies to make the investment to come into our waters and to seek to find some oil therein.

Thirdly, Madam President, when we consider making an award of an offshore block to a company we do a great deal of due diligence on that company to make sure that it has got the technical capacity to do what it is that they want to do, to make sure that they have the experience in similar areas as that that we have in Barbados, to make sure that they have the managerial expertise, to make sure that they have got the financial capacity, to make sure that they have got a good health and safety record and to make

sure that they have a good environmental protection record. We, therefore, consider that we ought not to have ourselves in a position where we award a block or blocks to a particular company and then have that company sell that block to some other company without our knowledge or without our permission specifically because we would have to do the same level of due diligence to a potential purchaser as we would have done on the vendor, and therefore we would settle on this matter and what we therefore propose to do is to make sure that where there is a change of control of the licensee that we in the Government get the opportunity to study it, investigate it and then make a decision thereon so that we know at all times the persons with whom we are dealing.

Madam President, there has been some oil finds off of Guyana. Of course, the waters are rather shallower than those that we contemplate off Barbados, and there has been some oil finds off of Trinidad nearer to our borders and so we verily expect that there is something there that we can benefit from.

All of the advice I have, Madam President, suggests that it takes quite a while before you can actually do your investigation, do the exploratory wells and then move to a production basis where you are producing the oil and gas, and so while we wait for that to happen we are trying to make sure that the economy becomes more resilient when it comes to the matter of energy, and we are doing that basically in two ways: (1) to try to improve the energy efficiency of the economy to make sure that we use less energy for each dollar of output that we produce and (2) to make sure we use our natural resources of sun and wind and biomass to generate electricity rather than having to import heavy fuel oil or diesel for that purpose. Of course, whenever we import those things we use foreign exchange and like all small economies we are a very small open economy where foreign exchange becomes a critical constraint on whatever we do, so we are embarked on an effort to reduce the amount of foreign exchange that we use in order to generate electricity and power in the country.

Madam President, we have developed several programmes in renewable energy. One, of course, has been a smart fund where we provided loans at low rates to small businesses and so on for solar photovoltaics to power themselves and we are working now with the Inter-American Development Bank to get a larger fund to be able to expand that operation to more manufacturers, hotels and so on to be able to help them reduce the cost of energy and to help us to reduce our use of foreign exchange for imports of oil and of course to help those businesses to reduce their own costs of operations.

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Madam President, Government itself has already started on a programme to put solar photovoltaic panels on several community centres and beach facilities around the country and that programme is continuing. Government itself has also started a programme to place on certain Government buildings at the moment solar photovoltaic so that we can generate some power ourselves within Government to reduce our power bill. Madam President, that programme is likely to improve the other token some more, both with the Inter-American Development Bank and the Caribbean Development Bank about trying to get more funds to expand that programme, so that eventually all those large Government buildings will be properly covered with solar photovoltaic and that we get power from them.

Madam President, the Barbados National Oil Company itself is moving towards the Barbados National Energy Company Limited and itself is pursuing discussions with several other Government departments where it can use the roof tops of their buildings to be able to generate renewable energy from them. Madam President, with 130 schools it seems to me that we do have some opportunity and scope to develop renewable energy from those properties.

Madam President, we are pressing ahead on this matter of renewable energy sector, probably our of 220 megawatts or 240 megawatts of power we have allocated already about 70 megawatts for intermittent renewable energy, that is wind and solar photovoltaic divided between households, Government, independent power producers, as well as the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited. Later on this year we expect that we will review that allocation and hopefully push that allocation up hopefully by another 60 megawatts or 70 megawatts so that we will have half of our peak and generating capacity coming from renewable energy sector. I expect that will come to me for consideration very shortly.

In the meantime, the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited has been pressing ahead with its own work to improve the electricity grid so that it is can take more intermittent renewable energy and that it can still remain stable. I am at the moment pursuing discussions with a number of people to see to what extent the storage facilities that are available are becoming more and more affordable and to see how they could incorporate those storage mechanisms within their grids and therefore to provide for us even more opportunity to use intermittent renewable energy.

Madam President, we are also now looking to test the various sites in the island which are best for wind and which do not pose hazards to aircraft so that we are able to develop our wind energy in the next several years and that between wind and solar we expect that we will move to a very high percentage of power generation very shortly. The

Barbados Light and Power Company Limited has indicated that by 2040 or 2045, I think, that we can be at 100 renewable energy for power generation. I myself will like them to bring that forward to 2035 and we are constantly nudging them to do those things. I believe that they are taking a conservative position so as not to overexcite persons and so as not to have assets that are already there stranded and which are not good for retirement until 2045.

Madam President, later on we hope that we would be able to provide facilities so that more households would be able to avail themselves to the opportunity to have solar photovoltaic without themselves having to go into the banking system to borrow. We are having discussions with the Caribbean Development Bank on that matter of how do we introduce the opportunity for all households to be able to avail themselves of solar photovoltaic systems without having to put themselves into additional debts with commercial banks. Hopefully, we would get that matter sorted out in the next few months and we will be able to come back here with something on that.

Madam President, that is the matter of what we are doing with the renewable energy sector going forward. There are several manufacturers who have themselves approached us and asked for guidance, to make sure that they make their factories that much more energy efficient so that they can reduce their costs of operations and to reduce our importation.

Madam President, we are not just dealing with how we generate power, we are also dealing with how we reduce the need for power and so we are pushing hard to get some more energy efficient solutions both within the Government and the wider community. We are at the moment discussing with the funding agencies under the distribution of company, the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited, the matter of how do we incorporate energy efficient mechanisms within the whole country, households as well as businesses, without once again having to have people to find a bank loan or whatever to be able to install these things. We are working on that, we know that in Nova Scotia Canada there has been a lot of work done in that area and we are investigating that work to see how they have done it to be able to push energy efficiency right throughout the economy. Madam President, we are focussed on pushing this energy efficiency and this renewable energy sector right through the economy so that all those who wish to use it and in some instances we may have to take the approach to energy efficiency the way we have to go and therefore make some other decisions about the type of lighting and appliances and so on that are brought into the country.

Madam President, while we are doing that, because I really feel that it is not only those persons who have the financial resources now who should be the ones to benefit

from renewable energy thrust and from energy efficiency thrust, we feel that we have to make that opportunity available to all persons in the society and we have to find a way to be able to get it done so that they too can become investors in their own power usage in the country and so we are pushing on that very hard. Madam President, I really would like to see many more people using LED bulbs instead of the florescent bulbs and we have to find ways to get those things out. Madam President, as part of our first marketing programme we did have a bulb-giveaway where on a sample basis names were drawn and people came forward and got energy efficient bulbs to put into their homes. I would love to be able to have that extended so that the whole country could get LED bulbs. Of course, if the LED could be switched by half then that would be a substantial benefit to the country and to the consumer who will then see a lower electricity bill.

No.D12 (3)12.08 p.m.

Madam President We are pushing that matter of the energy efficiency throughout the Government programmes, and part of why I want to expand the Smart Energy Fund is also to make sure that the manufacturing and hotel sectors and so on find a way to reduce their own costs by reducing the power that they use. Of course, all of this ties in with our commitments under the Paris Agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It is not that we are significant in the scheme of things, but for us it matters. Climate change matters for us, and therefore we have a moral duty to protect our little rock and do what we can do to make sure that it is as safe as we can make it. Madam President, while we look forward to the time when we can get oil and gas underground safely from offshore, we also want to make sure that our economy uses less energy per dollar of output. This is not to reduce output, but to make sure that whatever we produce, we produce using less energy. We want to make sure that of that energy which we actually have to use, we are able to produce most of that energy from our own resources; from wind, solar, waste and biomass.

Madam President, what we would ultimately like to have is a situation where, when we shall be harvesting oil and gas from offshore, most of those resources can go into some heritage fund or stabilisation fund and be kept there for times when you absolutely need to draw on them. Economies that have built themselves around oil and gas to the detriment of everything else have found themselves in considerable difficulty when the price of oil drops. Our neighbour to the south has found itself in that situation. In all economies which are driven by oil there are two effects which you look for: One is that it drives up the wages of everybody in the economy; and while one wishes to see wages improve, you do not want it to go to a stage where non-oil businesses actually fail because the wages are too high. That is one of the difficulties you have with natural

resource-based endowments. You have got to manage them very carefully. Norway has done a tremendous job of managing their offshore oil and gas, so that they have pressed ahead with their energy efficiency and they have pressed ahead with their renewable energy, particularly wind, but they have put most of their production of oil and gas into heritage funds and stabilisation funds so as to be able to draw upon those when they need to and also to use those resources for developing other parts of the economy; to make the economy more diverse and therefore more resilient to economic pressures. We want to put ourselves in that same position, but we can only get there if we right now do the things that are important to reduce our use of energy and also to generate energy from other sources. Therefore, that is what we are doing. While the grass is growing, as they say, we have found a way to feed the animals and, Madam President, coming from St. Andrew, you know that I would have had a little time raising some animals.

Aside.

Senator the Hon. D.W. BOYCE: I came along last in my family so I did not have quite as much of that, but there are some Members here from the country who I see smiling knowingly, because they know how much they did to raise animals when they were schoolboys and so on.

Aside.

Senator the Hon. D.W. BOYCE: Yes, I said when they were schoolboys, Madam President.

Aside.

Senator the Hon. D.W. BOYCE: I choose not to hear asides, Madam President, because the person who makes the aside is so young. He is so young that I do not know that person would have had any experience of those things. I am sure that her parents had cows and so on and forth. Madam President, we have to find a way. Part of the CARICOM Strategic Plan focusses very strongly on economic resilience, and a major part of what we have to do in the Caribbean region is to make ourselves resilient to oil prices. We have been lucky in the last few years. Oil prices have been down in the 20s, 30s and 40s. I think yesterday it was at \$48 a barrel. Madam President, oil prices go in phases and in the oil business what goes down comes back up. Normally, what goes up comes down, and that happens in the oil business too, but we are not concerned about that; we love that. What we are concerned about is when they go up. When they are down, we behave as if they are going to stay down forever, and then they go up on us and they take a lot of foreign exchange. I am very conscious of what happened in 2008 when the oil prices went up to \$145 per barrel and, mind you, fell quickly thereafter, Madam President. They came back down into

the \$40-per-barrel range. We have to prepare ourselves for when those prices go up again, and that is part of why we are pushing as hard as we are pushing, and we will push harder in the next while. I know there have been some concerns by some people that the price being paid for renewable energy is not high enough, and we are looking to review that, and maybe once we have done that we can make a submission to the Fair Trading Commission (FTC), which is the appropriate body for dealing with those matters.

Madam President, at the same time our Study is in progress. We will soon be finished, and after the stakeholder consultation we will submit to the FTC to look at the prices which are to be paid for renewable energy to those very large producers who are not the Barbados Light & Power Company; those people who want to produce one megawatt and more than five to ten megawatts. We will have a process for dealing with that, and we expect that will be in the FTC before the end of this third quarter of the year, and we expect to have the review of that as well as the review of the occurring renewable energy rider for the smaller production systems before the end of the year. We are trying to pedal as fast as we can on this, Madam President, being conscious all the time that we cannot do anything to disrupt the stability of our power supply, that we have to make sure that the power company is in step with us, and that we provide opportunities for the democratisation of generation of power as well as opportunities for people to reduce their use of power.

Madam President, this is just a quick thing on what this Bill is about, and secondly where we are with the offshore drilling. I mentioned BHP Billiton. We have also awarded a block to Repsol, which is another international company that has done very well in deep offshore waters. We will, during the course of this year or early next year, vote again for prequalification in looking at some new blocks. Madam President, we are very careful in making sure that we prequalify people, and there is a regulation which we have which sets out very clearly the terms and criteria for prequalification. I have mentioned the things before, including financial capacity, managerial capacity, experience in these kinds of waters, technical capacity, environmental things, health and safety, and so on and so forth. Madam President, they have first of all to pass and meet those prequalification criteria before they are invited to make a bid. Of course, we will limit how many blocks we put out at any one time, because it does not make sense for us to give out all the blocks one time, Madam President. We want to see how people do on the basis of that experience, and make judgements as to how fast we should go and who else we should give blocks to. Certainly, Madam President, we want to make sure that we have critical mass of international oil companies of repute operating in your waters, because that helps. They follow

each other, and if you have the right crowd some others will come knocking on your doors on that matter.

Madam President, with those few words I wish therefore to move that this Bill be now read a second time, and I thank you.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Watson, you have the Floor.

12.06 p.m.

Senator J.A. WATSON: Thank you, Madam President, I just want to make a few brief comments on this Bill, nothing that is too technical but when we are looking at a small country like Barbados with limited resources, we have to be mindful of how we approach certain projects. Madam President, I believe that as Senator Boyce say that tourism is very important to Barbados at this point in time. I have already said that I hope that eventually it would become less important as we build other sector.

Madam President, the imports of Barbados are very high in the areas of oil imports and food and I believe that while we could reduce the import bill in oil by success in the offshore drilling I believe that we should be cautious. I believe that Senator Boyce made this point over and over during this presentation. I am agreeing with him about caution not only in terms of selection of the people who will drill but also in the idea of maintenance and in the area of recovery in case of an accident. I think you cannot do offshore drilling without a very serious detailed plan in case of an accident. I think that is something that should very much be considered in the awarding of these contracts.

Madam President, one of the things about small countries like ours is that we have to be really efficient and effective so that when we spend a dollar, we must get the best return for, not just a return but the best return for it. I believe that if we look at the two areas of imports, oil imports and food import, I believe that we should make a concerted effort at the time to reduce our food bill even along with the work towards getting the offshore drilling going. Madam President, I say that because it is far easier to reduce our food bill than to get our drilling operation going and for that reason I want to suggest that we look at really doing something about our waste land. I believe that I have made a suggestion in this Chamber already that the Government has to do what is best for the country and if it is necessary to take over lands that are idle and make sure that owners of that land are properly compensated, not necessarily in terms of purchasing the land but for the use of the land. There are a lot of programmes now in Barbados for young people in agriculture, there are a lot of successful programmes that are going for young people in agriculture and you do not need a whole plantation. Madam, young

people could with a half acre of land or an acre of land produce substantial crops that would reduce our food bill. Madam President, I think that is an area that be looked at very seriously because I know our effort in Barbados must be to reduce our import bill and I believe that agriculture and oil are the two biggest import and that we should be approaching them hand in hand. I give the advantage to agriculture simply because it is less risky, we already have the land and we already have the manpower. I believe that there are enough young people in Barbados now who could be producing much food. Madam, that would be my only few words on this bill. I believe that it was well presented and I realise tht lots of thoughts have been put in it. we have to realise of course, as well that we are also developing a renewal energy programme and therefore, overtime our requirements for oil would also be reducing so that if you are developing renewal energy and agriculture at the same time, we are going to be reducing our import bill and therefore, when it comes to the selection of those people who would be drilling, I do not think we have to rush, or give it to the first person who makes an offer. I think that has been our problem sometimes where you find yourself in a position where you do not have much latitude and therefore, you take what you could get. I think that in this case, we should not be in that position at all. I think that we should be very careful and select only the best. Madam, at the same time while we are doing the other two things I think that we would also be satisfying the needs of country.

Madam President, with those few words I want to say I will support this Bill. I want to commend Senator Boyce on his presentation on it. It was very comprehensive and obviously it looked as though it had much thought and research included in it.

Madam President, I thank you.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Hunte, you have the Floor.

Senator HUNTE: Madam President, Thank you very much. I rise to support the amendment of the Offshore Petroleum Bill, 2017. We have heard the outline of the proposed programme as far as the offshore drilling is concerned. It is no easy matter. I have heard spokespersons from the Opposition saying that Barbados has been laxed so to speak for the last three or four years on having this matter going but of course, you would have heard the Minister outlined all of the fact tied up with the complications and challenges that the country would have in going after the exploration of this matter.

Madam President, first of all, oil prices have gone down in recent years and those countries that are already in production are currently meet some challenges as far as their production/revenue income is concerned.

Madam President, the United States of America up to when I look at the record about a year ago had some 720 million barrels of oil in storage on the ground. Madam, since I look at that matter it has been ordered by this new administration to sell off some of those reserves. Madam, of course, you know that the United States of America has started shale production and the extract of that is more oil and therefore they have ordered the sale of some of those reserves.

Madam President, I am looking at the challenging matters of the exploration of oil in this area.

Sequence 5

You have heard the Minister outlined that we are in a 200 miles economic zone, 12 miles border so that any challenges, any mistakes, any mishaps in the exploration of oil offshore knowing that the countries in the Caribbean are dependent on tourism and we know the millions that BP international had to pay out when they had their oil spill because these things can happen but in everything there is a risk. I want to look at saying, for example, Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is one of the six largest producers of oil in the world but the decrease in revenue has hit them extremely hard.

In 2010, they increased salaries in that kingdom threefold but a couple years later they had to ask workers in their public sector to take a 20 per cent cut. In addition to that, where subsidies were applied to various commodities workers, not necessarily workers, but people in the kingdom, that is, the citizens now have to pay in full for those commodities.

The war in Yamen of which they are in up to October last year that war was costing them up to 25 per cent of their budget. Adjustments and adjustments when revenue starts to fall in any country except for some people in Barbados that do not feel so, there are some \$400 000 undocumented Ethiopians in Saudi Arabia and they were asked to vacate the kingdom and the deadline, of course, was here in June. To date, some 40 000 Ethiopians have returned home but listen to it now. Laws, rules and regulations, employees under any circumstances no matter whatever the circumstances are cannot leave the kingdom unless permitted to do so by their employers and, of course, that example is the state of what goes up must come down. That is what is occurring in one of the largest producers' of that resources and its by-products.

We can come home to Venezuela which was, at one time, the third largest oil producer in the world. Well I do not have to speak, the rest is history. Look what is happening in Venezuela. These are countries, I did not worry to mention Iraq and Iran. We know what is happening over there, the war and in some cases they do

not have a stable Government so I would not go into that but I have looked at the economies, the countries that are still behaving properly, so to speak, by their citizens and to see what is happening to those large producers. I like any other Barbadians would like to see us hitting that vein that can produce that resource for us despite our alternative energy programmes. Whatever benefits you can get as a small country you should be glad but it is a very complicated matter.

Sometimes when I hear spokespersons in Opposition speaking just because that is where they are, in opposition, as though you press a button and everything falls into place, it forces me to do.

Asides.

Senator R. A. HUNTE: Do you want me to repeat it? When spokespersons in the Opposition keep a lot of noise about what should be done, what should not be done, it should have been done sooner, I sometimes wonder if really and truly if we had not wasted the money in this country on education. It forces you to go and I have the time to do it.

I have said in here already, I do not allow follow what is going on in Barbados. I follow what is going on in the rest of the world because we behave as though all the problems in the world have been created here in Barbados by persons who tend to be the administration of the day, but people forget. A lot of things are easier said than done. No challenges, everything should be smooth. I do not expect to live in a world that everything will be smooth because the opposite to smooth is rough and everything carries an opposite figure. I learnt to live with that and I will continue for the balance of my life and I am glad that I am not one of those persons who keep looking and living under a dark rock and expect that one of these days, if you do not be careful, it might roll on you. I do not live in that kind of world. You hope and you pray for the best but it does not always go the way you want it to go.

I will say something else, based on what I have heard in respect of what the Minister has put forward here this morning is that if the Government had gone into this matter, circumstances might have occurred that forced the Government to look and re-look at the proposals and proposed agreements, did not go into effect it might have been a good thing because a number of those things had to be re-negotiated. A lot of those persons who originally were a part of the exploration ducked out because of the low prices which oil are fetching now. I say that because the opposite of sweet is bitter and those are realities that we have to face. It really irks me -- I make no apologies for it.

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I am always ready for battle. It irks me when I hear people just playing to the Gallery, "Oh, you should have done this this way, that should have been done the other way, it should not have been done so" without careful analysis and careful research. They do not like looking into books. The Internet is there. It breaks down sometimes but it does not break down all of the time. Do your research and do a comparative analysis rather than being critical at every juncture in this country about what takes place and what does not take place.

Barbados is still 166 square miles. It still does not have in any large amounts any natural resources, and I think that we do well under the circumstances, so all those persons who are critical and over critical... Well, if you got two feet, march. I do not know how much it would change, but march. They had one in 1974 where marches took place against the constitutional amendments of this country, 26 amendments and six insertions. The people that created the march in 1974 which of course led to the Democratic Labour Party losing the election in 1976... Not one of those amendments were changed. You have to be careful when you are walking about in the hot sun following people. I have seen it in this country already. It has changed nothing. Judges are still being appointed today based on the Prime Minister's judgement and maybe in consultation with whomever he consults with. Nothing has changed, but it caused the Democratic Labour Party to lose the Government in 1976 because the late Tom Adams could walk off from there in Trafalgar Square and walk into Government House without a permit and people followed him, that old trick, and "gone long up by the Park and gone long up". I saw all of that. They came into office in 1976 and not one of those amendments were amended, if we can use that term. All of that I have seen. Now you are coercing people and one employer had the audacity to come out to say that those going on the march had to sign with the supervisors.

We are back in 1945 to 1950. I am not going back to 1937 because 1937 created the changes in Barbados that some of us are enjoying today. Have we wasted our money in education? Sometimes I believe it because we do not follow, research or look back at our history. We are falling back into the same track/trap that we were in in those days. Whatever benefits Barbados are to receive in my life time - well, it has to be because if it is not in my lifetime I cannot see it - in the area of exploration of this commodity called oil and its by-products, I would be entirely happy for my grandchildren because those are the ones who would more or less see a benefit from all of these things.

Madam President, I want to say to the population of Barbados that they are being blinded in this country because already lorry hands and porters had to strike for a \$5 increase not in 1894 but in 1974. A lot of things occurred in that 1974, and the same build up towards the

Democratic Labour Party Administration is taking place again. All of those porters on Roebuck Street in 1974 when you had the provision Merchants Association had to strike for a \$5 increase. You got the former General-Secretary in this Parliament who knows of their points. The General-Secretary, of course, who is a member of this Parliament is entitled to speak on anything that I am saying if he disagrees with it. If he disagrees with that I would not wish to say what I would like to say.

Madam President, this is part of the economy. Any time that you could discover a commodity or a resource, it forms part of your economy and workers are part of the economy and therefore whatever we do in this regard is to the advantage hopefully or maybe the disadvantage of the economy because if the proposals and the agreements go badly we have a problem and if they go well you benefit.

Madam President, I support this amendment because life is about risk and about chances. It has to take place at some point. I wish to say that I will speak at length on other matters on another item on the Order Paper if it is necessary for me to so do.

With those few comments, Madam President, I am obliged.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Adams, you have the Floor.

Senator A. A. ADAMS: Madam President, I rise to make my contribution to this Bill to amend the Offshore Petroleum Act. First, I want to commend and indeed congratulate the mover of this Bill, Senator Boyce, for the manner in which he did so. He was extremely thorough, you could see that he gave a lot of thought to what he had to say. Although he did dwell on three major areas which he said were the granting of permit giving it a longer time between the granting of the licence and the environmental impact assessment, that the company cannot change any of the agreements without the consent of Government and that in moving on from one block to another that 25 per cent of that should be relinquished. Senator Boyce also went outside of that and in that sense I would like to touch on a few areas.

I think Senator Boyce basically implied that this debate is also about the territorial integrity of Barbados not only in the 166 square miles but to the extent as it goes offshore and within that limit we would have what I would want to refer to as a sovereignty.

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Madam President, both are important, in my opinion, because sovereignty is one of the most sacred things that a State can have, and in our thrust for development it is

possible, certainly not here in Barbados but in some countries, the danger is that sovereignty might be given up. Madam President, I am happy to say that in this regard the concept of sovereignty has been kept intact. I say that, Madam President, because in the area of offshore drilling the investors and companies involved are usually foreign multinational entities and I think we know that virtually any one of those multinationals will dwarf the budget, the Gross Domestic Product and indeed the expertise and technological knowhow of a country like Barbados. Madam President, that it important because there is the possibility that they can flex their muscle and you will have an asymmetrical relationship between the company and the country, in this sense Barbados.

Madam President, I think Senator Boyce has been very clear in indicating that at every step the sovereignty of this country has been kept intact. We have seen in countries that are far larger than Barbados, for example, Nigeria, where companies have virtually taken advantage of that country, particularly in the area of the environment. Therefore, Madam President, we want to say how happy we are, at least I am, that the applicant as stated in Section 15 of the Bill, that the applicant shall submit the Environmental Impact Assessment Study and the environment plan within nine months of the notice of the designated authority pursuant to the subsection.

Madam President, I say that because the Environmental Impact Assessment Study is very important in the sense that in trying to look at the economic, financial and commercial aspects of this deal sometimes we can put on the sidelines the concept of the environment but I am happy to say that this has not been done in this case because this Parliament - and Senator Boyce was very clear on this - indicates that we are really stewards of the environment, a concept that has been put forward by I think a lady by the name of Ms. Mahon who spoke about environmental stewardship and about how important it is that as we move towards development we need to be concerned about protecting the environment, about conserving the environment and the sustainable practices that we go into in relation to our development, and that certainly in our quest for economic development and so on one must not at all forget the importance of the environment because the environment affects the people of the country and therefore it is fair to say that in this case the economic, commercial and financial aspects of this Agreement is fairly...Madam President, we are looking at two sides of the same coin, we are looking at the environment, as well as looking to see how we can benefit from the standpoint of economics.

Madam President, environment stewardship is extremely important. The major point therefore that I am making is that in piloting this Bill, Senator Boyce has not done it in isolation, the Honourable Member did not just

look at the offshore drilling or at the economic benefits but the Honourable Member has taken into consideration a very important aspect, that being the environment and so the sustainability aspect is very, very important. In fact, I would say it is really a moral imperative.

Madam President, I would also want to point out that we are here dealing with fossil fuel and it is also true that this country, this Parliament and this Government is really putting renewable energy as almost the centre of its economic development and therefore I believe that we need to look see how we balance that, and Senator Boyce did, in fact, spent a lot of time in dealing with that. Madam President, I simply want to say that while we are moving towards renewable energy, that we also have to recognise that the fossil fuels are not going to go away overnight like magic and therefore we have to look in a twofold way at how we deal with that, and therefore in this interim period we must look to see how best we can continue to use fossil fuels for as long as we would have to but in doing so, we also have to look at how best we can make sure that we have cleaned up our act.

Madam President, in that sense I think that we also need to look again, because I would say that we have looked at it before, but we need to look again at how we can get a new cleaner petrol in our vehicles. I am saying that we need either to enforce more forcibly the laws that we have or we need to put more laws on the statute book to ensure that we limit the dangerous emissions to which we are subjected on a daily basis. I can identify three on hand but it is general, we can look at ZRs, you cannot even walk on the road if you are trying to exercise; the Transport Board buses, the minibuses and our vehicles generally. I think that we need to look at what is being done elsewhere in other More Developed Countries where steps are being taken to impose penalties that bunt to make sure that the restraints, constraints and the limits are adhered to.

Madam President, people in London are complaining, although they have some fairly stringent laws there, but they have made the point that over the last couple of years research has shown that substantial numbers of persons, especially young children, are affected and are in fact not only becoming ill with asthma and other respiratory diseases but it is actually causing premature deaths and therefore I believe that in this debate we ought to consider matters of that nature and to make sure that our people generally but that our young people breathe in good and clean fresh air. As a proud people, Madam President, I think that is very important so that we cannot sit by - kind of silently - and watch people suffer from the impure air that we are breathing in in this country.

No.D12 (8)12.54 p.m.

Recent research has shown that air pollution kills some 5.5 million people prematurely across the world. India and China are the main culprits and are the main countries that suffer, but there are other countries as well. India's figure is 1.4 million, and China's is 1.6 million as a result of air pollution. It is a very major risk factor in relation to the quality of life which we have here in this country.

Madam President, the other point I want to focus on, and which was hinted at by Senator Boyce and Senator Watson, is that oil wells offshore have given rise to some of the most devastating oil spills in various parts of the world. Therefore it has to be a consideration, and I recognise that steps are being taken, but the experience really boggles the mind where, if I were to refer to the Shell accident in the Gulf of Mexico and the Fox Creek incident in Canada, they created havoc in those countries. This has happened elsewhere as well. Some of the things that we need to consider, which actually happened, are the immediate fire hazards, so steps have to be looked at in that direction. There is air pollution which I have mentioned; the concept of the respiratory distress that it causes. As a tourist destination, we would have to be very wary of oil spills. Madam President, one of those to which I am referring stretched in California for over 35 miles. We are only a two-by-four country. Of course, Senator Boyce mentioned the fact that we also have islands to the west of us, and therefore the utmost care must be taken in that regard. Our marine life we really depend on, and our beaches as well, so we need to do everything possible because prevention is really better than cure. Therefore we need to do everything, and I am sure we are, to make sure that these things do not actually happen; but accidents do happen and I believe that certainly Senator Boyce will in a way tell us what some of the things are that he or we would like to see done just in case an accident happens.

Madam President, we can look overseas where these accidents have happened and recognise that the world did not stand idly by. What we found was that the international community had an international convention on the civil liability for oil pollution as a result. In other words, we need to look there to see the outcome of that convention and some of the recommendations that were made. We therefore, I think, need to look and make sure that we negotiate adequate compensation from the multinational company in case we have one of those spills. I think the lawyers would probably say that there should be strict liability in case there is an oil spill. In other words, whether it is the company's fault or not, they ought to be held liable, and in that sense really not only compensate the State but compensate individuals and property owners and others who might be affected as a result of that. I believe that we should be able to use our international contacts to call in experts to advise us as to what we ought to do and the steps we ought to take even before we have any environmental

problems from the drilling of oil. We need to look at our laws and our statutes and see that they are up to date. We need to look at regulations, and we need to look at our common law and what might be even referred to as customary law. The point is that while we are making steps to exploit our offshore assets, as a sovereign state we also have to make sure that the environmental impact assessment is done and done thoroughly so that the welfare of people of Barbados will be adequately looked after. I believe that once those things are done, we ought to go forward.

Madam President, the concept of really exploring and exploiting our offshore asset is a very good one. We know that part of our economic problem happens to be the importation of oil. It is hundreds of millions of dollars, therefore we want to attack this in two ways: One, from the standpoint of having self-sufficiency, and two, I mentioned the dual aspect of renewable energy. This will involve, of course, how the electricity company operates in the sense that we need to have smart grids which can operate with both petroleum and fossils and also with the intermittent power we get from oil and from solar. I think that once we do that, our economic woes will recede into the background. I know Senator Watson also mentioned something which I am very strong on, which is agriculture. Of course, if you make savings in these areas and if you make gains and we benefit from the exploration and from the forays we are having into alternative energy, we ought to look at perhaps the greatest potential for growth in the country, and that is agriculture. I do not want to go into that now, but I believe it has been overlooked for perhaps too long. Now that we are looking to see how we can manage our economy much better, and so long as we have the financial means, we ought to put some of that into the area of agriculture. Therefore, I must again end by commending Senator Boyce for piloting this Bill here this morning, and the country can rest assured that not only will we be getting financial, commercial and economic benefits from it, but our environment will remain inviolate. We can still be proud to be proud managers and stewards of our environment. With those words, Madam President, I rest my case.

SUSPENSION

Senator Hon. Ms. M.P.O. McCLEAN: Madam President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended for lunch until 2.15 p.m.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 2.15 p.m. for lunch was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Her Honour THE PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

12.54 p.m.

RESUMPTION

MADAM PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed. Senator Worrell, you have the Floor.

Senator A.R. WORRELL: Thank you Madam President. I rise to support the amendment to the Offshore Petroleum Bill, 2017. Madam, just to say that this legislation is something that was in place for sometimes. I believe that it first started under the previous administration and we would have proclaimed this legislation a few years ago and it is for an area for which we in Barbados it is not common territory for us in terms of offshore drilling of oil. There are a number of areas within this particular piece of legislation which would be very imp to us and that we need to pay close attention to. I believe that Minister Boyce in his opening remarks would have outlined some of the amendments in terms of extension of the time for those companies who would have been awarded areas within our offshore sector to supply the environmental impact assessment, that period of time within the first piece of legislation was considered to be too short and it was felt because of the critical nature of this because the safety and protection of our environment especially the marine environment is of paramount importance to Barbados especially because we are predominantly a tourism destination and our tourism product relies heavily on the sea element and the sand in terms of visitors being able to come to Barbados and to be able to enjoy our beaches many of which are recognised across the world and also we have to pay attention to persons who for many years would have earned a living from the sea as well in terms of the fishermen who constantly go out on a daily basis. We need to do whatever is necessary to protect our marine environment. We cannot operate like other States for instance, where in Trinidad oil and gas is the major part of their sector and in other countries maybe Nigera, oil and gas is a major part of their economy but whereas for Barbados this is not necessarily the maintain source of income of this economy and it an area for which we have not necessarily started to earn the revenue that some of those other countries would have began to earn but we earn the majority of our revenue from our tourism industry and critical to that industry is making sure that we have an environment that would be conducive to the continued development of that tourism industry not just for tourism but also for the people of Barbados as well.

Madam President, one of the main items of amendment in this 2017 amendment is extending the time in which those companies would need in order to submit the environmental impact assessment. I think that goes to show how critical that area is for us and that we came about that through negotiations with companies who were interested and recognised that the time frame and the environment in which they would have to do their surveys that a short time frame would be not beneficial to them and certainly it would not be beneficial to us as a country

because if you are rushed to do this environmental impact assessment you may not get the correct results but if you are given the time in which to properly do your studies and bring back the results, it would be better for us so that we can definitely safeguard our environment in the process.

Madam President, other amendment looked at reducing the amount for the relinquishment from 50 per cent in the first instance to 25 per cent. Madam again of this came about through negotiations with persons who worked within the industry. This is not an industry that Barbados commands any authority in so more or less, we have to be competitiveness in terms of going out there and looking at the fact that the area in which persons would be drilling for oil may not necessarily be economically viable in the first instance when compared to other jurisdictions where you may drill for oil in shallow waters or in more conducive environment. I think that you need to make our sector competitive as well. Therefore, in terms of reducing the area which is relinquished from 50 per cent to 25 per cent would give the companies an opportunity to earn a little bit more revenue or possibility have more time in terms of exploration as well.

Madam President, the point as well in terms of the change of ownership of the licensee is very critical and I think that in terms of this piece of legislation this amendment can also be applied to other sectors in Barbados as well particularly in the telecommunications and even further in the energy sector as it relates to the production of electricity on land because you would recognise that the business landscape has become more competitive and one morning a company is own by Player X and then Player X buys another company and you rely they may be the owner of the two major suppliers in your jurisdiction which would more or less create an imbalance in terms of power and a situation where a monopoly is created where you did not expect that a monopoly would be created. I think that portion of the legislation can be adopted in other sectors as well in particular telecommunications and something that we need to pay close attention to in terms of the actual owners of licences within Barbados and the operation of companies so that one company does not necessarily command too much of a larger share particularly in major sectors in the economy so that you can have a more competitive environment and not necessarily developing monopolies along the way.

Madam President, I would like to go further in terms of speaking to this amendment and dwell more on points which were made by Minister Boyce in this contribution in that the position in which Barbados is taking in terms of the development of the offshore section and in terms of the development of the energy industry in Barbados as well. It must be recognised that under this administration we have done significant work in terms of restructuring and adding new components to the energy sector in Barbados. Madam,

a few years ago, when we talk of alternative energy and greenhouses, it was a pie-in-the-sky thing where the only elements of alternative energy was a display house in Queens Park but now today we have moved beyond that and alternative energy, especially through the use of photovoltaic systems is more or less common place across Barbados and nearly every district that you go into, you can look at the roof top and see a house with some sort of alternative energy system, some may be photovoltaic but to a lesser extent a few people may be using wind as well and it has been adopted in a significant way by a number of corporate enterprises in Barbados.

Madam President, most commercial establishment have some sort of renewal energy system in place and this has adopted in a significant way by a number of corporate enterprises in Barbados most commercial establishments have some sort of renewable energy system in place.

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This has help to diversify and to reduce our use of fossil fuels in Barbados and this is something that we must play close attention to. We are not a market leader in that areas, we are not one of the OPEC countries that we can control the price of oil. We need to put ourselves in a position where we become less dependent on the price of oil because our economy responds quickly to changes in oil prices once the oil prices start to go above a certain level we will begin to feel the pinch and the pain in every single sector of the economy in Barbados. Manufacturing becomes far less competitive, the tourism industry will feel the pinch in terms of the cost to cool the rooms and to run the tourism plant from the air conditioning units to the lighting and security, every single household will feel that in terms of the increase cost for the electricity bills. We really need to do what we can to wean Barbados off the fossil fuels and as we would have said in our 2013 Manifesto, to develop a green Barbados and what we consider in terms of utilising renewable energy for more of our energy consumption in Barbados. It helps us in two ways, 1) it helps to reduce the cost of energy in Barbados to make some of our industries more competitive and 2) it also helps to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions and also help to develop a cleaner environment as well. If we could be leaders in this small country in terms of pushing the use of renewable energy in Barbados I think that is something we should be commended for and make good use of the sunlight that we have on a daily basis. The wind that blows across the country and even the wave energy that is there, make good use of that in terms of utilising more sources of renewable energy in terms of our energy production in Barbados. We need to take it to another level as well.

We have a number of electric vehicles on the road and I think it is time that number is increased. I think France recently made a declaration that within a few years

they would reduce the number of fossil fuel vehicles which would be on the roads that they are trying to convert to hybrid or electric vehicles. That is a trend which we should also take on as a country. We should come to that stage in Barbados where we utilise more electric vehicles in Barbados and reduce the amount of normal gasoline or diesel vehicles which we use on the road.

To implement that we also need to lead from the area of Government. We have been complaining in terms of the Barbados Transport Board fleet. We have not replaced those buses for a number of years. When the situation turns around and the funds are available that we can replace the buses on the Barbados Transport Board fleet we should be looking at using energy efficient buses and utilising renewable energy to power those buses so those are area that we need to start leading in as a Government and as a country in terms of making sure that we make better use of renewable energy to power this country and to take us forward as well. We will see the benefits in terms of our Central Bank of Barbados Report because at one point I believe that fossil fuel accounted for over US\$800 million in terms of the purchase of fossil fuel. If we can even reduce that by 50 per cent now it would go a long way in terms of balancing the budget and also maintaining our foreign reserves, something which is critical to us as a country because maintaining the peg to the US dollar we would need to have the foreign reserves there to back it up. If we can look at way and not only how we can earn more foreign exchange but also how we can reduce the use of foreign exchange and that way by utilising more renewable energy it would also help to benefit the country in terms of developing a sustainable economy as well.

I think that the significance of this is that even though we are looking to get into the offshore petroleum sector we are not doing so giving up on the other sectors. We are not saying this is the new way forward for Barbados but we are doing it in a way in which we are building on and enhancing the other sectors and we are mindful that we still need to push forward in terms of utilisation of renewable energy and building a greener economy. I definitely do support the bill in terms of the vision and in terms of how it would be incorporated into the economy of Barbados is indeed laudable.

We also need to look at ways in terms of the disposal of our waste as well. We need to pay close attention to that. Years ago we were discussing in terms of a plant for waste to energy conversation. I still think that issue is still critical to Barbados and we need to also continue the conversation on that. We are talking about protecting our environment. We cannot to be dumping garbage in the Greenland landfill. No, we have not dumped anything at the Greenland landfill, we cannot continue to dump garbage in St. Thomas. Obviously there is a limit to what that can facility can take and we recognise that we cannot dump

anything at Greenland so we need to bring that into this conversation. It is not just about waste disposal but are there any avenue in which that can turn into an energy production cycle for the country so that garbage which we accumulate on daily basis, if you see the pictures from Soca Royale after the people left the Bushy Park field, it was littered with garbage. You have to find someplace to dispose of that. Recycling is one aspect of it because even before you left Bushy Park, you saw persons walking around doing the usual thing in terms of collecting the bottles so that area of recycling in Barbados we have done well and it is something that other Caribbean countries are trying to adopt, one in particular is Trinidad because in Trinidad their focus has always been on fossil fuels and recycling has not been that important to them but now they are trying to develop that culture in terms of the recycling plants in Trinidad and develop that component in terms of people recycling those bottles but we do that well in Barbados. You do not have to worry about those bottles. They are always collected and you will never see them in the garbage after events such as Soca Royale or even on Kadooment Day but we need to take it a step further. We need to bring back on to the table the conversation about how do we go further in terms of using our garbage to develop energy to power the country? I think in terms of baseload power supply for the country so we need to put that conversation back on the table again. That conversation with regard to the possibility of a waste to energy plant and the best system that can fit into our Barbadian environment given the quantity of garbage which we produce and the types of garbage which we have on the island. We need to have that sort of progressive conversation, bring it back to the table and talk about things that would help and benefit us as a country moving forward.

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We also need to look at other ways as well because we have spent a lot of time in terms of the photovoltaics, we have also had the solar water heaters and we are seeing a few places using wind energy, but are there other sources that we can tap into, and how viable is it for Barbados to get involved in these areas in terms of energy production, so will we be seeing work being done in terms of studies or will the ministry be producing any information in terms of the viability of wave energy or even ocean thermal energy in Barbados. These are things that we need to look at because any way that we could move in terms of reducing our dependence on fossil fuel and utilising the things that are naturally available to us, the better for us. It would help to reduce our expenditure and it would also create employment along the way. Linking it to employment, we have to find job sectors that would be attractive to the younger generation, areas that they would want to get into as well.

With regards to the photovoltaic fields, in other countries you can twin the photovoltaic fields with agriculture because in between the panels you could have your sheep going and clearing the grass, and those are things that we should be looking to do in terms of twinning energy production with agriculture. It is not only that. If you are having a cheaper source of energy, we should be looking to get into greenhouse farming so I would hope to see financing becomes available because it is not easy to set up a greenhouse, there is a bit of a cost to it, but at the end of the day the production from that greenhouse is far better than if you do an acre of open farming. I think it would be more attractive too for younger people. You can set up a farming environment where you can utilise greenhouses or shade houses and have all of that incorporated so that you do not send persons to work with a fork and hoe to prepare the land because they are not going to do it or they are not that mindful to do it. Not everyone would be willing to do that, but if it is done in such a way that you just go in and you plant, water and do what is necessary and be able to reap after a few months, these are things that persons are more geared towards, that easier form of life or just a turnkey operation. Yes, there are some people who are cut out for the more labour-intensive aspect of it so you would utilise them in the initial stages to get the land and the area ready but you would have to develop things that would be more a turnkey approach, and that is what we need in terms of the enhancement of our industries and making them more efficient and more effective so we need that turnkey approach. All of these things lend well to this particular debate on energy because through the utilisation of renewable energy it makes these things more economically viable and it changes the dynamic a bit because before we complain about the cost of the fossil fuel in terms of the power supply, the electricity to run these plants, but if we are utilising renewable energy that cost component would have changed a bit, and I think it makes these projects a bit more viable.

Madam President, in looking at this, I am more supportive of this not because this is a sector that would bring some money, but as I said at my introduction this legislation was in place even before the Democratic Labour Party came to office but then we had to make some amendments to it along the way. It is an area that takes time for you to actually see the revenue from it so if there are offshore petroleum deposits in Barbados eventually someday we would get to it so we must not lose sight of what is important to us, so we must make sure that we do not go after that at the detriment to our environment or we must not just look at that and not pay close attention to the other sectors in Barbados which are just as important and just as critical as the ones that have maintained the economy over the years. At this particular time in the world where you are looking more towards renewable energy and going green, I think that is an area of focus that we should not lose sight of and should continue with our efforts in

terms of building out the renewable energy sector in Barbados and making Barbados a green economy. That, I think, would add more benefit to the country, and any benefits which we get from the offshore petroleum sector, as they would say, would be gravy. Madam President, I am looking forward to having that gravy someday on the plate but let us focus on how we can integrate renewable energy into the sectors which already exist and expand on that and enhance it so that when this sector is ready to take off those sectors would still be performing or would be performing at optimum efficiency.

With those few words, Madam President, I want to support this amendment. Thank you.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Todd, you have the Floor.

Senator the Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Thank you very much, Madam President. I rise to support the passage of this Offshore Petroleum (Amendment) Bill, 2017 which is before this august Chamber and I would wish to thank this Democratic Labour Party Administration for treating the energy sector with tremendous importance as we seek to ensure a greater level of, we hear about food security and food sovereignty, energy security, which I believe, Madam President, is also a very, very important because I am just old enough, I am still relatively young, middle age, never mind the receding forehead, to remember the oil crisis in the 1973 period. I was a young lad living in the Dalkeith area and I remember the long lines of vehicles and persons stretching from the Birch gas station at the corner of Culloden Road and Dalkeith Hill and Beckles Road as there was a chronic shortage of hydrocarbon fuels in terms of gasoline and diesel for motorised vehicles and even kerosene and certainly liquefied bottled gas for cooking purposes. As we know, in that period there was an international crisis as the OPEC countries, the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, flexed their muscles in terms of demanding a higher price for their oil supplied to the more developed countries and in that geopolitical crisis that emerged we had a global shortage of hydrocarbons. There we were faced as a small open economy, as we still are today, with a shortage of these vital hydrocarbons. Vehicles stalled and people had to get all types of receptacles and walk to gas stations to get limited supplies of gas, so we saw the tremendous vulnerability of a country not self-sufficient in the production of hydrocarbon fuels, so any attempt by any Government to seek to be self-sufficient in terms of the energy needs of the country must be lauded to make us less vulnerable to these shortages that can occur at a moment's notice if we are reliant primarily on imports from abroad.

Madam President, over the years we have had very modest oil productions at our oil fields in the Woodbourne, St. Philip, Christ Church area.

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I must admit that it is great sense of pride, we have just celebrated 50 years of Independence, and when you pass that Woodbourne area and see those oil installations there, they are well-painted in the national colours of aquamarine and gold, commonly referred to as donkeys as they go up and down pumping the oil out of the ground. Of course, with that comes the natural gas that is then utilised primarily by the business community in terms of restaurants for the hotels sector and individual households where you have a cheaper and cleaner fuel for cooking purposes, as compared to the liquefied bottled gas, but there is a limited supply, we have hardly ever gotten past 1000 barrels per day in terms of our oil extraction rate from the Woodbourne fields. We have done explorations over the years.

I remember as a lad in the 1970s going to the Lodge School and as the bus that took us to town via the Six Road area passed the bottom of District "C" Police Station, that whole Society/St. Philip area we saw huge rigs, these huge grey trucks. I remember at the time in mid-70s they would be parked on the road and would be vibrating violently, looking like a 10-wheeler truck, but it was a special piece of equipment. Those vibrations were part of the seismic test being done to search for oil. Madam President, over the years we have been able to extract oil at a modest level on shore.

Madam President, I would therefore wish to encourage the public to appreciate that the prospect of discovery of oil off shore is really something to forward to. As the mover of the Resolution, the Minister with day-to-day basis responsibility for energy matters, Senator Boyce mentioned, just recently we would have read in the media that there has been significant discovery of oil off shore Guyana. According to media report the Guyanese Government is very excited about the prospects in terms of the short-term, within a few years there is the possibility of extracting at least 10 000 barrels per day. We are hearing of the possibility of billions of United States of America dollars per annum being secured as a result of the exploration of this find to give rise to large scale subsidisation of fuel for consumers or for more taxpayer-funded education and the works.

Madam President, there is no guarantee about anything but certainly with these several offshore bid blocs on the market in the EEZ off Barbados - we have already allocated three blocs as has been mentioned before but others are available over time. As the Minister mentioned this whole region, the Continental Shelf stretching from Venezuela, across Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, this is one continuous space and certainly as I understand it in the oil exploration community there is a tremendous buzz at this time in terms of the realistic prospects of more

significant discovery of oil in this area, including this Barbados area as the Minister mentioned. Also in Trinidad and Tobago adjacent to the Barbados oil bid blocs you have had significant finds of energy reserves in terms of hydrocarbon deposits.

Madam President, I remember the Reverend Jessie Jackson in the United States of America when he made his bid a few decades ago to become the Democratic Party nominee for the post of President of the United States of America, he focussed on the term "keep hope alive" and to borrow that expression I encourage Barbadians to keep hope alive. Madam President, it is not all gloom and doom but there are tremendous possibilities if you are able to really strike some significant wells in the offshore area in terms of hydrocarbon finds. It would help to really earn foreign exchange for our country and also to save foreign exchange in terms of making us more secure and self-sufficient in meeting our oil and hydrocarbon needs on a daily and yearly basis, thus saving that hundreds of millions of dollars in foreign exchange that we current spend importing oil products and of course the possibility of earning foreign exchange in the medium-to-long term in terms of the export of oil and gas products that we are able to access from these offshore wells.

Madam President, as I said, in recent years since 2008 we have had periods of the global economic crisis and we have had some belt-tightening realities here but I would wish to encourage Barbadians to keep hope alive and to have faith that we will see an upturn in the quality of life of Barbadians as seek to exploit possibilities in the oil and gas sector here, Madam President. Madam President, this is very important because I know that the prevailing global price of oil has been relatively low, short of US\$50 per barrel, both the American light-sweet West Texas intermediate and the foreign benchmark, the Brent North Sea Crude which is a heavier oil. The Brent tends to be a little higher in terms of the world market price than the West Texas intermediate but certainly the West Texas intermediate oil produced in the United States of America has been in recent month less than US\$50 and holding well-over a year now, so I would encourage Barbadians not to be drawn into a false sense of security and complacency saying that they do not have to worry about alternative sources of energy because the world market price of oil has been very low in the last year or so, but as other speakers before me have mentioned this market is very volatile.

Madam President, let me just spend a few minute just to outline some of the reasons that would have given rise to this consistently low price of oil in the last year or so. Madam President, prior to that we had the price of oil going to \$100 per barrel and that sent up our utilisation of foreign exchange, as the cost of imported fuel would have skyrocketed. Madam President, what happened, as I understand it, is that the Saudi Arabians in particular and

their colleagues in the OPEC Grouping in the last two years they would have been seeking to deliberately increase production of oil to send down the world price of oil so as to make it less feasible for the North American Shale Oil producers in the fracking process to make it less viable for them to remain in business.

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At that time it was considered that it was uneconomical for the production of oil by the fracking process -- the shale oil sector -- when the world price of oil had dipped below \$50 per barrel. There was this sustained over-production of oil led by Saudi Arabia to drive the world price of oil down, and it went to around \$30 per barrel a few years ago. As Senator Haynes was mentioning earlier, it gave rise to tremendous pressure domestically within Saudi Arabia, because a lot of the social welfare entitlements that the Saudi Arabian government would have been able to offer to their residents in terms of subsidised oil and so on had to be reduced significantly as the receipts coming to Saudi Arabia from its oil exports would have decreased significantly as the world price of oil went down to that very low level. They had to make that sacrifice, and it was unsustainable, and what has happened is that the shale oil sector has been more resilient and has been able, due to improved efficiency and technology, to hold its own in terms of remaining viable with that depressed price of oil.

Madam President, this is seen in the fact that in the industry what we call the Baker Hughes weekly rig count, which is a determination of the number of oil rigs that are being actively drilled week by week in the United States, at least for 20 consecutive weeks up until a few weeks ago that Baker Hughes data indicated that the rig count had inched its way back up. That is 20 consecutive weeks increasing. Of course, it has not got to the stage of a couple years ago when the shale oil production was at its optimum; when the global price of oil was closer to the US\$100-per-barrel level and there were over 1 000 rigs in active production, according to Baker Hughes. Right now it is inching its way back up to at least, I believe, 800 rigs per week. Madam President, I am just demonstrating that even with the current prevailing, sustained low level of oil prices on the world market, the shale oil producers in North America -- the United States, the Dakotas, Canada in the Calgary area and its oil sand -- have been able to hold their own, and so OPEC has really lost its bid to drive them out of business, as it were. As a result, OPEC has had to change course, and what is now trending, as you may know, Madam President, is that within the last year OPEC has really achieved something which was very difficult in the past: the discipline among its members to actually agree to adhere to an agreed reduction by most of its members in their daily output of oil to, as they say, rebalance the oil market. What has happened with the over-production of oil

is a glut in oil, where the supply far exceeded the demand, thus driving the world market price of oil down. What OPEC, in collaboration with non-OPEC countries such as Russia, has done in the last year is to be able to agree and they have stuck, at least in terms of 95 per cent compliance, to the agreement where these members, excluding Libya and Nigeria, have agreed to reduce their daily output. They are seeking to therefore rebalance the supply-demand equilibrium or ratio so as to reduce the over-supply of oil, thereby driving the world market price of oil up. In fact, Madam President, they agreed to six months' reduction and that has been extended, and even as recently as a few weeks ago at a committee of OPEC overseeing this process in St. Petersburg, Russia, there was even talk of extending this cut further well into the next year and further reducing the output of each participating country, thereby increasing the likelihood of the world market price of oil inching its way back up.

Madam President, now currently with the political scenario in Venezuela unfolding, the United States has imposed sanctions in terms of freezing the assets of the President of Venezuela, and there is talk of possible sanctions in terms of Venezuela's oil production. As I understand it, about one-tenth of the United States' imports of oil come from Venezuela. It is a heavier oil, and they have to import lighter oil to mix with that heavier oil, but what I am saying is that any issues of reduction in the supply of oil on the world market can actually cause the world price of oil to increase, Madam President. For example, as I mentioned earlier, in that OPEC agreement to reduce their oil supply, Nigeria and Libya were excluded because they have had challenges in terms of disruption to their production of oil. In the delta region of Nigeria there has been military sabotage, and of course after the removal of Colonel Gaddafi from Libya we have had significant instability in that area in terms of local and regional conflict involving Al Qaeda and ISIS supporters. These disruptions have reduced the supply of oil in terms of those countries' daily production, and that is why they were given an opportunity to seek to increase their production of oil to the levels of a few years ago. All of that, Madam President, was to simply demonstrate that the world market price of oil is volatile and that we should not rest on our laurels and say, "We do not have to worry about diversifying the economy in terms of being more self-sufficient in our energy needs because the world market price of oil could very well remain low for several years to come." Of course, we hope so and it seems that way but nothing is guaranteed.

Madam President, it is very important that we as a small, open, developing country seek to diversify our energy mix, as it were, to become more self-sufficient. That is why I congratulate this Democratic Labour Party Administration for doing all in its power to reduce our oil import bill. Madam President, for example you would have

read within the last few months that our Government has been able to initiate the process in which we are going to replace the lighting system for our street lights with more energy-efficient LED lights. A contract has been signed with the Barbados Light & Power Company and we have committed to that process. It will save the Government millions of dollars per year in terms of reducing our oil import bill, and this must lauded, Madam President. I would take this opportunity to also encourage us to consider the utilisation of solar-powered street lights at least on a trial basis.

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We have seen with the construction of the new headquarters of the Barbados Water Authority in the Pine that if you pass along that stretch of the ABC Highway you would notice these very bright lights in the carpark, at least two dozens of that new compound, and these are solar powered lights, so that we can reduce the likelihood of vandalism, as well as in the carpark east of the Frank Collymore Hall, just east of the Central Bank of Barbados for the last three or four years or more, they have erected at least two similar solar powered street lights to illuminate that carpark. Madam, I am suggesting that we really look maybe on a pilot basis and maybe start with carparks in Government building, we have the public parks and beaches that we can start on. Of course, we have already been installing photovoltaic panels at areas such as installation of the National Conservation Commission and even the esplanade on Bay Street has solar tv to generate electricity for lighting those area. Madam President, all of that utilisation of photovoltaic panels accessing energy from the sun to reduce the oil import bill in order to generate electricity. It does not come from lighting bolts, in our current arrangement we have to utilize Bunker C fuel or diesel, hydrocarbon fuel to run those turbines at the Barbados Light and Power Plant at Spring Garden or the smaller one at the Garrison.

Madam President, the more electricity we generate from alternative sources such as solar and the wind... I have actually seen solar lights that actually have small windmills as well, so that you have two bites at the cherry as it were, the photovoltaic panels as well as windmill as a back up. Madam, the more we use alternative sources of energy to generate electricity for lighting and so on the less fuel we will have to import to generate electricity using the turbines at the Barbados Light and Power.

Madam President, we have ahead of the multipurpose sugar cane factory being proposed by the Government through the Ministry of Agriculture. I know that there is a matter before the court that create challenges there but just to remind the public that as we speak, the Ministry of Agriculture is not sitting by twiddling their thumbs because I have attended a major conference of that

Ministry where I would have learnt and seen photographs of the work being done by the Ministry of Agriculture in terms of planting various varieties of the river tamarind to determine the greater yields per acre, which varieties are more suited our climatic and soil conditions, which varieties are more amenable to being harvested by mechanical devices so that once we are able to get that multipurpose sugar factor constructed, then we would have a viable source of biomass in terms of the river tamarind to generate electricity as part of that factory process as well as using the bagasse.

Madam President, this is very feasible. I remember at least four years or five years ago being fortunate to attend the annual meeting of the Board of Governors in the Inter American Development Bank in Calgary, Alberta, and I was able to see presentations in terms of video footage of Inter American Development Bank funded projects in Latin America involving a very similar multipurpose sugar factor where they use the bagasse from the cane trash to generate electricity in that sugar factory. Madam, as it produced sugar, it was also burning the biomass to supply electricity which I understand can be part of the base load in terms of the electricity being generated for the domestic purpose because you have the base load and then you have the intermittent load, so some of the alternative sources like solar and wind could be intermittent but base load in terms of that biomass in terms of electricity generated by those multipurpose sugar factories can be part of the base load, a consistent supply of electricity that is reliable, Madam President, because intermittent sources of electricity if you have extended periods of rainfall then the solar energy would be interrupted in terms of levels that are desirable.

Madam President, as I wrap up, I would wish to congratulate this Democratic Labour Party administration for being very serious about diversifying the energy sector. I remember seeing the long lines at some of the major stores at Sheraton Centre a few months ago as we distributed free of cost to thousands of Barbadians LED lights. You just had to produce their electricity bills and there was tremendous uptake and I congratulate the public for their buy-in.

Madam President, I thank you.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Carmichael, you have the Floor.

Senator Sir. T. A. CARMICHAEL: Madam President, thank you. I rise with a certain measure of glee to support this Offshore Petroleum (Amendment) Bill and also to commend Senator Boyce on his very concise and as always lucid and highLY analytical presentation. (8:26) Madam, in many respects he saw this Bill as a democratization of the oil drilling programme continuing to give it that flexibility where it encompasses players of a

wide variety but doing so with clearly marked qualification criteria before they are even asked to make a bid. I also heard with a certain measure of glee when he averted to the presence of Rex Oil. I say because Rex Oil as many of you would know is the old Talisman company and Talisman is one of Canada's leading oil exploration companies. Talisman is also a company which through it four or five entities had for over 25 years had a presence here in Barbados in our international business sector and continues to do so.

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It is a very pleasing sight, it is one that we can accept with that measure of glee that I adverted to earlier when we see companies like that which come in through the international sector when there is a presence or indeed a possibility that they can make their presence felt more forcefully in terms of active business of another kind that they do so. REPSOL is in many respects a symbol and substance of that intermeshing of our international business with our domestic business.

I am very pleased that the two amendments speaking specifically about the Bill, for obvious reason. The change of control of the Licensee Amendment and the necessity to apply to the designated authority is very useful because what it does is that it seeks to ensure that we identify and we maintain those standards which Senator Boyce very clearly identified and of which he spoke with great clarity because we have to have a provision such as that change of control of the licensee requiring notice because that is an effort in an ongoing sense to continue the process of identifying the right players and the same way the presence of the environmental impact assessment requirement which is as, to the best of my knowledge, new and brought about by this amendment is also part and parcel of that ethos.

Madam President, I would like this afternoon to take a tangent which might not appear directly a part of this amendment which is before the Honourable Chamber but which, in my humble opinion, has relevance albeit in a holistic rather than a direct sense. Madam President, in this regard I speak of the vexed challenge of Venezuela which poses special considerations for Barbados. I say Venezuela and the reason I introduced it at this point is because of its presence as what was once possibly the most important oil producer in the world but Venezuela oil and Barbados has a special unity which we cannot ignore and which the presence of this amendment gives me the opportunity to speak about. There are considerations which even before Barbados' independence have operated within Barbados as a jurisdiction of what one might call principle reason, the principle reason that could lead us to adopt the mantra and indeed the policy of friends of all, satellites of none. Madam President, unlike the majority of our Caribbean neighbours there are two things that we have to recognise.

In the first place, Madam President, Barbados has never signed on to PetroCaribe, never even looked at it seriously. PetroCaribe, a protocol by which Venezuela was offering to many of our Caribbean neighbours oil at concessionary cheap prices by a President Chavez who at that time, Madam President, you may remember, was even offering free oil to the people in Harlem that is in the US. We did not sign on to PetroCaribe and indeed, Madam President, Barbados was offered by Barbados never accepted so I put that consideration to my right. To my left, Madam President, I put a second consideration which is in a sense bifurcated in two areas. My second consideration, Madam President, is that again Barbados, unlike the majority of countries in this region has signed not one but two tax treaties with Venezuela of old. I speak about the second treaty first and that second treaty was a double tax treaty, Madam President, comprehensive with all of the safeguards and all of the principals and protocols of a classic OECD model tax treaty and we signed that on 11th December, 1998 with Venezuela. Indeed a document signed with the two signatories, a signatory that we recognise very well, Billie Antoinette Miller, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and I think a Miguel Rivas. That was signed, Madam President, on 11th December, 1998 and it provided as I said all of the OECD protocols a serious document doing what? Opening up our two countries Venezuela and Barbados for mutual investment and investments but even before that on 15th July we had signed an investment protection treaty with Venezuela and that was treaty equally comprehensive. I was comprehensive and also an agent to promote and protect investments and it was well drafted and well signed. Indeed the signature to the treaty is another signature that we well recognise, David John Howard Thompson for the Government of Barbados. That treaty save or indeed was geared to protect investments from expropriation and to protect and ensure the safe repatriation of investments. I am not going to speak about how these treaties have been used or indeed how they have been tested and I intentionally do not do so. I only would mention that on one occasion I myself have had the presence in The Hague in certain judicial hearings which sought to protect the integrity of these treaties because treaties are only as good as how well they are used and whether they stand up to the test. I give these two elements, Madam President, to show and to identify that that our relationship with Venezuela is indeed a very serious one and when put in context we have to put it seriously. I am not going back further to even the presence of a Venezuelan institute here from as far back as the 1950s and the 1960s where many Barbadians had their first and in some cases their only exposure to the learning of Spanish.

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I am not going back further to even the presence of a Venezuelan institute here from as far back as the 1950s and

the 1960s where many Barbadians had their first and in some cases their only exposure to the learning of Spanish, I am not even going that far back. I am suggesting that these two elements which we have to recognise clearly differentiate our posture towards Venezuela and indeed our relationship as a whole towards Venezuela. If we look at Venezuela today, Madam President - and I am not here saying anything inflammatory, I am saying here everything that is backed with factual data - it is the most destroyed economy in the western hemisphere. These are International Monetary Fund statistics. Its Gross Domestic Product in 2017 is 35 per cent below 2013 levels or 40 per cent in per capita terms. Between 2013 to 2017, there was a 17 per cent decline in oil production which excludes the 55 per cent plunge in oil prices. Today, Venezuela as you know, Madam President, is the world's most indebted country. No country has a larger public external debt as a share of Gross Domestic Product or of exports, no not one country.

There are other statistics, Madam President, which are worrisome. The non-oil tax revenues have declined by 70 per cent in real terms between 2012 and 2016, there is an accelerating inflation caused by 79 per cent real decline in the banking systems monetary liabilities in some areas, and in black market terms the decline was actually 92 per cent, from \$41 billion to just \$3.3 billion. If we go even to lifestyles, measured on the cheapest available calorie, the minimum wage declined from 52 854 calories per day to just 7 005 calories, a decline of some 87.6 per cent. Income poverty increased from 48 per cent in 2014 to 82 per cent in 2016. That is actually not a guesswork. That last data is data received by a survey of three of Venezuela's most prestigious universities and that study also shows a loss in voluntary of 8.6 kilos, that is 19 pounds in weight of individuals in the country and that is without going on the treadmill, but there are no treadmills to go except for those who are very wealthy.

Madam President, the current President's Government has turned down, as we all know, offers of humanitarian assistance. We all know the election which took place past weekend which commentators see as an attack on liberty and democracy and which, even though we may report it very scantily here, is attracting serious worldwide attention. The Organisation of American States (OAS), of which we are a member, has come out strongly against things which are happening there. The European Union as well has come out with a scathing report and the United States of America has finally issued some new sanctions.

Madam President, what we have is an unprecedented catastrophe which really, in my view, requires urgent attention by the international community. One might ask why do I raise this. I raise it because we have to reconsider our position because no position cannot in these

circumstances be a viable position. We have a history of democracy and we have a commitment to democratic principles and practices. We have a tradition of a foreign policy which is principled, never choosing the easiest question to answer. We have displayed these principles in our own early outright rejection of a flawed Petrocaribe offer. We have a treaty relationship at two levels which has both commoted and protected investments through the use of Barbados business corporations among other things.

I am suggesting, Madam President, that we have to put our heads together and we have to look for a position on Venezuela. If necessary, I suggest we even have to put together a small think tank because I recognise that we belong to CARICOM and we see the primacy of CARICOM in terms of some issues but CARICOM can never lead Barbados. If CARICOM begins to lead Barbados we are in trouble. Barbados has to be a member of CARICOM in a strong way in which CARICOM respects Barbados' views, and I am suggesting that in the area of Venezuela we have to take a position. I am not suggesting what that position would be. I do not know. I would not be so bold as to say but I say that we need to reconsider because we have hard data before us which forces us to do so. We have a tradition of a very special financial economic relationship built through two treaties. We have a principle position recognised through the utter rejection of Petrocaribe, and we have a long social and historical connection through the presence of many Venezuelans here. People may not know of the many Barbadians who have gone to live in Venezuela and who have contributed also in Venezuela's development. I only suggest, Madam President, using the sedge way of this offshore petroleum amendment that we need to maybe look even a little further offshore and consider the situation in Venezuela and if necessary put together a think tank which would be in the best interest of Barbados and in the best interest of Venezuela as a whole.

Madam President, sometimes small countries can create miracles. It does not mean that we reject Mr. Maduro. Maybe we are the people to intervene and to do what is right and what is best for the population and the people of Venezuela as a whole.

Madam President, I am glad that you have allowed me and indulged me to go this far and I go no further.

Thank you very much.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Ince, you have the Floor.

Senator J. INCE: Madam President, I rise to support the Offshore Petroleum (Amendment) Bill, 2017. It is a Bill, Madam President, that underlines this Administration's initiative where we set out to restructure

and diversify this economy. In restructuring and diversifying this economy we include all of the sectors, and the energy sector is very critical to Barbados. When we look at it, it touches every area of our lives when we go about our day-to-day production within the production systems, but what we should look at is that this Energy Bill is going to take Barbados into what I termed a new dispensation.

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We have celebrated 50 years of Independence and what we are seeing now is the beginning of a new cycle, another 50 years into dispensation No. 2. Ma'am, my reason for saying that is that when we had bills...

Madam President, I like to reflect on dates and times. We would have just celebrated the 1937 riots in Barbados. Ma'am, in 1937 the first offshore drilling process took place when we were having the riots in Barbados. Ma'am, not the first offshore well, the first oil well was sunk in 1923, you then had fresh water drilling in 1891, and salt water drilling off the shores of Louisiana in 1896 but in 1937 two companies, one called Superior Oil that we now know as Exxon and another company called Pure Oil who we know as Chevron sunk an offshore well 1.6 km offshore Louisiana in 1937 and here we are today discussing an amendment to an offshore energy bill that is going to be critical.

Madam President, many of us may not be around to see the results of this Bill but let us look at Barbados and what we perceive Barbados to be, that is why I say when we look at the dispensation, a Barbados that we may have an increase in electrical motor vehicles, a Barbados once where our import bill as a result of diversifying this energy sector, as a result of the studies being done and we have developed an offshore oil and gas industry, a Barbados where our import bill is significantly reduced, that \$800 million import bill when oil prices are raging, when oil prices start to appreciate. If you were to reflect on the 1973/1974 when the oil crisis started and impacted on Barbados in 1974, we would have known that the price of oil at the time was \$12 per barrel and that the price went from \$12 to \$13.50 and we thought that the country would have fallen apart. Those persons who live in the countryside would have known how to cook on what we term wood fire because we had the luxury of what we called the hard branches of the 'mile' trees, while those persons living in the city area might have used a different method but all of this, as I said that dispensation between 1937 to 1966, between 1966 to 2017 and 2016 when we celebrated the 50th anniversary, what is Barbados going to be like.

Madam President, it is not only the amendment to this bill but also, Madam President, the whole idea of

having an energy sector where the whole idea of a restructuring Barbados Water Authority where as it now we pay almost \$30 million a year in energy cost to have water pumped to the various institutions in Barbados, but let us look at a Barbados Water Authority where that bill is significantly reduced because of the use of alternative means of energy. Let us look at what that is going to do to our overall production. Let us look at a situation, that is why I used the word a new dispensation, 15 or 30 years from now what is Barbados going to be like with these significant changes and the changes are coming Madam President. We have on course again the whole idea of a green energy sector and the impact of a green energy sector on the social and economic viability of Barbados. Let us look at the impact that that is going to have. Let us look at the impact of the hope of linking our energy sector to a viable tourism sector.

Madam President, if you have an energy sector that is diversified then along with a tourism sector where the cost of production is tied directly to the cost of energy, the cost per unit within the suites/rooms in the hotel sector has a direct link also to the cost of our energy, so that when we look at what is happening, at what is going to take place, then we can only conclude that the initiatives to date, despite not seeing the results tomorrow, is going to have tremendous impact on changing what I would call the economic operations of Barbados.

Madam President, this amendment is not just about what should have happened, it is about carrying a country forward with the patience and efficiency that is necessary, because once you are getting into the offshore sector it is not anything that happens overnight. When you think about setting up an offshore sector with petroleum, it is a village within itself, people must understand that when you start to get into offshore drilling that it is a community within itself and research will show you that some communities, I call them offshore communities, can cost sometimes between \$150 million and \$250 million, depending on the type of community established at the time, so that it is not an easy task, when persons hear offshore drilling it is heavily capitalised, it is highly expensive and you must take all necessary precautions, that is why I say that this bill is a turning point in the dispensation of Barbados as to where we go and this is a Barbados I am talking about.

Madam President, as I said, it started under the previous Government, it is a national issue and there are times that I always say that we in Barbados are blessed with quality leaders. Ma'am, because of the politics sometimes we are our worst enemies but Barbados has always been blessed with quality leaders and quality governments. When we look at this bill, this is an example of where Governments that have the social welfare of Barbadians at heart, both the Democratic Labour Party and the Barbados Labour Party, that is why the political

stability in Barbados is what it is today because we have Governments who clearly understood what it is to minimise social dislocation by implementing and amending bills to the benefit of all.

No.D12 (19)3.58 p.m.

Madam President, I look forward to the day when we would have what I call a sovereign energy fund, and as a result of that sovereign energy fund of what we would have projected, we would see an improvement in our education system as far as innovation and technology are concerned. This offshore sector is going to go into all of these areas. We are going to see changes coming into our health system, into our tourism, into our agriculture, and taking on the whole idea of restructuring our water mains system, Madam President. That is also critical, so that is why in my brief presentation I said that this is a new era in a dispensation in Barbados, because we have started a new 50-year cycle, Madam President. This Bill is what I call the platform because it ties into everything else in setting the stage for that new dispensation which I am very excited about. As I said, when we speak of it we never know what life holds tomorrow. Some of us may be here to experience it, some of us may go to the Great Beyond to be with our Saviour and Lord, but the fact is that we have set a stage for not only ourselves but our children and generations to follow.

Madam President, with those few words I am obliged to you.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Abrahams, you have the Floor.

Senator W.A. ABRAHAMS: Madam President, I rise to contribute to what is, I guess, a relatively simple Amendment in the grand scheme of things. The debate has been quite wide; wider than I would have expected at the beginning, but I am quite happy to join it at its extremes.

Asides.

Senator W.A. ABRAHAMS: The door has been opened. I did not turn the key. It had been open so the least I can do is walk through it. Madam President, this Bill and the debate ostensibly touch and concern oil exploration and some regulations concerning the same. The main focus of the Amendment is to allow for a wider period of time to do the environmental impact assessments which, I think, almost everyone who has spoken is in agreement with. However, the potential for destruction of our environment occasioned by drilling offshore is too serious a concern for those with a fragile economy. Our economy is pretty much dependent entirely on tourism. When we sell Barbados, we sell the sea, the sand, the sun and some other "S's" but we are not selling that in here. We sell the sea, the sand and the

sun, and all it takes is one disaster for our livelihood to be wiped out. It takes forever to recover from that, so yes, like all who spoke, I am fully in favour of detailed, considered, well-researched, double-checked, passed-through-the-grinder environmental impact assessments before drilling takes place off the shores of Barbados.

Madam President, this is of particular concern for me because I do not know how many of us, when we go to the sea, actually pay attention to what is around us. For example, when I was a child, unlike Senator Todd who seems to be 98 years old, because I remember him saying that when he was a teenager in the 1950s....

Senator the Hon. P.M.T. TODD: On a Point of Order, Madam President. The Honourable Senator is misleading the Chamber. We can call for Hansard. On no occasion did I ever suggest that I am older than 53 years of age. In fact, I have said that I was born late December back in '63.

Asides.

Senator W.A. ABRAHAMS: Madam President, I would not over-debate that. I would just say that Senator Haynes and some of us on this side had a good laugh as we tried to calculate Senator Todd's age based on him being a teenager in the 1950s, but that is not really integral to the debate. I just would like to say through you, Ma'am, that he looks really good for his age. It must be all the cucumber.

Aside.

Senator W.A. ABRAHAMS: Madam President, when I was a child and I went to the beach, quite often you would be in the sea and you would feel fish nipping at you or swimming around you. You used to borrow somebody's goggles or a mask and you would go diving and looking around. A fertile ground for us used to be on the West Coast off Paradise and the Folkestone site. Madam President, our reefs are dead. You are not seeing the variety of fish. You are not even really seeing fish on the reef at all. Madam President, while we consider the environmental concerns occasioned by drilling -- and others spoke about other environmental concerns -- we actually need to pay attention, not oil-related, to our reefs and what we are doing with them. The reality is that the technology exists for reef regeneration. It requires some considerable investment but if we had to invest a lot of money in anything, it should be in our environment. I had a chance to enjoy it as a child. When I learnt to dive some 20 years ago there were lots of fish in Carlisle Bay and there were lots of fish off the South Coast. Almost all of the Dive Tour operators and any of the fishermen will tell you that the fish are not there anymore. This is not pointing at any one Government, because I do not think it is a governmental thing. This is not a political issue, but we need to do

something about it. Where it becomes political is that having recognised the problem, action needs to be taken, and the longer we take to initiate the corrective steps, the harder it is going to be. I would like to urge this Administration and whatever Administration is there next year that of critical importance is the investigation as to what has happened with our reefs and the implementation of corrective steps to regenerate the reefs, not only for ourselves but it deals with our sustainability as a country. If the fish are not there, then it impacts upon our diet, it impacts upon how we live our lives, and we need to deal with that.

Madam President, a lot of the younger people would not know that Barbados was the pioneer in solar technology. We were the innovators in solar technology. I believe the solar water heater originated in Barbados, but we have let that one slip. We have let that one get away from us. The one thing we have in Barbados, regardless of who is in power, regardless of how much the cost of things have gone up by assorted levies or whatever, is a steady supply of sunshine most of the year. It is now incumbent upon us to pioneer further development in solar technology. The issue a lot of people have in making their houses fully solar is the size of the batteries; the fact that you have to cover your roof in panels and the battery is so big that it takes up a whole room, and it does not make sense. This is where we need to create incentives for development of that technology. In the same way that somebody took it upon themselves once upon a time to say, "Rather than burning that burner to heat the water, why do we not use the sun to heat it?" and pushed that to the point where almost every Bajan has solar water heating and you only have an electric switch as a backup, as opposed to the natural gas heaters that were common.... I see Sir Roy nodding, because Sir Roy would be familiar with the old natural gas heaters.

Asides.

Senator W.A. ABRAHAMS: Sorry, Madam President. We need to create incentives for development in this area, Madam President. Are we serious? We keep talking about green economies and moving away from the fossil fuels and the dependence on oil. We cite the examples of Venezuela and Trinidad, which were oil-based economies that collapsed when the price of oil went down, but are we serious about encouraging green energy in Barbados?

4.04 p.m.

Where are the initiatives for powering houses and powering facilities by solar. Madam, those initiatives are taken away. They were there a couple of years ago and they are now gone. Madam, the fact is that we cannot afford to

not make use of the ready sources of energy that we have in Barbados chief among which is the sun.

Madam President, I do not intend to speak long but a couple of things are bothering me as we are talking about oil and the environment. Madam, somebody spoke about emissions with respect to ZR vehicles and minibuses but it is not just ZR and mini buses. We seem to have a system in Barbados where nobody actually cares what their car spits out behind it, once they cannot smell it, they do not care. I have driven behind some vehicles where I had to pull off the road because I literally could not see, that I swear the person in front of me was burning wet colds to power their vehicles. We should have as a country a zero tolerance approach to excessive emissions but we do not seem to take it seriously. If the police sees a car on the road and it is spitting out smoke, he may not be able to measure it in a quantitative way but you know if it is billowing black that it should be illegal and that the car should be pulled off the road because the vehicle needs to go to MTW to be inspected and if it is spouting black smoke it should not be on the road and the person should get a fine for that. Madam, unless we get to the point where we are serious.

Madam President, I am not the person who defends ZRs or mini buses because I have my own issue with them but let us not just point at them because they are easy target for this one because this also equally applies to private citizens and commercial vehicles on the roads in Barbados. If it is smoking and a danger to pedestrians and the car behind it, then it should be off the road. I am asking that when we are looking at legislation let us look at it not just for passage but for enforcement because we need to cut it out, it is not good enough.

Madam President, Senator Worrell spoke about waste-to-energy and the cleaning of all the Kadooment area because the bottles are taken up almost immediately and I agree with him. We have a good thing going with recycling of the plastic bottles because it cuts down on bottles going into the landfill but that only applies when the bottles get out there into the public domain that those who are collecting can collect. Madam, at this point in the history of Barbados, at this point in life cycle of our country, it should no longer be a discretionary thing. Madam, separation of garbage at the source should be mandatory. It should be legislated and it should be enforced. If we are looking and talking about diverting waste from the landfills, if we are looking and talking about reducing what goes into the ground, Barbadians are not going to do it willingly, it has to be legislated because recycling now must become a national priority. Let us use what can be used, let us reuse what can be reuse, let us divert or convert what can be diverted or converted and only what has no other useful purpose when all things are considered should find its way into the landfill. Madam, that is something that we cannot now leave up to the initiative or the goodwill of the

individual householders, we now have to look at legislating the separation of garbage from the sources. We keep looking at solutions to our garbage issue but we need to be looking at waste management as a whole, we need to be looking at it holistically and we need to be looking at it as a potential of revenue.

Madam President, householders bagg their green waste and throw it out with the other garbage and sometimes they include the household garbage in with the garden garbage and they all go into the back of the same Sanitation Service Authority truck and find their way the separation facility or to a dump. There a place out behind Providence Church in Christ Church I think there is another facility in St. Thomas that takes green waste and card board boxes and mulch it and when you actually see the quality of soil that is produced from what would normally go into the landfill, it is high grade soil and it is very useful and very nutrient rich. Madam, that is a commercial enterprises and something that people should be making money on. We should no longer be digging up fields to get our soil. If something wants to get top soil (5:44) we go to one of the people who is recycling it. Let us push it as something that should be encouraged. We are looking at ways to cut cost so let us look at that. We are looking at ways to reduce chemical fertilizers and pesticides so let us look at that as well. Madam, all this goes back to us approaching waste management seriously and developing sustainable and sustained solutions to waste management in Barbados.

Madam President, to come back to the substance of the debate I must say based on what recently transpired with the sales of the Barbados National Terminal Company and the objections taken therein to what potentially create a monopoly, I am glad to see that one of the amendments in this Offshore Petroleum Act, the way I read it, that it is designed so that monopolies do not happen by accident, so that the Authority retains some oversight or some discretion in the ownership of companies or approving the change of ownership of companies where their licences are involved to prevent the creation of monopolies that would probably cripple us. I do not know whether this is a good time to be issuing licences to drill off Barbados when oil is at an all-time low. Madam, maybe it might make sense to wait, maybe it might make sense to sell it, or sell the licences when the price of oil goes back up but that one is above my pay grade, that is more for Senator Boyce and Senator Ince who are more versed in that than I am but I will say that I was very pleased to see in this legislation the provisions that reduce the creation of monopolies. On a whole the amendments were slight but the amendments just serve to enhance the overall efficacy of the substantive legislation., I just thought I would take the opportunity to express my concerns about the environment about where we are going and to make my plug to do what we can as Barbadians to save and regenerate our coral reef to divert, convert, recycle and reuse and to do our part in our small

way to make Barbados better and to really value and treasure the environment that we have. Madam President, we owe it to ourselves and we owe it to our children. It will not survive without our help.

Madam President, I thank you.

Sequence 21

Madam PRESIDENT: Senator McClean you have the Floor.

SENATOR M.P.O. McClean: Thank you very much Madamn President.

I rise to speak to this amendment on the Offshore Petroleum (Amendment) Bill 2017. When I say that I did not initially planned to speak, as I often say when there is a substantial case, I often do not seek to dilute it. I do not think it would be fair to Senator Boyce to not even get up and congratulate him on the excellent way as is the norm of presenting the issue before this distinguish Chamber.

Sequence 21

I do not think it was his intention, but Senator Carmichael spoke of matters that bordered on my responsibility I do not think it was his intention, but Senator Carmichael spoke of matters that bordered on my responsibility as Ministry of Foreign Affairs and therefore I also feel at some point that I will make some reference to that because I think he raised some very important issues when he spoke of the issue of Venezuela which, of course, as we know in this part of the world is one of the world's major oil producers but we also recognise that as a longstanding friend, a friend of Barbados and member of this region is going through a number of issues which have continued to require the attention of the CARICOM member states and, in fact, prior to his speaking and as he was speaking I would have been reading emails requesting a meeting in Peru to look at the most recent developments. Of course, I will speak not to that but to some of those things but of course I also want to address an important issue raised by Senator Abrahams when he spoke of our coral reefs because I think imbedded in the presentation made by Senator Boyce as we look to undertake the amendments that are proposed is the recognition that above all else we have to ensure that whatever we do as we engage commercially in this case in the issue of the drilling for oil and related activities that we have to protect what I would describe as our ocean, the oceans of course being a significant contributor to the health and wellbeing of nations and of the earth essentially and it is absolutely critical that we pay some attention to that. As I would describe it, it is really, and I remember the Secretary General of the United Nations at a recent Oceans Conference referred to it as the life's blood of our planet

and that is no exaggeration so when we talk about pursuing opportunities afforded us that is something that we have to remember and we have to build into those regulations those elements of securing and protecting our oceans. This is particularly so given what we anticipate to be engaging in deep water development because from what was described and if you look at the geology and other scientific information in relation to Barbados and its oceans we will discover that in fact unlike our neighbour and I refer this because it was not raised here. I think Senator Boyce might have raised it in terms of an explanation but there was a critique elsewhere suggesting that we have allowed -- and this is my paraphrasing of what I have seen elsewhere -- Guyana to get ahead of us but if you look at the situation of Guyana and their recent oil finds, geology wise or geologically there are very different propositions from what we are dealing with. The cost of commercialising that is substantially different. That is an important consideration but I would want to suggest therefore, Madam President, that as we do this, we do so bearing in mind that we are operating on the premise that petroleum companies in the business of oil exploration are doing that against what I would call the backdrop of a situation of protracted or sharp declines or slumps in oil prices. I found it interesting as I sought to read in some background information the if you think in the context of our offshore drilling operations the decision by many companies to postpone and to tread very cautiously is very real and therefore not only do we have to recognise that we have to put in place all measures that we can to protect our environment to ensure beyond protecting the environment that we have negotiated deals that are in the best interest of Barbados because we are new to this and I can tell you from the information shared with my ministerial colleague that the officials of his ministry were very sharp in ensuring that, for what of a better word, there were not taken advantage of because people might have seen us as neophytes in this. One of the things I would use as illustrating the timing eventually of decisions to explore what for Barbados is perhaps a major opportunity has to do very much with the state of the industry, the complexity of the kind of offshore drilling that we have to deal with so that is an important consideration but above all we are doing so in a manner that is very studied and intended to ensure that we maximise the benefits and minimise any negative fallout. That drilling takes place within the context of our identified maritime boundaries but I want to touch on a matter which moves a bit outside of that to reflect a little bit on what was said by Senator Abrahams in relation to our reefs and to recognise that while we attempt to address what happens within our boundaries there is an area of our oceans which can impact on what happens within our boundaries, for example, the level of pollution that is manifested when we look around our ocean.

I am happy to report, of course, that as we seek to address activities within our boundaries, Barbados like the

other members of the United Nations are part of process which intended to collectively address the kind of problem that was identified. In other words, there is a process similar to what would have taken place when we negotiated the issue of climate change where the focus now is more specifically on addressing the situation of the oceans and without spending a lot of time to talk about the sustainable development goal agenda or agenda 2030 of the United Nations one sustainable development goal number 14 speaks to the intention to conserve and sustainably use the ocean seas and marine resources for the globe sustainable development so it is within that context that matters of re-preservation and rehabilitation are being addressed. I can tell you that one major resource that was shared with us at that conference in New York recently is that there is, in fact, a Caribbean National, a Jamaican to be more specific, who has been working around the globe rehabilitating reefs. There is the whole question of who do we access the resources to get that kind of resources and expertise in Barbados so it is not that nothing is happening because clearly, the quality and the state of our reefs are very important.

In addition to that, the area that I mention which is really described as the area beyond national jurisdictions that is the part of the ocean that is supposed to be owned by all of us and it is connected to what we are talking about because in addition to looking to exploit those parts of the ocean, as I said, that fall within our jurisdiction therefore the identification of exploration blocks, et cetera, there is an ongoing process, fairly new within the United Nations system but following on the climate change agenda and consistent with the agenda to pursue sustainable development and that 2030 agenda is a process which is seeking to bring the world together to tackle the state of our oceans. As I said, we are seeking to address how we take joint responsibility to protect the oceans. We are also looking to negotiate the various methods of protection and if we look at what transpired it might have taken some time, but the agreement that was signed in Paris recently is testimony to what can happen when countries collectively come together to address that. At that recent ocean conference in addition to looking at trying to articulate a beginning process of articulating that joint responsibility for protection it was also put on the table that we have to pay attention about sharing the ocean's resources because when we talk about oil and gas within our boundaries per se, there are also other kinds of resources, genetic resources, and a range of non-hydrocarbon resources that we also would be taking time to talk about. I would want to suggest that while domestically we are talking about those things and looking for resources there is also what I would call an international or global dialogue in relation to those things. That is important.

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The other matter I wanted to raise or to respond to or to comment on not in detail is to agree with the concerns raised and to reflect on those concerns raised by Senator Carmichael in his speaking to Venezuela. Senator Carmichael is correct. This country looked at the issue of Petrocaribe and recognised that it was not in the interest of Barbados to participate, and that has not changed. As the Chair of COFCOR, which is really the Council for Foreign Ministers and Community Relations, I have had to defend our position at the level of the Organisation of American States (OAS) because there were exchanges in the newspapers, some of them very ill-informed, as to what was transpiring.

Madam President, I can tell you that within the context of the OAS and within CARICOM while Barbados has sought to be part of a coordinated foreign policy, there is clear recognition that the foreign policy of Barbados, as it is the case for any other member of CARICOM, cannot always coincide, square or cover all elements of a rectangular, if you want to use that analogy, and be totally 100 per cent in sync with all individual members states. At the end of the day while CARICOM is a community of nations seeking to achieve unity in many areas, we are all independent nations.

Madam President, it has been very clear that Barbados continues to subscribe to the premise that we are 'friends of all and satellites of none'. I can say very clearly that while at the level of our Heads Barbados has had to be firm on its position, we have also had to say within the context of the OAS and the United States of America as well that we are not dictated to, that the positions we take are based very much on the principles that we subscribe to as an independent democratic nation which subscribe to rule of law, good governance and so on.

Madam President, I will not speak to the most recent developments because given the nature of how this has unfolded within the context of CARICOM, there is a commitment that we do not speak off the cuff, if that makes sense, particularly in the context of the most recent developments and the request for further dialogue. I can tell you that as recently as yesterday I was talking to my colleague from Jamaica who is seeking to come to some understanding as to how best we should proceed because at the end of the day our major concern within the context of Venezuela is that, as I indicated, we have had, as Sir Trevor said, longstanding social, economic, cultural and historical ties with the country. We continue, as we would for any country, to be concerned about the welfare of the people of Venezuela, and that for Barbados is the most important consideration. We continue to have in Caracas a small embassy, and at all times on a multiple exchange of communication on a daily basis we stay in contact with our staff there, but at the end of the day I agree with the Senator that this situation is a point in the history of our

relationship, one that will continue but one in which we hope that democracy can prevail and that the loss of life and so on can cease. I will tell you, as the Senator said, that there is that longstanding very important relationship which is in the context of our business activity.

The Senator has made some recommendations, which I certainly when speak I often, as he said, listen to his recommendations because I do not think that he speaks glibly or take these things lightly, but I trust that the hemisphere within the framework of the OAS and the region within the framework of CARICOM can hopefully look beyond what may be certain narrow kinds of positions and focus on the bigger picture of addressing the welfare and the wellbeing of a country that really is at a place that it should not be on many fronts.

Madam President, without saying more I think that is what I would want to respond to simply to say that we are not ignoring the situation and we have sought very hard..., and I certainly would commend our new Ambassador in Washington. I know that some misguided people sought to criticise him in the public but seeing him operate in Washington recently on this matter and having had to chair meetings of my Foreign Minister colleagues I think Barbados can consider that it continues to operate within the traditions.

Madam President, I really do not think I need to say more, however, I just want quickly to say something about the parallel strategy because there are a couple things that I believe very firmly in in relation to our pursuit of renewable energy. Reference was made to our pioneering work in solar water heating and, as is the case with many things, my concern is that we do not move outside of our comfort zones often. I think that those persons who had the capacity to engage in research and development having invested in the sector did not take it as far as they could but I can tell you that even though that may be the case with the older companies there are many young Barbadians at home and abroad who are working collectively and separately on technologies to move beyond just using solar energy for water heating. I can tell you that even beyond renewable energy generation people are looking very much at the application of these technologies in a number of sectors.

I want to put something on the table before I sit, Madam President. For those who know me they would know that I have spent... I am not 95 years old. I did not hear what was supposed to have been said by the Senator but that might have been a slip as he is a mathematician so he would know.

Asides.

Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Not Senator Abrahams, Madam President, I am talking about Senator Todd.

I believe that the renewable energy sector and the application of renewable energy across sectors, whether it is tourism, retrofitting our tourism plant, or whether it is pursuing new technologies in agriculture, which would allow for the most efficient and effective in production, can benefit from the investment of the public. I have mentioned over and over again two things: (1) the concept of pooling is very powerful. If we look at the credit union movement... I joined my credit union when it was formed in October 1983, and if I want to be specific, it is not a 50 000 plus member, I am the 122 member. I like to remind them of that not that it gives me more dividends than anybody else or anything, it does not work like that, it just talks about my commitment to what was done to a fledging entity. The point I am making is that when we look at the success of the credit union movement, it is simply a question of pooling. If we can get involved in supporting some new indigenous ventures, which tap into the business opportunities created by renewable energy, we in fact can do something which is going to be very critical. One of the strategies or one of outcomes of investment in renewable energy will be the saving of foreign exchange. However, if investments fall largely in the hands of others what will happen is that part of what we save will go back out in dividends paid to investors. I am very much in support of foreign direct investment, et cetera but I also believe that Barbadians need to step off the side-lines. They often complain but rather than complain they should act on and literally - I am not supposed to hear asides but this is a reasonable one consistent with what I am saying - put their money where their mouths are. I believe that if we can do that we can in fact create an opportunity to not only generate wealth. It is part of a wealth creation strategy but all that goes with it in terms of training for the new industries, et cetera, job creation, all of that is a plan. I can tell you, Madam President, that I spend many hours as a volunteer talking to young people about strategies of doing this.

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Madam President, I will close by saying that there is a model that we can replicate because beyond asking people perhaps to relook their savings in financial institutions that are basically realising no returns of any consequence, we also believe that the established private sector needs also to partner with the fledgling indigenous entrepreneurs, as well as Government wherever, possible to create what I would call a triangular arrangement such as we see with what is a very successful initiative in the tourism sector, i.e. the Bridgetown Cruise Terminal Inc.

Madam President, for those persons who do not know -and I would hate to think that people do not know this at this stage, at least those persons within the hearing of my voice - that is an arrangement between Government and a number of large established companies which operated in the Port before that facility was created and public shareholders like myself. Ma'am, I can tell you that that has been very successful, it is something that can be replicated at the domestic level. Madam President, beyond that, I also believe that when we talk about renewable energy sector within the context of the Caribbean Community that that can be replicated between Governments, regional private sector and regional citizens.

Madam President, on that note I want to thank my colleague Senator Boyce for setting out in a very succinct way the critical issues related to what appear to be fairly basic amendments but which are very far-reaching in terms of ensuring that we have in place the kind of regulatory framework that is critical to ensuring that the best interest of Barbados and Barbadians in the long-term as we seek to capitalise on any offshore opportunity that are there. Madam President, with those few words, I certainly support this amendment.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Byer-Suckoo, you have the Floor.

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Madam President, thank you very much for allowing me to come in at this late stage, I had not indicated that I would have but as the debate has unfolded I just wanted to make perhaps what would be a preemptive strike as more persons in the community start to talk about where Government is taking the offshore oil and energy sector. Madam President, we have spoken today about energy and we have also ventured into the environmental arena because it is quite obvious that these are two sectors that would be very much impacted by what is happening in the offshore exploration for oil. We have spoken at length to what this would mean for our tourism should we not be careful in terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment Study and so on.

Madam President, I just wanted to indicate that there are other sectors and other ministries that have been involved in the development of this process so far, of course, the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of the Environment but as we start to roll out the offshore energy sector we will begin to see the role played by other agencies or ministries, for example, the Immigration Department when we start to talk about persons coming in to work and work permits being granted and that kinds of things. Yes, they will be out to sea but they will be in our waters and so we will have to talk about those kinds of arrangements. Of course, the Ministry of Labour is actually now a part of the Economic Policy Committee, we sit with the Ministry of the Environment and Drainage, the

Ministry of the Environment and so on, as we discuss all the developments that we are hoping to bring to encourage economic growth.

Madam President, I have made the point here before that it is not just for us to have economic growth but to ensure that economic growth is with jobs because left on its own we have seen and are seeing across the world the phenomenon of jobless growth, so that it will take a concerted deliberate effort to ensure that any growth brings jobs and so the Ministry of Labour is at the table to ensure that even as these discussions are going on and as we look at how we can generate jobs, at how we can look at technical and vocational education and training in areas that would be relevant to the offshore energy sector and other related industries that we expect it to spin off. This happens whenever there are multinational enterprises coming in to stimulate the economy, where with some kind of enterprise there are usually opportunities for growth, job opportunity and for other spinoffs as well, so that we would want to be on top of that in finding out what opportunities there would be for Barbadians, what training has to happen, et cetera.

Madam President, the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development takes very seriously its responsibility in terms of ensuring that not only they are jobs but that they are decent jobs, that the conditions of those jobs are also satisfactory and that they meet our very high and exacting standards.

Madam President, we also have articulated a migrant labour policy and that is to ensure that workers who come into Barbados to work on whatever the project is, in this case the oil sector, that they are also covered by certain arrangements that we have in place in Barbados. The migrant labour policy does not speak to any new legislation but just encouraging the enforcement of legislation that is already there with regards to work permits, health and safety standards and other conditions of work.

Madam President, this is a preemptive strike to ensure that it is made clear that even as we are looking here at the environmental impact -- and we have talked about other things - but labour is very much at the table in this discussion as we ensure that we are preparing ourselves for the jobs that come on stream. Madam President, we have actually done training with the International Labour Organisation among the unions and employers as well in the area of multinational enterprises. The International Labour Organisation has articulated a tripartite declaration of principles concerning multinational enterprises and social policy and that is because around the world, especially in developing countries, we have seen multinational enterprises coming and they are usually massive corporations that come in and because of the potential for growth, for more jobs, for better jobs, for

wealth, for increase living standards, et cetera, that they bring with them we have seen sometimes that the workers get the short end of the stick; that there is no protection, that persons are not necessarily enforcing the standards that they should because of the fact that the multinational enterprise and the foreign direct investment mean so much to the economic development of the country that they are not enforcing these standards, and so we have already gone out there and have started training.

Madam President, there has been training through the International Labour Organisation for the unions and employers on the multinational enterprise and the declaration on the multinational enterprises to ensure that when these enterprises come here, that we can engage them in a way that is mutually beneficial to all. The idea is to ensure that not only are they adhering to our rules, and we expect that they would adhere to our legislation when they do come in; in fact, multinational enterprises that come into most countries the one thing that they do is that they look at the legislation and try to be sure that they stay within the legislation. They also want to ensure that they know where the loopholes are and so on, but we also have been working as well with the tripartite partners to ensure that those multinational enterprises that we can engage in dialogue. This is beyond what is written in the legislation but involuntary dialogue that would encourage the transfer of technology, that would encourage for example, the freedom of association and the right to organise, which is one of the principles of the International Labour Organisation, which is something that we in Barbados adhere to and we would want to ensure that multinational enterprises coming here are adhering to this principle also and that the workers have similar rights.

Madam President, that way we can ensure that the standards in the workplace that we have talked so much about can be adhered to, even hundreds of miles offshore. Madam President, that is very important because we want to ensure that while we have economic growth, that while we have development, as

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As I said before, we want jobs, we want conditions of work, we want that people's rights are realised, and we want that people are treated humanely in the workplace. As Barbados' sustainable development policy embraces these, we also want to ensure the optimisation of the quality of life for every person. That is what our sustainable development policy speaks to: Ensuring the optimisation of the quality of life for every person, by ensuring that the economic growth and development does not occur to the detriment of our ecological capacity. We have spoken at length about the ecology and ensuring that what we are doing here today and what we envisage will happen with the drilling offshore does not affect our ecological capacity.

Madam President, I just wanted to have the opportunity to say that certainly my Ministry is also working to ensure that it does not affect our people, their capacity to train, their capacity to find better jobs, their capacity to improve themselves, and to find a better life for themselves and their families. We are at the table at the Ministry of Labour working with the other Ministries in the Economic Policy Committee to ensure that all of this happens at the same time, Madam President.

Just to support those who have spoken before in the area of energy and in the area of environment, Madam President, it is with great pride that you speak to Barbados having not only signed the Paris Agreement but then having gone out so quickly and submitted the nationally determined contributions. As Minister Senator Boyce said early this morning, Barbados is not a major contributor. In fact, my research suggests that we contribute about 0.004 per cent to the global greenhouse emissions, but we were still out there articulating our nationally determined contributions that would see us decreasing significantly our greenhouse gas emissions as well as looking at other areas such as energy from greenhouse gas emissions, generation for transportation from waste and industrial processes, for agriculture and land use as well. We are also looking at other areas to ensure that we are not contributing to the global greenhouse gas emissions. When we look at other countries, for example our big cousin up to the north, the figure I saw for 2013, I think it is, is that the United States produced 14 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions and did not think it appropriate now to stay with the Paris Agreement and work on reducing those greenhouse gas emissions, but here is Barbados. In fact, I do not think any of the Small Island Developing States produce more than 0.01 per cent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, but they have been out there. It is not because we are not contributors, but because the Small Island Developing States have the most to lose with climate change and the effects of the greenhouse gas emissions. We have said it already in here. It affects our tourism, which is the mainstay of the economy; it will affect agriculture, fisheries, sea-level rise and just about all of the development which we have made recently.

We do not know what is going to happen down the line in terms of human health, with pest outbreaks and so on, as we see climate change affecting all of that. We have a lot to protect in ensuring that we maintain our environment, and in ensuring that, yes, we do our part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It is not a lot in the grand scheme of things but when I studied in Jamaica I learned the expression, "One-one cocoa fill basket", so one-one cocoa can fill basket, and if everybody does their "one-one cocoa", we will hopefully eventually reach the point, Madam President.

I wish to support then what Senator Boyce was saying this morning about not just the reason for the legislation but what they are doing in general with renewable energy and the role which renewable energy and energy efficiency plays. He also spoke to energy efficiency and the LED lights and so on, and the role which that will play in us reaching our targets for a nationally determined contribution and reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. All of these are important. We will not see the effects of them today. Nothing which we have spoken of today in terms of this legislation will we see the effects of today. This is all long-term, but this is indeed visionary work, and so, Madam President, I give my support to the Amendment that is before us and to the continuing efforts of the Ministry responsible for Energy and, in particular, the offshore oil exploration. Thank you, Madam President.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Boyce, you have the Floor.

Senator the Hon. D.W. BOYCE: Thank you, Madam President. I am sure you will let me thank all our colleagues for the contributions they have made in this debate. I shall not take too long, Madam President, but I do have to respond to a couple of matters; not contentiously but to give some answers, because people may not know all of what is going on. Firstly, Madam President, I wish to assure this Honourable Chamber and the public that we do have an oil spill crew and a plan, which is that we do drills on it every couple times each year, and that oil spill plan does include a scenario where the spill occurs when you are actually bringing the imported product from the ship, so that we are able to do some work on the matter of spills on water. Clearly, it is being upgraded and will continue to be upgraded as we work with the licencees in the offshore oil area to make sure that it is the best that we can possibly make it.

Madam President, I also share the concerns of Senator Watson on food imports, and I am pleased to say that the Barbados Light & Power ten-megawatt plant at St. Lucy is incorporating livestock under the solar panels as a way of contributing to the food supply in the country and, of course, making their venture hopefully a little bit more profitable and reducing their own maintenance while producing some food. Indeed we have been having discussions on an ongoing basis with the Chief Town Planner about how we can incorporate renewable energy and insulations with agricultural enterprises, particularly livestock enterprises. That is an ongoing thing to make sure that we do not reach the renewable energy target at the expense of food, but indeed that we reach the two of them together by using the right technologies and the right mixes.

Madam President, I just wish to remind Honourable Members that no drilling or seismic work can begin by the

licencees until the environmental impact assessment (EIA) has been submitted and approved by the responsible Ministry, which is the Ministry of the Environment. Knowing how big these companies are and what resources they have, we have not been slow in inviting help and asking for help from the Commonwealth Secretariat and from other people who can give us the assistance and experience which we need to be able to treat with these companies. Not only are they big and have a lot of resources, Madam President, but they are also very fierce negotiators, and therefore we have to be equally fierce in responding to them and to get help in that regard.

Madam President, Senator Adams raised the issue of what I would call the balancing of our energy matrix system. Our plan is not to depend on any one technology to supply the energy for the country, but to have a mix of technologies - the wind, the solar, some natural gas and perhaps some fossil fuel -- as an island plant, as well as some waste-to-energy and possibly also some wave or ocean energy. Right now there is a draft energy policy being formulated with very wide stakeholder consultation, including the unions, private sector and public sector, and they are working together to send forward to us at Cabinet a policy which sets out how we transition from where we are now to where we want to be and looking at the various mixes of fuels which we will use to generate power.

4.52 p.m.

Madam, our work in on the way and we expect it would come to Cabinet before the end of this of this year and we will be able to share it officially with the rest of public.

The matter of cleaner fuel in vehicles was raised and just to say that we have during the last few year introduced ultra low For diesel to be able to reduce the emissions that we get from diesel vehicles. It has been there now for a couple of years and we have been looking at changing the additives in gasoline and we shall to get back to that very shortly maybe using ethanol instead of what we are now using which is a much harsher chemical and we shall get that done relatively soon to make sure that the gasoline itself is cleaner. The issue of the exhaust, how we monitor it and maintain order in that matter is an issue the Ministry of Transport and Works will have to deal with. I am sure that we all agree that the matter of emissions from vehicles should be treated very seriously.

Madam President, the energy policy will always look at the matter of transition to electric vehicles. We do not see that this is going to be a short term matter. It is going to take quite some time and the British has just said they are going to ban diesel vehicles but they have said they are going to ban them by 2040, that is 22 years from now, so given that timeline, we have to look further down the road

because whenever you move from one technology to another technology there is disruption of the existing arrangements and that disruption causes its own set of problem if not managed properly and therefore, that transition has to be done very carefully.

Madam President, work has been begun too in response to the cry by Senator Worrell. There has been a feasibility study on ocean energy and on wind energy and we are looking at doing a feasibility study now on the ocean (2:35) ... energy conversion. I think that something is being done on wave energy as well and on offshore winds. Madam, given the issues we have with onshore winds in a small heavily populated country, we have been looking at offshore wind which is generally a more efficient converter of wind to electricity but we have to do some more retail work in looking at that and figuring out what the potential really and how we will actually get that done properly bearing in mind of course that you have to deal also with the coral reefs, if you go into offshore wind so it also has to be very carefully done because there are a lot of issues there that attention has to be paid to but that work has begun already. There is the matter of solar powered street lighting where there is a solar generator on each street. Madam, now it has been looked at, the view has been that it is more efficient to generate the power in renewal energy installation and get that into the grid and then pass it through rather than trying to have individual small units and that is what we are working towards so that we get the same impact on the economy at a lower cost of doing so, that work is going on.

Madam President, there is currently in the legislation a requirement for the environmental impact assessment in response to Sir Trevor. The only thing is that he said three months only and we are looking at nine months because we just need more time to do a proper environmental impact assessment.

Madam President, the matter of the solar water heaters and the reverse on that is a matter which we have to spend some more time. We have begun to look at. The issue is how do we make those solar water heaters more efficient, how do you make them cheaper or how do we merge the solar water heaters with solar TVs. I think there has to be some thinking going on in that area and maybe the University of the West Indies will have to look at that matter of how does the technology change so that we have the advantage of solar water heaters and tie it in with the solar TVs and we can push it out further to more households. I suspect that the issue is that the people who do not have solar water heaters are not in a position to purchase them and therefore we have been trying to see how do get them to be more affordable. Madam, that work is still ongoing so we cannot say yet where that would go.

Madam President, on immigrant we recognise that we will have to facilitate people who have the skills that we do not have here who are coming for the offshore oil industry but in any case, our general policy has got to be that we have to make Barbados a place of choice for highly skilled individuals to come, set themselves up, and live and work here. Of course, give there are some countries in the world who use to have very attractive programmes of immigration for highly skilled individuals and where those programmes are not looking nearly so promising as they used to be before that they may be an opportunity for us to work out a very good scheme for highly skilled persons much as the Canadians have done and attract some of the best here to Barbados. It will cover not only the offshore oil but it will cover other areas of the countries where we need to get those highly skilled persons to come here and work.

Madam President, we do have in our licences requirements for a number of things which generally would not expect us to have. We do have requirements for training of local people both Government employees working in that field as well as other persons who are working in the field. We do have negotiated arrangements for minimum amounts of local labour that would be employed and we have in those licences requirement for negotiations as to how much local content they would be, how much of your spend would be made for local goods and services and supplies. Madam, those things are roped into our licences and we have to negotiate them as we go through with each licensee and from phase to phase. We try to capture some of that benefit for our local people and try to get the skills and training to make sure that our people are able to enjoy some of the benefits of this resource.

Madam President, finally, when I spoke earlier on mentioned the Barbados National Oil Company as see itself become the Barbados National Energy Company and that it is going to be charged to embark on making itself a producer of energy for renewal energy sources talking with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Housing, the schools and other buildings that are owned by the Government.

Madam President, I would imagine that would become the Barbados National Energy Company Limited gets that programme going and get suitable investment done that it would present the next opportunity for the Government of Barbados to divest some of the shares in that energy company to the public of Barbados as a way of bringing the rest of Barbados, the small man, into a shareholding in this new renewal energy business.

Madam President, I am hopeful that not too long from now that Barbados National Oil Company Limited renamed the Barbados National Energy Company Limited would be able to do a share offering in a company that

generates its revenues from renewal energy and that the people of Barbados both big and small would be able to share in those dividends.

Madam President, with those few words, Madam President, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed on.

On the motion of SENATOR the HON. MISS M.P.A. McCLEAN, the SENATE resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Sequence 26

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1 - 5, inclusive were called and passed.

The Schedule was called and passed.

On the motion of Senator M. P. O. MCCLEAN, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to Her Honour the PRESIDENT the passing of one Bill in Committee and MADAM PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motion of Senator M. P. O. MCCLEAN, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Offshore (Amendment) Act, 2017.

SUSPENSION

Senator M. P. O. MCCLEAN: Madam President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 5.30 p.m.

The question that the Senate do now suspend until 5.30 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and MADAM PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

Senate D 12 Seq 27 5.07 p.m.

RESUMPTION

MADAM PRESIDENT: The Sitting is resumed.

ORDER No. 3

VALUE ADDED TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2017

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Ince, you have the Floor.

Senator J. INCE: Madam President, I rise to move the Second Reading of the Value Added Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2017. Madam President, in my opinion, the amendment is a simple and straightforward amendment which speaks to two items. On the one hand it speaks to raising the threshold, and this was mentioned in the Budget of June 15, 2015 where we looked at moving the threshold from \$80 000 to \$200 000. This is for persons who are registered businesses and would not have to pay any VAT based on the threshold, and that would have advantages, if you do not have to pay, for your cash flow, for even the hiring of additional help, of having the opportunity for capital because as a registered business you would also have the advantage of a grant - when we speak of grant funding sometimes you have to be registered - and also for the whole idea of technical assistance if you need technical assistance through one of the Government agencies to manage your business. On the other hand, it also looked at the list of the zero-rated basket of goods. Madam President, we know how important this zero-rated basket of goods is to those persons who we consider vulnerable and as far as the consuming society is concerned.

Madam President, as I said before, the basket of goods is a complete shopping cart when you look at what is included. Some items were removed but when we looked at the inclusion of what it is within the basket we have the meats, from pork to mutton, fish and chicken. Within the basket we also looked at the varying milks from condensed milk to evaporated milk. We also looked at the varying types of fresh vegetables from potatoes to tomatoes, to cabbage and cauliflower. Then we moved to what we call the legumes, things like black eye peas, string beans, split peas and the other peas. Madam President, as I said, really and truly the basket of goods is a complete shopping cart because it covers the variety of things that are necessary as far as the Barbadian consumer is concerned, and the amendment, as I said, is simple and straightforward where we moved the threshold from \$60 000 where it was in 2010 to \$80 000 and then we moved it from \$80 000 to \$200 000. Again, we looked at the whole idea of zero-rating the basket of goods. Some items were removed and some items were added to make it more viable, and at the least it is approximately about 309 items.

Madam President, with those few words, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Trotman, you have the Floor.

Senator Sir Roy TROTMAN: Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, similar legislation, I think, was brought to the Chamber just a few Sittings ago and I did not think then that I needed to comment on them and I do not now wish to go into the specifics that were raised by the leader of the item but I would wish to use the

occasion to comment on aspects of the operations that are given to the operating or the implementation agency, and the implementation agency, as I understand it, is the Barbados Revenue Authority.

Madam President, I would wish to use the occasion to suggest that the legislation, though it may not occasion any controversy insofar as I am concerned, can only be properly dealt with and can only satisfy the requirements and the demands of the Government and indeed of the people of Barbados if the operating agency is operating at a level that is satisfactory not only to the Government itself but where the satisfaction is satisfaction to the people of the country and satisfactory to its own employees, and it is in that area that I need to concern myself. Some specific issues therefore I would wish to raise this evening, some as they relate to general labour management issues and some to general government issues or governance issues I should say.

Madam President, in the last session of the Senate I indicated that there was some information which had reportedly been given to me and which I passed on to the Chamber in the hope that we would have examined that information because it addressed some matters that were of concern to me not in my capacity as a parent but in my capacity as a member of the public who still receives concerns and expressions of interest as though I was still seeking for an office in another place. Madam President, part of that concern relates to the comment that I gave then that persons had been advised that the income tax consideration for a third child or for other than a second child, a child beyond the second child, was no longer going to apply. I gave it as a reported instance then and we all expressed concern about it so I took time out to recheck that information and my checking suggests that the information stands and that in fact the problem is as I described it. Now, since that last session of the Senate I have been approached, I supposed as a former trade union leader and a Member of this august Chamber, regarding what persons believe that I might be able in either one or the other of those two positions to bring before this Honourable Chamber with a view to having those matters addressed as they relate to the said Barbados Revenue Authority.

I am raising them, Madam President, because I am of the view that we cannot look for excellence in our delivery of service if the deliverers of that service are frustrated in their efforts to deliver that service. One such issue that has come before me relates to the conditions of service of staff members who are in the Barbados Revenue Authority as they approach retirement.

Senate D10 Sequence 28

Madam President, another issue addresses to persons who have moved from the Public Service of Barbados to the Barbados Revenue Authority and who were of the view that if and when they moved to the Barbados Revenue Authority that they were moving to contribute to the wellbeing of the country, in the same way that they accept that they were moving to improve their personal positions or to advance their personal status. There was never in their view any understanding that the move would downgrade either the office they were going to, the agency they were going into, or in fact downgrade themselves and/or their conditions of service, yet I understand that there is a major area of concern, and I have been bombarded by a number of people regarding these said issues, that indicate that persons proceeding on retirement or wishing to proceed on retirement are faced with the problem of having the years which they have put into service in the Barbados Revenue Authority either denied for computation of their retirement benefits, or their pensions computed on their salary levels before they moved across to the Barbados Revenue Authority where they earned increased emoluments during the time that they had been serving in that particular new job. Madam President, there are two areas: one is that they have found -- and I have spoken to people who have actually explained it to me -- that before their pension is computed, they are then pushed back down to their substantive position in the General Service, for example, if they were at \$3 000 they were pushed back down to \$2 100 at which their pension is computed when, in fact, they had been taken up into a higher job -- and I will speak to what generally obtains in those circumstances - and that their years of service, for example, three, four or five years of service are not being treated.

Madam President, it should seem that that represents a contradiction. Madam President, for persons preceding on preretirement leave - and this is another dimension of the problem - are allegedly, and I use allegedly advisably, denied such preretirement leave on conditions that they informed me that they are told that they must take the money when, in fact, people proceeding on vacation... Ma'am, preretirement leave is a form of trumped up vacation, on the grounds that it is your final occasion to proceed and that therefore you would get a longer vacation period as it were. Ma'am, all of the psychology relating to vacation is that vacation is not paid for in lieu but that vacation is taken, that leave is taken. Indeed, in certain parts of the law if you do not take your vacation you contravene the law. Yet we have been told, and people are claiming, and I have been trying to get the thing remedied, that this is matter which is now before them.

Madam President, I am of the view that where a Government finds itself accused of undermining its own rules, regulations, customs or practices that we have to be careful because Government is going to be accused and people will use the word very loosely that the Government

has done it. I am sufficiently aware of what happens when I know that Government can cover a multitude of sins or indeed can cover a multitude of blessings, but that the persons who actually make the decisions may be persons who have authority for making decisions and who may make outside of their authority, and will make those decisions very glibly and very nonchalantly because they have no responsibility that is concomitant with the level of authority they have.

Madam President, I have been a trade union leader and I know that we have taken action in some instances where those things have happened, to find that the final decision-maker was not necessarily responsible but that the person who actually activated the wrongdoing did not care a penny because he or she did not lose a penny and that you were sometimes tilting swords at the wrong windows, like Don Quixote in years past.

Madam President, the point I am making is that very often persons with authority and without the necessary responsibility for the decisions that they have taken can lead to major difficulties in the public arena when those said persons do not need to answer to the public. Madam President, I therefore have a major problem arranging these issues because I want to know if they are Government dictated mantra or instructions or whether they have become the figment or good wishes maybe of a board, because sometimes and we have had experiences of some boards that have taken upon themselves responsibility bigger and larger than the responsibilities of Ministers of the Crown and they have not had to face the ire of the public thereafter. Ma'am, because I am not trying to make this a political presentation I will not refer to any such board but I do not think that there is anybody in Barbados who will fail to understand that boards that do well are known and that boards that do badly are also known.

I think, Madam President, that there are far too many occasions in the Public Service where the policy enunciations of Government are being frustrated at the administration level; too many people want to show their power but seek to avoid responsibility for their abuse of that said power. Madam President, I would urge whatever Government agency, in this case, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, to check out the allegations which have been made here. They are not made in any bad faith by this speaker, they are made as a result of several presentations and importunes that have been made and in some cases the people said that they have raised those issues before now and that they are getting no traction.

Madam President, in the cases I have raised I suggest (1), a clear-the-air statement, that is in the matter of the children's allowances.

No.D12 (29)5.57 p.m.

If it is true, then the Government needs to state the authority for the change, because that authority would seem to me to have had to pass through the various Houses of Parliament or there must be some statutory instrument that is used to give that level of authority, and the public should be made aware of where that authority is. More than that, the public should be made aware of what is the justice at this time for the use of that authority. Why could we and would we at a time like this have an imposition of that sort where we have so many challenges of a similar nature; that is the payment of social obligations or social charges? I do not say that it cannot happen. I am merely saying that if it is happening, people should be made aware of the circumstances that give rise to it.

In those other areas, particularly relating to staffing, I suggest that where there is a problem between the years that people spent in the Public Service generally and the years they have spent now in the Barbados Revenue Authority (BRA), and where there may be problems of administration that would bring those matters to resolution in the immediate term, Government should move to bring a special Resolution to the other place to permit and to empower the BRA to facilitate the fair computation and the just payment of pensions to those good people who went over into the BRA. Given the two Houses of Parliament, I have got almost 30 years of awareness that this is quite possible, and it does not divide the House for more than the same time it took Senator Ince to make his presentation in this particular matter.

Madam President, I further urge that we ensure that the provisions for public servants do not become dishonoured or denied by any weakness there may be in the transfer document which is moving people from the Public Service generally to the BRA. There may be new conditions of service and it may be possible that some lacunae within the document within the structuring of the new arrangement may have occasioned some little difficulty. We all know that the intention was to take those workers who went from the Public Service to the BRA, a public company, but take them across in much the same conditions as persons who went from the Public Service to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital or any other such arrangement where people move from the Public Service proper to a statutory board where the understanding was that their conditions would be no worse but may possibly be better. They cannot be worse. If there is a problem, the problem is that somebody forgot to put in a comma or somebody put a semicolon where some semicolon should not have arisen, but the intention was never the intention to cause anybody any disservice. Therefore, for those persons who are now contemplating retiring from the service -- and I regret that there are so many who are at the senior level seeking to leave, especially at this time when we need some of those persons with the requisite experience and expertise -- it should be possible for us, within a matter of a

week or so, to prepare the relevant documentation and to have those kinds of transfer documents properly addressed, thereby bringing back the confidence of John Citizen in his employer, where as an employer that employer is in fact the Public Service.

Madam President, this is necessary, I think, because the Government's role is to be the exemplar; the employer who sets the example which all other employers should aspire to become. There should be no better employer than the Government itself, and so where there is a situation where doubt is cast on the trust and the goodwill and the honour that there should be in an employment contract, and where that dishonour and that lack of trust and that failed effort at goodwill is found in the Government or is found in the behaviour of people in the service to the extent that the public servant has a doubt about the relationship, then that is something that falls on all of us and for which we should be pained and very unhappy. We have a responsibility as a matter of urgency to address that matter, because if the Government fails where everybody else is watching the Government, for example, then it stands to reason that the mice will play because the cat is out. I do not need to develop that any more fully, because even a blind man on a three-legged horse at midnight in the countryside should be able to see the truth in that particular statement.

Aside.

Senator Sir R.A. TROTMAN: Madam President, may I continue? Thank you very much, Ma'am. I thought that my analogy had become a little problematic.

Aside.

Senator Sir R.A. TROTMAN: I want to underscore just a couple of things and then I will relieve you of my concerns. I want to underscore that management has an inherent right to manage, and if people were working in one employment area and they moved to another, I do not think that anybody should deny the right of that new employer to manage. In all contracts there will be those arrangements for managers to manage as they see changed things and rearranged things, but always within that inherent right to manage there is an understanding in this country that there is a balance which is brought about when we recognise that the security of the worker has to be brought into the equation; that you have a right to manage and to make changes as you see fit provided that in so doing you do not arrange to the disadvantage of your employee who has been working under a different work arrangement or a different contractual arrangement. There could be no arrangement that I have spoken of earlier that should be allowed in the Service to obtain purely on the grounds that one Government agency has taken over from another one.

We want to highlight as well the importance of having agents of the Government as people in authority speaking sometimes for the people who have the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that they get the vote, and that they do not find themselves -- the people who look for the vote -- at a disadvantage because those who cannot speak to that have used the power but abused the responsibility.

6.05 p.m.

Madam President, thirdly, I would wish to insist on the value to our society of institutions like trust, faith and honour, that where a worker worked for an employer, that worker has to be trustworthy, has to be honourable, has to be faithful, and even today I say that although nowadays the employers does not say anymore, that he wants people who are faithful, committed and who gives long service. He just wants somebody who is cheap, but that is a different thing that the Minister of Labour may have talked about earlier in another presentation this evening or that she may have to enter into discussions over because I do not believe in the maxim that says that you are employed with me but not for long and be not for your goodwill, see not for your good service, be not for your productivity only for my exploitative measures.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Honourable Member, you have three more minutes.

SENATOR SIR ROY TROTMAN: Madam President, that is so good. Thank you so much, Madam. I believe that where you go to work there should be an understanding that if you give good service, honest service, trustworthy service, that employers should recognise that would want you want to serve that employment opportunity as though it were it your own personal business and that therefore, that counts for some thing at the time of the award because you should be like Paul hearing from somebody that you have done your best and that you should enter into your reward.

Madam President, yes, within my three minutes I am going to make my last point. I want to make the general comment that we must commit ourselves to a regime in which Government notice of the respond that there is and that there should be from bad decisions is recognised by all of us who are in positions of authority and that we should all recognise the damage that can be created directly and collaterally where persons are not treated in the proper manner where persons should be treated and where that mistreatment leads to further examples of a falling away from the principles that have guided Barbados over the years. It is still better for us to recognise that this country has grown on the backs of our commitment to solid acts of honesty and to integrity and that we understand that making errors and not seeking to correct those errors are a recipe for disaster.

Madam President, I raise these matters because the concern on a public that is preoccupied by other concerns, that concern is not one that we could leave to chance. We have to act on that concern and we have to act now and we have to correct it.

Madam President, I am grateful to you.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Abrahams, you have the Floor.

Senator Abrahams: Madam President, I am a man of my word, and I will be as short as Senator Ince was. Madam President, I just wondered how they arrived at the threshold \$200 000. While we are going in the right direction, I believe that we will probably end back up here to raise that because in addition to the concerns Senator Ince has raised with respect to the small business person and they having to incur expenses to file the VAT returns, if you actually go to the VAT office when returns are due and you see the chaos down there, to be honest, we need to factor in the ability of the Barbados Revenue Authority to process all the VAT returns and especially when you are dealing with small thing like promoters. Madam, right now promoters have to get a promoter's authorization and the Barbados Revenue Authority has to look at the tickets. I guess that is the Barbados Revenue Authority's way of being able to collect its revenue but you have to wonder what is going to happen in a situation with things like promoter's authorisations and whether the VAT is going to attach to promoters. T here are some other logistics that I guess will become apparent as we seek to implement it but it is a case that makes sense. I cannot say anything more than it makes senses because the threshold was a little bit too low and it was hurting some people because the VAT returns are easy to do if you know what it is you are doing but they hard when you have a lot of offsets or if you are dealing with a big function that may not actually make a lot of money.

Madam President, I agree entirely with the raising of the threshold up to the \$200 000. I believe that we should look at taking it a little bit further because you really want to actually just exclude the real small business person and with the actual value of the dollar not being what it was putting it to \$200 000 means we are going to be back here again to raise that simply for expediency and simply because it is going to be difficult for the Barbados Revenue Authority to handle the volume that it is handling.

Madam President, with respect to the basket of goods, I will not touch on that one. Sir Roy dealt more than adequately with his concerns. I do believe that the issue at Customs and what is going to happen with the Customs and it being absorbed into the Barbados Revenue Authority needs to be addressed. It needs to be sorted out and it needs to be finalized one way or the other.

Madam President, I have nothing more to contribute. I thank you.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Todd, you have the Floor.

Senator P.M.T. TODD: Madam President, thank you very much. I too promise to not utilise my full half hour in this presentation but to support fully the passage of this Value Added Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2017. Madam, forgive me but I always like to go into details for the benefit of the listening public in terms of impact of these proposed measures that we debate in this Chamber on the average citizen.

Madam President, as other Senators have mentioned the raising of this threshold from \$80 000 to \$200 000 in terms of the earnings of persons conducting business in our country after which they will be subjected to the VAT registration process, we can be specific and talk about who would be therefore relieved of this administrative cost in terms of having to file these VAT returns by the lifting of this threshold.

Madam President, simple micro enterprises be they small rum shops, small snackettes, small minimarts, cosmetique, small pharmacies within the cottage industry, the people who may be manufacturing condiments, jams, jellies, spices, hot sauce and so in the craft section, people involved in jewelry production and so on, self-employed persons be they electricians, plumbers, small auto parts, repair outlets, small bakeries and the list goes on, so that this is a very appropriate measure.

Madam President, this goes in phases notwithstanding what Senator Abrahams just mentioned because initially the threshold was \$60 000 and it was raised to \$80 000 so that there is nothing wrong with gradual incremental changes as we roll out these changes and see the impact and hear the response of the public.

In terms of the basket of goods, Madam President, I will touch on this because I am very, very happy that this Democratic Labour Party (DLP) Administration has not yielded to the pressures of commentators out there who suggest that it is better to reduce the overall Value Added Tax rate by completely removing the zero rating of this basket of goods and exemptions so that you widen the net, as it were, broaden the base of the tax and therefore we would not compromise revenue but it is not as simple as that, Madam President, because we say that we are a caring Government, a caring people and we must demonstrate that in terms of our policies and this is a case in point.

Madam President, I submit that the facility of zero rating this basket of essential food items primarily is part of the social safety net to cushion the impact of Value Added Tax which is by nature regressive. That is to say that these, like most other indirect taxes be there general consumption taxes, sales taxes and so on. They are regressive in that the tax is levied to the same extent on all citizens regardless of their income reality so that VAT applied to a refrigerator, the richest person in Barbados would pay the same amount of VAT if he purchases the same refrigerator that the poorest person in Barbados might seek to purchase. Whereas income taxes and these direct taxes are more progressive in that the higher the income the higher the tax rate so the richer you are the more heavily you are tax. On the reverse, the poorer you are the smaller imposition of direct tax that you would have to carry, Madam President, so that a caring Government realising this fact would in implementing a Value Added Tax also at the same time have these aspects such as zero rating a basket of goods to cushion the impact on the masses on no better category than essential food stuff. One may decide that you will delay the purchase of a new refrigerator, repair the old one and therefore in the process give a little employment to the technician who is repair your refrigerator or your stove or your stereo or your clothes iron but you have to eat. We as human beings are not robots. We would starve to death if we are not able to buy essentials such as food so that it is so important not to play around with this basket of goods in terms of ensuring that we do zero rate a basket of goods to ensure that the most vulnerable groups in our society, the poor, the indigent, Madam President, are able to get some ease and by the same token that is why we would have had the introduction of the Reverse Tax Credit to give back a little something to those vulnerable groups and this Democratic Labour Party (DLP) Administration, I dear say, Madam President, raised the amount of the Reverse Tax Credit by doubling it to at least \$1 300 per annum. It was reduced when we had to implement certain cost cutting measures within Government but that was time bound, as I understand it, that Reverse Tax Credit will now revert to that \$1 300 amount as occurred in the past, Madam President. Again, another measure mechanism to cushion the impact of the "regressivity" of the indirect tax, the Value Added Tax.

I would also congratulate this Government for reviewing the whole basket of goods, as Senator Ince mentioned, we were able to take out food stuff that we thought were not necessary and what we did is that we set up a committee including representatives from the Ministry of Health that were able to provide their professional advice in terms of the issue of nutrition, the nutritional value of foods and which foods would be injurious to health and so on so that we had this comprehensive approach in terms of looking at the basket of goods. We have seen this, Madam President, the utilisation of fiscal policy to effect a desired positive outcome, for example,

the soft drink tax. We were really considered world leaders. Developed countries are now playing catch up. We utilised that soft drink tax, not to earn additional revenue in the first instance but really the objective was to discourage the soft drink manufacturers from having their drinks with excessive amounts of sugar. By imposing that soft drink tax we are encouraging them to actually have the sugar content per serving reduced so that they would not have to pay that levy and the overall effect would be a health benefit to our country because, Madam President, you may figure a soft drink is a soft drink but it is only in recent years that I looked at the label of soft drinks and found that it was the Ginger Ale of one particular brand that per serving the amount of sugar was a lot less than let us say another brand of soft drink where the sugar content per serving was nearly double. These are issues that are very, very important. In looking at the basket of goods, the Ministry of Health officials would have been able to identify certain products that, although they may be popular, may not be healthy. For example, Madam President, we all know about salt fish. For years it was part of our national cuisine in terms of salt fish cakes and so on and I am not telling people do not eat salt fish cakes, I love them, but we have the option, now that we know better, Madam President, in terms of making sure that we boil out as much as that salt as possible before we actually make the salt fish cakes or the salt fish gravy with a little hard boil egg in the middle. Even things like the salt beef, the salt meat, the pig tail and so on which is saturated with brine, sodium chloride, the impact of excess consumption of salt in terms of increasing blood pressure although, I understand you still need some sort otherwise you may get cramps. As I said, it is part of your culture, from roasting a breadfruit with a little pig tail in the middle.

I remember, very quickly, Madam President, in the 1980s I was able to be in Mexico City for a conference and I was amazed that in the heart of that City with all the ruins of the recent volcano that had occurred a few years earlier hustling and bustling you had a lot of small food retail establishments with what we would call in Barbados, a glass case, and there staring at me through the glass case were a whole set of what we call fried pig snout. That was a part of their culture as we have it in Barbados. The point I am making is that, I am not telling people do not eat the pigtail and the pig snout and so on but boil the salt out, Madam President, as much as is possible. It would still be tasty but it would be healthy.

This basket of goods, Madam President, as I said, we were looking at those aspects to encourage the masses to eat healthily. In fact, Madam President, there is nothing wrong with some of these essential food stuff being in this basket of good because, in fact, simple things like sardines may be considered a poor man's food but the doctors say that this is very, very healthy because the lower down in the food chain you are, the smaller the fish, the less

likelihood of it actually being contaminated with heavy metals such as mercury and lead so that the small fish are eaten by the bigger fish and so you get that build-up of contaminants. Fish oil and fish oil capsules, the best source are from those small fish such as the mackerel and the sardines and so on.

Finally in this basket of goods, we would have removed some of the luxury goods that clearly defeats the whole purpose of the basket of goods.

Senate D 12 Seq 32 6.25 p.m.

It is to protect the masses in terms of providing basis sources of protein, carbohydrates, minerals, oils and so on. Madam President, what I understand would have occurred initially giving rise to some of these luxury goods being actually caught in this basket of goods was that it is a very laborious process in terms of identifying the basket of goods because you may have several meats lumped into one particular category for tax purposes so that the choice cuts of beef might be mixed up with the beef stew and so on. It is a laborious process in terms of dissecting out so that we can remove the luxury goods that the rich would be able to afford to pay the VAT on so that we identify the basic simple cuts of beef, be it beef stew and so on. Madam President, this has been done in this process and that is why we have been able to remove some of those luxury items like the dark chocolate and so on and keep the essentials.

Madam President, I am very happy that this Administration has resisted the advice from international technocrats who are just looking at the figures because we have to look at the impact of the lives of the people and their ability to get a meal to feed themselves and their families, so I am very happy that this Administration has kept this basket of goods because in other jurisdictions they have gone the other route and have almost removed most of the basket of goods zero-rated from VAT, and I believe, to the detriment of those vulnerable groups in their respective societies.

Madam President, I therefore congratulate this Administration for being a caring Government and for thinking not just of the rich and the famous but of the masses, the vulnerable people in our society who rely on their Government to protect them, and this Democratic Labour Party is such a Government.

I thank you.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Ince, you have the Floor.

Senator J. INCE: Madam President, as I said, this amendment is a simple and straightforward amendment, but I have noted the concerns of Senator Abrahams. There

are many schools of thought when you look at the comments about VAT internationally. Some persons say that you should carry it to \$400 000, some say to \$500 000 and there are others that say that you should look at it from a perspective of a budgetary year and what you think is prudent and feasible within a budgetary year.

Madam President, as I said, this is a simple and straightforward amendment. Madam President, the basket of goods is comprehensive, I call it a complete shopping cart.

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

The question that the Bill be read for a second time was put to the Senate and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, the Senate resolved itself into Committee, His Honour Senator the Very Reverend H. E. Crichlow in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1 -- 6 inclusive were called and passed.

The Schedule was called and passed.

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

On the separate motion 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, 2017.

ORDER No. 1

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 A PARCEL OF LAND, THE PROPERTY OF THE CROWN, SITUATE AT THE FORMER SITE OF DISTRICT "E" POLICE STATION IN STATION HILL IN THE PARISH OF ST. PETER IN THIS ISLAND FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Byer Suckoo, you have the Floor.

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER SUCKOO: Thank you very much, Madam President. Madam President, what we have before the Chamber at this hour is a rather straightforward Resolution vesting a piece of land in the National Housing Corporation. This is a piece of land that would be known to many as the land that the District "E" Police Station was on. I gather that the District "E" Police Station was resited sometime after the year 2000. I was looking through the file, I cannot find exactly when but the records indicate that there was money put into the Estimates of the financial year 2000-2001 for building a new police station for District "E" in Speightstown.

Senate D10 Sequence 33

Madam President, having vacated that property at Station Hill, it was then passed onto the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. in 2007 for tourism-related purposes. Indeed, there was an overall redevelopment of the Speightstown area that was envisaged at the time.

This property, Madam President, is actually known as Dover Fort and the Crown had acquired it since 1836 for the establishment of a police settlement known as Dover Fort pursuant to the Act for Establishing a Police Settlement at Dover Fort, 1836, so that it has been with the Crown all that time, although for a period during this redevelopment process the files were not actually found and so it had created a lot of paperwork in the interim, but we do have the records that confirm that the Crown did acquire this land back in 1836 and that they built Dover Fort there. Around 2000 they built the new police station in Speightstown and this land was vacated.

Madam President, it was given over to the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. and the Cabinet of Barbados approved that in 2007. The Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. has since indicated that they are no longer interested in developing Dover Fort and so it is now the intention to have this land, 5 930 square metres, vested in the National Housing Corporation for housing purposes.

Madam President, it is rather straightforward, there really is no more to it than that, just a piece of vacant land that is no longer occupied by the police station, where the National Housing Corporation is to take it over for housing purposes. Madam President, I do not know that it requires much more to be said on the National Housing Corporation, on housing and so on and therefore, Madam President, I now beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Abrahams, you have the Floor.

Senator W. A. ABRAHAMS: Madam President, I do agree with everything Senator Byer-Suckoo has said but the one thing that troubles me and has troubled me for quite some time is that if we were to go around Barbados and look, all the churches are on prime real estate with fantastic view, also a lot of police stations are on prime real estates with fantastic view. Madam President, the fact that the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. once considered developing the 5 000 square metres at Station Hill, St. Peter, should say something about the quality of the land.

Madam President, there may have to come a point in time when we consider what we do with the land that belongs to the Crown, rather than by default vesting it in the National Housing Corporation for the purpose of housing. If we just think practically, 5 000 square feet with that view might net a huge sum that can then be used to buy other land or more land that can better serve the purposes of the National Housing Corporation, so that rather than it be a case of a default all the time when there is land that the Crown cannot immediately find anything to do with it, we may have to look at the vesting process and at how we concede the utility of lands that belong to the Crown.

Madam President, I speak now on this because before that police station was closed, I had gone there in my capacity as an attorney-at-law and I stood up there and you could see across the whole of Speightstown. From that position it is a fantastic, beautiful view of Speightstown, parts of St. Lucy and out to the coast that, Madam President, I am sure that if it was put on the open market somebody would snap that up for a pretty penny and the money used for the purchase of that land could not only buy an equivalent-sized spot somewhere else but the excess could also then go into the housing development.

Madam President, we are going to have to come to a point where we start to look at the uses that we put to land, every piece of land is not suitable for housing development. It is bang for the buck, do we want to provide a lot of low-income housing? If so we may have to sell some of the prime pieces of real estate and apply the money and profit into the low-income housing. It will then drive down the

cost of housing to the eventual purchaser. It is something that we need to look at. Madam President, I raise it now because I once stood on that exact piece of land and thought to myself, wow, what a fantastic piece of land, that this piece of land could fetch a lot of money if they stopped using it as a police station. Ma'am, it is ironic that that happened to me as a young lawyer and I am now here many years later debating the exact same piece of land that I thought was wasted as being a police station, and there are many more like it around Barbados. Madam President, I thank you.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Byer-Suckoo, you have the Floor.

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Madam President, I want to thank Senator Abrahams for that property that he has longed had his eyes on, clearly. I too know when we had the District Medical Officer in St. George at Buttals, I remember going there and as a child thinking what a lovely piece of property, that I could be the District Medical Officer just to get there. Of course, by the time I went through medical school they had done away with the District Medical Officer system and so that went abegging.

Madam President, yes, the point is taken, I am sure that somebody from the National Housing Corporation will note that. We will certainly pass that on and indicate that we do have an interested buyer for that property, one who sounds like he will pay top dollar for it, also one who has top dollar and so we will put it on the open market just for that interested buyer.

Madam President, with that being noted, again I now beg to move that the Resolution do now pass.

The question was put to the Honourable The Senate and was resolved in the affirmative, without division.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator McClean, you have the Floor.

ADJOURNEMENT

Senator the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Madam President, I now beg to move that this Sitting be adjourned sine die. Madam President, while speaking on the Adjournment, I believe that it will be some time before we meet, certainly we will not meet before October, given the completion of the Order Paper. I want to take this opportunity to extend best wishes for the rest of the Cropover season and indeed to encourage all of our distinguished colleagues to participate in CARIFESTA which, by all accounts, promises to be an extraordinary festival. I know that my colleague, the Honourable Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth has introduced a number of

very interesting elements. Madam President, beyond the Members of CARICOM I believe that we will have at least 23 countries being represented.

Madam President, as we take what will essentially be a short recess, I would also want to extend our sincere appreciation to our Presiding Officers, to all the staff of Parliament, to the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force, the staff of the Cabinet Office and all persons, including our support staff, the caterers, all ensuring our well-being.

Madam President, on that note I must tell you, I mentioned earlier that I was Chair of the Council of Foreign Ministers and because I was Chair our main meeting was held in Barbados and I thought that I should invite them to Parliament, more specifically to the Dining Room on the first day for lunch. They were very pleased, in fact, I am still getting comments about our hospitality. I got the opportunity to share this Honourable Chamber with them on a tour, as well as the House and they were very pleased.

No.D12 (34)6.48 p.m.

I believe I have impressed upon them that we try very much to be hospitable, and I thank those who extended that hospitality to them. To you, Madam President, in particular, I want again to say thank you very much for your very skillful leadership of this Senate. I know that sometimes my colleagues can become a bit enthusiastic -- I will be nice -- but I look forward to the break even though we have to remind Barbadians that we do not have a complete break, but just a break from the Senate. So with those words, I want to say thank you very much to all who continue to assist us and I look forward to continuing our work in this distinguished Chamber after we return in October. Thank you.

Senator W.A. ABRAHAMS: Madam President, I wish to take this opportunity on behalf of the Opposition Senators to wish everyone a very safe and fulfilling Crop Over. Crop Over is the time of the year when we should put aside all of our differences -- all of them -- participate in the festival for which Barbados is famous, enjoy the music, enjoy all the spirits of Crop Over, and come back rejuvenated and refreshed to do the work of the people. I also wish to thank all those who take care of us when we are here in the Senate: the police officers, the ancillary staff, the caterers, everyone who plays a part to make sure that we can actually focus and do the business of the people in the way that we do. I also want to say the best wishes for the season to all of my colleagues, because I do consider those at the table. We may be on different sides of the table -- as much as you can for a partially round table -- and we may be on different ideological or political sides, but I think when we are here our aim is to pass laws and to take

steps that better Barbados and life for Barbadians generally, so I just wish the best for Crop Over to everyone and to all Barbados who are listening. Please let it be a safe, happy, fulfilling and enjoyable Crop Over in the spirit in which Crop Over is meant to be enjoyed. Thank you.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Trotman.

Senator Sir R.A. TROTMAN: Madam President, it is usual that the Independents get to share in whatever is being done at the particular moment, and this is a moment for making some comments before the break. I would wish to join with those who spoke, both the Government and the Opposition, to thank those who have contributed since we last stood and spoke on such an occasion. We are going to have a moment for some review -- some may say for some rest -- but I do not know about the rest because I think that there is a lot for us to do and not much time in which to do it. For example, I heard the Minister of Labour speak to the significant things that we are going to be doing for labour during this two-month period and onwards. I was a little sorry to hear that she did not mention the domestic workers, and I was going to interrupt her but I did not want to have my former representative being stopped in the middle -- as she says, "my next representative" -- of her presentation. I would not be a good constituent that way. I would want to hear that being part of the programme. We are trying very hard to make sure that is part of the programme. Trinidad is having cases which are treating with domestic workers being workers too, and it is making the rounds and making history, so the Minister of Labour and the Cabinet will understand we have to do it here.

The second thing that we need to reflect on while we are taking the break is the fact that although we are, I think, presenting ourselves fairly sharply, one of the things I discovered is that we do not seem to be benefiting from the level of parliamentary training that used to be available for parliamentarians before. I myself have spoken to this matter of training being available for Members of the Lower House as well as for Senators, and that used to be on the basis of regular involvement of Government people, of Opposition people and of Independents as well. I would like to believe that the officers of our branch of the Parliamentary Association would recognise that training was a very well built-in part of the structure of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and that it is an arrangement which is intended for training for everybody. The only sure position was that our serving officer, the Clerk, had to be there to make sure that he or she benefited from whatever was going on; but beyond that there has to be training right around. I do not know what is stopping this, I am not happy that I am not seeing it, and I want to make sure everybody understands that I do not think it is the right thing not to be making sure that training becomes necessary. Some of the people who are now Senators will no doubt be expecting that next time around they may still

be in Parliament but they may not be here with people like me, if I am here; so I would think that it is important that training is seen as being a prerequisite for all of us.

Beyond that, I like the idea of our being safe. There is far too much violence around, and those of us who can speak out should speak out against it every time we can, and let us hope that we have an absolutely trouble-free Kadooment, and that when Carifesta comes along in a couple of weeks that we will not have any interruptions because we have not prepared properly for that occasion. I would believe that the Minister of Labour should be in a position to understand that that is the stated problem which may stand in the way of a Carifesta without difficulty, and we also would want to see one without violence. Madam President, I am looking forward to this recess period. I wish everybody good health and I look forward to seeing us all again when once we are convened.

Asides.

MADAM PRESIDENT: As we prepare to adjourn, I too would want to join with my Senate colleagues in thanking all the persons who continue to make our time here such a pleasant one: the staff, the caterers, the police officers. You have well deserved your break and I hope that all of you enjoy a safe Crop Over. I also wish at this time to join my Senate colleagues in offering our condolences to our Deputy Clerk, the long-serving Mr. Nigel Jones, on the passing of his mother who will be laid to rest on Friday. I am sure all of you will join me in offering condolences to the family and our prayers for a restful time of recess.

Asides.

ADJOURNMENT

Senator the Hon. Ms. M.P.O. McCLEAN: I beg to move that this Sitting be now adjourned sine die.

The question that the Sitting do now adjourn sine die was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Her Honour THE PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

6.54 p.m.

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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 and date. The convening sentence in the source gives the date as Thursday, February 2, 2017, but the heading and file name give Wednesday, August 2, 2017, which is used. Please confirm.

Q2. Masthead. The session is not stated in the source, so no session line is printed.

Q3. Order No. 2, Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean (take-slip Sequence 21). The President's call to Senator McClean and the opening paragraph of her speech appear twice, once before and once after the take-slip. The fuller version after the take-slip is printed and the earlier one (about 175 words) has been left out. Please confirm.

Q4. Order No. 2, Committee (take-slip Sequence 26). The Committee stage is recorded twice. The first version, with Mr. Deputy President in the Chair, has no clauses called and ends 'the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Interpretation (Amendment) Act, 2012'. The second calls Clauses 1 to 5 and the Schedule and cites the 'Offshore (Amendment) Act, 2017'. The first version (about 70 words) has been left out. Please confirm the correct citation, which elsewhere in the debate is the Offshore Petroleum (Amendment) Bill, 2017.

Q5. Order No. 2, heading. The source has 'ORDER No. 2' as an ordinary line and no heading giving the title of the Offshore Petroleum (Amendment) Bill, 2017. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Headings and labels. Headings read 'PRESENTATION OF PAPERS' and 'ADJOURNEMENT', and procedural sentences name the Leader as 'SENATOR the HON. MISS M.P.A. McCLEAN'. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Take-slips. Some take-slips are typed as ordinary lines ('Senate D 12 Seq 1', 'Senate D 12 Seq 27 5.07 p.m.'), and one reads 'Senate D10 Sequence 33' among D 12 slips. Printed as in the source.

Q8. Adjournment. The final procedural sentence says the President 'suspended the Sitting accordingly' after the question to adjourn sine die. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings at 11.15 a.m. on Wednesday, 2nd August, 2017, with the President, Senator Miss K. F. Ifill, in the Chair; prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah. The President reported the absence of Senator Professor Emeritus Sir Henry Fraser and the late arrival of Senator V. I. Sandiford-Garner, and the Minutes of 19th July and 23rd June, 2017 were confirmed. The Leader of the Senate, Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean, laid seven papers, among them the Police Complaints Authority Annual Report 2016, a loan contract with the Inter-American Development Bank for cleaner fuels and renewable energies, and the Accountant General's Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2015 to 2016. Standing Order 45(2) was suspended and the Value Added Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2017 was read a first time.

Under Order No. 2 Senator the Hon. D. W. Boyce moved the second reading of the Offshore Petroleum (Amendment) Bill, 2017. He said it did three things: it allowed more than the previous 90 days for a licensee's environmental impact assessment, because Barbados' waters were very deep; it changed the part of a block to be relinquished from 50 per cent to 25 per cent in the first phases; and it required a licensee changing control to seek the Government's approval. Senator J. A. Watson urged care in a small country with limited resources; Senator R. A. Hunte, Senator A. A. Adams, Senator A. R. Worrell, Senator the Hon. P. M. T. Todd, Senator Sir T. A. Carmichael and Senator J. Ince supported the Bill, Senator Ince as part of diversifying the economy.

Senator W. A. Abrahams spoke of the marine environment and called for incentives for renewable energy; Senator Todd rose on a point of order to say he had never suggested he was older than 53. Senator McClean hoped that the Barbados National Oil Company Limited, renamed the Barbados National Energy Company Limited, would one day offer shares to the public in a renewable energy business. Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. Byer-Suckoo also spoke, and Senator Boyce replied. The Bill passed Committee, with Clauses 1 to 5 and the Schedule, and was read a third time, and the Sitting was suspended until 5.30 p.m.

On resumption Senator J. Ince moved the second reading of the Value Added Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2017 under Order No. 3. It raised the registration threshold, which had moved from \$60 000 in 2010 to \$80 000, to \$200 000 as announced in the Budget of June 15, 2015, and

dealt with the list of zero-rated basic goods. Senator Sir Roy Trotman, Senator Abrahams, who asked how the \$200 000 figure had been reached, and Senator Todd spoke, and the Bill passed all its stages, with His Honour Senator the Very Reverend H. E. Crichlow in the Chair in Committee.

Under Order No. 1 Senator Byer-Suckoo moved the Resolution vesting in the National Housing Corporation, for housing development, the former site of the District 'E' Police Station at Station Hill, St. Peter, which had passed to the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. in 2007. Senator Abrahams agreed but suggested that prime Crown land of

this kind, about 5 000 square metres with views to the coast, could be sold on the open market and the money used to buy other land and fund low-income housing. The Resolution was agreed to.

On the adjournment Senator McClean said the Senate would not meet before October and wished Senators well for Crop Over and CARIFESTA; Senator Abrahams for the Opposition, Senator Sir Roy Trotman for the Independents and the President added their thanks, and the Senate was adjourned sine die.