



**CAYMAN ISLANDS
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

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2012/13 SESSION

22 November 2012

Tenth Sitting of the Second Meeting

(pages 485–506)

**Hon Mary J Lawrence, MBE, JP
Speaker**

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PRESENT WERE:

THE SPEAKER

Hon Mary J Lawrence, MBE, JP.
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

Hon W McKeeva Bush, OBE, JP, MLA	<i>The Premier</i> , Minister of Finance, Tourism and Development
Hon Juliana Y O'Connor-Connolly, JP, MLA	<i>The Deputy Premier</i> , Minister of District Administration, Works, Lands and Agriculture
Hon Rolston M Anglin, JP, MLA	Minister of Education, Training and Employment
Hon Michael T Adam, MBE, JP, MLA	Minister of Community Affairs, Gender and Housing
Hon J Mark P Scotland, JP, MLA	Minister of Health, Environment, Youth, Sports and Culture

OFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

Hon Franz Manderson, Cert. Hon., JP	<i>Deputy Governor</i> , Member responsible for Internal and External Affairs and the Civil Service
Hon Samuel Bulgin, QC, JP	Attorney General, Member responsible for Legal Affairs

ELECTED MEMBERS

GOVERNMENT BACKBENCHERS

Capt A Eugene Ebanks, JP, MLA	Fourth Elected Member for West Bay
Mr Ellio A Solomon, MLA	Fourth Elected Member for George Town
Mr Dwayne S Seymour, MLA	Third Elected Member for Bodden Town

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

Hon Alden M McLaughlin, MBE, JP, MLA	<i>Leader of the Opposition</i> , Third Elected Member for George Town
Hon D Kurt Tibbetts, OBE, JP, MLA	First Elected Member for George Town
Mr Anthony S Eden, OBE, JP, MLA	Second Elected Member for Bodden Town
Mr V Arden McLean, JP, MLA	Elected Member for East End

INDEPENDENT MEMBER

Mr D Ezzard Miller, JP, MLA	Elected Member for North Side
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APOLOGIES

Mr Moses I Kirkconnell, JP, MLA	First Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman
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ABSENT

Hon Cline A Glidden, Jr, MLA	<i>Deputy Speaker</i> , Third Elected Member for West Bay
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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
SECOND MEETING 2012/13 SESSION
THURSDAY
22 NOVEMBER 2012
10.49 AM
Tenth Sitting**

The Speaker: Good morning everyone.

The Elected Member for East End will read prayers for us this morning.

PRAYERS

Mr. V. Arden McLean, Elected Member for East End: Let us pray.

Almighty God, from whom all wisdom and power are derived: We beseech Thee so to direct and prosper the deliberations of the Legislative Assembly now assembled, that all things may be ordered upon the best and surest foundations for the glory of Thy Name and for the safety, honour and welfare of the people of these Islands.

Bless our Sovereign Lady, Queen Elizabeth II; Philip, Duke of Edinburgh; Charles, Prince of Wales; and all the Royal Family. Give grace to all who exercise authority in our Commonwealth, that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety may be established among us. Especially we pray for the Governor of our Islands, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Official Members and Ministers of Cabinet and Members of the Legislative Assembly, that we may be enabled faithfully to perform the responsible duties of our high office. All this we ask for Thy great Name's sake.

Let us say The Lord's Prayer together: Our Father, who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make His face shine upon us and be gracious unto us. The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon us and give us peace, now and always. Amen.

The Speaker: Please be seated. Proceedings are resumed.

READING BY THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER OF MESSAGES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Apologies

The Speaker: I have no messages or announcements this morning.

I have apologies for late arrivals from the Second Elected Member for Bodden Town and the Honourable Attorney General.

STATEMENTS BY HONOURABLE MEMBERS AND MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

The Speaker: I have given permission for the Premier to make two statements this morning.

Honourable Premier.

Prime Minister Cameron's Economic Growth

The Premier, Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the honourable Members of the Assembly have just debated and passed the Framework for Fiscal Responsibility Bill which places very tight fiscal restrictions on the Government and adds many more layers of bureaucracy to Government's financial transactions. Indeed, some would describe the FFR as onerous.

Just this week, Madam Speaker, my attention was drawn to a newspaper story in the [Mail Online](#), bearing the banner headline, "**Cameron reveals battleplan to cut Whitehall box-ticking as he puts Britain on an economic 'war footing.'**" Madam Speaker, some of the main points of this article which, with your permission, I wish to table in this honourable House . . . and I would like to add two more to it as well, and ask that they be distributed.

The Speaker: So ordered.

The Premier, Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Points of those articles are:

- "PM warns government is 'far too slow at getting stuff done'
- He likens the battle for growth to the fight to defeat the Nazis
- Whitehall officials accused of being 'too willing to say no instead of yes'"

Madam Speaker, this all sounds very familiar to me. In fact, they are the same points that I have been making for the past three years. And when I

have tried to overcome them I have been criticised for doing so by the Opposition and the Foreign Office.

In a keynote speech to the annual conference of the CBI (Confederation of British Industry), Prime Minister Cameron said, and I quote, **“Government has been like someone endlessly writing a pros and cons list as an excuse not to do anything at all.”**

“Consultations, impact assessments, audits, reviews, stakeholder management, securing professional buy-in, complying with EU procurement rules, assessing sector feedback this is not how we became one of the most powerful, prosperous nations on earth.”

Madam Speaker, this article and the Prime Minister’s speech bring home to me the contradiction of what the Foreign Office has imposed on the Cayman Islands with the FFR and what the elected UK Government is saying it is going to do in order to bring about some economic growth in Britain.

Prime Minister Cameron said, and I quote, **“Well, this country is in the economic equivalent of war today – and we need the same spirit. We need to forget about crossing every ‘t’ and dotting every ‘i’ and we need to throw everything we’ve got at winning in this global race.”**

Well, Madam Speaker, the Cayman Islands is in an economic war also. People are out of work, business is slow, rental units are empty, people can’t pay their mortgages. People are hurting real bad, but what are we being made to do? We are being made to not only cross every ‘t’ and dot every ‘i’, we are made to go back and double check that they are crossed and dotted. We are made to spend huge sums of money to do all that the FFR says while the good Prime Minister of the United Kingdom says he is removing that kind of bureaucracy.

Prime Minister Cameron says there will be an end to a mandatory consultation period. He told his audience that ministers will now decide how long the consultation period should be, and if there is no need for consultation, then there won’t be one. Yes, yet here, Madam Speaker, if we even mention anything, they say we are interfering and then we are maligned and investigated. The United Kingdom’s Prime Minister said Whitehall officials were too risk-averse, too willing to say ‘no’ instead of ‘yes’ and called for a buccaneering, deal-making, hungry spirit to get things done.

Madam Speaker, I support the Prime Minister’s Government. I like Prime Minister Cameron’s thinking—let’s get things done; let’s get the economy rolling. But what the UK Government is doing to get their economy rolling is the exact reverse of all the things the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is foisting on the Cayman Islands. If what the Prime Minister has put forth is what is needed to get the UK economies growing, then what they have forced us to do must be meant to stagnate our economy.

Madam Speaker, along with the article from the *Mail Online* I have tabled two other articles with the report on the UK Prime Minister’s year-long relaxation of Planning laws in order to stimulate the UK economy. I can only wonder what the reaction would be if my Government did the same. I ask the people of these Islands to stop making politics by people who only know how to play politics, and have that luxury because they are not accountable. They can criticise because they are not responsible.

These new-found commissions, all appointed by the Governor, the Boards, all of them in Cayman, the so-called ‘Good Governance’ and people who are using all this hogwash are doing it in an effort to kill me and my Government. And, of course, they are trying to make McKeeva Bush, the Premier, the subject of the election campaign. I applaud Prime Minister Cameron. Destroy bureaucracy where it is hurting rather than helping. Destroy it where it is stopping our projects, stopping the people’s business and hurting our people.

When people read what Prime Minister Cameron has said, and continue to accuse me of being a dictator, they should really be asking what is happening in the UK. I can see what is happening there, Madam Speaker. Prime Minister Cameron is using good, commonsense. There are people who don’t want him to succeed. There are people who want to be the Government in the UK, but do not have the responsibility. And there are people who are just downright jealous and outright obstructionist. I say to Mr. Cameron, *Keep on doing what you are doing. You have time. Sad to say, I don’t.*

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Premier.

Are there any questions?

If not, Honourable Premier, would you proceed with your second statement?

The Premier, Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: Madam Speaker, I prefer to have the podium, but I will wait until the Serjeant comes back. When he comes back I will use it, as this one is a lengthy one.

[Interjections]

The Premier, Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: Yeah, make Arden do it.

The Speaker: Thank you, Member for East End.

The Premier, Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: I thank the Member for East End, Madam Speaker. The Serjeant was out getting some papers for Members, that’s why.

Madam Speaker, I rise now to make a statement concerning the Government’s efforts to support the financial services and investment industry during this administration.

Government's efforts to support the Financial Services and Investment Industry during this Administration

The Premier, Hon. W. McKeever Bush: The position in which we find ourselves today pales in comparison to where we were in June 2009 when I took up ministerial responsibility for Finance. To date, much work has been done to strengthen and enhance financial services and investment and we have made it abundantly clear that we as a Government stand behind this industry, which is our chief economic driver.

Early steps: Following elections in May 2009, Government's first major step was to create for the first time a Ministry specifically for Financial Services and Investment. This demonstrated to local and global industry, as well as to the Caymanian public, our level of commitment to the primary pillar of our economy. To create the Ministry, Government identified ministerial subject areas and departments and restructured where necessary to create a cohesive, focused organisation.

Under the leadership of the Chief Officer, Dr. Dax Basdeo, and the Deputy Chief Officer, Mr. Samuel Rose, the Ministry of Financial Services operates with a collaborative approach. It supports the work of its departments, directly liaises with the private sector, oversees legislative processes and interphases with local and international media, supra-national bodies and potential investors.

Madam Speaker, in a few minutes I will speak about the achievements of the Ministry's departments, but at this time I note that the Ministry itself has accomplished the following:

- Secured Cayman Islands membership on the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers Government's advisory committee which will help to facilitate the development of e-commerce and Internet related business here in Cayman. E-commerce is driven by the Fourth Elected Member for George Town and much work has been done on that area.
- Facilitated the transfer of the Westin Hotel and the Marriott Hotel to new ownership (not much was said about it publicly) preventing the temporary closure of the hotel and avoiding interruptions in guest accommodations. As I said, nothing much was said about it, but a great work to keep the two hotels afloat was done.
- Hosted US Tax seminars in April 2011 and February 2012 to promote US Tax compliance with Caymanian and US dual citizens.
- Hosted the Global Forum Peer Review Meeting in June 2011.
- Successfully coordinated the visit of the UK MPs and the Members of the All-Cayman Party group and Friends of Cayman from the UK.

- In consultation and cooperating with industry, led delegations in 2011 to China and in 2012 to China and Brazil to promote awareness of Cayman, as well as business opportunities, and to receive feedback from industry in those countries on legislative and regulatory matters.

Legislation: Furthermore, Madam Speaker, a key mandate of this Ministry is to keep Cayman competitive in the global marketplace. This includes providing guidance regarding our legislative framework. We have done much work in this area, including:

- The Insurance Law— amendments to the Insurance Law which create a framework for re-insurance, improved consumer protection and meets international standards.
- The Mutual Funds Law, which introduced the registration of master funds and thus creating a more robust regulatory framework for funds, our leading industry now.
- The Companies Law, which enables Cayman Islands companies to hold treasury shares and also improve existing provisions, in particular those governing mergers and/or consolidations.
- The Patents and Trade Marks Law, which modernizes the way agents to business with the General Registry.
- The Auditors Oversight Authority Law, which provided for the establishment of the independent auditor's oversight authority.
- The Special Economic Zone Law, which provides for the establishment of special economic zones and the Special Economic Zone Authority to handle administrative matters for these Zones.

Because of this Law we now have our first special economic zone, Cayman Enterprise City, a major project that is creating economic diversification inward investment and job opportunities. Soon I hope that will be extended to Cayman Brac to do special work there. Not long from now, I hope. And when I say special work, [I refer to] special investments.

Relationship with the private sector: Madam Speaker, these legislative improvements were achieved with invaluable input from the private sector. Government recognised that a strong, healthy relationship with the private sector is essential to our economic success. To this end, Government has reorganised the Financial Services Committee in order to strengthen the level of dialogue between the public sector and the private sector. In addition, the Financial Services Legislative Council was established in order to receive proposals from the private sector for

amendments to existing laws or for the recommendation of new laws.

The Council works in consultation with the Ministry and the Attorney General's Chambers in providing these recommendations to Cabinet. And a whole heap of work, Madam Speaker, then goes in for the Attorney General after that. Furthermore, the Ministry meets with each and every industry association in order to build stronger relationships and receive updates on matters of interest in all sectors of industry. Remaining accessible and engaging in dialogue with the private sector has been the hallmark of the Ministry's modus operandi and it has had my full support, my involvement in fact.

Departmental achievements: However, in terms of progress, the Ministry's departments have been just as active and engaged as the Ministry itself. I will start the departmental overview by speaking of both the Financial Services Secretariat and the Tax Information Authority as their work is collaborative and complementary.

The Secretariat and the Authority have been and continue to be at the forefront of the interaction between Government and the OECD's [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development] Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes. And their work has restored and enhanced the reputation of the Cayman Islands. None of this would have been possible had we remained on the OECD grey list left by the now Leader of the Opposition. Cayman's swift action in the three months following the 2009 election not only got us off the grey list but it also created the immediate benefit of restoring the confidence of global business in our commitment to international standards. So we got back on the white list.

The benefits of Cayman's leadership and participation in this area include credibility building for the jurisdiction, keeping abreast of current and/or emerging issues, reputational benefit and relationship building among jurisdictions. Another key benefit of our participation is that we rub elbows with some of our harshest critics, critics from the technical arena who understand more about what is at stake than politicians. Today, these critics have seen Cayman's openness, willingness to engage and the strength of our framework, and their opinions of our jurisdiction have softened.

Since 2009, the Financial Services Secretariat and the Tax Information Authority have gotten Cayman off the OECD's grey list (or black list, whichever it is) and onto the white list; guided Cayman through the OECD's former requirements of having 12 TIEAs in place to its current more substantive requirements of ensuring that the TIEAs fulfill their intended purpose; oversaw the signing of 22 TIEAs, bringing Cayman to having 29 agreements in place. Twenty-two, Madam Speaker, much of which I had to travel to do, and much of which I couldn't get to but I sent various civil

servants to be at that signing, including the Attorney General.

Since September 2009, has sat as a member of the OECD Global Forum Peer Review Group and Steering Group with both memberships recently renewed for at least one more year; being selected to serve on the Global Forum's advisory panel to the G-20; provided assessors for six peer reviews of Global Forum members and assisted several times with assessor training; participated in the Peer Review Group's mid-2010 phase 1 review with the Global Forum announcing in September 2011 that Cayman met all of its legal and regulatory standards for the exchange of information for tax purposes for the first time, and participating in Cayman's phase 2 Peer Review Report which will be released in the first half of 2013.

Madam Speaker, continuing with the departmental achievements . . . and I should say, Madam Speaker, that's a lot of work for one department of a few people, because there are not a lot of people in that department.

General Registry has worked assiduously to incorporate technology into its operations resulting in time and cost savings for clients worldwide who use its company register. Since 2009, the General Registry has:

- Developed a new website that enables company searches, online requests for birth, death and marriage certificates, background information on the Cayman Islands company regime and general information on its operations;
- Upgraded its existing enterprise system. Cayman Islands online Registry Information Services (CORIS);
- Introduced electronic filing for corporate service providers licensed by CIMA. This builds the strength of our Registry and business conducted here.
- Introduced permission of company names in foreign script. The Cayman Islands was the first international financial centre to introduce this. For instance, Madam Speaker, in Chinese, they would do it in Mandarin or otherwise. We had some trouble with it, but the General Registry is dealing with that. That's what we found out when I went to China.
- Seen growth in the Company's Register by 2 per cent since June 2010, and an overall revenue increase of 7 per cent over the same period.

The Department of Commerce and Investment has had significant success in improving processes working with investors to facilitate their projects and supporting small business owners in launch-

ing and sustaining their endeavours. The Department of Commerce and Investment has:

- Assisted hundreds of local entrepreneurs and foreign investors to successfully open or expand their businesses with an average of 70 new businesses per month. In an economy that is supposed to be down, that is a tremendous amount of small businesses—70 per month. That would be 800-and odd for the year if it continued in that trend.
- Set up the Special Economic Zone Authority which monitors and participates on the Board while working at the Secretariat for this new Authority.
- Improved the business licensing process gaining 40 per cent to 50 per cent efficiency through streamlining processes, scanning documents, shareholder database search and electronic signatures.
- Worked on revisions to the Trade and Business Licensing Law to improve customer service and create a mechanism for better regulation which would be brought forward in the near future. I hope by the 1st of the year.
- Collected \$150,000 in revenue over the last year by enforcing licensing laws.
- Formed various committees that achieved or that are actively participating and implementing policies to streamline and regulate business activity.

I move now to the London Office, Madam Speaker, and report on that. In October 2011, Cabinet approved a consultancy agreement between my Ministry and Two Lions Consultancy Ltd., to provide service relating to the operation and strategic development of the Cayman Islands Government Office in London (the London Office). As part of this agreement . . . and I should say we did that against the Opposition too of the FCO. As part of this agreement, the Rt. Hon. Lord Blencathra, the principal shareholder of the Two Lions Company was appointed as the director of the London Office. Two Lions bring a unique skill set and experiences, expertise, because its principal, Lord Blencathra, both as a sitting Member of the House of Lords, and previously serving as a former Minister with Her Majesty's Government and a high ranking member of the Conservative Party, and through this engagement we are able to get timely and accurate into financial services related matters emanating out of the UK and have representation at the private sector conferences, forums and meetings.

Successes over the last year of this initial contract with Two Lions (or Lord Blencathra) have more than sufficiently demonstrated the benefits of this appointment and excellent value for money.

I turn now to CIMA, Cayman Islands Monetary Authority. CIMA and Government have undertaken initiatives to strengthen the domestic regulatory framework for financial services and ensuring that the Cayman Islands remain a leading financial services jurisdiction. These initiatives include:

- BASAL II implementation to establish standards for minimum capital requirements for banking organisations;
- Amendments to the Monetary Authority Law to further enhance CIMA's independence, the Dorman Accounts Law, 2010, as well as the already mentioned Insurance Law and Mutual Funds amendments and assistance to Government in reorganising the framework for the pension plans and plan administrators to allow CIMA to have regulatory oversight.
- The Eighth European Union Directive. Assistance with the establishment of the Auditors Oversight Authority, which is an independent oversight body of auditors in the Cayman Islands, created to meet European Union Auditor Oversight Standards as set out in the Eighth European Union Directive.
- AIFMD: Madam Speaker, the Cayman Islands is also preparing to meet the challenges posed by the Alternative Investment Fund Manager's Directive, or the AIFMD, in November 2010 the European Parliament adopted the AIFMD which introduces a unified regulatory regime for alternative investment funds managers and funds within the European Union from 2013.
- In 2010 I personally led a delegation to Brussels to meet with Commissioner Barnier and his Cabinet in the European Union Commission which was responsible for the AIFMD in order to present the case of the Cayman Islands and to open the lines of communication. Since then, the Authority also worked with members of industry to ascertain areas of difficulty in meeting the AIFMD requirements applicable to the Cayman domiciled funds, managers and other service providers.
- Input provided in January 2011 to the European Securities and Market Authority (or ESMA) in response to ESMA's call for input to help it frame implementation strategies for the Alternative Investment Funds Managers Directive. Seeking to expand bilateral cooperation agreement to key counterparts in the European Union countries where service providers to Cayman domiciled funds are located.

- Met with regulators in Germany, Ireland, Luxemburg, France and Italy to initiate discussions regarding possible memoranda of understanding. The Authority also met with ESMA to commence negotiations on a draft model MOU.

Now, Madam Speaker, they criticise me for travelling. But if I had to travel to all of these, I wouldn't be on the Island. So, it is good that I don't have to do as much travel as I am required and that we have civil servants that do all this work behind the scenes. But they have to travel. They have to spend money, or Cayman goes down the drain.

- Launched a working group of public and private sector representatives to discuss and propose to CIMA's Board of Directors and to Government reforms required for the regulatory regime for funds and securities investment businesses.

Other international Initiatives, the Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (CFT): Madam Speaker, Government also made significant progress on the Anti-Money Laundering and the Countering the Financing of Terrorism fronts. On 16 February this year, the Financial Action Task Force, which the Honourable Attorney General heads up for the Government and for this side of our work, released the new 40 recommendations on combatting money laundering and the financing of terrorism and proliferation. These recommendations demand a greater level of inter-agency coordination and cooperation in order for Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (or AML CFT) regime to be effective anywhere in the world.

To this end, in late May 2011 Cabinet approved the Attorney General's Chambers to establish an Anti-Money Laundering unit to coordinate the efforts of CIMA, the Financial Reporting Authority, the Financial Crime Unit of the RCIP, and other agencies involved with these efforts. Once operational, this unit will spearhead the monitoring and coordination of AML and CFT matters and guide the technical transformation of the revised FATF [Financial Action Task Force] recommendations into law, regulation and guidance.

The Unit will also be instrumental in preparing a national threat assessment with a view to providing the AML's steering group, and ultimately Cabinet, with practical recommendations to strengthen our overall regime. The next round of AML CFT reviews by the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) is expected to commence around the end of 2014.

FATCA: Madam Speaker, of all the current international initiatives it is FATCA that presents the greatest challenge to the way in which the Cayman Islands conducts business. This is not something that has caught us by surprise. To the contrary, we were

among the first countries to engage directly with the United States, dating back to 2010 when we first learned of FATCA (Foreign Accounts Tax Compliance Act). At that time, Government submitted a written response to the IRS (Internal Revenue Service of the United States).

In March 2011, I led a delegation to Washington, DC, to meet with officials from the IRS and the US Treasury. Our aim was to gather more information on FATCA and to raise specific concerns emanating from our financial services industry, as well as Caymanians who have United States dual citizenship, or permanent residency.

Upon our return from Washington, my Ministry organised a US Tax Seminar in April 2011, and arranged to have US taxation experts address both the financial services industry and the United States citizens or permanent residents here to promote tax compliance both at the corporate and individual level. This was done as a service by the governments to the community. A second series of US tax seminars was held in February this year, and again US tax experts and/or their advisors were brought in to assist the public with understanding their US tax obligations. These are not small matters, Madam Speaker. [They are] huge to this country, as we have a lot of dual citizenship and a lot of financial services (of course I mean industry), and a lot of permanent residency holders of the US. This was huge.

Following the announcement in early 2012 of the joint statement between the United States Treasury and the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy and Spain, it was recognised that a window of opportunity had been opened for an inter-governmental approach for the implementation of FATCA. Therefore, in March of this year we sent a technical team led by the Attorney General to Washington [DC] to meet with the US Treasury to ascertain whether such an approach would be available to the Cayman Islands. The US Treasury confirmed that an inter-governmental agreement would be possible if our Government so desired.

A follow-up meeting was held in April 2012 in Madrid between officials from the Cayman Islands Ministry of Finance and the US Treasury following an OECD Global Forum Steering Group meeting. During this meeting it was confirmed that the model agreements would be published in the near future and that the United States would anticipate engaging further with the Cayman Islands Government. Government continues to receive regular updates on FATCA from Sidley Austin, our legal representatives in Washington [DC].

Madam Speaker, this honourable House should also be aware that in May of this year Cabinet approved the formation of a FATCA task force to evaluate the sustainability of a government-to-government reporting arrangement. This task force includes the Attorney General's Chambers, the Office

of the Financial Secretary, the Cayman Islands Monetary Authority, the Tax Information Authority, and the Ministry of Financial Services and Finance. It has consulted with all financial services stakeholders and asked for their views on what is being called the Model 1 Intergovernmental Agreement, and for an update as to the state of readiness for the implementation of FATCA. With the recent publication of the Model 2 Intergovernmental Agreement, the engagement with the private sector will continue.

Our Government is committed to making a decision that will be in the best long-term interest of the Cayman Islands. However, time is not on our side. In order to give the private sector certainty we will have to provide the United States with an indication of what direction we are taking before the end of the year. We will also have to consider the United Kingdom's views on FATCA as there are now indications from them that whatever we provide to the United States in terms of information will also be required by the United Kingdom.

Madam Speaker, I want Members and, indeed, the public, to take careful note, what FATCA signals is another shift in global positioning. Exchange of information upon request, a principle that underpins our Tax Information Exchange Agreements regime remains the current internationally agreed standard. Make no doubt, though, and however, unilateral initiatives such as FATCA, which are based on automatic exchange of information, are gaining multilateral support. The current standard is not keeping pace with the new environment of transparency and exchange of information.

These are the challenges that are facing Cayman on the horizon. And these are challenges which Government must continue to influence and to respond. The only way we can do that is if we are at the table. The only way we can do that is not alone. I hardly have to travel for that particular part of it, but if our AG and the rest of financial services staff are able to be at those meetings and put Cayman's position solidly in front of those committees. Anything less will damage the country.

In closing, Madam Speaker, time does not allow me to sufficiently cover all that has been done for financial services. When we consider for a moment the economic crisis that has crippled the world, its impact on the global financial services industry, the scandals that have swallowed up large and reputable institutions in what were supposed to be some of the world's best regulated onshore jurisdictions since 2008, we have much to be thankful for in the Cayman Islands. Madam Speaker, we haven't lost one bank. Not one financial institution went down. There were amalgamations, but not because of our regulatory regime. When you consider what we have been faced with and the external challenges and attacks Cayman has come under, I should say we have done well.

The Leader of the Opposition, in his usual manner, has taken to berating me saying that I don't know what I am doing, that I am running a one-man show, and that I am not smart enough to run the Government. As recently as Wednesday morning (yesterday), the Chairman of the PPM, Anthony Duckworth (or Anton Duckworth, as we know him), was on the *Rooster* talk show criticising me saying, among other things, the same things as parroted by the Leader of the Opposition.

Madam Speaker, the financial services industry has been in existence for more than 40 years. Up until 2005 it was the responsibility of the honourable Financial Secretary, a civil servant. After 2005 the now Leader of the Opposition (then the Minister of Education) took over responsibility for financial services and the PPM, with Anton Duckworth as Chairman of the party, ran the Government and pursued policies for the country; policies that they initiated and some that they didn't. If I am a one-man show, Madam Speaker, and I don't know what I am doing, well, where was the Leader of the Opposition and Mr. Duckworth when the country was grey listed by the OECD? Mr. Duckworth, the Chairman of the party, a lawyer, some kind of estate planner, I understand (I don't know if that's so or not) . . . but, Madam Speaker, he was leading the charge. Where was Mr. Duckworth when well-known multi-million dollar companies and other businesses were leaving the country because of the policies of the then-Government—his Government, the one that he is chairman of—resulting in loss of revenue to the Government and loss of jobs for our people?

Duckworth was the Chairman of the PPM when during the crash of 2008 they set up an economic committee of citizens and never met with them. Well, what do you call that? Negligence of them running the country by themselves and not listening to the people? Duckworth was the Chairman of the PPM when they put the country head over heels in debt to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars resulting in the country being maltreated and having to run cap-in-hand to the United Kingdom to do something that we know is good for us and should have done that and have that say for ourselves.

Madam Speaker, I can give a good account of my stewardship. I have never been a one-man show, except in some well-known public issues on which I stood alone, and stand alone on. However, in my work as a Minister and leadership as Premier, I do have a Cabinet that I am accountable to. I have good civil servants who carry out the work and travel with me to negotiate for the country and travel with or without me to negotiate with multilateral organisations. There is no one-man show here. There is no way that Mr. Duckworth should even face the public of this country to belittle my work and accomplishment for these Islands and say insulting things about me, Madam Speaker, when I don't know that he has done anything

for these Islands. I challenge him to show what he has done for these Islands, except get rich!

I understand he bought an island up in the Channel Islands. It was an island in the morning, and in the afternoon it was a reef, covered over. He didn't know the tide rose.

Madam Speaker, as much as is being said about parties, I am glad that my party stood by me to fight the evils and find solutions to the problems we have encountered due to the mismanagement of the last Government. I am not here to put down one party over the other; or as to say whether the party system is good or not. Let the public decide that. I do know that you have to have organisation to run the Government. This morning, however, I can report progress for these Islands. And party or no party, Madam Speaker, McKeeva Bush is a hard worker and will always be a hard worker.

When I am called, I will be at my job. I am not working for my own glory or my legacy. There were no roads named after me, no buildings named after me, and I don't want any. But I am working for the wellbeing of every individual who calls Cayman their home—whether that's born Caymanian or one with status or one who is just staying here on a work permit. Everyone here, I am working for their interest, for all of our loyal investors who have partnered with us to build this country.

Moreover, Madam Speaker, we are able to provide employment for many of our people. The financial services industry should be commended for continuing to offer scholarships and for expanding their physical footprint via construction projects for new office accommodation. Again, these are all signs that there is confidence in our model and that we as a Government have done the things required to attract and retain this key industry within our shores. All of this should be viewed in light of increased competition from onshore and offshore jurisdictions, baseless attacks on our reputation.

I say often, Madam Speaker, that, these Islands are as good in regulation and our regulatory regime as New York. It is as good as, and better than, London in many instances and we are definitely better than Delaware, especially in light of the now concluded US election and a growing merger of left-leaning pressure groups and media personalities who attempt to use innuendo and sensational journalism to persuade.

Instead of Duckworth and the Leader of the Opposition saying things that belittle these Islands in the eyes of the world, they should be articulating to the people of these Islands what their plans are to help these Islands cut down unemployment, help people's businesses, attract investors, bring in government revenue and generally be better tomorrow than today at ensuring fiscal performance and results.

Madam Speaker, my work and what I have articulated here today gives these Islands a good

chance in the future. I have laid the groundwork for a better foundation for future generations. I said I would do that if I got nothing else done. And we have done it already.

These are challenging times for the Cayman Islands, Madam Speaker. But nothing worthwhile in life comes easy. This industry has served our people well for more than 40 years. Under my stewardship during these past four years I have had the privilege of seeing this industry continue to succeed as I was also instrumental from 2000 to 2005. We have put in place building blocks, both domestically and internationally, which will place us in an excellent position to see the industry further develop. We can proudly say we are well regulated. We can proudly say we are transparent. We can proudly say that we are successful. We can proudly say that we provide excellent services across a broad spectrum of specialties.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank the former first Financial Secretary, the late Sir Vassel Johnson. We can thank the late [Hon.] Thomas Jefferson, and we can thank Mr. George McCarthy, who continues up until today as Chairman of CIMA, who worked hard for these Islands. And we can thank Mr. Ken Jefferson and all the staff and all the industry workers who keep these financial services alive in these Islands. And I can thank my staff, Dr. Dax Basdeo, and Mr. Samuel Rose, for their very, very hard work here, Madam Speaker. This work that they have done, the Secretariat, and all those who work, does not come easy. They do have to travel. You don't hear about them because they are civil servants. Oh, they pounce on me. Well, that's okay; I'm the Minister.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for allowing this long statement. But these are the kinds of statements that need to be made in this House so that people understand, and Members who might not be aware of what is going on understand, what we are doing, how it's getting done and what benefit it is to these Islands. I thank you for affording me this opportunity to address this honourable House.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Premier.
Are there any questions?

[No audible reply]

OTHER BUSINESS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

**Private Member's Motion No. 2/2012-13—
Education Fund**
[Deferred]

The Speaker: The Fourth Elected Member for George Town.

[long pause]

The Premier, Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Madam Speaker, I think we would like the House to agree to move to the next motion (the Members are ready with that) and come back to No. 1 [on the Order Paper]. I think Standing Order 14 might allow us to move from the Education [Fund] motion, which is number 1 [on the Order Paper] and [Private Member's Motion] No. 2.

The Speaker: The mandatory retirement age [motion]?

The Premier, Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Yes.

I think, Madam Speaker, the Member for North Side would be ready with that.

Firstly, we would not like to proceed with Private Member's Motion No. 2, but not to remove it from the Order Paper, to come back to it.

The Speaker: You want to change the order on the Order Paper?

[Pause]

The Premier, Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Madam Speaker, what I want to move then is to ask leave of the House to move Private Member's Motion No. 2, which is the Education Fund, [take] Private Member's Motion No. 3, and go back to Private Member's Motion No. 2 a little later on in the day.

The Speaker: I am going to put that to the vote.

The question is that we move from Private Member's Motion No. 1 *[sic]* [on the Order Paper] and return to that motion later in the day.

The Premier, Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Two.

The Speaker: The question is that we move to Private Member's Motion No. 3 and then return to Private [Member's] Motion [No. 2] later in the day.

All those in favour please say Aye. Those against, No.

Ayes.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it. Private Member's Motion No. 3 will now move forward on the Order Paper.

Agreed: Private Member's Motion No. 2 deferred until later in the day; Private Member's Motion No. 3 moved forward.

Private Member's Motion No. 3/2012-13—Removal of Mandatory Retirement Age

[Withdrawn]

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller, Member for North Side: Madam Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 24(14), I seek leave of the House to withdraw Private Member's Motion No. 3/2012/13 submitted in April 2012, standing in my name, as certain changes have been proposed which have overcome the Motion.

The Speaker: Is there a seconder?

Mr. V. Arden McLean, Member for East End: Madam Speaker, I beg to second the motion to withdraw Private Member's Motion No. 3.

The Speaker: The question is that Private Member's Motion No. 3 be withdrawn from the Order Paper.

All those in favour please say Aye. Those against, No.

Ayes.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Private Member's Motion No. 3/2012-13 withdrawn.

The Clerk: Private Member's Motion No. 4/2012-13—Bounty on Lionfish.

[long pause]

The Speaker: I need to suspend proceedings for five minutes so we can get this sorted out on the Order Paper. Members please stay in your seats. I'd like to see the Member for North Side so we can be sure what we're withdrawing.

Can I see you in my Chambers for a few minutes please?

Proceedings suspended at 11.50 am

Proceeding resumed at 11.55 am

The Speaker: Proceedings are resumed. Please be seated.

We need to get the procedure straight on this. Fourth Elected Member for George Town.

Mr. Elvio A. Solomon, Fourth Elected Member for George Town: Madam Speaker, I move that the Private Member's Motion No. 2/2012-13, standing in my name, be deferred until later on in the sitting.

The Speaker: Is there a seconder for that?

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour, Third Elected Member for Bodden Town: Yes, Madam Speaker, I beg to second that motion.

The Speaker: The question is that Private Member's Motion No. 2/2012-13, standing in the name of the Fourth Elected Member for George Town, and seconded by the Third Elected Member for Bodden Town, be deferred until later on in the sitting.

All those in favour please say Aye. Those against, No.

Ayes.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Private Member's Motion No. 2/2012-13 deferred.

The Speaker: Private Member's Motion No. 3, standing in the name of the Member for North Side has been withdrawn from the floor, and now we move on to Private Member's Motion No. 4.

Private Member's Motion No. 4/2012-13—Bounty on Lionfish

The Speaker: Member for North Side.

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I wish to move Private Member's Motion No. 4/2012-13, entitled Bounty on Lionfish.

WHEREAS Lionfish are a serious threat to the Marine Ecosystem in the Cayman Islands; BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Government consider the placing of a bounty of \$5.00.00 per fish on Lionfish to encourage their elimination and further, that they consider taking the funds to pay said bounty from the Environmental Fund.

The Speaker: Is there a seconder for that Motion?

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, I beg to second Private Member's Motion No. 4/2012-13.

The Speaker: The question is: BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Government consider the placing of a bounty of \$5.00.00 per fish on Lionfish to encourage their elimination and further, that they consider taking the funds to pay said bounty from the Environmental Fund.

The Motion is open for debate. Does the mover wish to speak thereto?

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Lionfish have been identified by the Department of the Environment as being a very serious threat to the marine ecosystem and environment in the Cayman Islands. I believe that the Government needs to get involved and do as much as possible to assist with the elimination, or at least with the reduction, and therefore the reduction in damage they are

doing to our reef systems, if not eliminated. Evidence suggests that it is going to be very difficult to eliminate them entirely.

Madam Speaker, in my constituency, and I am sure in other Members' constituencies, there are those persons who supplement their income or whose only income is the poaching of conch and lobster in large volumes whether in season or out of season. Madam Speaker, I believe that if we offered those individuals \$5.00 per lionfish and they went through the appropriate training by the Department of Environment, that they could assist in the reduction of the lionfish population and it might also, as a side effect, so to speak, benefit the conch and lobster populations by reducing the need to poach conch and lobster to sell to supplement their income.

Madam Speaker, I believe the Government could organise that the lionfish be turned in to the Department of Agriculture that has the necessary facilities for freezing and preparation, and they could be sold to the restaurants. Some of the \$5.00 could actually be recouped through the sale of the lionfish. I believe that we need to do all we can do and not just leave it to dependence on volunteers who are willing to go out there and risk whatever exposure it is to cull these lionfish. We are grateful, of course, for all of the volunteers who currently do so. I understand there is a tournament being organised for early December to involve as many persons as possible in culling the lionfish. But I think the Government needs to get more directly involved and offer an incentive to people to assist in culling these lionfish.

I have seen evidence, Madam Speaker, of marine—

[Inaudible interjection in the background]

The Speaker: I can't hear the Member. Please, Members across the floor . . .

Member from North Side, please continue.

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I have seen photographic evidence of areas where the Department of Environment makes a consistent and determined effort to cull the lionfish in a particular area and do their best to keep them under control compared to areas where there is no culling activity, and it's dramatic, Madam Speaker. There is no question that the lionfish are definitely destroying our reef system and ecosystem.

We have millions of dollars in an Environmental Fund (EPF) and that was supposed to be established to protect our environment. I would think that would be a place the Government could tap into to get the funds to reward and pay people for killing these lionfish.

So, Madam Speaker, I recommend the Motion to the Government for consideration. I do not have a hard and fast rule on the \$5.00; if the Government

thinks that they can get people involved for \$2.50, or \$3.00, or \$4.00, that is up to the Government to come up with the final amount. But I believe that the Government needs to be able to demonstrate that they are actively involved in trying to control this threat to our marine reef systems.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you Member for North Side.

Does any other Member wish to speak?
[pause]

Member for East End.

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Madam Speaker, thank you.

I rise to make a short contribution to this Motion which I seconded.

What this Motion is asking for is not strange to us in Cayman. I grew up in this country ensuring that every rabbit my father got when I was a kid, we would behead it and tie the head out on the line so that when we went to George Town we would take them, after we'd accumulated quite a few because it was one of the staple foods in those days, but it was destroying farming in Cayman, and Government stepped in and paid farmers a few dollars. I don't remember exactly . . .

The Speaker: [whispering] Five shillings.

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Five cents it was?

The Speaker: Five shillings.

Mr. V. Arden McLean: Five shillings? Okay. I knew it was during pound, shilling and pence. If you say five shillings . . .

I recall us putting them in a crocus sack and taking them to town. We would go right there by the old Government House, the old wood Government House, at a side door. You would go in there—and it was quite a scent in there with all those rabbit heads—and you'd collect that. You would also collect shells. I think it was one shell for every head, or two shells . . . shotgun shells I'm talking about.

So you were rewarded for trying to save farming in Cayman in those days. And I believe this is similar. Now that the Government has an Environmental Fund, I do know that there are some concerns about touching that Environmental Fund, particularly with the FFR. I think we may have some difficulties with it, or we may have to request, or seek approval from England under the FFR to use it for that purpose.

We all agree that the tourism now is as important to our livelihood as farming was in those days. That's all we had then. What we have now are two pillars of the economy: one is finance, the other is tourism. If we do not preserve the natural environment, then we will lose some of that tourist attraction that is so important. We have been considered the

mecca of diving in the Caribbean on many occasions. I believe Government should consider doing it.

Like the mover said, Madam Speaker, I am not fast on whether it is \$5.00, \$10.00, \$2.00, \$3.00, whatever is necessary, because the thing is that the fish can now be sold, as I understand. It is a delicacy at some of our restaurants around here. So, we could be getting double payment, double whammy so to speak, out of culling these dangerous fish. We could sell the meat, present the head of the fish to Government, and get paid in both ways.

Now, Madam Speaker, I heard recently of one of the news media announcing a culling contest in Cayman Brac. They were hoping to get 150 lionfish, I believe it is this coming weekend. That is commendable on the part of people who go out and volunteer to do this. I met a few kids a few months ago at one of the marinas. They were gassing up and were on their way to do culling. Young kids, I guess they might have been in their late teens, early 20s. They told me that in most instances they pick up 20 or 25 and that they can sell them to the stores for \$5.00 or \$6.00 per pound. Or they will have their own party with lionfish.

Madam Speaker, besides the demographic that the mover described that could go and do it; we have our own children as well. It is about time they go into the water like we used to. Making a few dollars off it may attract them, so they can go out on weekends and have their fun, which is what we would do with the few shillings we would get off the rabbit heads that my father got. So, I believe that instead of going to the sandbar every weekend, they can go out on one of those trips and pick up a few lionfish.

I do know that the Department of Environment has some concerns about how it's done, and you have to be trained. I would be surprised if young men in this country don't know how to catch a fish that doesn't move very fast. I mean, I really don't know what kind of training is necessary. And I am not saying you don't need training; but I know I have had a few in one fish pot some time ago. But I don't know what training it would take. But if that is necessary, they could go around and train the young people in this country to take it up. We have college students who go to college in the morning. In the evening they could take out their parent's boat and do culling and pick up money. I don't know the big deal of catching these fish unless they are afraid that they go at other fish. But I don't think that would be the case. It would not be anything in it for them.

Madam Speaker, I support this. I hope the Government finds favour with this Motion in that they can then go and see if we can take monies from the Environmental Fund so that it doesn't play such havoc on our other areas of finance in the country. I believe the Environmental Fund was made specifically for this kind of reason—the protection of the environment. No one should object to using it for what we believe is its rightful purpose.

So, Madam Speaker, I too commend this Motion to the Government and ask that they seriously consider it. It is not hard and fast on any particular way of doing it, or any amount. Let's see what the Government says. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you Member for East End.

Does any other Member wish to speak?
[pause]

Third Elected Member for Bodden Town.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Madam Speaker, I give way.

The Speaker: Minister for Health and Environment.

Hon. J. Mark P. Scotland, Minister of Health, Environment, Youth, Sports and Culture: Thank you, Madam Speaker. And thank you Third Elected Member for Bodden Town for giving way.

Madam Speaker, there is no doubt that the lionfish has become a scourge on the environment over the past 10 years or more. Since being introduced to the Caribbean they have become very well established throughout the Caribbean and to date there have been no natural predators that have stepped up or become predators of the lionfish.

Madam Speaker, they have become quite prevalent throughout the Caribbean and now the Cayman Islands is no different. Around all three Islands they are not only being found in shallow habitats inside the reef and so on, but they are now starting to go to the depths in the hundreds of feet into much deeper waters. They have very, very high reproduction rates. The lionfish reach to maturity in less than a year, and they are able to spawn every four to six days and release up to 30,000 eggs every time they spawn. When you compare this to groupers and snappers and other fish that take a long time to mature, you can see the problem they are presenting.

Madam Speaker, as to the point by the Member for North Side, they eat the juvenile fish on the reefs. When they do autopsies and cut them open they have found dozens of juvenile fish in their stomachs. That's evidence of how they are wiping out the reef life. So, to acknowledge that there is a problem, no one is denying that. We all agree that there is a tremendous problem. We know what the reef life in Cayman does for not just our tourism, but the environment as well. So, when you look around all three Islands and see how they have invaded, we agree that we have to find a solution.

What has been happening so far, Madam Speaker? To date there have been several activities ongoing. One of those is the voluntary effort the Member for North Side spoke about, with the dive masters mostly at this point when they are on dives or on their days off, and so on. They cull the lionfish using various methods, whether it's spearing, not your

typical speargun, but specific spears that were brought in for that purpose. There are other methods, using nets and otherwise. Some of those are not as effective and more difficult to use. But those exercises have been ongoing for a couple of years now. So several areas they have been culling those lionfish.

I know of some residents in Cayman Brac that have the dive lodge. Ms. Nina Banks, for instance, dives several times a day. One of her activities is to cull lionfish. She always sends me emails with pictures saying how many she has caught for the day and the week, and so on. So there is a significant voluntary effort going on. Some of these people recognise that diving themselves, as well as the clients that dive with them, are what makes their living and if you look at islands, like the Bahamas, where the lionfish have virtually wiped out their reef life, they are now doing something about that. But up until this point . . . and when the reef life is wiped out the reefs themselves obviously die. And so on and so on, Madam Speaker, the effects just get worse and worse.

In addition to this voluntary exercise, for instance I know in Little Cayman there was a study carried out between the University of Florida and one of the dive operations in Little Cayman which identified a specific area and did a directed effort knowing how many hours per day and how many divers and that sort of thing to be able to determine what. And one of the outcomes of that was to try to determine what level of effort is required on a sustained basis in order to cull lionfish.

One of the things you could do, Madam Speaker, is if you use this Motion as suggested, or what is suggested by this Motion, the bounty is that if you put an effort at it but not knowing what level of effort needs to be sustained you won't know unless you track how effective it's going to be. So, one of the objectives of the study that was being done was to see what level of sustained effort needs to be carried out, for how long and how many divers, for instance boats and that sort of stuff, to be able to cull and keep an area fairly free from lionfish. Because, again as the Member for North Side said, unfortunately, the possibility of completely eliminating lionfish is beginning to look like that's not going to happen.

In fact, I believe, from the little bit of research that I have done, that it is going to take some type of biological intervention, not just in manual culling and so on, if you want to reduce or eliminate, until a natural predator could come forward. Madam Speaker, some of the divers are even doing things like trying to teach the groupers on the reef to catch lionfish. So, there are all sorts of exercises being carried out to try and address this serious problem.

Madam Speaker, the Motion calls for a consideration of placing a bounty of \$5.00 per lionfish to encourage elimination and consideration of taking the funds from the Environmental Protection Fund. Madam Speaker, first of all, I would say that the Environ-

mental Protection Fund is definitely the appropriate place for the funding to be taken to address this problem. It is there for the protection of the environment, and what greater protection do we need now than from this invasion of lionfish.

So, we certainly support the idea of the funds coming from the Environmental Protection Fund. Obviously at this time, considering the recent FFR that was approved in the House last week, it would have to be done subject to the provisions in the FFR. But, Madam Speaker, I do not see that being difficult because this is certainly what is going to be tantamount to an environmental disaster if it is left unchecked going into the future. So I don't see where that would be a difficult matter to be addressed from the Environmental Protection Fund.

Madam Speaker, from the Government's perspective, the other exercise being carried out now is that the DoE, on behalf of the Ministry, is carrying out an exercise to put together what would be an RFP [Request for Proposal] to invite people to look at specific areas that we want to cull. So we would see how that would fit with the compensation that's being spoken about here in terms of the \$5.00 bounty. Whether \$5.00 per fish, or looking at compensation over a specific area or even by the weight of the fish or otherwise, but it is clear, and we certainly agree that the idea of culling them and what is being proposed in the Motion is certainly needed to be done. And just to say that the Government has been working on this before. As I said, there are certainly culling efforts that have been encouraged around the Islands already.

In fact, the restaurants have been playing a part in this; the tournaments that the Member for North Side spoke about, as well as whenever they have the different culinary events, they also use a lot of lionfish. So encouraging persons to consume lionfish as a delicacy or otherwise, all these things come together to help us to eliminate this problem.

As I said, what we would want to see happen in any exercise that's going to happen in terms of the elimination of lionfish is that it has to be a structured programme. There has to be some definition of areas we are going to work in. There has to be monitoring of the problem, as the Member for North Side said. When there have been sustained efforts you can see where those areas have been clear. So we want to monitor the specific areas to see how much culling has been taking place, the effect it's having, whether it takes three months to cull a certain area, six months and so on, because you certainly do not want to have an open ended budget or cost situation where for an unknown period we are offering this bounty for lionfish and not knowing whether or not it's being effective.

Madam Speaker, in very short, the Government certainly supports the Motion in terms of considering the placing of a bounty, but more that we are going to continue to consider how to eliminate this problem or minimise the problem. As I said, we want

to make sure that anyone who is going to be involved in such a programme would have to be trained. As I said before, it is not a matter of the lionfish now only living on the reefs where everyone can dive. I can get down to six or eight feet. But I am certainly not going to dive to 100 feet or 200 feet . . . no!

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. J. Mark P. Scotland: I can get just about six or eight feet down, not much more than that.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. J. Mark P. Scotland: Again, we want to ensure that whoever is going to be involved is trained properly. As the Member for East End said, most people are trained nowadays. In years gone by I would agree with that, but most young men are not adept at diving as they used to be years ago. They spend their time on top of the water, not below it. So we want to ensure that people are trained properly. Safety would come first. We wouldn't want to be encouraging persons to go out into the water to try to dive lionfish simply for the prospect of this bounty and some money.

We readily agree that there are many people who find themselves unemployed, and if you just stick a figure up in front of their faces and say, *Dive all the lionfish you can dive for, for a \$5.00 bounty*, the risk of people getting hurt and so on is one we wouldn't want to happen.

So, Madam Speaker, again, the Government in general supports considering what the Motion is asking to do and certainly working further to arrive at a solution to this very, very vexing problem that we now have in terms of lionfish. With that, Madam Speaker, I can say that the Government is going to support this Motion.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? We are going to pause at 12.30.

Madam Deputy Premier, do you want to speak now?

The Deputy Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-C Connolly: Madam Speaker, I am happy to commence after the luncheon break if you so desire.

The Speaker: Thank you very much.

We will suspend proceedings at this time for lunch, until 2.30 pm. I am asking all Members to assemble in the dining room where you will take instructions from Mr. Eden, the Second Elected Member for Bodden Town.

Proceedings suspended at 12.26 pm

Proceedings resumed at 2.55 pm

The Speaker: We were in the process of debating Private Member's Motion No. 4 when we took the break.

The Minister had completed his presentation. Does any other Member wish to speak?

Honourable Deputy Premier.

The Deputy Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Conolly: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise to render the Government's support on [Private Member's] Motion No. 4/2012-13 entitled "Bounty on Lionfish" just brought by the Member for North Side and seconded by the honourable Member for East End. Madam Speaker, I just wish to reflect the significant sections of the resolve, whereby they were asking the Government to consider the payment of a bounty of \$5.00.00 per fish (being the lionfish) which would in their estimation, encourage their elimination and also consider taking the funds from the Environmental Fund. My colleague the Honourable Minister responsible for Environment has already responded on Government's behalf, but I wanted to just lend a few remarks as related to this particular Motion, not only because it is of great significance in my constituency, being Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, but from a general perspective the Cayman Islands on the whole.

As all and sundry would be fully cognisant, Madam Speaker, tourism is one of the pillars of the success of Cayman and as far as my constituency is concerned it's the only pillar, really, that we rely on for sustainability and for a jump-start in our economy there. Many folks come from all across the world to dive, especially Little Cayman's Bloody Bay. And there are many, many picturesque areas and pristine waters around Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. This predator, which is invasive, would be an understatement; it has been extremely detrimental to our waters there. Representation has been made from time to time by persons with vested interest or just general persons who love the environment and see the damage that they are making thereto.

It's not unique to Cayman. In fact, their genesis is from the Indo-Pacific area and for whatever strange reason they do not seem to have such a proliferation of them as has been here. Some sources believe that the genesis of them came after Hurricane Andrew and some other hurricanes when they began first seeing them off the eastern seaboard of the United States. Then they found that they were in Nassau, because originally it was thought that the new habitat of the lionfish was in the Caribbean North Atlantic section in the shallow rocky areas. But we understand that even in Cayman there have been some sightings of them even in deeper water, which is even more frightening for us here in Cayman.

For two particular reasons the lionfish, as my colleague the Honourable Minister indicated, have that innate ability to reproduce very rapidly. In fact, it

is not unknown for some of the clusters to have more than 15,000 eggs at a time and it is thought by scientists who have researched, including NOAA [National Oceanic and Atmospheric and Administration], that the lionfish produces all year round in the Caribbean area. They have found no real known predator.

After doing some research, I was able to find out that they are training sharks in Honduras to try to take care of some of the lionfish, but all scientists have come to the conclusion that it is almost a futile job just to rely on one thing. They have also looked, as the Honourable Minister responsible for the Environment has indicated, to maybe going to the source—where the eggs are actually laid and released into the ocean. They could use some type of biochemical component to try to retard the growth from that stage and stop the cycle. But nothing has been finite.

Madam Speaker, I believe that as the economy is what it is for whatever reason it is there would be another way for us to diversify, especially for those non-white collar jobs. Caymanians have always used whatever situation obtains to be able to make a way forward. We believe that if the Environmental Fund (if we can get permission in light of the FFR from the United Kingdom) would be the most appropriate fund to be tapped into once the Minister has the opportunity with his technocrats to really work through the full details of it.

I believe that training is necessary. I do not believe though that they would have to go to the extent that they require getting a tertiary certificate. But as we would know the lionfish is extremely attractive, but its spines and tentacles are very poisonous. So, as a result, not only are they a danger to our beautiful coral heads around here, but they can also be a danger to human beings. So, obviously some training would have to be carried out.

Madam Speaker, as far as I am concerned, as it relates to the Sister Islands, the more that are killed, the better. I do not particularly believe that they should just be killed and thrown up on the beach and just wasted, but I believe that we could be innovative as in some other jurisdictions where they have encouraged restaurants to eat them. I know that's the case here in Cayman, but I believe we could actually look into that some more and study it. For example, cookbooks could be done specifically, a competition perhaps could be done with the owners of restaurants or those who are avid cooks so that we could just have cookbooks particularly on lionfish, how to prepare it, because some people are reluctant to eat it knowing that the spines are venomous. But if it is prepared properly, and perhaps I am not the best one to say that because a few months ago (well, now almost a year) I was poisoned from lionfish.

But, as with any fish, the barracuda is perhaps one of the most tasteful fish in Cayman, we still take our chances with that. And we know how to test it

with the coin and the fire ants and everything else. There are ways of doing things. Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I believe we could also, from an agricultural perspective, do what we refer to as the value added on. I believe that could be one area of agro-tourism that we could actually venture into. I have had the opportunity in a personal capacity to visit Israel with my church some years ago. If there are any people who have excelled in marketing and production, it is the natives of Israel, the Israelis. If you even take the opportunity to visit one rock in the middle of the desert there you would find that not only will they have a restaurant that will serve whatever is indigenous to that particular area, but you will have T-shirts, tote bags, pens, pencils. That is what I mean by value added.

We could, just as we've done with Sir Turtle and the turtles, use the lionfish as a tourism destination to do branding where the lionfish is a beautiful species we could put them on calendars and posters and stamps, what have you, and still realise a value so that we would not necessarily have to tap into the Environmental Fund, especially at this crucial stage when it's there for the debt ratio purposes as well. We could still, in the meanwhile get money to pay.

Obviously, the honourable Minister and the Government would have to look at the amount proposed in this, but as they are asked to "consider" I believe the Member should be more than happy that something is being done regardless of what the consideration is. Perhaps if the Department and others get together in a consultative process, it could be even more innovative than other foundations around the world, especially in Europe, who are environmentally sensitive, may also come up with funds to help.

Madam Speaker, I also will perhaps be so bold as to say that that is the living of many persons within the diving industry. That's the way they survive. I don't believe they would be very reluctant to also contribute. Right now divers are contributing by way of labour when they go out and dive. I know as far as Little Cayman and Cayman Brac, they will make opportunities even in their down time to dive and do the culling. I know certainly Ms. Nina Banks and her team in Cayman Brac are so excited about the lionfish. They were almost in tears trying to get their application in the beginning. And I thank the Honourable Minister for accommodating that so that they are now able to go out. She goes out practically every day, sometimes more than once a day, getting them, because she is an avid diver and she understands that the more killed and the more persons killing them, the better chance there is of reducing them.

Scientists who have studied at NOAA have said very concretely that they don't believe it will ever come to a stage where they will be fully eradicated. But to do nothing is not an option for the Cayman Islands Government and the Minister realised that from a long time ago and has been diligently working with

his technical staff to ensure that steps are taken. And he has already elucidated what those steps are.

I believe we can now wrap it up a bit and try to make investigations. I am happy that from indications all Members of the House will be supporting this Motion. I have not yet heard anything to the contrary to anticipate a negative response to the Motion. It is one of those motions where the entire House lends its full support for immediate action to be taken.

I would ask the Honourable Minister as we sit down to deliberate that special consideration be given to Little Cayman which mainly . . . its sole income, really, except what the Government puts in, is from tourism, that action be taken as quick as possible there because that's where most of our divers congregate and most in the tourism there are divers. I know the Honourable Premier has a keen interest in this as well and has always responded positively. As it has been brought to his attention before, he has given a commitment that he will do everything under Tourism as well to ensure that this problem can be, if not irradiated, which scientists say it cannot be, but that it can be reduced as much as humanly possible and within the fiscal restraints we have.

But I would like to say, Madam Speaker, that whatever licensing results from this Motion or whatever methodology is put in place, that the Department will take extreme care to make sure that it is not over-regulated because the goal is simple. The goal is to get rid of as many lionfish, if not all lionfish, as soon as possible. I believe that if we approach it from that very simplistic platform that we can all work together for the common good and we can see the destruction of our reefs beginning to slow down.

Madam Speaker, I believe that the education [about] lionfish also has a role to play within our education curriculum. We can start from kindergarten and teach our children what the lionfish is, that it's not an indigenous fish but it's causing severe damage to the marine environment which has a direct impact on our own survival and the ability to bring in that tourism dollar here, so that they can not only respect the environment, know the role and the functionality of the lionfish, but also from an early age when they are swimming or at some of the private schools getting diving instructions, they can learn how to cull so that it will be a continuation from one generation to the next.

Madam Speaker, I wish to congratulate the Honourable Minister for his willingness to take this problem head on, and also, for his willingness to continue to seek and find a solution for this dire, urgent problem. I wish to lend my full support to all endeavours in that regard. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Deputy Premier.

Does any other Member wish to speak?
[pause]

First Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

Mr. Moses I. Kirkconnell, First Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I rise to make a short contribution on Private Member's Motion No. 4, Bounty on Lionfish.

Madam Speaker, the invasion of lionfish may prove to be one of the greatest threats of this century to warm, temperate tropical Atlantic reefs and associated habitats. Obviously, that is the Cayman Islands. It is the first marine reef fish invasive species to this region. Lionfish are changing the culture of how reef managers actually look at how they manage and try to protect the reefs.

Madam Speaker, the term "lionfish" is now as notorious as other major invaders of this century such as the Asian carp and the zebra mussels which oceanographers know destroyed the habitats globally in areas. Originally, the lionfish was imported into the United States as a popular aquarium fish, the lionfish is now one of the most abundant top-level predators of many reefs. Lionfish pose a threat to the integrity of the reef food web and are capable and viewed as one of the major stressors of reefs.

Madam Speaker, I take the time to try to explain how big this problem really is, because as we have listened here today everybody has input and everybody has the knowledge and the want to do something about this problem. The Member for North Side, the Member for East End and obviously the Minister when he answered on behalf of Government acknowledged the problem that it really is. But how big is it, Madam Speaker?

The first outstanding characteristic of the lionfish invasion is that it has occurred so rapidly. And it occurred in this geographic area at an unheard of rate. The first sighting was in the United States off Dania Beach [Florida] in 1985—some 15 years ago in 2001. Lionfish are as far north as North Carolina and are fully established in the Caribbean Sea, the Bahamas and continue to move south into the warm waters of the South American Continent.

The second pronounced characteristic of lionfish is their broad diet which is a huge concern to the reef. What a lionfish actually does is range from a depth of 300 meters to the shoreline. From hard bottom to reef to mangrove to sea grass beds, is that it removes the smaller fish in the food chain that actually clean the coral of the algae. It destroys the food chain itself and does not allow the reef system to support the proper growth and health of our marine environment. Obviously, we are totally dependent as far as tourism in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman on the marine environment to help with our economy. So, for the Sister Islands it is of huge importance, and for the Cayman Islands it is a very, very large part of the tourism product.

So, Madam Speaker, the past, the present and to look at the future we clearly realise that at this point, until new technologies and approaches are de-

veloped for controlling the lionfish population the managers of our reef systems must be prepared to continue to look at how intervention is used. As has been said, we are doing that. But, Madam Speaker, one of the heartening things that we heard here today was a way of funding. As we look at the Private Member's Motion and the bounty programme, it has been left open that as they analyse it and look at it, what can work from a standpoint of how much is actually paid would be based on the information they get to make it successful.

I have every confidence that they will do that. And the idea that they are able to get funds from the Environmental Fund, I would ask that it's looked at in a bigger picture than the bounty programme to realise the intervention that continues to be needed if we are going to be able to allow our tourism product and allow our economy and allow our local population to benefit from what we have been blessed with in our seas.

Madam Speaker, the culling programme is running and working and successful. It involves a private sector public partnership which the public part is the training and the help and, as has been mentioned, dive masters, property owners, and our local population do their best in their spare time to go out and get the lionfish. But the idea of the bounty system has to be looked at in an overarching programme that offers continuity and offers a long term success for it to work. And I say that in that if the funding is made available, I trust it would be looked at that you provide the opportunity to pay the bounty, you provide the opportunity to take the lionfish and then to educate and put it into the restaurants and the population that it can be used as a food source. And then when private sector realises the success that is now starting between it being commercially valuable for the restaurants, a phenomena that I think tourists would enjoy when they come ashore with them. And obviously, if they can participate in some way they would also enjoy that as well.

It has to be given the consideration in a total way that it has a huge chance for success. And I have every confidence that the Government will look at it in that way.

Madam Speaker, I also move to the third idea of when we realise that this is a very, very large problem for the Cayman Islands and for this region, that if it is possible to secure the funds, as has been indicated here today, that we try to look at it in a bigger holistic way and attack the problem to stabilise and hopefully encourage some of the new technologies that are supposed to be worked on.

Amazingly, Madam Speaker, they are now training groupers, snappers and sharks of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman to eat the lionfish. And they actually have them waiting for the divers when they come to cull and take the lionfish. The phenomena is starting, but the Government certainly has to do what

it can to keep us stabilised until the new processes and the evolution of the food chain starts taking effect.

I congratulate the Member who brought this Private Member's Motion, the Member for North Side; and the Member for East End who seconded it. I am happy to support it. Thank you.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause]

Third Elected Member for Bodden Town.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have been trying to get up for some time now! I wanted to be one of the first to support this, however, I have my opportunity now to show my support for the Motion brought by the Member for North Side and seconded by the Member for East End in terms of Private Member's Motion No. 4/2012-13, Bounty on Lionfish.

Madam Speaker, I will be very brief. A lot has been said and the Minister has really given us a comprehensive overview of efforts the department is already taking. I am glad that this bounty motion was brought forward.

I definitely want to encourage whatever procedure is put in place that it has to be a structured one and I don't want any piles of confusion out there because we have now announced a new way for people to gain some funds, which is definitely needed so badly in our economy today. I guess it will be a term of self-employment.

Madam Speaker, as I wrap up, I stood up just to give my support and I definitely hope that they explore every possible angle to try to move in the best way forward and to ensure that training is put in place. I am sure some new people who have not been diving in a while will probably try to go out there and there are things like the bends and apparently they are at great depths now. So, people may try to go down there and they haven't been diving in a while. So we want to be sure that some training is put in place to ensure that there is safety, and that they also recognise the poisonous nature of this fish.

Madam Speaker, one of the things I wanted to really address, we were all talking about the bounty. I haven't really heard anyone address the problem of our local natives unable to use spear guns. I guess this is one of the items that could be used to catch a lionfish. But with the present law we have, you are unable to buy a spear gun or import one. I have had a lot of representation from persons of many districts who want an opportunity to use a spear gun, whether it is regulated in certain areas or only beyond the reef, et cetera. But I have had a lot of representation about spear guns, so I just took this opportunity while we are talking about bounty on lionfish, to bring up the issue that is still out there.

A lot of local Caymanians want an opportunity to be able to practice their tradition in using spear

guns. Most of us used spear guns when we were growing up. I think this would be one of the items we could use to catch some of these lionfish. So, I just wanted to publicly say that that is an area which I think we need to look at also.

Again, I commend the Member for North Side and the seconder from East End for bringing this Motion forward. I support it. Thank you.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause] Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause]

Fourth Elected Member for West Bay.

Capt. A. Eugene Ebanks, Fourth Elected Member for West Bay: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I too would like to offer my support for this Motion. I think it's very timely and it definitely is badly needed. I know there have been some efforts on the Island to help control the lionfish. They determined that there is no way of total eradicating them, but they are trying to control them by culling them.

There are some local guys who actually started little lionfish tournaments to try to encourage the culling of these lionfish. I have spoken to the Department of Environment with regard to issuing some of the special spear guns that we gave them a permit for this same purpose. It is a spear with three prongs. Madam Speaker, we have some very law abiding conservation minded Caymanians who would really like to get involved in it, however, for whatever reason they are not able to a permit for these spear guns.

These spear guns, I understand, are being issued primarily to scuba divers. I am not saying that the scuba divers are not conservation minded, but Caymanians are also very conservation minded and law abiding. I feel and have told members of the DoE that I think they are missing the boat when they don't issue some of these guns to the Caymanians who truly have the interest of these waters at heart.

Now, a few weeks back there were many meetings with regard to amending the Marine Parks Law around the Islands. I made it abundantly clear that I think the lionfish are a bigger threat than the actual fishermen themselves. I think we should concentrate on the lionfish. I mean, they caught lionfish with as many as 22 juvenile tropical fish in the stomach. One lionfish! And you have heard some of the Members speak about the massive amount of eggs and how frequently they spawn.

Madam Speaker, this is a very serious threat to these Islands and to the reefs. I think we really need to go all out. Offering a bounty I think especially in these tough financial times will encourage the local guys who by any stretch of the imagination love the water, and to give them some source of income as well.

Madam Speaker, this Motion has my total support and I would like to encourage whether it's by

a bounty or going into the Environmental Fund, to help in every way we can to bring these lionfish under control.

I thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause]

First Elected Member for George Town.

Hon. D. Kurt Tibbetts, First Elected Member for George Town: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I sense from hearing those who have spoken thus far in this Chamber, that Members do realise this is not a trivial matter. I thought many valid points had been raised and perhaps it wasn't necessary for me to make any contribution because the points were made. But as I sat thinking about it, Madam Speaker, it kind of stared me in the face that it is possible that even some members of the public and perhaps the media might really not realise what we are dealing with here.

Let me say this, Madam Speaker, I have had, I would say many conversations with those in the dive industry; many who have been in the dive industry here for a long time; many who have seen the changes in the aquatic landscape in certain specific areas over the periods of time since the bunny rabbit of the ocean, the lionfish, has invaded our waters. Madam Speaker, sometimes when I am talking to some of these people, and I kid you not; I can hear the quivering in their voices because they are actually fearful of what tomorrow will bring.

As has been admitted, as much as we want to encourage every effort, no one has really come up with an answer for this daemon. And that is what we have to term the lionfish as, sad to say. But to us, that's a daemon. The Member for North Side introducing and the Member for East End seconding the Motion certainly have their own experiences from their districts, which I am certain propelled the Private Member's Motion. So let's get a few things straight now. Let's not get into this business about who did not do what right. We are not talking about that now.

The Government has outlined some efforts, which some of us knew some, if not everything, about ongoing efforts that had been going on. Certainly, the vast majority of those in the industry are well aware of the danger and the threat. Madam Speaker, first of all, this is something that this entire country needs to be made aware of. I don't think there is anything that we could single out that will not be affected if these daemons take over any worse than what is happening now. We have all talked about it in various ways, but I am not so sure that this country has a full appreciation for the devastating effects that these lionfish can have on our national economy, not just a certain sector. Everything has its tentacles. And if that industry dies a lot of other things die with it.

Madam Speaker, the Motion itself asks the Government to consider introducing a bounty and to

perhaps to use funds already approved to the EPF, the Environmental Protection Fund, to support that bounty to entice more people to bring these daemons to justice (if I may term it like that). I want to speak about that for a minute so that perhaps if we look at it because all who have contributed thus far to the debate have brought very valid points. But I don't want us to get very fearful and say that we will now have to deplete the Environmental Protection Fund, because if we will really get it up in gears and everything starts to roll, we really have no idea how many of these fish can actually be caught because they are being produced every day. They are perhaps one of the most prolific saltwater species in the world.

I want to say what I think in this regard. While I heard the Deputy Premier speak to seeking funding to do research or to assist in whatever, and that is fine, but Madam Speaker, I personally believe (and the First Elected Member for Cayman Brac also alluded to it along with others) that there is a tremendous market here in the Cayman Islands for lionfish. I have never heard anyone yet who has eaten it say it doesn't taste good. I happen to know that it can be prepared in as many numerous ways as we can do our own fish. You can fry it, you can steam it, brown stew it, every way, and it tastes good. I happen to know.

Madam Speaker, I say all of that not just to talk about how good food tastes. But I believe that if this is handled properly and a bounty is used to entice people while we streamline how they are going to be able to get it . . . and I heard the Fourth Elected Member for West Bay speaking about some people not being able to be licensed. And he gives his personal view, for which I am sure he has reasons, that there are many people who would want to do it simply to assist and not use it as an avenue to break the law. And I know that's the fear of the DoE. They are going to fear themselves to death, I believe!

Anyway, Madam Speaker, this is a time when we cannot juxtapose positions by saying because we fear this we can't do that because that's going to kill us anyhow. At least the other one is a "might." My view is, let's get real.

Madam Speaker, I want to say once again that this may seem something not worth our talking about. But I believe it is as important to the future of these Islands as anything else that we have discussed in this Meeting. And I sincerely mean that. It's just because it's not staring us straight in the face and that it's [not] going to happen in a day that we keep putting it off and figure it's not going to happen. In the meantime the cancer is eating us slowly but surely and by the time it all comes staring us straight in the face, it will be stage 150—not 4 but 150—and then we just wait on the time. That may not be a very nice analogy, Madam Speaker, but that is purposely done to stress the importance of what we are talking about here.

Madam Speaker, getting back to the business of the bounty, I hold the view that if a proper plan is devised and the Government being the conduit . . . in other words, there is one avenue through which the bounty can be collected and once you bring in these fish and they are in good physical order, that they are not spoiled or anything, because people have to appreciate that. They can't just go out all day and leave them out in the sun as they please and bring them in. You have to take care of them; perhaps take your cooler with ice and keep dumping them as you get them.

But if they are brought to a station and they are paid, and that station is able to take care of it . . . because, Madam Speaker, may people now know how to properly clean the fish. It's not a difficult task. There are certain areas of the fish that are poisonous and it's not difficult to get rid of those areas. So, it is not an impediment that is a danger. I am so sorry to hear that the Deputy Premier was poisoned. But I am sure that was inexperience on the part of whoever was dealing with the fish who prepared it. But by now most people know exactly how to deal with it and other people can easily be trained.

Madam Speaker, if that were the case, and it has been suggested, and I think the mover is of the view (and I don't see why not myself), that perhaps the Department of Agriculture could have the ability . . . because while the abattoir is there, the first thing you think about with an abattoir is animals. But it doesn't have to be limited to that. It can be worked in such a way. And, Madam Speaker, those fish can be sold. If restaurants know there is a steady supply of those fish, they will buy those fish. [And] not [just] one restaurant. It is a novelty to many of our tourists. And already there has been exposure in various places, especially along the West Bay Road, where they have these special nights that the lionfish are sold (once they can gather enough of them). It works well.

Madam Speaker, years ago I never, ever thought I would see tilapia in the supermarkets. I didn't think anyone would buy tilapia. And they sell like hotcakes now! I say that to say that with this diverse population we have here in the Cayman Islands there will not be a problem to get rid of this product once it is handled and prepared properly. My point is that while it may take some money initially to offer this bounty, I do not doubt for a minute that if it is handled efficiently it would be in short order that the sale of the prepared and finished product could very well almost take care of the cost of buying them wholesale.

So while the Member for North Side in his introduction to the Motion was specific about \$5.00, I am sure that while that is the case, it doesn't matter to him if the formula works different. I know that. And I am not saying that that is not the magic number either. What has to happen is that you have to look to make it enticing enough for those who will go and not stop until they get and bring 20, 30 or 40 of them in for

the day, that it is worth their while going to do that. Then what it will cost for the bounty and when you prepare them what kind of weight you will get from that, because they are going to vary in size, which means your end product will vary as to how much you get.

Madam Speaker, I am sure all of that can be worked out. But I am sure, while the Motion specifically speaks to its resolve sections, that a big part of the intention of the Motion is to bring awareness to all of us about the dangers of the lionfish and also to spur on a concerted effort of this entire country to do something about it while we all go on with our daily lives. I am sure of that.

I cannot impress on those who will have heard this debate today (or whenever they do hear it) how important it is for the public to pay the attention they need to pay to this. If we think of it just as *What can I do?* you are going to throw your hands up in the air because, *I man by myself can't do anything. I don't have a spear gun licence. I can't go in the sea and get them, so what can I do?* Well, let me say this: just about everybody I know eats fish. And those who are not going to get them, eat them! And let's get enough of them so that everybody can eat them. Sooner or later there will be less of them. I say that in a light manner, but with a very serious intention.

I believe that that perhaps is enough coming from me because I don't think we need to spend all day on it. Many valid points have been made. The Government has accepted the Motion. I am sure the Government is very well aware of the threat that this is, and certainly I am sure all of us on this side support the Motion and are quite happy to participate in whatever role we can play, whether it's awareness or whatever else, to ensure that we all, as a nation, do something that is meaningful to not just cull these daemons, but get them where there is an incessant charge against them non-stop, that sooner or later we will be talking about when they were here.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, First Elected Member for George Town. Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause] Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause] Does any other Member wish to speak? [pause]

The Fourth Elected Member for George Town.

Mr. Ellio A. Solomon: Madam Speaker, I would first of all start where I intend to finish. That start is to commend the Member for North Side and the Member for East End; the Member for North Side, obviously the individual moving the Motion, and the Member for East End seconding that Motion.

Madam Speaker, just as the First Elected Member for George Town has so eloquently stated, I think a tremendous amount has already been said.

But I believe it would be remiss of me to not join chorus, at least for a few seconds.

Madam Speaker, it is a very, very serious issue and just to help bring home the gravity, Madam Speaker, I remember having a conversation some years ago, or some months ago, when we were having so many accidents taking place on our roads with our young children, particularly a lot of males. And that was obviously followed up by a lot of shootings. I remember in those conversations persons were saying, similar to what the Member for George Town was saying, that it almost seemed to some degree that a daemon was loose among us because we were losing so many of our young persons.

It's very, very important to recognise that the lionfish is out there and not devouring the older ones, they are devouring the younger ones. And technically if you are allowed to continue on that rampant devouring what happens is that the old grow older, die and nothing replaces them. So it is a very, very serious issue, this issue about the lionfish. And as has been mentioned, the Government has been taking some steps but further steps have to be taken.

So, Madam Speaker, in joining the chorus, I believe (as I stated in the caucus meetings when we had discussions about lionfish) that every way, a study has to be done to find every single way to commercialise this whole issue of the lionfish. We have to investigate it for whatever properties it may have in terms of a chemical or biological benefit to humans in terms of fighting poison. It probably has something there. It has to be a situation, as has already been stated, where were we are making sure that we are selling it to the restaurants, advertising it, having it being purchased. Every way that we can commercially exploit this whole issue about lionfish, I believe is a step in the right direction to creating an energy that works incessantly to deal with this problem of the lionfish.

Without a doubt the gravity should not be missed. Hopefully, members of the general public, if anything, hearing all of us standing here giving some statement towards this issue, will perhaps have the seriousness of it underscored. This country is under attack by the lionfish and as the Member stated if it is allowed to continue it is going to have an impact on the life of every single person in this country. Where we can sit and knit-pick the Motion I believe, as stated, the Member for North Side is perhaps flexible with some of those things. I think that was captured already when he said he was asking the Government to "consider." So I believe there is flexibility and perhaps ways that we can battle and deal with this problem, Madam Speaker. But it has to actually be worked on.

Again, I find it interesting (just to drag in the whole issue of funding) that this whole . . . to think that we may actually have to go to the United Kingdom, assuming everyone agrees, to actually get permission to actually spend some of our own money from the

Environmental Protection Fund so that we can fight an enemy in our own territory, is perhaps in itself worthy of discussion. But that said, Madam Speaker, I will conclude as I began: This is a very, very serious issue. It needs to be dealt with. It has to be a concerted effort. This is not about one group or another; it is about all parliamentarians and everyone in this country doing their own part in terms of dealing with this enemy that we have, called the lionfish.

Again, in closing I wish to commend the Member for North Side, the mover of the Motion and the Member for East End, the seconder. And with that, Madam Speaker, thank you very much.

The Speaker: Thank you the Fourth Elected Member for George Town.

Does any other Member wish to speak?
[pause] Does any other Member wish to speak?
[pause] Does any other Member wish to speak?
[pause]

If not, I will call on the mover of the Motion to wind up the debate.

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

First of all, let me thank everyone for their support. I believe that by the end of this debate we will have achieved part of what was necessary to bring the Motion, a greater public awareness of what is happening. I had people trying to make fun that I was actually bringing a motion on a bounty for lionfish. But I think if people listen to the tone, the enthusiasm, the passion with which Members of Parliament have spoken today as to the threat that this poses on the country, hopefully the various media houses will pick it up and give greater exposure to the danger.

Madam Speaker, I took the time to check the 2012/13 Budget, and it is estimated that the Environmental Protection Fund should be at \$43-plus million at the end of this financial year. So, even if we only took 10 per cent, Madam Speaker, at \$5.00 that would eliminate 800,000 lionfish. I believe that would put a substantial dent in the numbers that are out there.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: Yes.

And as other Members have said, there are all sorts of combinations that can be used to recover the funds, whether it is government/private partnerships with the Agricultural Department . . . we have the problem with the Marine Parks Conservation, and the people in my community believe that part of the problem there is that we have to create artificial habitats for fish and other species that we need to reproduce at a greater rate because our population is simply growing in the Island. It is not impossible for the Agricultural Department to use the waste from these lionfish to produce food pellets that could be given to di-

vers to feed fish with and stop them from using cheese. Right?

Madam Speaker, if the people in North Side and East End, according to the Marine Parks people, can kill out the species of parrot fish with a line and a single hook on it and a couple of soldiers or conch, you give them a spear gun and the lionfish is in plenty trouble; especially, at this price of \$5.00. I know of at least one Caymanian who is putting together a commercial operation to actually export the lionfish to the United States. He is looking somewhere in the region of \$5.00 to \$6.00 per pound. So, they have several combinations. The important thing is, Madam Speaker, that I think the Government now needs to lead the initiative by putting the bounty on the fish, whatever we agree on the final figure, take some money out of the Environmental Protection Fund and kick start it. If we can take 500,000 or 600,000 out of them in a year at \$5.00 a piece, by paying it out of the Environmental Protection Fund, that is going to be a substantial dent because I don't think any species can stand that kind of over-fishing, so to speak.

We can't wait, Madam Speaker, for the scientists to discover genetic means to alter these fish to stop them from breeding and all that sorts of stuff. Right now we simply need to put Caymanians in the water, put a spear gun in their hands to kill these fish and bring them to the shore so they can't damage the reef. End of story.

Madam Speaker, the Third Elected Member for Bodden Town mentioned the spear gun issue. I can tell you that that is a very topical issue and it has come to the forefront now that the DoE is going around trying to expand the Marine Parks and the petition that is coming to the Government from North Side includes a re-look at the ¹spear gun prohibition law for the re-licensing of spear guns to Caymanians under certain conditions. The other problem we have now is that we have Caymanians who have licences for spear guns and the Government is forcing them to do one of two things. To have the danger of exposure, because they are jury rigging the guns because they can't buy parts for them; or, they are going to Miami, putting the parts in a suitcase and bringing them back.

Spear fishing is a sport that all of us grew up with, Madam Speaker. Yes, it can be destructive, but it can also be controlled. And all of us should have the right to pass on to our children and grandchildren the things that we enjoyed in life. And just simply saying you can't do it . . . I have a spear gun licence. My spear gun needs rubbers and a head. I refuse . . . I know I can walk into any fishing equipment store in Florida and buy the parts and the likelihood of me being discovered coming through customs is zero to none. I just refuse to do it. But it's a perfectly good—

[Inaudible interjection]

¹ Marine Conservation Law

Mr. D. Ezzard Miller: Eh?

[Replying to inaudible interjection] Well, that's fine. I'm not going to do it.

But the point is, Madam Speaker, that we are forcing good, law abiding citizens to contemplate criminal activity simply because the Government will not change this attitude that if you have a spear gun you shouldn't be able to repair it properly or you shouldn't be able to replace it.

So, Madam Speaker, I thank all Members for their support and I think that the House has made a good decision. As the First Elected Member for George Town declared war on this devil among us, I believe that if we put our Caymanians out there we can have some effective reduction in numbers.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you Member for North Side.

The question is: BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT Government consider the placing of a bounty of \$5.00.00 per fish on Lionfish to encourage their elimination and further, that they consider taking the funds to pay said bounty from the Environmental Fund.

All those in favour please say Aye. Those against, No.

Ayes.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Private Member's Motion No. 4/2012-13 passed.

The Speaker: I had notified the Premier that I wanted to break the House as 4.00 for two reasons: that I would like to meet with all Members in the common room; and that would be followed by the CPA Annual General Meeting.

So I would, at this point, ask for a Motion for the Adjournment.

ADJOURNMENT

The Premier, Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We want to move the adjournment of this honourable House until 10.00 am tomorrow morning. Sorry, Madam Speaker, we do have the [Parliamentary] Prayer Breakfast tomorrow morning. So, we should say at 1.00 pm.

The Speaker: One o'clock.

The Premier, Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Madam Speaker, we do have, I think, one or two finance bills, the SPS will also be laid on the Table either tomorrow or Monday (I'm not sure). Anyway, the balance of the business on this Order Paper will go on. So we ask for

the adjournment of this honourable House until 1.00 pm tomorrow.

The Speaker: The question is that this honourable House do adjourn until 1.00 pm tomorrow.

All those in favour please say Aye. Those against, No.

Ayes.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

At 4.02 pm the House stood adjourned until 1.00 pm, Friday, 23 November 2012.