



THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 - 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, January 16, 1996

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.15 a.m. o'clock on Tuesday, January 16, 1996.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, B.A., Dip. Ed., (Speaker)
His Honour R. D. MARSHALL, (Deputy Speaker)
Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD, B.A., M.A., (Econ.),

J.P.

Mr. B. M. TAITT, B.A. (Hons.), M.P.A., LL.B. (Hons.)

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.), (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and Minister for the Civil Service)

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.) (Leader of the Opposition)

Hon. Sir Harold St. JOHN, Q.C., LL.B.

Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A.

Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Q.C., M.A., M.Sc. (Econ.)

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tourism and International Transport) (Leader of the House)

Mr. J. O. TUDOR, J.P.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE, (Minister of Public Works, Transport and Housing)

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, J.P., B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.), LEC, (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES, M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.P. (Edin.)

Mr. D. CARTER

Hon. R. N. GREBMDGE, B.A., LL.B. (Minister of Labour, Community Development and Sports)

Mr. G. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Housing)

Mr. J. M. EDGHILL

Mr. F. J. STUART, B.A., LL.M.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER, J.P., B.A., Dip. Ed., B.Sc. (Chairman of Committees)

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tourism and International Transport)

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Minister of Health and the Environment)

Prayers were taken by Father Lawrence Small.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, the 12th of December, 1995 and Friday, the 15th December, 1995.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Honourable the House of Assembly for its meeting of Friday, the 15th day of December, 1995 which Minutes have been circulated be taken as read.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no corrections or observations, then let those Minutes stand **confirmed**.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: I am in receipt of:

The Accounts and Statements for the months of September and October, 1995 prepared by the Accountant General.

Also: The Auditor General's Report on Appropriation and other Accounts for 1994-95.

PAPERS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am commanded to lay:

The Duties, Taxes and ~~Other~~ Payments (Exemption) (No. 20) Order, 1995.

The Duties, ~~Taxes~~ and ~~Other~~ Payments (Exemption) (No. 21) Order, 1995.

The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 23) Order, 1995.

The Duties, ~~Taxes~~ and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 24) Order, 1995.

The Duties, Taxes and ~~Other~~ Payments (Exemption) (No. 25) Order 1995.

The Duties, ~~Taxes~~ and ~~Other~~ Payments (Exemption) (No. 26) Order, 1995.

~~The~~ Duties, Taxes and ~~Other~~ Payments (Exemption) (No. 27) Order, 1995.

The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 28) Order, 1995.

The Duties, Taxes and ~~Other~~ Payments (Exemption) (No. 29) Order, 1995.

The Duties, Taxes and ~~Other~~ Payments (Exemption) (No. 30) Order, 1995.

The Duties, Taxes and ~~Other~~ Payments (Exemption) (No. 1) Order, 1996.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, with apology I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Honourable the House of Assembly for its meeting of the 12th day of December, 1995, as well, which Minutes have been circulated be ~~taken as read~~.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: If ~~there~~ are no ~~corrections~~ or observations then let those ~~Minutes~~ stand confided.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to give notice of:

A resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of the parcels of land at Palmetto ~~Square~~ in the parish of St. Michael for the establishment of vendors' malls.

And further, to give notice of:

A resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land at Apes Hill in the parish of St. James for housing development.

OBITUARY SPEECHES

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, since this Honourable House of Assembly last met in December of the year just past, 1995, the Governor-General of Barbados, the late Dame Ruth Nita Barrow passed this life just a few days before Christmas in the midst of her duties of that post which, in our tradition, tend to be particularly onerous in the month of December and through the celebration of our Independence at the end of November and through December, the season of Christmas and the opening of the New Year. In the ~~midst~~ of all of that celebration, she left us.

The name Ruth Nita ~~Barrow~~ is perhaps one of the earliest names that I became acquainted with. Nita Barrow as I first heard her called was a nursing student with my late mother. There was a group of ~~them~~ in those days, Pearl Marshall, Eileen ~~Stuart~~ now Eileen ~~Murray-Aynsley~~ affectionately called "pupsy" as I recall. There were 2 Lashleys. My late mother's maiden ~~name~~ was Lashley. One was tall and buxom and the other was tall and slim. ~~The~~ tall, buxom one was my mother known as 'Big Lash' and then there was 'Little Lash'. I think the Attorney General's mother was part of that group, My mother was the first to have married and had a baby and, in a way, they all became like honorary godmothers to me.

But from the very earliest days, I always heard my mother say that Nita was the brightest of them all. Growing up as a young child I always heard that Nita was ~~the~~ brightest of them all. I hardly ~~knew~~ her in those years growing up because, by the ~~time~~ I was old enough to be conversant with people and get to know people, she had already gone off.

They all started at the Barbados ~~General~~ Hospital, a hospital of good repute in the Caribbean and to which there was always a nursing school, the ~~Tercentenary~~ School of Nursing, so to speak, and to which ~~nurses~~ came from all over the Caribbean, indeed as people came from all over the Caribbean to ~~Erdiston~~ Teachers' Training College, to

the Police Training School here and **SO** many other teaching and **training** institutions in Barbados. The Barbados **General Hospital** enjoyed the highest possible reputation prior to the establishment of the University of the **West Indies** at Mona when the Faculty of Medicine was established **there**.
11.25 a.m.

Nita, as we knew her then, was first and foremost in my memory a **nurse** who left the Barbados General Hospital and her then contribution to national life in Barbados to go **to** Jamaica to give, at a later date, and I am not going to be chronological, **SO** much has been written about this in recent weeks that I do not feel the **need** to be chronological because I think that all of us, **Mr. Speaker**, **are** aware of the **tremendous** chapter in history that will surround the work and the **career** of Ruth Nita **Barrow**.

She did her duty **here** at the national level in the early training years of her life and she did regional duty as well, particularly in Jamaica, as a nursing tutor at the new Faculty of Medicine at Mona, **Her** international contribution came later, a contribution which saw her rise to the post of Resident of the World Council of Churches, rise to be **President** of the worldwide Y.W.C.A. Her contribution in the context of what we now popularly call **N.G.O's** (Non-**governmental Organisations**), also saw her presiding and chairing the non-governmental forum of the Women's Conference which was held during the **decade** of the eighties at Nairobi. Of course she rose beyond that then to move from NGO to Government, so to speak, when she **became** our Permanent Representative to the United Nations, the first woman to have done so. But Dame Nita as she became known by that time, was what I would wish to describe as an iconoclast. She was a **breaker** of many **molds**. She was a person who **SO** often became the first person to be doing something and even more often than that the **first** woman to be doing something. It has to do with the time at which she was born. It had to do with the general development of our country, but more than anything else it had to do with the ability, with the character, with the disposition and the charm of Ruth Nita Barrow.

Other people, men and women, born in the same era, cast in the same environment, somehow did not quite take the road travelled by Nita Barrow. I would wish to say, Sir, that the career of the late Dame Nita **Barrow**, and especially as a black woman, almost throughout the course of this century, follows the political history, the social and the economic history of Barbados, where she was born. **The** parents to whom she was born, the society in which **he** grew up in the twenties and the early **thirties** in **arbados**, all of that allowed her to ride almost in tandem.

The history, the story of Nita Barrow in a way is the **ory** of the political and socio-economic and political **ory** of Barbados of the twenties and the thirties and

down to this time. If one is allowed to regret anything, Sir, and I would like to think that life is not for regretting, you do the best you can where you find yourself in this life, Where God's providential **arrangement** puts you, you do the very best that you can. But if there were a matter for any regret it is that she was not privileged, like others before her, notably Moses, to enter into the twenty-first century with us. We do not know how many of us will live to **see** the **twenty-first** century, but when we look at her record, when we look at her work and her career and her ambition, not **SO** much for herself, but her ambition for Barbados, and for all Barbadians, notably women among them, it would have been, I think the crown of it all that she should have been able to **see** us into the twenty-first century but that was not to be,

Yet, as I said of her late brother, sitting in the other place, upon his passing in 1987 - he left much unfinished business. Of Dame Nita I do **not** think that would be a fair comment. I think she was a woman, a lady, a Dame, much accomplished and who, in her time - and she was blessed with good long life in her time - accomplished much.

It is not my impression that Dame Nita had set out with a fixed end goal, a fixed ambition. I think she set out like **SO** many of us, to give back to this community here in Barbados and this community here in the Caribbean of her talents which were manifold and diverse.

There are aspects of her life, there are aspects of her character which are not known to us. This point has been made before and I would wish to make it again that it is an incredible statement about the kind of person that she was that she would have lived so many years away from Barbados. We have friends, family, relatives, who live abroad, I do not think there is any Barbadian family that cannot lay claim to a relative who lives abroad and sometimes we form the impression that by living abroad for a long time, twenty, thirty, forty years, they lose touch with what life is about. Their mind set, their memory, their vision of Barbados is the vision of the Barbados that they left behind. This is not **true** of Dame Nita at all. She found, even when she lived abroad, there are so many of my generation, the generation after me and the generation before me as well, who can lay claim that when they were in Geneva or when they were in Jamaica or when they were in New York or wherever Dame Nita was serving as an international personage that she was. She found them and was able to share and to make people feel that there was still some little part of Barbados that she could share, even in distant land, and at difficult times. There are many who can raise their hands and testify to that.

As I said earlier, Sir, Dame Nita's life and history, and it is good that some of it at least has been written down in a volume. One of the last things that she was

able to do was to launch her book which is recommended reading for all of us, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and it is good, I have commented on it in here during the course of this particular item on the Order Paper in the past on more than one occasion, I have remarked, Sir, on the paucity of writing **because** the lives of so many of her generation who are leaving us - it would appear almost in a rush - at **this time** of our lives, so that we now **begin** to feel that we are the old people so to speak, It is a pity that not nearly enough has **been** written not only of their contribution but of their lives because, in that sense, their lives are the history of the time in which we have **grown up**. The things that we **take** for granted now, particularly those things which successive **Governments** in Barbados having invested so heavily in the social sectors, the things that we come to take for granted like our education system, **our** health services, public housing, public transportation, our road system and, the fact that when you **take up** utilities in Barbados, we take these things for granted now. But there was a time when it was not so.

11.35 a.m.

Dame Nita became a nurse in this Barbados when the pay was five shillings a month, Mr. Speaker. Of course, five shillings then like it is with currency everywhere else in the world was worth more than the exact equivalent would be worth today and could buy much more. But she grew up at a time when, if you became qualified as a nurse at our General Hospital and you became married as my mother and the **AG's** mother did, you had to give up your career. You could not be married and be a nurse at the General Hospital. Oh, yes! I am definitely serious, Mr. Speaker. That was the price one paid in that profession. So it is not surprising that having made that decision Dame Nita stayed with it. Of course, we came to see so many of those undesirable aspects of the colonial civil service fall away. Again, we **take** those things for granted. There was a time, **too**, to be a civil servant you had to be an Anglican because it was the established religion in this country. But with the demise of colonialism many of these things went and we take these things for granted.

What I want to say, Sir, is that Dame Nita Barrow was part of that political and socio-economic struggle, not only because she was **born** into a family where they became warriors in that struggle and that there are other heroes before her among her immediate relatives. Dame Nita in her own right, and I believe that even without that nurturing environment, had what it took to become who she was from the beginning to the end. As I said, they all said in the student nursing days that Nita was the brightest of them all and bright not only in terms of being book bright, but bright in that she had the larger vision. There were so many who started with her whose ambition was to become the first black Sister at the Barbados General Hospital. I can remember as a little child, Mr. Speaker, when all of the

Sisters and Matrons were **white** and Nita was **trained** and began to **realize** her earliest **ambitions** in that **metier**.

I must **confess** that I have not finished **reading** the **book**. But there is more to Dame Ruth Nita **Barrow** than could be **contained** in any one **volume**. **This** may not be the most suitable occasion, Sir, but I **really** would wish that the historians would begin **to address** the lives of our heroes, It is an **interesting** thing for me **because** in some ways **there** are things that **Dame** Nita and I had in common despite the **difference** in our ages because **Dame Nita** lived at a **time** when she was able to see **Non-Governmental** Organizations to which she gave more years of her life than to any other entity, she lived to see **NGOs** accepted according to the words of the now Secretary **General** of the United Nations, Mr. **Boutros Boutros Ghali**. She lived to hear year **before** last that the **NGOs** were accepted on the floor of the **U.N.** as partners. Dame Nita would have **known** **NGOs** in the **U.N.** family in the years when you could not even get a seat in the gallery furthermore be recognized **from** the **gallery**. It is for me a privilege that I was able to **be there** at a time when **NGOs** received that **final** accolade and acceptance within the family of the United Nations.

During her funeral service, the Rev, Phillip Potter in a very moving tribute to Dame **Nita**, and this is something else we share in common both Methodist, among other things made the point that Nita Barrow had made her contribution in the field of the Non-Governmental Organizations. But the Rev, Phillip Potter went on to say that perhaps Dame Nita in the end was the best President that the United Nations never had. I am raising that particularly, Sir, to make this point. That was a sad day in the history of Caribbean politics when the Caribbean, having put up a candidate, could not have counted on every single Caribbean vote to support the candidature of Ruth Nita Barrow. I would want to agree with the Rev. Phillip Potter that perhaps Dame Nita was indeed the best President that the United Nations never had. But Dame Nita was not one to sulk in her tent. She was not one given to spitefulness. She was not one to be way-laid by disappointments in life - these became building blocks. She had an excellent foundation laid here in this Barbados and lovingly built by Barbadians by those who educated her, those who loved and **nurtured** her through her childhood and her early **training** for the race which would take her far beyond these shores.

It is not an over-statement, Mr. Speaker, to say that everywhere I go in the world and, when her name is mentioned, somebody has known her and known of her contributions. There are even places, I remember so well at Beijing, that when one said one came from Barbados the response was: "Oh, Dame **Nita's** country!" She was an ambassador for Barbados long before she became its Permanent Representative to the United Nations in the

way that all of us - and this was the wonder of the example she set - are indeed, and particularly those of us who are privileged to sit in the Honourable Assembly to be ambassadors for Barbados, You do not always have to be beyond these shores to be an ambassador for Barbados, You can do it right here, when you are here. But to some of us is given that opportunity to serve our country not only at home but abroad as well,
11.45 a.m.

I would venture, **Mr. Speaker**, that **Dame Nita Barrow** was perhaps the most charming, and I use the word again, the brightest and best of all ambassadors that Barbados has ever had, both at home and outside of its shores, so it should not have been a surprise to any of us when she was chosen to be the Governor-General of our island, the highest post that Barbados could bestow upon a person, She transcended political partisanship. Let it not be forgotten that Dame Nita became a Dame during the time of a Barbados Labour Party administration, and was elevated to Governor-General during the time of a Democratic Labour Party administration, and yet this was a woman who had such obvious and well recognized ties with the Democratic Labour Party through family relationship, This was only a part of the measure of the woman, partly because she lived abroad for a long time and therefore Barbadians only came to know her truly late in her life.

I do not think we had any real appreciation, and in some cases no appreciation at all, of the stature of the woman outside Barbados, Her international persona was unknown, largely speaking, to so many of us in Barbados, Many had no idea of the esteem in which she was held and the way in which she had shown the best of Barbados to people outside of Barbados, It was only after her passing, week 1, week 2, week 3 and even now there are still words of condolence and praise, I have no memory of a period of instinctive mourning to have gone on this long for anyone in Barbados, and it still goes on. Everything that Dame Nita touched wants to have a memorial of her - the school to which she went, that she was a girl guide, that she was a nurse, that she was this, that she was the other,

Like myself and some others who choose the path of public service, Dame Nita had no family of her own but had around her a family of her own creating. This too was a part of her life that Barbadians never quite got to glimpse until the very end when that veil was drawn back and we saw her as a cook and a friend of children. She has been described as the people's Governor-General and I think that the outpouring, the tribute to her again of the occasion of the State funeral which was accorded her, I have no memory of the outpouring of emotion that one saw literally at the side of the street. It is felt that all of this was richly and well deserved.

She was able to accomplish much during her life and it turns out in the end, Sir, that most of her accomplishment redounds to the benefit of Barbados. It is not easy to be able to say that about a lot of people but one can say that without fear of a contradiction about **Dame Ruth Nita Barrow**, and she had this facility, She was able to bridge the gap between **Government** and non-government. She was able to bridge the gap between old and young and she remained young in her thinking and attitude, She was open-minded,

I well remember, having been invited, I cannot remember why, up to **Government House** and we were sitting in the drawing room chatting about a whole host of things, One of the things I raised with her was my own view about Barbados becoming a republic, This is long before this has now become a subject for discussion in the public domain, I was greatly impressed - I felt I could take the odd liberty with her because of the longstanding relationship - but I was much impressed at the equanimity with which she received my opinion. In essence what I was saying was that "if I had my way I would do away with the job you are doing now." We joined conversation and had a lively and interesting discussion about where Barbados would go to in the future,

I am making that point, Sir, because one of the recurring decimal points in this extended period of mourning and tribute to Dame Nita I am hearing over and over again is the point that she brought to the Governor-Generalship of Barbados a new and different way of doing things to the point where Barbadians saw Dame Nita Barrow as the Head of State in Barbados bearing no relationship to the monarchy in the United Kingdom, that in a way she was our Queen. I will say there is a generation of Barbadians for whom she is Queen and was Queen,

I have 2 little nephews who live in the United States with their mother, my sister, and a couple of years ago they came home for Christmas. When Dame Nita discovered they were here she invited us up to tea and tea was set out on the lawn, the big people at one table and then a little table for these 2 little people, 7 and 9 years old. George, who it seems to me has been at Government House forever, came out and very politely said to these 2 little people: 'What would you like to drink?'

11.55 a.m.

And the littlest of the two little people said: "Have you got any red **Ju-C?**" Now in all his years at Government House, I don't think anybody ever asked George for red Ju-C, whatever he offered they took, but it was like such a regular and ordinary thing. These two fellows went back up and were asked at school what they had done in the **Christmas** vacation. One chap wrote an essay where he

said that he had had tea with the Queen of Barbados, and to **this** day there is nothing that my sister can do to **persuade him** that she was not actually the Queen of Barbados. In his head she was the **Queen** of Barbados, The truth is that in the heads of so many of us she did in fact **become the Queen** of Barbados, I am speaking here now of not only **regal** Queen in the **sense** of **governing** over Barbados or **ruling** over Barbados in anyway, but Queen, meaning the woman at the **top** of it all, Queen in the historic context of the Queen of Sheba and so many other distinguished queens who have gone before us.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. **MILLER**: I refer to Sheba, because Sheba was a black queen that many people did not recognise,

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I don't think, as one coming in her footsteps - and one is tempted to say that when I grow up I really would like to be like Dame Nita - that I could find enough words, the right words, suitable language to commemorate the contribution that she has made to our Barbados.

I would wish to say, Sir, on my own behalf, I speak too as Leader of the Government's Business in this Chamber, I speak as a Member of the Cabinet of this country and a Member of the Government of this country, and I believe I can speak on the behalf of all of those entities to **say** to the family of the late Dame Nita Barrow that we offer our warmest, our deepest condolences upon the passing **of their** sister, their aunt, their great-aunt, and of course to her many friends as well.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that **the** usual Resolution, and perhaps not so usual in these **circumstances**, 'that perhaps a Resolution which, if it were possible, could have been physically signed by all of us, but somehow a Resolution of some special design, of some special composition, might be passed and I am in **fact** moving such a motion, Sir, and that in due course it would be communicated to the **family** of the late Dame Nita Barrow.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. D. J. H. **THOMPSON**: Mr. Speaker, I **rise** on behalf of the Opposition to second the Resolution of **Condolence**, to associate myself with the remarks of the Honourable Member for the City and perhaps to add a few personal comments to this Resolution.

The entire family of the Democratic Labour **Patty** and Barbados as a whole would have been plunged into gloom on the passing of the late Dame Nita Barrow. I don't know what it feels like to be in Barbados when a Governor-

General passes away, because for **some** strange reason **all** of them have passed away when I am out of **the island**, and I have always received the news **overseas**. On my first ever trip **as** a youngster to the United States at about age 13, when I returned to Barbados I discovered that -

- (a) the Government had changed, and
- (b) the Governor-General had died, **That** was Sir **Winston Scott**.

Then each subsequent Governor-General and Prime Minister who died in office. I was in Trinidad when **the** then Prime Minister, Tom **Adams**, died.

The loss of Dame Nita Barrow obviously was a very unique experience, because I don't **think** there is anybody who in their comments about her life and service would not have recognised that her personality and her disposition were such that she touched the lives of all Barbadians in a very real way. From my own two year old daughter, who I assume would be slightly more aware of her passing because of our relationship with the Barrow family, but there are other two year olds, other three year olds, **children** at Erdiston Primary School and elsewhere, who reacted to the passing of Dame Nita Barrow in a different way,

For some very important reason, Dame Nita Barrow became the Governor-General of Barbados at a time when the whole concept of the relationship which we have with the Monarchy and the role of the **Governor-General** was in the **air**, and her personality had the effect of demonstrating that there was some relevance to the post, or relevance to the stature of the post. Even those who were clamouring for change, their viewpoints became somewhat muted because of the stature of the holder of that office. Therefore, she made the role of Governor-General even more relevant than it had been until then. Now, of course with her passing, those issues resurface and the **great** difficulty is to anoint somebody who has the same characteristics and qualities which Dame Nita possessed. The point being that she possessed **those** qualities before she came to office, but there **are** very few Barbadians who realise that and I must say that for my own part I also plead to have been ignorant until that time of the stature of Dame Nita **Barrow**, because in Barbados she would always have fallen in the shadow of her brother, whose influence nationally was much stronger, and she never seemed to trespass on the space which he had within these shores. But outside of Barbados it is clear that the stature of Dame Nita Barrow was equal to his and in some parts of the world far surpassed his in terms of people's knowledge of her and in **terms** of her involvement with the people that she knew.
12.85 p.m.

Everyone therefore whether you met her at a family function which the Barrow family held, whether you met her at a social event or outside of Barbados assumed that you knew the Dame Nita Barrow who you were meeting or even before she became Dame Nita Barrow that you knew the Nita Barrow, Aunt Nita or whatever you called her. The assumption was that you knew who she was. It was not until she became the Governor-General of Barbados and even then, **moreso** on her passing, that many people wrote and spoke of her outstanding contribution in several facets of public life and the impact that she had on persons of all walks of life throughout the world.

As I said such **was** her personality that she never sought to intrude in other people's space but she commanded her own space and always demonstrated deference and a **kind of humility** which was uncommon to people who held such positions.

In 1986 when I entered **the** House of Assembly, I visited New York and I made a call to her to say hello and say I was in New York. Of course, as **with** many other people, she insisted that one would come over to the office and visit her. At that time she had taken up the responsibilities at the UN and I believe she very well may have been in the contest for the Presidency of the UN.

I had the privilege of going to the UN dining room with her on 2 or 3 occasions. Of course, in the UN dining **room**, the full effect of diplomacy is seen by the normal courtesies which people extend to each other shaking hands, acknowledging people's presence and so on. But, as you sat at that table with Dame Nita Barrow, it was almost as if **you** felt that the eyes of all of the Ambassadors from major countries and all of the officials **were** focussing on that table. As we went through the lunch and Dame Nita sat at the table nodding very politely at everybody, I was **sitting** with my back to the larger part of the room and it was almost as if you felt that these eyes were piercing through you to take a glimpse or to get an acknowledgement **from** this very distinguished and well-known world stateswoman.

In the United Nations, she certainly ensured that Barbados' stature was **enhanced** and improved and she took on many challenges which Barbados had hitherto not even considered as being part of the opportunities which presented themselves to us. She opened **many** doors in the United Nations to this **country**, in the involvement of Barbadians at that level which had previously not been open.

Then she returned home as our Governor-General. I take this opportunity to commend the former Prime Minister and those who had a hand in persuading him, if he needed persuasion, or those who had a hand in deciding on

the choice of Dame Nita Barrow. Because from the time she returned to Barbados as our Governor-General, even though there were some critics who said, 'Well, she has not lived in Barbados...' There were a few people who were being critical, some of whom were very prominent persons at the funeral which means they must have come to a better understanding of her personality. On political platforms, not of the Barbados Labour **Party** nor the National Democratic **Party** which then would have been in incubation - they were not the critics - there were other fringe elements who were very critical of the appointment and felt that somebody who was more influential locally, in Barbados, should have been chosen. But whatever doubts they had would have been very quickly assuaged by the outstanding manner in which Dame Nita wove herself into the fabric of Barbados,

There was no worthy, charitable cause in this country that Dame Nita did not, at some time, actively assist with; whether it was by way of writing a small letter to a group or, in some way, congratulating them. There was no effort which was made in this country on behalf of the underprivileged, the disadvantaged, non-governmental organizations or any cause which was relevant to the lives of our people for which when Dame Nita was asked to add her words, she added them. She did not just add the usual platitudinous forewords and comments which one reads in many of these official documents which **Government** puts out and which organizations put out. Her message was always one that was relevant, always thoughtful, always conscious of the circumstances and the role of the organization.

She certainly enjoyed, in a way that was not overbearing or rude or even arrogant, pulling men down a peg or 2 because she always commented whenever the usual male dominated linguistic structures sought to exclude the role of women. For example, I was just discussing with the Honourable Member for St. Michael West comments which people may make about a woman having children. She always used to remind you that the woman could not have had that child alone. Or if your comment was a usual male centric comment, she always sought to point out that you should, perhaps, rethink your position and the loose way in which you speak which does not take full account of the role and contribution of women. As I said, she very often pulled people up for that approach.

She moved between the various genders, age groups with great ease and made a great impression, in my view, on all levels of the Barbadian society. But she made her greatest impression, in my view, among the women of Barbados who, by her example and by her approach to public life, I am certain, assisted women in developing confidence and in understanding that there certainly

is a greater and more significant role for them in all areas of national life, She did it in a way that was not crass or brash, abrasive or, as I said, arrogant but she did it very calmly and very quietly with the brilliance for which she was known and with the **charm** and the dedication with which she set **to** her task,

Prior to her death, I know that she was making arrangements to spend some time in the parish of St. John. I know that this House had approved the lease to her of very lovely premises at Bath in St. John and, certainly, the people of St. John always looked forward to seeing Dame Nita as she passed **through** on a Saturday, I know that she had several visitors. People would come off the beach with sea cat or other delicacies and she enjoyed cooking those delicacies.

We had a mutual friend Rosina Wiltshire who is now resident in New **York** as part of her UN duties and she spent a few days with her recently. Rosina who is an extremely effervescent and over active person found that Dame Nita was even more active. They went to the opera. They went to something at the Kennedy Centre. She cooked during the day. She got up early in the morning and wanted to go for a little walk. Constant activities, Calling people on the telephone. She read the newspaper and recognized that there is somebody she should have **gotten** in touch with. She was constantly moving, working. The critical thing about her life's work was that concept of **networking** which for anybody who wants to be successful in any field, particularly their professional field, would know that networking in international circles is critical. Networking is how some politicians survive after their political activities, those who go into retirement and there are some people who have done exceedingly well by **picking** up the telephone and calling people who at first they may have known only in a few minutes conversation and developing relationships and spreading influence and making their view points known. Certainly Dame Nita Barrow was always apt to be involved in this **task** of networking. If you had a problem and you raised it in normal conversation with her, she always had somebody, whom she could call, to try and solve it or to be involved or to be in contact with. When you expressed a view point she always found time, whenever she was having dinner parties or other functions to bring you into contact with people who either had an alternative view point or would have an engaging and interesting discussion.

12.15 p.m.

In that regard I remember lamenting to her some years ago what I considered to be my distress at the U-turn which Michael Manley had made ideologically in politics, or what I perceived as that U-turn, having been a product of the University in the early nineteen eighties. What I was hearing from him, and I **am** certain no other university

graduate who would **disagree** with me, what I was hearing from him in the nineteen nineties was not the Michael Manley whom I knew. And she put me in the same room as one of his greatest **admirers** who was also for sometime **an** Ambassador at the United Nations, so that I could **express** that view and thereafter I was inundated with copies of every speech Michael Manley delivered, with little footnotes on it as to why his position had shifted and what the rationale for his changes was. But she remembered my disappointment and I think her task, she felt, maybe, was to bring me back to Planet **Earth**.

There certainly were **many** other small gestures at some of the most difficult times in one's life and big decisions were coming up. I know the Honourable Member for St. Peter relied on that open door policy at Government House because he, at one point, was seen in the newspaper heading to Government **House** to consult, as Leader of the Opposition, and I said that in the comments I wrote about her, that he availed himself of that opportunity, The Press assumed that I was saying I availed myself. I said the then Leader of the Opposition wisely availed himself because her advice was not the kind of advice which only saw people in the context of their position and politics but some very useful personal **insights** about difficulties. And when Barbados was facing its crisis in 1994, I **am** certain that her own influence on who she may have sent for, or called on the telephone, to help make the problems that Barbados may have been facing less sharp and divisive than they were, would have been useful and she could always point out when one was in a catch 22 situation, and she would tell you, "do not make another move, wait..."

I remember those words from her very wisely because in situation like that, you would be dammed if you do and dammed if do not, so stand down in the middle on the spot and wait because events always will turn out to justify you, at the end of the position you take at the end of the day.

I believe that Dame Nita's contribution then has been significant in relation to my life and there are certain occasions when I am certain that from behind the scenes, without us knowing, she may have had a profound influence on the course of events in this country. She is said to be one of the only people, although there **are** many others to whom this is attributed, that **Errol Barrow** listened to and it is said that her advice to him was always accepted.

I assume that therefore there may have been many ways in which she had an impact on his life which would not have been known to us. The fact that it was not known to us meant of course that, as I said, she sought not to trespass on his domain in politics in Barbados and he sought not to trespass on hers in anyway.

I hope therefore that her contribution will continue to be one which inspires women in Barbados and will **continue** to have a profound effect on how women view themselves as contributing to our national development. I hope that her life and witness will also, perhaps help us to understand that very often it is not the institution which counts, it is the quality of the persons, their commitment, their sincerity and their humility which are more significant than the position which they hold or to the institution itself. Very often institutions can only be relevant and only significant in the lives of people if the individuals who hold positions or make up those institutions are themselves **sincere** and dedicated in the tasks which they perform.

Dame Nita Barrow, I think, spent little time trying to find out who you were or where you came from and things like that. In fact I will tell you one final story and that is that shortly after I got married I took my wife to introduce her to Dame Nita Barrow who was by then in Barbados and the two of them got along very well as she would with anybody else. It was subsequent in conversation that she discovered that she knew my wife's family, on both sides, very well from St. Lucia, Trinidad, Jamaica and other parts of the Caribbean. She always said to my wife whenever she met her, "remember I always liked you, before I even knew that I knew you".

The point is that sometimes in Barbados relationships are forged not so much because people genuinely like each **other** but they are forged because of the factors which are extraneous, family relationships, who people think you are and that kind of thing. That certainly was never the approach of Dame Nita Barrow and for that matter the Barrow family as a whole. In **Errol** Barrow's speech when he launched the Charles **Duncan O'Neale** Scholarship for the Young Democrats and one, if not his last, speeches to a gathering of Democratic Labour **Party** supporters, other than the public meeting in Independence Square, he spoke about what he called the O'Neal legacy and he spoke about the conditions in which the Barrow family found themselves at the time of their birth and their development.

The role of the Barrow and O'Neal women is something that he spoke about without again being **aggressive** or dominant, but you could see that the Barrow women had a very profound impact on his life. The role of Charles **Duncan** O'Neal who may, to some, have been viewed as being a maverick or in modern times sometimes politicians can be so consumed with their ideological stances that they forget the world in which they live, the children they have, the responsibilities at home etc. It is the women then that filled that void and that partnership in the development of that family was clearly very strong. The fact is that women had to fill in several roles because of the raging **battles** which either consumed physically, **mentally** or otherwise the lives of the men in that family;

whether it was that they had to leave Barbados to secure a living; whether it was that they did not receive rewards for the work they were doing because they were helping the poor and underprivileged. It was always the women who had obviously to come in and to fill the void in the family life and the void in the development of the individuals in that family. Dame Nita Barrow also would have come up with that to build her own confidence as a woman, her own adaptability and creativity and her pursuit of excellence and the friendship, care and concern which she demonstrated for others obviously would have been part of that very rich O'Neal legacy which Errol Barrow spoke of as he addressed the Young Democrats.

12.25 p.m.

The Barrow family was always known for their hospitality. There was no occasion, even as the State Funeral was concluded and some of us went to Government House, that the Barrow family did not feel that it was necessary to sit down and break bread. It is part of their tradition and it is unbelievable the extent to which it is ingrained in their socializing that coming to the table or sitting down and eating with them was almost the most important ritual in terms of friendship and in **terms** of relationships which they had. In years gone by, people always assumed that. I remember something in recent times. Some members of the Press and others get upset when you invite them to an event in which food is involved, because they believe that if you feed people that it demeans them in some way because they feel that having eaten at your table they feel that they are obliged to do something on your behalf. I do not think that was ever part of the tradition with which I came up in the Democratic Labour **Party** where eating together and sharing at that level was important, whether it was to go to "Kampala" and have a little sea egg when they were in season or go to Government House to have ackee and salt fish which would have been one of her favourite.

By the way, I recall when the Ministry of Community Development and Culture was located at Neilands where there are two Jamaican ackee trees in the yards. That is where the Bishop is now living and apparently Dame Nita passed and saw the ackee trees bearing. She called one morning and said, "Do you know what a Jamaican ackee is?" I said, "**Yes**. Of course, I know what it is." She said, "Are you aware that you have two lovely trees which I think were planted by Sir **William** Douglas when he was living there as Chief Justice which are bearing?" I said, "Yes. But I am used to canned ackee or somebody preparing it for me." She said, "Well, I plan to send over some people tomorrow morning to pick those ackees and I wish you would leave the gate open or inform the watchman, and I will have them done and send them back to you." Obviously, I got my instructions wrong and I took out what I thought was for me and, having a Vincentian maid, I took them home and assuming she knew what to

do I asked her to clean up the ackees for me and freeze them. When I next went to the refrigerator, I saw some little black seeds. She froze the seeds and threw away the ackee. So I had to return to **Government** House to get that year's supply of Jamaican ackee. Anyway, those are fond memories of Dame Nita Barrow and, as I said, part of the culture and tradition of the Barrow family was having the opportunity to be at the table with them and to enjoy part of their repast or whatever they had to share.

I want finally, therefore, to say on behalf of the Democratic Labour Party as for all other political parties that we feel that we have truly lost a sister, somebody who was in solidarity with us not necessarily on the partisan level, but the same kind of causes for which we were fighting for Barbados. No matter which Government was involved at the time or was running the affairs of this country, there were certain common causes for which the support, the eloquence, commitment and dedication of Dame Nita Barrow in rallying people to those causes was very important. In that regard, we have lost a dear comrade and sister and we extend our condolences to the family of the late Dame Nita Barrow. I have great honour in supporting this Resolution which will be put before the House and to acknowledge the deep sense of loss which Barbadians feel and felt at the time of her passing. Thank you.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give full support to the Resolution before this Honourable House and also to associate myself fully with many or rather all of the remarks which have been made so far about the passing of our late dear Governor-General.

It would seem to me, Sir, that the tear drops from the tear ducts of this nation continue to drip day after day as though they will never become dry as people bring to the fore each day memories of the late Dame Nita. The vocal cords of the nation seem inexhaustible as they express grief of our people and people throughout the world as they think of her passing. The pens of the nation, Mr. Speaker, seem never to become inkless as people scribe day after day to try to put in writing their feelings. Indeed, Sir, many millions of words have been written or spoken in a very short period of time in relation to Dame Nita. It would seem that our language, the English language which we speak, does not fully express the various shades of feelings which our people feel about the passing of Dame Nita,

For me, Sir, it is very much a personal and severe loss for me and my family. We have enjoyed a very deep and close friendship for many years and, indeed, the last occasion I spoke to her was just around 5.00 p.m. a few hours before she passed away. It was a very brief conversation simply putting in place a ritual which at that time of the year for Christmas and Old Year's night we

shared for most of the previous 28 years whether in Barbados or elsewhere. Every detail was spelt out at about 5.00 p.m. that afternoon as she prepared for the dinner later that evening.

12.35 p.m.

For me, my wife who has known her virtually all her life and her family from the time she went to Jamaica, it has been very much a personal loss for us. But that is not the purpose of my contribution here today. My reaction to her passing was expressed in very short comment which I made the following day which summarised in many ways my feelings on the situation and the scope of her contribution not only to Barbados but to the world in general.

I said then that there would be a deep vacuum in the public life of Barbados. That vacuum will arise not because the post which she held cannot be filled by someone competent to perform the duties but because you cannot replace the personality of Dame Nita. I doubt whether I have ever known anyone with such breadth of vision, energy, consummate communication skills and empathy to one and all, and such a profound commitment to the upliftment of humanity. I have never come across anyone who embraced all those qualities in one personality.

I also said that she represented all that was best in the traditions and values of this nation; hence that close and profound identity which people of all walks had with Dame Nita. Many seemed not to know that they had it until her death but, quite clearly, that linkage was there because the sharing of those values was a key factor in that identification process. I said she enriched the lives of all who came in contact with her at all levels and in every society in which she lived. I think this is important. It is not only in Barbados but wherever Dame Nita lived she had the same kind of impact on those societies.

I can recall the period when she lived in Jamaica and the impact she had on the social life of that society, and on the nursing profession. I can recall from her position at the University as a nurse she was able to command the presence of people like Sir Kenneth Stuart, Sir Harry Adarnanthado, Professor Cruickshank, Sir Kenneth Standard, a whole lot of outstanding people in the medical profession and it was a very unusual relationship that helped to bridge her relationship with the people, a very close relationship with the late Sir Frank Worrell. When you went to her home for a party you saw what really constituted the people who were deeply involved in the social development of Jamaica.

Another very unusual thing. It is hard to come across anyone who loved fun, just straightforward loved fun as much as Dame Nita. No matter how busy she was she

was always ready for a party, to entertain, always ready to be on the move. She was quite a remarkable person. Her ability **to** remember faces and names was just quite **incredible**. She could remember the names of people whom she **met** 15 years ago once. Few people have that gift, but it was a very critical gift and enhanced considerably her communication skills.

Not many people **know** that Dame Nita had, through her work with the World Council of Churches, the YWCA, and **as** a nurse, a profound influence on the thinking of health care delivery **internationally** and the concept of primary health care as the foundation of health services. At a time when after 2 decades when so much emphasis had shifted into secondary health care the return **to** that concept was **very** much part of **Dame Nita's** work. Few **would** know the effort she made and the relentless position she took over the impact of stabilisation and adjustment policies on the poor, children, women in particular and on **womens'** organisations.

Some of you may recall that at one time there were certain people in those organisations and in certain developed countries who tried to put all kinds of labels on the organisations and the persons who tried to bring some measure of humanity in their approach to economic **affairs** and economic adjustment policies. She was a very important part of that movement. The fact that she was part of it in many ways stymied a lot of the accusations that people wanted to make at the time.

I spoke on **the** ease with which she moved at all levels of society. It is quite an **amazing** thing, and always effusing that kind of **mix** she had, a maternal position and the **position as** a big sister in relation to her friends, **relatives** and the ordinary people.

I also said that she was the most outstanding woman in the history of this nation and no Barbadian female, apart **from** her, has ever achieved such international acclaim at the highest levels because I was aware over the years of the very high positions she had reached in critical organisations and the level **at** which she operated. The contacts that she had were just extraordinary.
12.45 p.m.

I was careful to say, the most outstanding woman, but perhaps in time that may be readily extended to say the most outstanding person. But in the quick reaction as my feelings flowed immediately after her death, I confined my remarks in that way, the most outstanding woman. It is very likely that that could be extended to the most outstanding person.

Then I noted, Sir, that that success was largely on her own. When she left Barbados to go abroad, the

relationships that she forged overseas did not have the backing of a State, did not have the backing of a family that was well known in the areas in which she developed, these achievements were achievements on her own. Later in life she was able not only for the State and the people of Barbados to benefit from those achievements, but at the same time she was able to uplift the entire society as they identified with her achievements. I noted that she exercised wisdom, **good** judgment and careful consideration of matters. She was never a person who took hasty decisions. She weighed things very **carefully** and she **made** decisions about people as she saw them as **human** beings. She made decisions and judgments about the integrity of individuals and seldom, if ever, have I known her to make any serious misjudgment.

I said she brought a fresh breeze to the **governance** of this State, and that was far beyond the role of **Governor-General**, because in a sense what she **was** able to do is not in anyway to overshadow or diminish the positions of those who held other offices, but by their association with her to help to uplift them in the public eye as well.

I spoke, and deliberately so as soon as possible after the burial – I think it was the Sunday after the burial – and I made the point that her complete **barbadianisation** of the office of Head of State of Barbados had put beyond any doubt whatsoever the need for a Barbadian as the Head of State in this country in pursuit of legitimate, nationalist dimensions and the completion of the **persona** of this State. So that in a sense, in her capacity as Governor-General, as representative of the Queen, she so dominated the office, not deliberately, but by her own personality, that people never had any doubt whatsoever that she was the Head of State **in toto**. That is how Barbadians view it. *De facto, de jure, de* everything, **in toto**, that is how Barbadians saw it and that is how it should be in the future. That is the major contribution which she would have made to the total development of the persona of the Barbados State. I have no doubt whatsoever that that position has been reached now in the psyche of the nation.

I am pleased to see that the Honourable Member for the City fully supports that position. She has said so before. We know the Honourable Member for the City to be a bit of a rebel – that is very much a compliment – and of course in different language I expressed the same **kind** of approach of Dame Nita to certain matters relating, for example, to the impact of adjustment programmes on women in particular and the poor, and her attitude to them.

There was a time when in international circles she was thought of as a bit of a rebel too, but the message got home and she lobbied hard in all the institutions. When I see at least one of these institutions now giving priority in its thinking to the social component of development as

something that is worth funding, as important for the development of the State, it had its origins way back in the 1970's, when people like Dame Nita were in a position to try to get that kind of humanity inserted into the development process which international bodies were prepared to fund.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I can only hope and pray that as we speak today that she has already taken her place among the community of the blessed when they have gone to the Great Beyond, because within the perspectives which man can grasp, within that range of vision delineated by the human mind, one cannot conceive of any other place which such a person who has done so much for so many and enjoyed such elevation of spirit and soul among us, I cannot think of any other place of residence for her other than among the community of the blessed.

And m, Sir, it is with that hope, that feeling, that much of the sorrow that one feels personally and one shares with one's fellowman is considerably relieved.

On behalf of my family, on behalf of the family of the NDP and sharing with the other political parties represented in this Honourable House, their membership and their supporters, we as one join today in conveying condolences to the relatives and friends of our late dear, departed Dame Nita, and hope that they would find some joy in the excellence which she achieved, just as we have found some joy and some solace as we reflect on those things,

Let us hope, finally, let us pray that she enjoys that special residence which I previously described,

I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker,
12.55 p.m.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this sitting be now suspended until 2.00 o'clock in the afternoon.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative, without division, and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly at 12.57 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, this sad occasion for us in Barbados which resulted in the death of our dearly

beloved Governor-General, the late Dame Ruth Nita Barrow is an occasion that the Members of this House should feel especially honoured to have been associated with the distinguished Governor-General, the late Dame Ruth Nita Barrow,

I speak on this occasion, Sir, under several umbrellas since you would be aware that during her last years of life, certainly her last 4 or 5 years, I happened to be the Parliamentary representative of the late Governor-General. What is quite remarkable is that on the evening of her passing, a number of us from that constituency were involved in a community activity in the Ivy, old people, middle aged people, teenagers and young children. When we learned of the death of our Governor-General the calm and the respect that members of the St. Michael East community felt for our late Governor-General was very evident in the outpouring of love that followed the news of her passing,

It is not easy to speak in this Assembly sometimes when you are very close to a person and many Members might not be aware of the closeness that the late Governor-General had with probably all of us in here on a one-on-one basis, very personal occasions that we all shared with her.

But many of you might not be aware that the late Governor-General was indeed a very close friend and associate of my family both on my mother's side of the family and on my father's side of the family and later when I was married to Patricia Sealy, I also discovered that Dame Nita was also a very close friend of my mother-in-law, Mrs. Carmen Sealy. She later was invited by myself and my first wife to be the Godmother of our only son Jason.

I recall, very fondly, the many, many occasions on which we were able to exchange family functions, dinners, lunches and picnics. I recall, very vividly, the many times that we spent working with the local YWCA during the 70s where I would transport both my mother-in-law and herself to all of the fund-raising functions that were then being held at the YWCA. There are many, many occasions.

I recall last Christmas day when I was having a family discussion with my first wife and she said that to sum up the life of Dame Nita, one would have to say, quite candidly, that she was indeed a person who had no minuses but all pluses.

Mr. Speaker, when we examine those comments where we can today indicate that Dame Nita - and I like to take those few words and sum them up - was a person who, if you examined her life, one could easily

determine that here was a person who had lived for almost 80 years and you could say that her life was one that had no minuses, That is a tremendous tribute to the life of the late **Governor-General** who we pay respects to today,

I think to go over all of her achievements would be **repetitious** and I would not want to labour on this particular matter. But I would say that her living **captured**, in essence, the very democratic process and the way of life that I **think** should be an example for all of us in **Barbados** to follow, Her life was devoid of **bias**. She saw no difference between administrations, She is probably one of the few persons who could, quite easily, be held in high **esteem** by any political institution in this country, Without blinking an eyelid she would be held in that high **regard** by any member of my political party in this country and, probably, throughout the wider Caribbean, At no time, Sir, even though she was a member of that great Democratic Labour Party **family**, the Barrow family, **she** never once indicated any bias whatsoever to any other political grouping in this country and I think that that was a tremendous tribute to her as a **person** and one which clearly is an example for us to follow if we **are** serious about progressing the lives of our people in the Caribbean. We certainly must use that as an example to move away **from** the kind of divisive tactics that **are** employed from **time to time** that seek to destroy the development of our people rather **than** to uplift them, 2110 p.m.

I **recall**, Sir, on a personal note now, my very close involvement with Dame **Nita** and her preparation of foodstuff, Many of you might not be aware that even when I became a Member of Parliament that I still functioned as a salesman in the selling of seafood. Like her brother who enjoyed the seafood that I sold for many, many years I was also a regular vendor to Government House and I would deliver on a regular basis quality seafood, **shrimp**, lobster, fish and everything, the full works, and I would on occasion go and demonstrate the skills that I possess in the preparation of those foods, So many of the dignitaries who have come to this country have enjoyed the quality seafood that would have had the **Johnny** Tudor touch. I **think** that our late **Governor-General** absolutely enjoyed having that kind of association with people on a one-on-one basis, She made you feel extremely comfortable. She listened to you and she enjoyed quality things in life and I certainly felt proud that I was able to provide a quality service to her while she was at **Government** House.

So, Sir, in summarising, on behalf of my family and on behalf of the members of the St. Michael East **community**, we certainly recognise and will miss an outstanding woman who, by her living will be a perfect example and a shining light for all of our young women and men to follow in years to come and I am sure, Sir, that her memory will live and linger for a very long time in the minds of all Barbadians. **Thank** you.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. **Speaker**, Sir, on the 29th December last this **country** bade **farewell** to its most **distinguished** daughter, Mr. Speaker, if I were to describe the life of the late **Dame** Ruth **Nita** Barrow, I would say that hers was a life of unselfish **service**. On leaving St. Michael **Girls'** School, in those days familiarly called **Grassfield**.

Aside.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: "**Grassfield**". In those days many people who went to St. **Michael's Girls'** School nicknamed it **Grassfield** because of the gap to the **north** of it which is **called** Orassfield Gap, She went to Jamaica, Mr. Speaker, and of enormous significance is that she chow a career in Jamaica, the career of nursing and I believe that that career pointed the way to her **future** on this earth,

As you well know, Mr. Speaker, **nursing** is not merely a job, It is a vocation and I would **distinguish** between a **normal** job and a vocation on these **grounds**: a normal job represents to many people a livelihood, it represents and opportunity to **earn**, it represents **sometimes** occupational therapy but a vocation is a calling, Mr. Speaker, where the person involved in the vocation is not just working for income but is working in **the** service of God and man at the level of a particular special devotion and a particular special dedication to humanity. That is what I would say is a vocation. The fact that she chose nursing in an era when there was hardly any money in it represented the sort of self-sacrifice that she **undertook** in the interest of serving her fellowman.

Mr. Speaker, she went on without at all taking **into** account her own narrow self-interest to involve herself in a large number of regional and international organisations, I **am** aware, Mr. Speaker, that she saw the International Young Women's Christian Association as an organisation that had potential to do for underprivileged women what even governmental agencies the world over may not have been able to do for the poor and the underprivileged, And she gave a considerable amount of her time, her energy and her expertise to the development of the International Organisation of the Young Women's Christian Association. But of some significance too, Mr. Speaker, I am not speaking of her life in any chronological sequence, is that in an era where we in Barbados saw people practise self-help and community service she saw the Girl Guides Association as the type of entity that would permit her to help in the community, to help in interacting with others and to help in doing for groups and for individuals sometimes what Government would either have been slow to do or may not have been able to do at all.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that she was aware of **the** gift God gave her, which was the gift of smooth interaction

with other people, **Hers** was this special gift of being able to relate to anybody, **Mr. Speaker**, you would know from experience that whenever she **spoke** there was a particular simplicity in how she **spoke** but also a particular articulateness, **Mr. Speaker**, she **was extremely** articulate but at the **same** time she spoke with simplicity.

She was able, in Barbados, after her return here to **so** interact with so many **different** groups that she **became** patron of scores and scores of organisations, not only in her capacity as **Governor-General** but in her own right, She was so able to impress a large **number** of Non-Governmental Organisations and community groups in Barbados that even if she were not **Governor-General** she would have been made patron of them, and I would like to make that point here, She was able to **reach** the **normal** man, She was able to reach the normal young girl. She was able, as she dedicated herself to **serving humanity**, to "leave out Nita" and to reach the other person and I am very impressed by that as one of the most **outstanding parts** that she played whilst on this **earthly plane**.

Mr. Speaker, I was also **impressed** with her **determination to see** apartheid in South Africa over. There is no doubt in my mind, **Mr. Speaker**, that around the time when she served Barbados at the UN, when Nelson Mandela was still in jail, she made it her **business** to repeatedly call for social justice and **genuine** democracy in South **Africa**. I heard her **making** repeated calls and I said to myself, here is a **person interested** in genuine social justice and here is a **person whose** interest in serving humanity is wide and varied that here is a **person** that all Barbados should be justly proud of.

Mr. Speaker, to her credit she was an **unrepentant** follower of the **Christian** religion and **there were times** when I was tempted to think that she was ecumenical because **she** went to the Anglican Church, **she** went to the Methodist and other churches and at all times, **Mr. Speaker**, she **acted** in church the way any genuine **Christian** would.

Indeed, **Mr. Speaker**, I am reminded that she **served** with distinction on the World Council of **Churches** which was an international body to which our own Caribbean Council of Churches interacted and related and she **made** a distinguished contribution there,

All in all then, **Mr. Speaker**, I would say that when one takes into account her brilliant and outstanding **career** there is no question about it that she has emerged the most outstanding female this **modern** Barbados has ever **seen**. There is no question about that at all.

In addition too, **Mr. Speaker**, in **England**, there is a large **body** of opinion that says that **whoever becomes** titular head of state should be somebody with the **capacity**

to unite the **people** and to be a **symbol** of unification for the people and she **achieved** that in Barbados. **She was able** to unite this country as Head of State in a situation where **given** its own way this **country** would divide **itself** along political **lines**. But she was **able** as Head of State to manifest **enough charm** to the people of Barbados, **enough** devotion in **serving** them, **enough commitment** to their cause as to unite and **unify** the various **competing forces** in this small **society** of ours.

2.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, Barbados would have **been the richer** for her life. Today, Barbados is the **poorer** in her death, I thank you very much.

Hon R. N. GREENIDGE: Permit me, **Mr. Speaker**, to lend my small **voice** as I, too, endeavour to pay tribute to our late Governor-General. I **cannot** claim, **Mr. Speaker**, to know her as well as the Honourable Member for the City or even as well as the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central or St. Michael East. But what I can say, Sir, is that during the last 15 months or so I would have attended quite a few **functions** and quite a few church **services** at which the Governor-General was **present**. Indeed, my **personal assessment** of her is and it has always been that, in spite of all of the titles and all of the names we choose to call her, to me she was a human being **first** and **foremost**. She was **real**. She was always, **Mr. Speaker**, the champion of the underdog and the champion of the under-privileged. She **never struck** me as one who would have been on the side of a Goliath against David. She **never struck** me, Sir, as one who would have been on the side of a slave master against a slave or anything of that sort. She always **struck** me, Sir, as one who championed the under-privileged. It did not **surprise** me, therefore, that where organizations such as the disabled were concerned and indeed organizations such as under-privileged were **concerned**, she was always in the vanguard of the **fight** and fighting on their behalf.

As Minister responsible for Women Affairs, I would like to make it as part of the record that the Government of Barbados is eternally grateful for what she has done for the cause of women in this country. **Certainly**, we are also grateful, too, for the reputation which she has given Barbados abroad as being a country which was always in the forefront of the struggle for equality for women. Indeed, overseas the name of Barbados became synonymous with Dame Nita. I spoke quite recently with the Director of Women Affairs who made a statement which I think captured the way people thought about her abroad, when she said "I have never been to an international conference of women where someone has not said to me - 'Take my regards to Dame Nita for me.'" Because whenever someone realized that you came from Barbados, she said they always thought automatically of Dame Nita.

In 1985, she was the Coordinator of the NGO Forum in Nairobi and here was a Barbadian woman responsible for organizing the NGO's at the international conference and certainly putting the name of Barbados on the map, I know when the 1995 delegation was ready to go off to Beijing and we were having meetings, she shared her experience of 1985 with the Beijing delegation, telling them what she thought they should look out for and what she thought they should try to avoid. I am sure, Sir, that this assisted them very greatly because that particular delegation had tremendous success in Beijing. She took a personal interest in Government's policy where women were concerned. She would provide the Bureau with documents, Whenever documents relating to women came to her, she always sent a copy of that document to the Bureau whenever she thought it would be useful to Government to have such a document in our possession. She took a particular interest too in women's entrepreneurship. Whenever they had an exhibition anywhere in this country, Dame Nita was always there and she not only visited but she bought from them and she encouraged them to be business people in their own right.

She was patron of the National Organization of Women and even there in her capacity she did a sterling job. She worked with the local YWCA. She worked also with the regional YWCA and with the worldwide YWCA where she became President and furthered the cause of women. As I said earlier, Sir, concerning the whole question of the disabled, whenever she visited the disabled or went to church with them and, as I said I would have attended quite a few church services with her, she had the facility to mix among them in a way which you could clearly see was not artificial. Believe it or not, Sir, we have reached the stage in this country, at least I have, where you can see when someone is putting on airs and someone is not being himself or herself. As I said, she mixed with them with a certain amount of facility and reflected what I would consider a genuine concern without any artificial trappings whatsoever.

She was also what I would consider, Sir, to be a regular person. One of the living memories which I will have of her, Sir, is that I spent some four hours I believe in her company on the very night of the last Crop-Over Finals at the stadium, and with the calypsos especially the rocking ones, she was not afraid to shake her shoulders and move.

2.30 p.m.

Indeed, Sir, one thing which stands out in my mind, and as I said it will be eternal, is the fact that at one stage when the entire Stadium was moving and rocking she turned to the wife of the Prime Minister and said, "Could you pass me one of those red plastic bags?" I can still see her now as she waved that plastic bag left and right and was part of that whole atmosphere.

Aside.

Hon. R. N. ORENTIDGE: I did not even realise that the Honourable Minister of Culture had also planned to make reference to this same incident. But, as I said, Sir, it is something which is going to live in my memory for a very long time.

The other point I want to make about that same night is that even when we were tabulating, I did a kind of work trying to mark the calypsonians 1st, 2nd and 3rd. She took such an interest in that and very often she said to me things like, "Oh, I do not think he was as good as the former singer, I would give him 76 and not 79." She took an interest in it as though she were the Chief Judge. That, to me, Sir, was the kind of person Dame Nita was,

We may call her the Dame of Barbados, we may call her Queen, we may call her the people's Governor-General but certainly my assessment of her was that she was a human being first.

Thank you*

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, they might call her the Dame of Barbados but first she started as Dame Nita of St. Lucy,

Mr. Speaker, it is not by coincidence that today we are discussing a former Governor-General who happens to be a lady and who happens to be connected to Lucy. It is not by error that the only parish that has a female name is St. Lucy and that is why it could produce the only female Governor-General to have such distinction.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes we have to ask ourselves was it coincidence that while the debate was going on in Barbados she decided it was time for her to depart from this land? History will record that maybe the Lord decided it was time to put an end to the debate. History will record that after the death of Dame Nita the debate ended, I hope that even though we are still in the mourning period that when we are out of the mourning period we will not get back to that debate.

Sir, Dame Nita was a Barrow but before her there was Charles Duncan O'Neal who did his work. Then there was Errol Barrow who also did his work and Dame Nita came along and made them look as if they were not working. How can we measure the contribution of

these people? **Duncan O'Neal** in the 1930s did a ~~great~~ job. **Errol Barrow** from the 1960s on did a ~~better~~ job, and Dame Nita also did an outstanding job.

I am saying that we in this Parliament **today** must recognise that the contributions of ~~people~~ must be recognised. We must do something to ~~recognise~~ the contribution of the **Barrow** family of which Dame Nita was part of that family, Mr. Speaker, the days of divide and rule should be **over**. We cannot **continue** in this **country** when **people** have done such outstanding work for **us** to **get** in this **House** of Assembly and praise them and days ~~after~~ we go to a level where we want to destroy their contributions,

I am hoping that the **youngsters** when they **get** the opportunity to follow the contribution of Dame **Nita**. we will be able to say that is the **foundation** we would **like** all the youngsters to follow, **and** they will be able to say when they grow up **that** we had **someone** by the name of Dame Nita who built such a foundation that she taught **us** that the days of divide and **rule** are over. I hope, Mr. ~~Speaker~~, that when the truth is told in Barbados that we **all** say that "Lucy" produced some good products,

Mr. Speaker, the good thing about Lucy **is** that she was never selfish, She **gave** **Duncan O'Neal**, and **she** gave him to Barbados, She **gave** **Errol Barrow**, and she gave him to Barbados, She gave Dame Nita not only to ~~Barbados~~ but Dame Nita was given to Barbados and the wald **and** Lucy did not **ask** for compensation. **All** I am asking, **Mr. Speaker**, is that because of ~~the~~ life of Dame Nita that Lucy ~~be~~ treated the way she should be ~~treated~~.

Mr. Speaker, Dame Nita has done her job and the question is, who will **continue** that job? It is a family tradition and the work must be continued. It **has** not **ended** with Dame Nita but **the** mantle will be **taken** by **someone** else, and I would want to ~~see~~ who would **fake** that mantle and continue **the** work **left** by Dame Nita.

Thank you, Sir.

Rt. Hon. L. E. **SANDIFORD**: Mr. **Speaker**, I rise to speak in support of the Resolution **before** this Honourable Chamber and to associate myself with the sentiments expressed on both sides of the House. In particular, Sir, I wish to pay a **tribute** to the life and work of the late Governor-General, Dame Nita Barrow.
2.40 p.m.

I do not intend, Sir, to be repetitive and I do not intend to go over her life's course from the neo-natal stage, through the stages of infancy, adolescence, adulthood and the stage of a senior citizen. I don't say senescence. I think all of that has been done most eloquently and many

~~persons have spoken from the heart~~ on those **matters**. Nor do I intend to draw on the **treasures** of the English Language and quote from literary works like **Lycidas** a **Adonais** or the **Elegy** Written in a Country Churchyard. I intend **simply**, Sir, to say that she lived a life that was worthy of emulation. She had special talents, divinely **given**, and **she** did not hide ~~those~~ talents under a **bushel** but **she** used **them** in whatever capacity **she** was called upon to act,

I think our focus now must be to **ensure**, whatever **she** achieved in life, and particularly in the last phase of her life as **Governor-General** of Barbados, that we are able to ~~continue~~ from **there** and to **ensure** that the traditions ~~and~~ the conventions which she **followed**, or which she helped to **shape** and **create**, would become part of the ongoing **saga** ~~that~~ is **Barbados**, and that they ~~are~~ used to chart a **course** of continuing **progress** for the country which we all love **m** well.

Perhaps I, **more than** anyone else in this Chamber, can **understand** what may be going through the mind of the **Prime Minister** at this time, because his is the awesome **task** of choosing **someone** to fill the vacant office of **Governor-General**, or rather to **advise** on the filling of that poet. It **is** a **task** which calls for the most careful **consideration**, the balancing of the various attributes that one should possess if one is to ~~be~~ elevated to that high **office**, and it ~~is~~ one that the **Prime Minister** will certainly **have** to **listen** to the views with which he will be bombarded both **directly** and indirectly, But we assume that the decision will ~~be~~ made, and we **certainly** **look** forward as a nation to that decision. We **hope** that it will be a worthy decision. I will not **seek** to bombard him from this particular position with any advice on that particular matter, Sir. I would say that in a similar position I know that I was bombarded with..

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Right Honourable Member, **please**. I am **here** striving not to **interrupt** you because I do ~~appreciate~~ **the** situation that we continue the business at hand. Let us not go down that path. There is no **need** to go down the path you ~~are~~ attempting to go. There is no need for it, **please**, not at this time. **(PAUSE)**, Have you concluded, Sir? **(PAUSE)**. Proceed, please,

Asides.

Rt. Hon. L. E. **SANDIFORD**: I have concluded, Sir,

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the fact that Dame Nita has **been interred** may allow, since we are **meeting** some time afterward, for a certain disingenuousness to invade our tributes, but in fact it is

our way of being inadequate in the face of this colossal and difficult situation where we are being asked to pay tribute to perhaps the greatest Barbadian that many of us have known. It is extremely difficult in those circumstances not to repeat words and phrases that have flowed from the mouths and pens of all those who are called upon in these circumstances to pay tribute. It may very well be, Mr. Speaker, that in this Honourable Chamber which is reputed to be able to rise to all occasions, that we may become overwhelmed in the face of the particular difficulty. The temptation is either to repeat words and phrases, or the temptation is to try to find a new and different way to say the same thing which has been said over and over again. In truth, though, Sir, in the tradition of this Honourable House, all we can do is to offer condolences to her family and seek in our own way to share in the great loss which this country has sustained.

2.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, all manner of things have been said, by now, of the late great Dame Nita. It is impossible to speak of her without, in some way, touching on something that somebody else has said. I wish to share the views expressed about her magnanimity, about the simple nature of the **woman**, about her capacity at the domestic, the regional and the international level. I wish to share in all of that, Sir.

But, like everyone else, I too have had personal glimpses and personal touches. One has to ask the question, what is appropriate in these circumstances? Does one speak of very intimate relationships which one might have had at a point along the way or does one do the correct thing? **What** is the politically correct thing to do, in the circumstances? Mr. Speaker, we all wish to demonstrate ~~that~~ we have had some close touch with this greatness. But we all wish, at the same time, not to cross the line where we go beyond the call and utter things that, in retrospect, ought to have been left where they were.

I remember her in many ways, Mr. Speaker. I remember her both as an individual and as a public person. I have refrained, except on the occasion when a radio station in Jamaica asked me for a comment, from making more than necessary comment on the passing of this great lady.

I remember, at the personal level, the occasion when Dame Nita was being installed, as Governor-General...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please could we have some order.

Mr. B. M. TAITT:...that it was a situation of great personal difficulty for me because I had been given **the** responsibility, as is the custom in the Cabinet of someone being given that responsibility, of overseeing the particular event. At the same time, my wife was in the hospital in

London awaiting a very serious and eventually, dangerous operation and I recall very **much** that it was my responsibility to have personal contact with Dame Nita in the discussion of these proceedings. I shall be forever grateful to her for the sensitivity which she showed to me and, subsequently, to my family when my late wife departed this life.

It is not well-known and, perhaps, would not have been well-known, except for this occasion, that among the people who helped to sustain us during that time was the said Dame Nita who made it her business, while I was in London for about 2 months, to ensure that there was a personal communication. Afterwards when the worst had occurred, I think my children would want me to put on record their appreciation of her very significant input in assisting them to continue their lives.

Then again, Mr. Speaker, over the last 5 years, I had the very great joy of sharing much time, from time to time, with Dame Nita in one capacity or another. But the one, perhaps which I can bring to this Honourable Chamber, at this time that is slightly different from what has gone before, would be to speak about her in the international capacity at a very immediate level. I recall when we went to Geneva. She was requested, through the usual channels by the World Health Organisation to chair the Technical Discussions of that year and therefore she went as a member of the Barbados delegation to the World Health Assembly which I had the honour to lead.

Her performance as Chairman of the Technical Discussions for that World Health Assembly is documented and there is no need for me to seek to enhance them. But what I can tell you is that all the members of my delegation were extremely pleased and somewhat overwhelmed when this gracious lady who, at the time, was our Ambassador to the United Nations undertook to teach us the ways of Geneva and show us some of the better **restaurants** in Geneva. Geneva is not a city that could be described as inexpensive. It is one thing to be shown the better restaurants of Geneva but it is another thing to be able to participate in the better restaurants of Geneva. Dame Nita had had a long sojourn in Geneva before she went to New York and, in the circumstances was able to do a mammoth between the relatively small capacity of the Barbados delegation and the requirements of the intimate restaurants of Geneva. I **think** that is the best way I can put her immense generosity which she demonstrated, at that time.

I think no one will hold it against me if I say that one of her dearest and perhaps her best friend, outside of Barbados, was a lady who now functions at the level of Assistant Director-General in the World Health

Organization, a lady whose name is Aleya **Hammad**. I put her name in the record only so that history will see that that particular fact was recorded in our House of Assembly. This lady and Dame Nita had functioned together for all the time she had spent, together with Dr. Mahler who was the Director of the World Health Organization, in Geneva.

The one regret in the proceedings for her interment was that Dr. **Hammad** who is an Egyptian and who, at the time, was on home leave did not make it to Barbados for reasons which are not now important.

But Dr. **Hammad** and Dame Nita played a massive role in the change of the attitude of the World Health Organization itself to women in the world. These two persons, one from Egypt and one from Barbados, two developing countries were able, in relatively short order, to change the outlook of that male dominated institution in Geneva to the point where Forum 85 and, subsequently, the meeting of First Ladies in Ghana were able to bring to the fore concepts relating to the development, the sustainable development, of the vulnerable groups in the world, that is to say, women and children, the elderly and other similar disadvantaged groups.

3.00 p.m.

Their role in shaping the patterns of the establishment of the World Health Organisation's Task Force, in shaping the approach and the development of health within the World Social Summit – all of these things redound to the credit of Dame **Nita's** contribution, this woman who came from the small country of Barbados and who managed easily to transform the importance of Barbados in Europe, in Africa and to a lesser extent in Asia through the work of health in development. Assisted by the influence of Dame Nita and **Hammad** and a number of other women whose names **are** now part of the folklore, if you will, of international organisations.

Mr. Speaker, I never left Barbados, both when I was a Minister and subsequently, to go to Geneva and come back without having to report in a personal and at times semi-official way to Dame Nita as to what had been achieved on our last visit to Geneva.

Mr. Speaker, I think I can share with this House a particular joy **which** I had over the last 5 years in particular which allowed me the benefit of her counsel and **vice versa** on a number of matters where I would receive a very early morning telephone call, a call which in the early stages when it would come used to create some havoc in my household. I recall the first morning my **young** son heard this person on the telephone he never got over the idea that "such a personage" as he put it, could telephone his household at that hour in the morning. He always considered it a great treat when that voice would come. But, Mr. Speaker, there are aspects of **that** which should

remain where they are. I would merely say in that context, that the very last undertaking which I did in relation to Dame Nita was a negotiation with one of her organisations.

It is not well known that she was, a patron of Rights and Humanity, one of the foremost human rights organisations in London; and the Executive Director of Rights and Humanity is a member of a Task Force of which I have the honour to be **Chairman**. One of the things which we negotiated in the last few weeks was for **Dame Nita** to participate in a unique BBC **broadcast** which would have occurred two days ago. I believe the broadcast still went on. We had negotiated and discussed the participation which Dame Nita would have. Mr. Speaker, it is ironic that in rummaging through my papers today I found the letter which I had discussed with the present High Commissioner for Barbados in London and which would have been coming through his hand to Dame Nita.

Without going into detail, Sir, it was a letter which would have seen her as one of only 4 persons in an interview. These persons would have been President Nelson Mandela, UN Secretary General Dr. Boutros Boutros Ghali, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, John Major, and Dame Nita. The letter, which we drafted and which I had brought down and discussed with Dame Nita just a few days before she died, did in fact invite her, on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the First United Nations General Assembly which was held in London at **the** Westminster Methodist Central Hall, to consider whether she would be willing to participate in an interview recorded by the British Broadcasting Corporation to be used in a concluding act of worship on January 14, 1996.

As I said, Sir, Dame Nita had indicated that she would accept and she would have been one of the four persons participating in that broadcast which was scheduled for the 14th January, two days ago. It is fascinating but on the Sunday before she died, when we discussed this matter, she made what has turned out to be a prophetic remark. The BBC had indicated that they would go wherever it was necessary to do the interview and she wondered, rather prophetically I **think** now in retrospect, whether they would be willing to follow her where she was going. It is perhaps one of those questions which philosophers battle with and mortals ponder about, the answer for which we will never know as to whether men and **women** do not in fact know when their end is near.

The Honourable Member for **the** City can **confirm** that on that Sunday she never **looked** better. Dame Nita seemed in almost perfect health **and** it would have been impossible for any one on that **occasion** to presume that within a matter of days we would all **be thrown** into deep mourning.

Mr. Speaker, great people live simple lives which **are** subsequently transformed for those who are left behind. Great people **are** recognised by us mortals after they have left the scene, not so much for what they have done, or for who they were but for how they have affected us. Each individual in this country can speak as to how Dame Nita and by extension, Dame Nita's family, has affected them. I am not able, like some, to speak of long and early relationships with the Barrow family. What I can say however is that the relationship which I have had with them ever since 1965 has always been one of enlightenment – that enlightenment which has come from the methodology which they have followed in service to their fellowman. I think that the higher enlightenment has come from the lady whose memory we honour by these tributes we pay today. The self-sacrifice which she obviously would have made in her choice of profession, the magnificent contribution of which volumes have been written and spoken, but more particularly the individual touch which she has had on the lives of ordinary citizens, **are** in the end the greatest monument that will remain for Dame Nita and her family. How we will remember her as a nation is yet left to be determined. But what will always **remain** with us is the simple nature of the woman's sincerity, her decency, her commanding capacity to put all and sundry at ease in a short time. Mr. Speaker, when we are paying tribute in a place like this, we try to be **as** articulate as possible. We try to be as honest as possible and we wish fervently that when the record is read subsequently that we would have given a **good** account in a particular way. But in a sense, because we are mere mortals, each of us will fall short of the standard which we would have set for when this day would eventually come. Even so we hope that merely by **making** the utterance or by making the effort, we have somehow conveyed the deep **and** abiding despair which the passing of someone as kind, comforting and good as the late Dame **Nita** Barrow would **have** done for us.

3.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that somehow through my participation in this Resolution which I support that I would have conveyed the love and understanding and **outpouring** **for** the people in my constituency, for the people in my village where I was born and **for my** family, I hope that I have been able to add to the feeling of sorrow and yet, Mr. Speaker, the feeling of triumph that this was another Barbadian who has lived a glorious life in a small community that has made us proud to be what we **are**. I am grateful to you, Mr. Speaker.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, sometime in June 1976 I attended an **UNCTAD** Conference with a group of experts on the transfer of technology in Geneva as a representative of the Government of Barbados. I was especially flattered to receive an invitation to lunch from the President of the World Council of Churches. I think

that time, Sir, I could have been forgiven for not knowing who was the President of the World Council of Churches, but as a young civil servant in my mid-twenties I was particularly flattered that for some special reason I had been singled out to be guest at lunch of the President of the World Council of Churches. That was my first acquaintance, Sir, with Dame Nita Barrow and it was characteristic and symbolic of the way in which she lived her life and related to people, that she did not know who I was but the fact that I was a Barbadian was enough for her to entertain me to lunch.

In this debate, Mr. Speaker, I would want largely to dwell on my relationship with Dame Nita Barrow in our respective capacities of Governor-General of this country and Prime Minister. But I would want more especially to set my contribution in the context of what I regard **as** her true accomplishments. I do not believe that there is any Barbadian in this century and any Barbadian in any previous century who has made contributions and has accomplished more in as many capacities in Barbados and across the world. There may be Barbadians who have had greater accomplishments in one endeavour. There may be Barbadians who may have had greater accomplishments in two endeavours. But there **are** no Barbadians to the best of my knowledge who have a greater range of accomplishments in as many high offices as Dame Nita Barrow.

I believe, Sir, that we should begin by recognizing that there is no Barbadian apart from the Deputy Prime Minister who has ever been the head of a world organization and it is to Dame Nita's eternal credit, Sir, that she was not only the head of one, but she has been the head of two world organizations, President of the World Council of Churches and President of the Young Women's Christian Association as well as Convenor of the International Forum in **1985** in Nairobi.

But I believe that Dame Nita's greatest accomplishment when history is properly been written will be the role that she played in the liberation of South Africa. It is, Mr. Speaker, a credit not only to Dame Nita but a credit to this entire country that one of the first persons who visited Nelson Mandela in prison and one of the people who contributed most through her membership of the Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons Mission to South Africa was Dame Nita Barrow, and her role in the liberation of South Africa and in the freeing of Nelson Mandela will secure for her a special place not only in the history of Barbados but in the history of all black people wherever black people are to be found. I truly do not believe that there is any function that she performed that has brought greater honour to herself and to this country than the role that she played in the liberation of South Africa and vicariously so in the liberation of black people.

Sir, there is a United Nations publication that was published on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations and in it you will see a listing of all the world leaders on that occasion. There is also a special section in that commemorative edition of special world persons who the United Nations thought that history had to be told were deserving of special mention. It is again, Sir, to the credit of Dame Nita Barrow that, on the 50th Anniversary of the commemoration of the forming of the United Nations, one of the world's special leaders who the United Nations thought deserving of being referred for the record of history was Dame Nita Barrow of Barbados. She will live on, Sir, in the history of the Caribbean as having been the patron of a group of Caribbean elder statespeople who prepared a blueprint for the development of this region into the 21st century in moralizing a document called "Time For Action" and for this she was suitably recognized by CARICOM, Sir, in the award of a special CARICOM honour.

Sir, I could go on and on. It is all in pursuit of my theme that I do not know of any single Barbadian whose accomplishments in as many fields come close to matching those of Dame Nita Barrow. Having said all of that, I would want to make the simple point that it would be very difficult to resist the conclusion that Dame Nita Barrow is eminently deserving of being elevated to the position of a national hero of this country. I think on the strength of her accomplishments, Sir, that it would be impossible to resist that she is eminently deserving of being accorded the honour of a national hero of this country.

Now, Sir, Dame Nita Barrow and I enjoyed a warm working relationship in our respective capacities. A lot has been said about the relevance of the post of a Governor-General, and it has even been thought, Sir, that we should change from a Governor-General to our own Head of State. In the final analysis, it will all depend upon the person and the manner in which they interpret their functions. We are going to have Heads of State, Sir, who **are** not supposed to be beholden to the Queen as they are in some other Caribbean countries, but they will come not to occupy the same positions in the hearts and minds of the people as Dame Nita because of the concept they have of themselves, their work and relationship to the society and to the people in the society. In some respects I know that at the end of the day it will all have to do with the way in which the function is represented. It will have very much to do with the way in which the persons perceive themselves in their relationship with the society and their place in history,
3.20 p.m.

I want to say, Sir, that Dame Nita Barrow brought a relevance to the post of Governor-General not only in the sense of public affairs, but from the point of view of her contribution to governance. She made the position of

Governor-General very relevant in our times. A lot of things happen in the governance of a country that **are** not reported, and one of those things is the audience that takes place very occasionally, and very often, depending upon the relationship between Governors-General and Prime Ministers.

I am not going to go into the details, Sir, just to say that Dame Nita Barrow considered of her function as Governor-General not just as a ceremonial position to involve her in public functions, ceremony and pomp, but also as involving her in a responsibility of putting her wisdom and accumulated experience at the disposal of Government. She interpreted the discharge of her responsibility as that of rendering advice on matters of State and taking a keen interest in matters currently before the society or that should be regarded as of national significance.

I remember, Sir, Dame Nita once called to ask for a copy of the White Paper on Education and then at a subsequent audience the contents of the White Paper on Education were the subject of our discussion.

I remember, Sir, when we were preparing for the Social Summit as well as the Summit of Women in Beijing that again there was a lot of advice rendered that was wise and was drawn from long experience and knowledge of international quality. As I said, Sir, I will always treasure the opportunity to have been able to draw from her wisdom, to have been guided by her experience and inspired by her humanity. I believe the manner in which she discharged her responsibilities as the Head of State has, in fact, secured for that illustrious position a new relevance and a new preeminence in the minds of the people of this country. But at the end of the day, Sir, I remember Dame Nita as a person who was very warm and human in all of her dimensions.

I do not believe there is another Commonwealth country in which the Head of State, whether President or Governor-General, found herself or himself at the official residence of the Prime Minister of the country as often as Dame Nita did. In many respects she established a trend that is not usual in what is supposed to be a formal relationship between the Prime Minister and Governor-General. In point of fact, a lot of the stiff formality that is supposed to, and in some people's minds, does envelop the relationship was broken down as **far** as her official residence was always open to me, **Sir**, and my official residence was always open to her and she looked forward, with relish, to participating in events at the official residence of the Prime Minister in circumstances that were not always in keeping with stiff conventions or traditions.

Indeed, Sir, I seem to remember that the last occasion on which she came to **Ilaro** Court on her own

insistence was to be part of a function "Christmas at Ilaro Court" and there was the reciprocal understanding that I would have been coming to her functions at Government House. That was the kind of relationship maintained in which there was always propriety and a sense of occasion. But there was a living relationship in so far as 2 persons with constitutional responsibilities found a way to establish a working relationship, treating each other as not necessarily bound only by constitutional proprieties and exigencies but by human relationships. That is the context in which I truly would like to remember her, that as a Governor-General my relationship with her was not only defined by the Constitution of Barbados, but was defined and established in the most human of terms.

I would like to say on this occasion that I would wish that the relationships between all Prime Ministers of this country and all Governors-General, Heads of State however they are termed, are set within the same kind of context as mine came to be set with her. I know that not only was my relationship with her of that nature but my wife and people close to me enjoyed the relationship with the Governor-General that went beyond what the Constitution says is the proper and necessary thing.

Mr. Speaker, I was with Dame Nita on the evening she left us. The Attorney General and I on that occasion, I remember it very distinctly, told her that she had a glow about her and that we had never seen her looking better. She and I were bantering about her retirement some time in the distant future. I want to repeat that, Sir, her retirement some time in the distant future and also what we would be individually cooking at Christmas.

I remember, Sir, and I would like to say this for history, that one of her last statements occurred at Grand Barbados. It was a sparkling night, and the waters around the Caribbean sea had a kind of look to them. She was remarking that this obviously had to be something specially bestowed by God on this country as a special gift and that was the tone of her conversation before she left.

I am pleased, Sir, that Dame Nita Barrow left in the line of duty. I want it always to be remembered that she left us performing her duty as she saw the way to perform that duty.

I have on this occasion given my fullest support to this Resolution before the House. On behalf of the Government and the people of Barbados I would wish too to extend my most sincere condolences to the family of Dame Nita on the sad occasion of her loss knowing that they can rest in the comfort that she rests securely in our history in my judgment and certainly in the judgment of many good people as surely the greatest Barbadian of this century,

I am obliged to you.
3.30 p.m.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to support this Resolution. I think I owe it as a duty to the record to say a few words about the opportunities I have had when I was in charge of this country as Prime Minister, for it was during that period of time that I was approached by the then Secretary-General of the Commonwealth for approval of Dame Nita Barrow to be a member of the Eminent Persons Group. Quite naturally, the Secretary-General provided me with a document which indicated the achievements of Dame Nita Barrow up to that date and the reasons why he felt she would make an outstanding contribution to that very delicate exercise. I was able, within a very short period, to indicate quite clearly the consent of the Government of Barbados to the appointment and her outstanding contribution in that area has been spoken of repeatedly outside and today in this House by a number of people.

She was a person who was gracious enough, when the Report was completed, to pay me the courtesy of coming to the Office of the Prime Minister in Bay Street and personally delivered a copy of that Report to me, and she was very effusive in her recognition of the fact that had the Government of Barbados at that time been headed by a person who was not objective on the occasion, that a veto could have been made to the appointment. I do not believe that given her record and given her contribution to the world, that there would have been any Prime Minister in Barbados who would have acted in such a manner.

But that was not the first occasion, Sir, that I had an opportunity of working and making a decision that affected Dame Nita Barrow. I well recall that it was really only in repayment of a favour that I previously had received from her. I remember when the Honourable Member for Christ Church West and I paid a visit to Guyana once and we were enquiring into the then state of the administration at the Caricom Headquarters, that we met Dame Nita. She was then, I believe, working with the Pan American Health Organisation and she was carrying out a project in Guyana, and she very generously offered to lend the Honourable Member and myself her Toyota motor car and we did have the opportunity of using the motor car around Guyana for a little over a week. That was the kind of person she was, of an exceedingly generous nature, and there can be no doubt that her outstanding contribution to the world in her capacity as President of the World Council of Churches, her association with the World YWCA and in other spheres of activity has brought nothing but glory to the name of Barbados.

She subsequently became Governor-General of Barbados and I also had the opportunity of working

with her in her capacity as being a Chairperson of our local Privy Council, and everyone who **has** had that opportunity would have recognised her great interest in the matters that came before the Privy Council and her unsparing effort to ensure that such decisions as that **body** has to make are made with expedition and after due consideration of all the factors surrounding the decision making process.

I wish, Sir, on behalf of myself and my family – because indirectly her family has been connected with my wife's family by marriage – to extend condolences to them and I wish to say that they can be comforted by the fact that her contribution has been certainly a most outstanding one.

Thank you, Sir.

Hon. Miss M. A. **MOTTLEY**: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this debate merely to lend my voice and support to all that has been said today in respect of the late Dame Ruth Nita Barrow. Indeed, Sir, there is really very little that has not been said in respect of her many accomplishments, both nationally and internationally, but I would want just to speak briefly of the person whom I knew and have known for a large part of my life, and who continued to treat me with a level of care and generosity of spirit and support that really is befitting of persons who normally are only very close to you.
3.40 p.m.

I consider it a distinct privilege to have had the honour, not only to have known Dame Nita but, indeed, Sir, to have observed the characteristics in her that I believed made her a great person. Great not in the sense of her accomplishments nationally and internationally which were clearly there, but great in the sense of the character of the woman herself. I speak, specifically, of her wisdom and her **sense** of humanity and caring that came at all stages of interaction with her.

It is very easy for people in this world, as I understand it, to be bright, to accomplish much or to do well intellectually. But I believe that it is a very rare thing for people to be wise. Nelson Mandela certainly when one reads his autobiography "Long Walk To Freedom" one is left with a sense of his own wisdom, a sense of a man who understands truly what life is about and who has not seen life as a series of stepping stones towards either accomplishments of himself or, indeed, his people alone, but understands that there is an innate sense in all of us that must be developed, if we are truly to benefit from what the breath of life has to offer.

I would wish to reinforce that characteristic of hers because it is the kind of characteristic that allows you to take decisions, to move forward, to offer advice and to do

many things born out of a sense of what is innately right and not, necessarily, what is expedient.

I also believe that, to a large extent, that wisdom really can only blossom with years of experience. She certainly did have the benefit of those years of experience. If I *can* say to you what quality I have **learned** most about her, it was that sense of being wise and being capable of offering support and advice regardless of the circumstances born out of a sense of, not necessarily, even an intimate knowledge of the particular facts but, as I said, out of a sense of being able to know what was innately right and what was wrong.

We have heard, in here and outside of this Chamber, all pay credit to her sense of caring and her sense of humanity. It is a unique thing when a person can make almost every person with whom she interacted feel as though they were her personal friend. You know, Sir, Barbadians have a way of saying, "This is my personal friend." I have never heard more people than I have heard, with the passing of Dame Nita, say "She was my personal friend." In respect of each of them, it was a true statement because the sense of warmth and the sense of support that they would have received from interaction with her would have relayed in them a sense of comfort and self-assuredness that Dame Nita, the Governor-General was my personal friend. That is a rare ability. Because, in a way it means that to be able to give that kind of assurance and support to people one has to put aside one's own needs and one's own feelings very often in order to be as even-handed with every person with whom one comes into contact.

I believe that it is a quality with which persons are blessed, and she was one of the few persons who had that ability.

It is a funny thing when very often people, particularly today with **the** perception of politicians and nation builders perhaps not being as strong as it might otherwise be, would still recognize that her contribution, even though it had no direct **impact** on their day-to-day lives in a way that someone who would have brought Independence to Barbados would have had on their lives, that they were prepared to accept that this woman played a significant role in making them better people and in making this country a better **place**. When you consider that her presence in Barbados on a sustained basis was truly really only in the last 5 years of her life, it **becomes** even all the more remarkable that she should receive the accolades of persons from all **parts of** this country, from all levels, as if she played a direct role in improving the quality of their life, even **if not in** economic terms but in spiritual terms and in a sense of **nationhood** and well-being.

Therefore one could only be happy to hear the Right Honourable **Prime** Minister offer his own personal view just now as to the type of person whom he believes would be deserving of being designated as a national hero. I would only want to say that I would agree too. I can think of no more fitting person than Dame Ruth Nita Barrow to receive such an accolade from the people of this country.

I also believe that it is significant that she has risen to the heights which she has risen to professionally, in the absence of being given the opportunity to pursue, initially, a university education and that what in truth and in fact took her through her professional and personal life was a determination and commitment to serve others. I believe that that determination and **commitment** to serve others, at the end of the day, when combined with the sense of humanity and the wisdom which she exhibited really is worth more than any university degree, than any job paying whatever, because it creates what is so rare among people, character.

I therefore feel a sense of great loss at her absence from among us. It is a funny thing because, in spite of all the Right Honourable Prime Minister indicated in his speech about her concern on matters of policy relating to the governance of this country and over the course of the last 18 months, I have on at least 4 occasions had discussions with Dame Nita relating to the educational development of this country, particularly as it related to the diagnostic and remedial programme.

What we are trying to do, in the Ministry, is ensuring that there is a shift in the emphasis in education in this country to ensure that the child becomes the central focus of teaching and **learning** in education. She took the point that, very often, children are in a class **room** and are required to finish a syllabus but very rarely do we find out whether they have understood or mastered aspects of that syllabus, as they go on and that the danger was there that they be shuffled through a system. Indeed, it was significant that we had this conversation on the evening of the opening of the **Alma Parris** Secondary School when she attended the church service and when, in fact, she offered to the Principal of that institution to come back and assist in speaking to the children which we considered then, a great honour. As time would have it, Sir, that was not to pass.

But I believe even the sense of that offer alone, was such a boost of confidence for the children at that institution, that school and the staff that they should take comfort from the care and concern which she exhibited thereto.

3.50 p.m.

The Honourable Minister for Women's Affairs has already alluded to the manner in which she enjoyed herself

fully on the night of the **Pic-o-de-crop** finals at the Stadium when she, Dame Nita, the Honourable Minister for Labour, the Honourable Prime Minister's wife and myself kept four separate scores going throughout the night as to the performances of the individual calypsonians and when during the second half she was so overtaken by the performance of the Red Plastic Bag she asked me to go and fetch a red plastic bag for her so that she could wave it when he was crowned the king because she believed he would have won the crown that night. There are a lot of people in St. **Philip** who felt that she was right, including the Minister of Labour. But it was significant, Sir, that once again here was a person who behaved no differently than any of the rest of us at the National Stadium, who became consumed by the enthusiasm that the event created and who, without any lack of propriety, exhibited that enthusiasm and really behaved in a way no different than she behaved when I met with her some weeks later when we met the Archbishop of Canterbury.

It is significant that her interest in the cultural development of not only this country but the region was such that she not only felt that she had to attend events to offer the support of her office but indeed to truly enjoy herself and there was one wish that I perhaps on reflection could have given her was on the night the Mighty Sparrow performed for his sixtieth birthday at the Wildey Gymnasium. I was sitting about 6 or 7 seats away and she called me to come and sit next to her although she had a party of people with her. Throughout the whole show, at the end of every song, I believe the Honourable Minister of Health was there that night too, having enjoyed every song, she had one wish, "**But** why doesn't he play Dan is the man in the van".

On reflection, Sir, I really should have **gotten** up out of my seat and gone back stage and made a request because the passion with which she was longing, because she had planned to leave at half time and she stayed on in the hope that they would play "**Dan** is the man in the van." That was the type of woman she was, Sir, who exhibited her feelings, her enthusiasm, and who saw no fear in doing these things and who could deal as easily with persons from whatever walk of life, in whatever set of circumstances.

Her sense of detail and care, very often she would call to see if I was doing all right and I remember one of the last occasions on which she called was to get the telephone number of my mother in Bermuda to call to wish her happy birthday. That was the type of woman she was, even though she had not seen her for nine or ten months before.

I therefore, **Sir**, would wish to associate myself with all that has been said, not only in this Chamber, Sir, but indeed all over. It is to her credit and indeed an

indication of the high regard in which she was held that on the same day of the funeral in Barbados there was a **memorial** service in Trinidad at the Methodist Church at the **same** time. On the same day that there was a memorial service in Jamaica at the University Chapel there was also a memorial service in Bermuda at the Cathedral because **she** had visited there in the last few years and had made a tremendous impact on the persons whom she left there as well as having some family there. It is significant that all of these countries held memorial services for her and they were **not** memorial services in which just one or two people participated but in each instance the Prime Minister of Jamaica participated fully, the acting Premier of **Bermuda** and the Governor participated fully because there was a sense of loss that we in the Caribbean had lost a **great** person **from** among us and that the event was not something to which Barbados alone could claim proprietary rights but it was something in which all of us felt that sense of mourning and loss, but yet a sense of pride **and** thanksgiving for the life which she lived and the manner in which she comported herself but more importantly the **sense** of comfort and the sense of caring which she left with all those with whom she interacted.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would wish to extend my condolences to the Barrow family and to the Springer family and to the **O'Neal** family, all of whom constituted her close family network. That family has had a very **rough** time both last year and the year before and one can only hope that they be comforted by the fact that in almost each instance each one of the persons lived long and **meaningful** lives that made a difference to the landscape of this **country** and a difference to the landscape of the commonwealth and the wider world. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, **permit** me to lend my warmest support to this Resolution **before** the House and to offer too my sincerest condolences to the family of our late Governor-General.

I think that the family can and should take **comfort** **from** the fact that hers was a life of rich and incomparable service, and that their loss is our loss, and is indeed **the** loss of the entire world because she was truly a citizen of the world and a creative actress on the world stage.

It was my good fortune to have been **introduced** to her way back in 1963 by the late **Cameron** Tudor. I was then a student at the University of the West Indies. She was very much then living in Jamaica with a reputation of an outstanding health professional and a very **prominent** socialite. He was then Minister of Education and on **one** of his visits to the University's Council Meetings he called on me and suggested that I should accompany him to meet **an** old friend and a distinguished Barbadian, Nita Barrow,

That was to be the beginning of my getting on her guest list, as it were, and I was to attend **5** or **6** parties at her residence over the 4 years that I was living in Jamaica. I was on meeting her immediately touched by her warmth. She had that enormous capacity to put everyone at ease. I was also impressed with the distinguished Jamaicans in almost all walks of life that she attracted to her parties, it was not lost on me then that she was a woman of enormous social reach and very powerful friends. I think that she demonstrated that throughout her life. She had very powerful friends and she was also a woman of enormous social reach, not only in Jamaica, and within the region, but also internationally.

What she achieved is remarkable and extraordinary, not only in this the latter part of the Twentieth Century, but it would have been in any era, **that** a woman, the product of a small society like Barbados could have reached the top in three major areas, the World Council of Churches, the Worldwide **Y.W.C.A.** and the World Adult Education Commission.
4.00 p.m.

It is a remarkable story, almost incomparable, **and** I **can** think of no one anywhere who has reached the top at **the** international level not in 1 or 2 areas but in 3 areas. That is very much a story that needs to be retold because it **can** do nothing but add **luster** to the name of Barbados **and** inspire generations yet unborn of Barbadians as to what is possible. It is a story about the meaning of what is possible.

I think it reflects her graciousness, wisdom, intelligence, her public-spiritedness and her love for **people**, and the range of powerful friends which over the years she has been able to attract.

There is an aspect of her life's **history** though that we must put in context when we think **of** her close relationship to **Duncan O'Neal** who made such an enormous contribution to the development of **political** consciousness in this country – when we think of the **fact** that she was the **sister** of **Errol Walton Barrow**, a **national** hero in his own **right**, who was the former Prime Minister of this country, **and** when we think of her relationship to the Springers – first cousins, one of whom became a **Governor-General** – when we think of the contribution of the Springers, **Clarkes**, **Gittens**, **O'Neals** and **the Barrows**, it is really a **most** remarkable story of a matchless contribution in this Century of virtually one family and it very much **needs** to be recorded.

I was glad that before she passed we have **seen** published a biography of her, I have **not** **had** the **fortune** of reading it, but I have no doubt that **her** story is a rich one which very much deserves to be told, I have no doubt

that it will inspire many Barbadians of this generation and Barbadians yet unborn.

In the office of Governor-General, she extended and enlarged the average man's perception of that institution by her warmth, her sense of care and large reach. She had a way of reaching people and I think it may truly be said that she has strengthened the institution of Governors-General in the eyes of the average Barbadian. She has also set new standards in the office. But on the whole we in Barbados have been fortunate in our choice of Governor-General over the years. I have no doubt whoever is chosen, and I know that will be done shortly, will himself or herself rise to the challenge and be a fitting successor to late Dame Nita.

She has given the lie, **as** many Barbadians have, to the idea that because Barbados is small and the size of many suburbs of large cities in Europe and North America, that we cannot produce citizens in large numbers of world class. Notwithstanding our size, Mr. Speaker, we can produce and have produced and I have no doubt that we will continue to produce actors on the world stage, creative actors out of proportion to the size of our population. She has been in that position and her life has been an inspiration. Her work has been impactful not only here in Barbados and in the region but in the Commonwealth and in many areas of the world. I am proud of her and of her contribution and I join with all Barbadians in mourning her loss.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, much has been said by Members who have spoken in **support** of the Resolution before this Chamber. I too, Mr. Speaker, **want** to say just a few words in support of the Resolution. Dame Nita was certainly in my 34 years the most popular Governor-General that this country has seen. She has redefined the role of the Governor-General so that it became not only the person who turned up or who was there on ceremonial occasions or whose name was added to official documents. But she embodied all that is good about Barbados and Barbadians – humility, generosity of spirit, the selflessness that characterizes many Barbadians particularly of a certain generation as well as love of entertaining and extending hospitality to others. Often people talk about how hospitable Barbadians are. Dame Nita embodied all of that and she was able to reach out to people with charm and love and to give guidance and support. She was sort of a mother figure to all Barbadians of whatever age and for me that came alive and was brought home very forcefully on the day of the funeral as I walked as an **honourary** pallbearer next to the casket. All along that route there were times in which I was repeatedly covered in goose pimples, because I looked into the faces **of** the Barbadians who lined that route and saw on those faces expressions of deep sorrow at the passing of this

great states person. It was as if for them seeing the casket and seeing the formality of the occasion, though they had heard the news, finally brought the point home that our beloved Dame Nita was dead. As we reached near the James Street Methodist Church one old lady said aloud, "Go along girl. God bless you." I think that captured the essence of what Barbadians feel and felt towards Ruth Nita Barrow, a sense of love that said wherever she went in Barbados or all across the world: "Go long girl. God bless ya" because she carried herself with such flair and style, such graciousness and wisdom, that you could not help but love her.

4.10 p.m.

I hear some people say, Mr. Speaker, and I want to make the point that I have heard her described as a distinguished Barbadian woman. Dame Nita was a distinguished Barbadian, and I do not think we should confine it to questions of gender because when one counts the number of Barbadians who have distinguished themselves, not only nationally but internationally, in any sphere of endeavour her name must rank as one of the most distinguished Barbadians who have ever lived, male or female.

I have read **as** a student of history of distinguished Barbadians over the years, but I am deeply honoured to have known Dame Nita. She was, as indeed I was, a student of the St. Michael School, and I saw in her and in her life many of the qualities and well-roundedness that St. Michael has produced in its students over the years. I think, Mr. Speaker, there are many distinguished Barbadians out there whom we know little of and whose accomplishments we do not know enough of. They live sometimes in communities and die unheralded.

After Dame Nita died when repeatedly there was praise of her in the newspapers and of her many, many accomplishments, I heard people say over and over, "Oh, but I did not know she had done all this. I never knew this and I never knew that." Sometimes we have a way of not treasuring those who are Barbadian, and those who have achieved, and not letting people know just how proud we are of them.

I first became aware of Dame Nita and her **accomplishments** just about the time she was chosen as one of the Eminent Persons to go to South Africa to enquire into conditions there, and particularly about the status and health of Nelson Mandela who was then still in prison. She came back to Barbados from the UN and a public discussion of Nelson Mandela and the situation in South Africa was held at Queen's Park. I think, I was then a student of the St. Michael School and I attended it one evening to listen to Dame Nita speak of her experience in South Africa.

For many people Dame Nita brought home the horror of what life in South Africa was like for Blacks, and what it was Nelson Mandela was going through. I was deeply impressed by this woman whom I was seeing for the first time and whom I had heard about before. She spoke at length. She spoke with passion and conviction. Here was a person who was deeply filled with a spirit of black consciousness. She was articulate. She was bright. She made me feel happy to listen to her. I sat, as many members of the audience, enthralled with the information she was pouring out, and with the distinction and simplicity with which she was doing it. The whole night Dame Nita fielded questions long after the moderator tried to get the public to stop asking. People were lining up to the microphones and Dame Nita was graciously answering. After that I started to watch and follow her as she strolled across the world stage. Subsequently, she became Governor-General. The St. Michael School hosted a congratulatory function for her and I was able then to meet and speak with her for the first time.

Dame Nita's achievements have been many. I will not repeat them because much has been spoken of them today. She was a health care specialist. She understood education and the social services. She was a well-rounded person. She was bright. She was articulate. She was gracious. So much can be said of her and all would be true. Everybody can speak of an experience with Dame Nita with joy and affection because that was the kind of person she was.

The Minister of Education made the point very well when she said that people spoke of Dame Nita as **their** "personal friend" because she had that way of making one feel loved and welcome, as if you had something to say that she was interested in and cared about and would give some guidance on.

I must say, Mr. Speaker, that at a personal level I will miss Dame Nita. Since I have come to office, this **period** has been beset by many challenges, and Dame has always during the course of this time reached out to me. I remember in December of **1994** I had to give a speech one morning at a function at which Dame Nita was present and was herself, I think, making a few remarks because it dealt with health care. Dame Nita and I often discussed health care, the future of nursing and the future of health in Barbados, and other related issues. Dame Nita used her nursing skill to look at me and say: "But Minister, you **are** not looking well to me, nor do you sound well. Are you sure you are not sick?" I said to her: "I have not **been** feeling well. I will take a day or two off and go to the doctor and **try** and get some rest, but I cannot do it just yet because I am very busy." She said: "No. You are sick **and** you need to take care of yourself." Within a couple days I was so unwell that I could not leave my bed and Dame Nita remembered that I was not feeling well and called to

find out if I was taking care of myself and if I had gone to the doctor.

Again, earlier in the following year, **1995** when there was some public discussion over comments I had made **on** a television programme, Dame Nita called and invited me to come and see her. I was amazed at her understanding of that particular issue and related issues and the level of support she extended to me, from then right up until the time she died. She would call from time to time. She would give her comments. She would give advice. She would give me information about international organisations with whom I could make contact and obtain assistance for Barbados. She would just give the feeling that she was there being supportive and would be there if I called on her. She entertained me at her residence and was very gracious to me at a personal level. I feel truly grateful for the assistance and support she extended to me during the time I have held the office of Minister of Health.

Like the rest of Barbadians, I mourn the passing of this very distinguished Barbadian. But I **think** that Dame Nita, certainly the Dame Nita that I knew and came to understand and love, and I would want to pause, Mr. Speaker, to say that there are other human elements about Dame Nita. Members spoke about the fact that she liked to entertain and cook. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East spoke about the preparation of **seafood** and her skill at entertaining and her culinary skill which is a **skill** I understand she shared with her brother, though I have never been entertained by him.

I would also like to say, Mr. Speaker, for the record that Dame Nita also loved to dress. She liked clothes. She enjoyed good clothes, She enjoyed shopping and choosing fine things. She liked to hear that she was well accoutered and there were times when she and I would **talk** about clothes, style and fashion. It really brought a human perspective to this person because we do not often see or come to fully appreciate that human element.
4.20 p.m.

To return to the point I was at, like Barbadians I do mourn her passing but I do not **think** that Dame Nita, though she would have understood our tears, would want us to keep crying. I think, Mr. Speaker, what she would want is for us to rejoice not in her death, but in her life, in the fact that **she** was able to live such a unique and distinguished **career**, the fact **that** she was able to accomplish so much, to live a long and happy life, that she did not suffer at the end of her life and that she loved and was loved by all Barbadians. I think those are the things on which we must focus rather than keeping crying. We must focus on a **life** of distinction and reflect on the love, distinction and honour that she brought to our country.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to join with those supporting this Resolution.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I too would like to support the Resolution before this Honourable House and also offer my sincerest condolences to the family of the late Dame Nita Barrow.

I must admit that I did not know the late **Governor-General** too well, like an ordinary person I read and heard a lot about the Governor-General, I admired her because of her simplicity. I believe that she was one of the most prepared Governors-General for the job. Born of a middle class family, born out of the Springer and the **O'Neal** family, I believe that family may have contributed to the political, social and economic development of this country more than any other family, and therefore I would just want to say that she was born to be one of the great leaders of this country.

As I said, Sir, I did not know her very well. I have read of her achievements, lots of which have been talked about here today. I believe she was a well-bred, **well-disciplined** person. I did not eat any of her food like some Honourable Members, I did not sit at her table, because I was never invited, but the point must be made that she was an excellent Barbadian Governor-General. I believe she was **well-loved**, well-respected by the ordinary man. She was **an** international woman, a woman who believed that black people could rise to the top. I believe she was most loved by children, by women and men of all walks of life in this **country**. Therefore, I must salute her achievements. I must say that I believe that in the next couple of years men and children will read and marvelled at her achievements, so I would like just to say that the late Governor-General was **indeed a great** Barbadian and I would like to pay my **respects** to her.

Thank you,

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, may I very briefly lend my voice to the effusion of compliments that have been expressed on the late Dame Nita. Over the last three weeks Barbados and much of **this** region have been flooded **with** the tributes that have been paid to her. I certainly do **not** intend to repeat a lot of what I have heard both in the House today or in the wider Barbadian community.

I, must however, have on behalf of my family say how **profoundly** grateful we are for the kindness and generosity that she has always shown to my family. Indeed, my grandson, Sir, was quite often her guest and he had the privilege of running all over the floors at Government House. She was always insisting that he come and visit. I marvel at the fact that at her age she was able to **run** behind him and keep up with him, but she was always anxious when you went to pick him up to have him stay a little longer.

I remember also, Sir, from time to time she would call me and invite me to come to Government House to meet some of her connections from the international community and she would introduce me quite often as someone they should meet, when I expected it to be the other way round, but that was the nature of the woman.

The Resolution refers to her commitment to the nurturing of family life, women's organisations and movements, community service and so on. It also mentions the elimination of racial prejudice and discrimination. I would wish, if I had seen this Resolution, to ask that it also include elimination of class, prejudice and bigotry. This is important, Sir, because a lot of the things that have been said about Dame Nita related to the way she interacted with people at all levels. Her background, her upbringing, her training, her social connections. Much of her life well prepared her for seeing people as important in themselves and she had a very easy way with them of which I can attest. She would quite often, certainly in conversations with me, speak out against the residual bigotry that was still haunting the land of Barbados and quite often expressed her own wish that something could be done to bring about a oneness in this community. She was not able to achieve it in her life, but when one sees what has happened over the last three weeks since her death and the way in which Barbadians of all walks of life have put aside their differences and have united as one in singing the praises of this eminent lady, perhaps we might be on the way of having achieved in death what she could not achieve in life.

On behalf, as I said, my family and myself, I wish to associate myself as fully as possible with the Resolution before the House and extend to her **relatives**, as I have done already personally, but now publicly, our profound feeling of loss at her passing, and our sympathy with them.

Thank you, Sir.

Hon. R. St. C. **TOPPIN:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to fully endorse the sentiments expressed by my colleagues this afternoon. I cannot profess that I ever knew the late Governor-General personally, I cannot profess that I ever took shrimp or any other fish to her residence, but I would say that I really and **truly** only started to come into contact with her subsequent to September 6, 1994. One thing I quickly observed was that despite her international acclaim and all the achievements she had reached in life, she really never lost touch with the technique of simplicity.
4.30 p.m.

I want just to elaborate because it is easy for someone with great intellectual achievement to have that accompanied by snobbery and all the other obnoxious features that can go with it. I must say that in

my encounters with the late Dame Ruth Nita Barrow, at the various functions which I had to attend she was always a very straightforward, simple and down to earth person.

I well remember that at a function at Government House to toast to Her Majesty the Queen that when the time came for the toast, she literally just said, "To the Queen." Everyone was waiting but she figured that the occasion merited her getting to the point, getting on with the occasion of letting the function proceed. That is perhaps an extreme view of simplicity. But I just made the **point** to say that what I admired in her was the fact that she connected with you very **naturally**. Whenever she **spoke** to you, you felt that she was actually speaking with you and not at you. That is, in my view, a very great attribute of one who would have attained the heights that she did, She did not lose the **human** touch.

I would just like, at this stage, to offer my **sincerest** condolences to the family and to say that I do **believe** that Barbados has lost a stalwart and a very great individual,

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Speaker, I **rise** to join, just briefly, on this occasion in bringing **condolence** to the family of the late Dame Nita Barrow as **well as** to people of Barbados who lost a great lady of the **soil**.

I am impressed by what I have seen of the late **Dame** Nita. I do not claim to know her as well as others **did** but I sometimes tend to form impressions of people by how they relate to other people and by their body language in any given situation. The few times that I have been **close** to her, I can say that I was welcome in her presence and that I was seeing someone who really cared for **all** Barbadians.

I recall going to Government House when I was being installed as a Justice of the Peace and, also, as a **Member** of Parliament and I got the feeling then that I was in the presence of someone who was a normal human being like all of us, one who understood what Barbados was all **about** and one who could make contact with people from all stations in **life**. The atmosphere was one of great welcome, We all felt at home. At least, I felt at home. **Whenever** I feel at home in a place I believe that most people would because I can sense when there is tension in any environment. I must say that, even though we were in the hallowed walls of Government House, the tension **was** absent because of the personality of the lady.

I am impressed with the fact that when she **left** school, she entered a profession which was not one of the great professions such as medicine or law, but she **entered** a relatively humble profession, the profession of **nursing**

which, from an early stage, showed that she cared about people because she wanted to be of service to people to ensure that the people's health was **looked** after.

Sometimes, Sir, people in entering these kinds of professions, if they do not have self-confidence, might believe that that is the beginning and the end of them as far as their professional career or their involvement in this **country**, is concerned.

But having entered that profession, she decided to take it seriously and to explore it to the maximum so that **she** attained excellence in that profession. It was through **attaining** excellence in a profession that others at that time would not have felt would have led her in that direction that she was able to make a great **mark** on the Caribbean **scene** and on the international scene.

I am also heartened by the fact that this lady understood what Christian values **were** all about. I have to **remark** on that, Sir, because we live in a society in which people tend to forget the value of Christian principles.

When we reflect on the contribution of Dame Nita, I think we can perhaps say that **her** Christian orientation could have accounted for the success which she achieved because she was involved in something which was not bringing her any **financial** reward. But I believe it brought her an emotional reward and, Sir, I believe it will bring her a spiritual reward, Her whole attitude reflected a Christian spirit, a spirit of one who was sure of herself and one who understood that we are **all** human **beings** subject to the will of God and we **are** all people whose destiny will be determined by how we behave, while on earth, and who all **lie under** the hands of a divine person.

I believe that the contribution that she made to the YWCA, to the Worldwide Conferences of Churches and **her** involvement at that time should not be minimized. I **also** believe that her involvement helped to develop her into the kind of person that **we** are all speaking about.

This brings us to the point that we need, within our institutions, to try to inculcate in people the values which, over time, have proven to be very essential for life and, which, manifested in the being of **Dame** Nita have **given** Barbados one of the great persons in the world.

I believe if she were not **born** in Barbados, perhaps, **she** might **have** gone on to be even bigger for the person that she was coming **from** a small, Caribbean country. Looking at that, Sir, we can say **that** she was truly a magnificent **person** and it could only **have** been because of some inner spirit which was **leading** her **forward**

always, not only **in search** of her own aggrandizement but in search of doing **something good for humanity**.

When we **heard** the **Minister of Labour** and the Minister of Education speak of **Dame Nita** and how she responded **at** the Stadium in the **calypso finals**, **here** we **were seeing** a person who was a human being, a natural person, not a person who was so **concerned about** putting on that aura to be so different that things that normal human beings do that she would **pretend** that those were not things to be done,

I must **reflect too** on the **fact** that she **dealt** - as attested here by my comrade from St. George South - with people of all walks of life. Not only did she do that, she was **concerned**, as he **said** about the **fact** that we need to **break** down a lot of the class **barriers** that exist in this country. Also the fact that she **was involved** in the black **struggle** and that **she** was able to **assist** in **freeing** Nelson Mandela, **being** part of those **eminent persons** who were able to make a **contribution** to **see** the **freeing** of Nelson Mandela shows us the **kind** of **person** that **she** was.

While I did not think that I would **have had** time to **speak**, while I did not want to impose **on** the House, while I did not know, as some **others** did, the **fact** that she has **been associated** with those **kinds of efforts** have, **perhaps**, so touched my soul and my **conscience** that I had no choice but to say these few **words**, because **she represents** the **ideal** person to me, the **kind** of **person** I would want to **aspire** to be, the **male person** representing the values that she had, the only difference **being** that she was in the female form and I am in the **male** form. Her **struggle** for the black cause, her involvement with people all **across** the class lines, her Christian involvement, her community **outreach**, the fact that she **started** in **what was** an humble profession and **was** able to rise in that profession by means of **offering** her a **service** and not only **looking** to be seen or to be heard, not **looking just** for **money** but **looking** to make a contribution. If only we in **Barbados** could reflect on what she stood for and **try** to emulate those qualities that she manifested, I believe this country would be a **better** place. I believe we would **see** better citizens and I believe that we would **see** better community **leaders** and we would **see** better leaders generally if we only reflect on her life as it was,
4.40 p.m.

Sir, today I am **honoured** to be here to pay tribute to the late Dame Nita Barrow and I want to assure her family, based on our sentiments here **today**, that Dame Nita will go down in history as one of the great people in this country and one whom the children of this country should know about. I believe **we** could have a history **written** about her, perhaps by someone **looking** at **her** from a different angle, because she had values, **she** had the **kind of** qualities which

I believe our children should admire and which we should **aspire to**. With those few words, Sir, I want to say I am **pleased** to support the Resolution that is before this House,

Mr. D. CARTER: Mr. **Speaker**, I would like to join **other** Honourable Members of this House in supporting this Resolution. Obviously I would also like to **endorse** all the good sentiments of **the others**. Dame Nita Barrow was a lady of outstanding character and I believe that most Barbadians would like to emulate her. I did not know **her** well but certainly the only occasion I met her, the warmth which she exuded helped me to feel very comfortable. I believe that she was a **person** who will always be **remembered** in the society and she will always be remembered in the world for the work which she **has** done. It is **interesting** to note that she is not noted as one of the academics of this world but the heights **she** has reached would be a lesson to most of us.

I certainly would hope that in the **future** we will have a Governor-General who would be able to **reach** the **same** levels **which** she has reached and I know that this country would be **better** for such a person, I would like at this time to express condolences to her family on behalf of my constituency and certainly on behalf of my family and myself, Thank you,

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. **Speaker**, I too would like to lend support for this Resolution before this Honourable House this **afternoon**. The late Dame Ruth Nita Barrow in my estimation was a person with great humility, I first came in contact with the late Dame Nita before she was the Governor-General of this **country**. When I met **her** it was at a salon where I was waiting for my wife and at the time the late Dame Nita was sitting under the **dryer** and her car was blocking the driveway. She said to me, "Young gentleman would you mind moving my **car** for me please?" What I am getting at, Sir, is the humble way, although at the time she was a person who was representing this country overseas and was here on vacation, although she knew whom she was, she asked me the favour in a very humble way and subsequently I met her a week or so after and she was still very apologetic to me, for asking me to move her car for her. And then again, on the occasion when my daughter was invested as a Queen's Guide she was **the** person who presented the Queen's Guides with their certificates and so on. At the end of the ceremony the way she went out there and interacted with those young ladies, it was done in a very humble way, in a motherly way.

Mr. **Speaker**, I then met her when I became a Member of this Honourable House and on going to Government House I never thought she would have remembered me. Again it shows that although she was a **person** who travelled **the** world and met with people from all walks of life, she **still** remembered humble people.

I wish to associate myself and extend my sympathy to the members of the family and Mends of the **late** Dame Nita and I would like to end, Sir, by **remembering** Paul the Apostle, Paul likened death to the end of a race, **where** in 2 Timothy 4:7 he said "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept **the** faith," To Dame Nita, she fought the good fight, she had finished her **race** and she has **kept** her faith. I thank you,
4.50 p.m.

Hon. Miss B, A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the tributes in this Chamber have been several and **eloquent** and I would wish to do what we do not normally do at this time, but in **deference** to the late Dame Nita **Barrow**, I would wish to read into the **record** of the House the Resolution which it is proposed should be **forwarded** to the family, It reads as follows:

"HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

WHEREAS the late Dame Ruth Nita Barrow, **G.C.M.G., D.A., Governor-General** of Barbados from the 6th day of June, 1990 until her death on **the** 19th day of December, 1995 served our country, the Caribbean and the wider world with singular distinction in a multifaceted career:

AND WHEREAS, in particular, in her **outstanding** life of public service, the late Dame Nita made **great** contributions **as** a **nurse**, health care administrator and advisor, **as** **President** of the World Council of Churches, **as** World President of the Young Women's Christian Association, **as** Convenor of **Forum '85** in Nairobi, Kenya, as a Member of the Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons Mission to South Africa, 1986, which **helped** to precipitate the liberation and emancipation of South Africa and as our **Ambassador** to the United Nations at a crucial period in our history:

AND WHEREAS Dame **Nita's** commitment to nurturing family life, to women's organizations and movements, to community service **and** to the struggle for the equality of sexes and the elimination of racial prejudice and discrimination were central pillars of her life, culminating in the award to her of the Caribbean Award for Women and the Caribbean prize for Peace through the **Struggle** for Justice:

AND WHEREAS in her dedication to her own family Dame Nita was an exemplar of the highest virtues:

AND WHEREAS **as** Her Excellency the Governor-General of Barbados Dame Nita manifested and demonstrated at all times the noblest ideals of her

office and **rendered unsurpassed service** to her country and its causes:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this House extend our **sincere** condolences to the family of the late **Dame** Nita on the sad occasion of their **great** loss:

AND **BB** IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this House mourn with her family and our Nation the **deepest sense** of loss on the passing of a **great** lady, Dame Ruth Nita **Barrow**."

Mr, **SPEAKER**: I would like to **associate** this Honourable Chair in expressing **condolences**. So much **has** been said, **There** is nothing really left for me to say, I would simply **like** to say that during the time I have **known** **Dame** Nita I **hav** always found her to **be** a **sincere** and humble **person** who **seemed** to have a **great** ability to get on well with everyone, Her humility, sincerity and compassion were to me **some** very outstanding **characteristics** that really **seemed** to **endear her** to everyone she came in contact with,

On behalf of my family, **constituency** and myself, I would **like** to extend my **sincere** condolences to her family and **friends**. This **Honourable** House with acclaim will support the Resolution of sympathy. **As** a mark of respect for the late **Governor-General**, I now **ask** all Members to join **with me** in observing one minute silence,

The House stood for one minute silence,

Hon. R, C, **EASTMOND**: Mr. Speaker, I **take** it that we are still under the head of "Obituaries" and so I rise to **speak** on behalf of **Members** on this **side** on the occasion of the passing on 22nd November, 1995 of Cato **Ebenezer** Payne, father of the **Honourable** Member for St. **Andrew** and Minister of Public **Transport** and Housing.

Mr. **Speaker**, **as** life would have had it, **Cato Ebenezer** Payne lived **for** 95 years during which he enjoyed a rich and varied life from the point of view of his many experiences. At one time he practised **as** a joiner taking wood and wooden parts and assembling them into finished products during the time when this country Barbados was able to witness craftsmen and artisans use their skills **along** with indigenous resources to convert these resources into finished products. In those days, **too**, Mr. Payne was able to lend a helping hand to many an apprentice who **interested** in the skills of a joiner, **turned** to Mr. Payne for advice which he readily gave. Mr. Payne also enjoyed life **as** what we in Barbados call in our own unique **Barbadian** way a "speculator". Such a person, Sir, and I believe **some** of these people have gone on so far **as** to be the **precursors** of Prime Ministers of Barbados, is one who **will** buy **farm** animals and sell them **usually** through their wits from

the point of view of marketing and subsequently gaining the best profit in the circumstances where sometimes it took several days for the seller to realize that it was some act of tremendous skills on the part of the buyer that permitted him to part company with his animal and such like. But, Mr. Payne, never enjoyed the reputation as king a practitioner of sharp practices. I remember he and a man called Neil Campbell who predeceased him by about 15 years were the best known speculators of Orange Hill in those days. These were gentlemen who travelled the length and breadth of the North and sometimes went beyond the North and gained reputations as being persons contributing in their own way to our cultural life and at the same time these men were able to spread their wings far. In the last 20 years, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Cato Ebenezer Payne pursued, I believe more as a hobby than anything else, life as a farmer rearing livestock. What is very significant about this, Mr. Speaker, is that in his last 20 years Mr. Payne would literally walk about 3 miles each day to take his cows to find the best pastures. He would walk from Orange Hill, St. James to Blowers and Portvale down-hill with his cows and then walk back up. Mr. Speaker, I observed him doing that early on mornings between 6.30 a.m. and 7.30 a.m. There is always some advantage in being on the road at 6.30 a.m. whether leaving home or going home as can be proven by some on VV side of this Honourable House.

It was excursions like these that I was able to encounter Mr. Cato Ebenezer Payne early on mornings taking out his livestock.

Now I knew him well enough, Mr. Speaker, to tell you that he was a father of enormous discipline. He inculcated in his children attitudes of hard work. He made it clear that natural ability by itself is not enough, that hard work and discipline went into making men of your boys. He produced in his time a chartered accountant who prefers to teach. He produced a lawyer. He produced a nurse and one of his children even learned at a young age to make building blocks. He produced an engineer. He also made sure that his children did not just rely on their natural intelligence but they apply themselves to life with determination. There is no Payne from Orange Hill who is not determined.

5.00 p.m.

Cato Ebenezer Payne, Mr. Speaker, had a brother called Fitz Payne who, I believe, was father to a former Honourable Member of this House for St. James North, Fitz Payne and like Fitz, Cato worked the land. They worked hard and were determined to make sure that their children succeeded in life. He married Albertine Delcina Payne for in excess of 60 years, a marriage which was terminated only by his death at 95 years.

As much as the fact that Cato Ebenezer Payne never became known for being involved in politics, much as it is

true that he never became a teacher or a community leader in a political or commercial sense, he was a man who was able to set an example in his community to make a contribution in every way to the community, and in his last days he made an outstanding contribution to the Christian Mission Church.

As I wish his family well, as I empathise with them in their bereavement, as I remark on his humility I want his family to take comfort, Mr. Speaker, in the words of St. Matthew Chapter 5 verses 3 - 5:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth."

Mr. Speaker, with these remarks I beg to move that the normal Resolution which VV Honourable House would pass at this time be moved and passed on to the family of the late Cato Ebenezer Payne to whom, on behalf of the Members of this House, I extend our most sincere sympathies.

Thank you very much.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, it is good that we are able under this Head to celebrate the life of one who has lived past the age of 90. Our only regret, I have no doubt, would be that we are not able to celebrate the century. Even though the Honourable Member would have had the opportunity to observe his father in all of his pristine correctness as a disciplinarian, I think even at the age of 95 there is still some sorrow when finally your dear old man departs this earth.

Those of us who have had the benefit, and it is a benefit and privilege, of having fathers who have lived long lives, know what a great joy it is to spar with the old man when he is old and you are able to say things to him at that stage that for many, many years you could not even dare dream of thinking about. It is a great joy to speak to your father when he is older and notice the veins in his head wondering what he would have done had you spoken to him in that way a mere 5 or 10 years before!

I am grateful to the Honourable Member for St. James North that he was able in a quite sincere and serious way nonetheless to bring us to a point of levity as we discussed correctly the life and times of the men of those years. The people who lived at that time, as Your Honour knows, were the real people of Barbados. They are the ones - we say the salt of the earth - but they are the ones who made this Barbados into what it is.

I have **often** spoken about the elderly primarily because I have known my parents as poor and elderly and **therefore** I can speak with passion, I did not **know** Cato Ebenezer Payne personally but the mere fact of his name tells you what kind of person **he was**. A few **weeks** ago we buried **Leroy Trotman's** father and the Eulogy could have been the same. When we think of these men and women who nurtured them we could **almost** say the same thing for each of them.

We are so lucky as Honourable Members, We are **described** in this House as the Honourable Member for this, and the Honourable Member for that, We are praising the father of the Honourable Member for **St. Andrew** and really when you think about that, the Honourable Member for **St. Andrew**, or the Honourable Member for **St. Michael West**, or the Honourable Member for wherever, could not possibly have dreamt when we were born, and the circumstances that were their lot, that we could ever be described as the Honourable Member for anywhere, The fact that all of us **are** in here at this time and we are able to share in both the joy and **sorrow** of the Honourable Member's bereavement and that of his very large family, is a tribute to those people,

In rising to pay tribute to yet another old man of the soil, we on this side join with our colleagues on the other side in extending condolences, but at the same time rejoicing with the Honourable Member for **St. Andrew** that he had the benefit of a family life in a family sired by this distinguished Barbadian, I say "**distinguished Barbadian**" not merely to use the language, When I say "**distinguished**," and we are talking about these kinds of people, I usually can say it with passion because I know that these are truly the distinguished Barbadians,

Earlier we paid tribute to a great woman and we were able to do that at a **certain** level but when we speak of these people whom we know and love so well, we can speak of them with real joy. The Honourable Member may not live so long. We would that he could, but he may not, having been brought up in this world that we now inherit which is permeated with all kinds of negatives. We drive from one point to another to pick up the newspaper. We live a lifestyle that sees alcohol not as a recreational pursuit but rather as something to be decimated on a continuous basis.

Aside,

Mr. B. M. TAITT: The Honourable Member is remonstrating that I may be misrepresenting a lot of those old fellows but those old fellows used to drink systematically. They did not deviate from either the quantity or the quality of their liquor. They remained steadfast to a particular brand. And as my father once told

me, "**therein** lies the secret, You must never **take** more than you should at anyone **time**."

Mr. Speaker, **as** I said, Sir, **we** were **able** to do this in the spirit of levity and jollity but, nonetheless, our **feelings** are **sincere**. I wish the Honourable Member would convey to his very large family, some of whom I have known even better than I know him, my own personal and my family's sincerest condolences on the passing of that **great man**, I love his name - Cato **Ebenezer** Payne.

Hon. **Miss B. A. MILLER**: Mr. Speaker, speaking on my own behalf, and I believe on behalf of the **Members** on this **side**, I would like to say that I did not know Cato Ebenezer Payne but I know his son, our colleague, and **knowing** Cato **Ebenezer** Payne through his son who is our colleague, then good things may be spoken of Cato Ebenezer Payne,

I would want to share some of the sentiments uttered by the Honourable Member for **St. Michael West** who spoke before me, These are men of honour, These **are** men who came through the hard times in this century that is rapidly coming to a close, These **are** the men who brought our generation on their **backs** to where it is **today**, and these **are** the men we must revere. These **are** the men who command our respect, It is clear, Sir, that we are at a time now in our lives when **our** old people are leaving us and in due course we will become the older generation, We will become the old people. It is, I think, Sir, a good thing that many people of the generation of Cato Ebenezer Payne would have lived to see, savour and be part of the success for which they were so largely responsible, the success which has come to their children and the generation of their children, Those of us who, like the Honourable Member for **St. Andrew**, were so fortunate to have a parent into **old** age, far enough to the day to see and to be able to gratify **parents** with a life that **mirrored** the great sacrifice that was made by our parents' generation, to see it so well gratified in one's children is not given to all and it was clearly given to Cato Ebenezer Payne. He, I believe, was a man who, from everything I have heard, would have **given** much to his children and from what we **are** hearing today, his children would have given much back to him and back to Barbados. Without meeting him, through his son, who is our colleague, I believe I know the nature of the man, and when I hear the word "**determination**" I know it to be manifested in the Honourable Member for **St. Andrew** and it is a virtue in him.
5.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, without **too** much more ado, I would wish to add to the sympathy and the condolences of others to the family of the Honourable Member for **St. Andrew** upon the passing of this great **patriarch**.

I thank you, Sir.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would wish to associate myself with what has been stated thus far and to say that it must be a very difficult thing to lose a father. It is not an experience which I have not, but certainly from my experience to date with people both in my professional and personal lives, and being there for persons, it is perhaps one of the most debilitating experiences. I am told, that a human being can experience. It is even more so, I believe, when you have had the opportunity to spend so much of your life with that person being then, the family of the late Cato Ebenezer Payne would have had the opportunity of having his guidance, his presence, his support for a considerable period of time in his 95 years, and indeed his wife would have had that experience for over 60 years. That adjustment is not one that will come easily to those who were close and dear to him. Having said that though, Sir, what is reassuring and comforting is the memory and the legacy of the care and support given by that person while they were living to those close around him.

As my colleagues have said already, Sir, it is clear, and certainly if you know the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, you would know that the type of character, commitment of purpose and a sense of compassion that he displays could really only be nurtured in a household where there was a person who was prepared to develop in them a sense of discipline, a sense of caring and a sense in which they understood that they had to live lives of service in particular to assist those around them who may have been more needy than themselves. In those circumstances, Sir, it is really a credit to the late Cato Ebenezer Payne that he was able to inculcate in his children that sense of responsibility, that sense of commitment, the awareness of discipline, so as to make them all better men and women not only for themselves but for their family, their community and their country. In the circumstances, Sir, it becomes all the more important and touching, because there are all too many children in our midst who continue today not to have the benefit, either physically or indeed sometimes spiritually, of that elder person, be it a parent, or godparent or a guardian in the context of our society, who is prepared to invest the time and the caring necessary to ensure that as children their personalities and their character are capable of developing to their maximum.

Anyone who has had the opportunity to work closely and to know the Honourable Minister of Public Transport, would be in no doubt as to the extent to which he has benefited from that nurturing and that sense of commitment and service and discipline. He is perhaps the most organised person I know, full stop, and I have no doubt that that is born out of discipline to organise his mind, his time and his work and in those circumstances he would have benefited considerably, certainly from what I would have heard from the Honourable Member for St. James

North, as to the type of life his father led. I must say that he himself has been very modest in speaking about his father, but then this, as I said, is not an easy thing to do, but I believe that within us all there must be a sense of confusion, because how can one experience such pain with such thanksgiving for the fact that he could have spent 95 years on this earth?

In the circumstances I would wish to associate myself with this Resolution and to extend to the family of the late Cato Ebenezer Payne, and in particular the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, my condolences and indeed my sense of association with their suffering.

Thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to very briefly associate this Chair with all the kind remarks that have been said. I personally did not know Cato Payne, but I was very fortunate to be at school many, many years ago with two of his sons, I remember the many mornings we walked together across the Bow Road and I believe that all those qualities of determination, respect, sharing especially in those days, whether it be sharing lunch or what have you, came from the precepts laid down by the father. I sincerely hope now that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew would continue in that same vein of sharing. It will not be lunch anymore, but I am sure it will be things like jobs and so on, I know the Honourable Member for St. Andrew has not lost that quality at all, I know the Honourable Member for St. Andrew has not lost that quality at all, 5.20 p.m.

This House, with acclaim, will support the Resolution of sympathy and, as a mark of respect, I now ask all Members to stand with me and observe one minute's silence.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that Standing Orders 6, 16, 18.20, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the rest of this day's sitting.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is now the Order of the Day. Order No. 3.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE **THE** LEASE TO
BARBADOS LIGHT AEROPLANE CLUB
OF THE PARCEL OF LAND AT
GRANTLEY ADAMS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN
THE PARISH OF
CHRIST CHURCH

Order No. 3 was called - To move the passing of a resolution to approve the lease to Barbados Light Aeroplane Club of land at Grantley Adams International Airport, Christ Church.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is a resolution in connection with the renewal of a lease of 8 220 square metres of land at the **Grantley Adams** International Airport to the Barbados Light Aeroplane Club.

It is proposed to grant this lease to the Club. In August, 1966, the Club entered into an Agreement with the Government of Barbados to lease a parcel of land comprising approximately 2 acres of land at the **Airport** for a period of 25 years at a nominal rental of 25 cents per m u m with the option to renew for a **further** period of 25 years on the same terms and conditions, except the provision for renewal.

The licence was granted on the basis that the company was formed for promoting the science of flying and intended to apply its profits or other income in promoting its objects and to prohibit the payment of any dividend to its **members**. It appears that it was, for this reason that the nominal rental of 25 cents per year was charged.

In May, 1977 the Club sought permission to sublet to Aero Services (Barbados) Limited the hangar building which was constructed by the Club on part of the lands leased to it. The Club was permitted to sublet its hangar building to Aero Services (Barbados) Limited on the basis that the revised rental payable by the Club should be at the rate of \$8 712 per **annum** with effect from September 19, 1979 with a review every 10 years or at such earlier time as any change in the terms of the sub-lease required.

Lease agreement between the Barbados Light Aeroplane Club and the Government of Barbados **continued** with this variation until it expired on April 14, **1991**. No further lease was done between the period 1991 and 1996, up to the present time, that is. Negotiations **took** place between the Ministry and the Club and it was finally agreed to **grant** the Club a further lease for a further period of 25 years at an initial rent of \$14 400 per **annum** with effect from April 15, 1991 with rent reviews every 5 years and, on the basis, that the Club will be responsible **for** the payment of land taxes, utilities and other outgoings and

charges arising out of its use of the premises. The Club will also be granted permission to sublet its hangar building to **Trans-Island** Air, the successor to Aero Services (Barbados) Limited.

It should be noted that, although the hangar building is owned by the Barbados Light Aeroplane Club, it is **the** Airport authorities' direct responsibility to ensure that the hangar is considered fit to maintain aircraft to the regulatory standard of air worthiness. It is proposed that the initial rent for the first **5** years should therefore be \$14 400 per m u m for the following reasons:

- (1) The Club is a non-profit making organization and it does not pay dividends or bonus.
- (2) The Club refurbished the hangar building to a standard acceptable to the Chief Technical Director of Aviation at its own expense.

And:

- (3) The hangar facility provides, *inter alia*, an outlet for the development of a **certain** technical aviation skill and an **important** support service by way of aircraft maintenance and storage of spares. It should be noted that in addition to revenue collected by the Barbados Government by way of land rent and taxes, the Government benefits by way of fees and other statutory payments from the business generated at the hangar building.

Parliamentary approval is now therefore sought for this resolution of the said 8 220 square metres of land at Grantley Adams **International** Airport to the Barbados Light Aeroplane Club in the terms mentioned.

I beg to move that this resolution do now pass.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for **St. Michael** East.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, this resolution **will** not be opposed by the Members of the Opposition.

There are a few comments that we would want to place on the record that maybe relevant to this resolution and I would seek to do so as quickly as possible.

For many, many years, the Light Aeroplane Club has, in fact, been providing an outlet for those flying enthusiasts who are excited by the skies and I was one of them probably 30 years ago. It is **an** area that can **provide** significant enjoyment for several nationals and it is **an** area certainly in **terms** of the development of tourism that

would provide entertainment and an outlet for visitors alike to experience the smaller islands around the Caribbean, *et cetera*.

There are some conditions that are attached to this lease arrangement in this resolution which are quite acceptable and we have no divide. But I **am** concerned that, in Barbados today in 1995, 1996 that we still have a situation where an aircraft as recently as a week or some 10 days ago should be making its way to the shores of Barbados and runs into the kinds of problems that we have **observed** and whether there is going to be an enquiry into that, over a short period of time.

5.30 p.m.

But it is of great concern to me, Sir, that the facilities that are offered and the attitude towards the provision of maintenance and the preservation of proper functioning aircraft can be reduced to the extent that within this region we have an aircraft that has indeed created some anxiety in the minds of all Barbadians and certainly in the minds of the flying public. I would publicly like to congratulate the pilot who was involved in that most recent experience. Not only would I like to compliment for having landed the aircraft in his own words, as quietly as he was skilled to do because he felt that was the right thing to do but what was outstanding was that he had an attitude which sought to preserve the lives of his passengers even though he was into a difficult situation.

I just want to make the point that this is an area that impressed me and I would like to congratulate **him** for what he did. I compliment him for focussing on his passengers during a very difficult experience. It brings me, Sir, to **this**, **there are** a number of questions regarding the release of this land which we want to have **answered** in relation to aviation as it relates to Barbados. This area is one that can provide entertainment and it is an area that tourism can certainly piggy back on, and we would be able to see the kind of programmes and flying policies put in place that would allow members of the public who are interested to participate. But we must not allow standards to drop in this country to the **extent** that we have to be confronted by these kinds of situations from time to time.

When I worked in the airline industry, Sir, I was responsible for writing the accident and emergency manual. I cannot recall which year it was but I was the Chairman of the Committee that dealt with the accident and emergency **manual** which is still being used today and that work taught me, when I was in that exercise, that an accident should never happen. There was a strong focus in those days when we were **training** to write these manuals and to understand accident and emergency, that an accident should never happen and the argument that was used by the tutors at the time was that if everything is done as it is

supposed to be done then an accident should never occur. That is something that I have always held in the back of my mind that if you are doing something you must be precise in what you are doing and you should ensure that an accident should never occur.

Yes the light aeroplane club will have improvements, yes will have facilities etc., but we have to be aware that if you are making provisions to clubs or institutions or whatever that the standards are so maintained in this country that at no time the public locally, the public internationally, must have this fear that something is going to happen that will endanger their lives.

In addition to that, Sir, the residents of Fairy Valley, Parish Land and even as far down as Ealing Grove and Ealing Park continue to be at risk to the fumes of aircraft coming into this country. My research shows me, Sir, that the highest level of asthma patients can be found in the immediate surroundings of the airport. That is a fact that I think any person who wants to research can find out. It is my information that it is an area that some attention must be paid to with regard to the residents there.

I recall that there has been from time to time debate in this Honourable House on the acquisition of the land so that persons so sited at present can be **resited** and not be exposed to the elements of the jet fumes *et cetera*. That is a consideration.

I am aware that the Honourable Minister is a very neat person. I have known him from school days and he is a very meticulous person and I **am** sure that he would want to pay some attention to the finalising of those acquisitions as well contiguous to the Light Aeroplane Club area and we would have to carry some degree of focus as far as the environment is concerned on behalf of the residents.

I **am** not sure if the Honourable Member for Christ Church East is aware of some of the concerns the residents have been expressing but it is considered to be a major problem.

Now, Sir, I would not want to be accused of digressing from the topic at hand but I think that I would want to use this opportunity where we **are** seeking to deal with the area of international transportation and I would like to focus very briefly, Sir, on an impasse that seems to be developing in the area of international transport by way of the servicing of the needs of the Caribbean people by a regional carrier that will ensure us being able to travel from point "A" to point "B" within the region at schedules that **are** appropriate and in conditions that are acceptable to a proper level of transportation. Certainly we would want to ensure that the safety net in terms of accidents and other emergency procedures **are** in place and that members of

the public can feel very satisfied that the services that are being provided at the airport are indeed acceptable, professional in nature and that they can travel on their business without fear of accident or fear of losing their lives through wanting to visit a family member or wanting to travel on business.

For some time there has been a significant argument developing in the Caribbean about whether we should continue the operation of a regional carrier with one that was losing significant revenue.

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: no, I want to put it in the record at this time. And a decision was taken that that could not continue.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the interest of the Caribbean people, and to ensure that we do not find ourselves in a situation or with a scenario that in the not too distant future we find that the Barbados **airport**, as well as other airports within the Caribbean are without a regional carrier.
5.40 p.m.

This to my mind, Sir, will be provoked unless there is an agreement within the Caribbean region and that there is a clear policy position as to where we stand as to where we stand as a Caribbean people in the **area** of a regional carrier. It is clear to me, Sir, and I will speak very briefly on it that if the present trend continues that both or all **three** operators right now within the Caribbean region are going to nose-dive and they will become a calamity and the Caribbean people will certainly be without a regional carrier.

Now I believe, Sir, that...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, is your word "nose-dive" I believe that is your way of getting back the land so you would not get too far from the topic? You are coming back down I believe.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, sometimes when you are flying and I have had some experience, Sir, and you have what is termed a "wind shear" or "wind drift", an aircraft drifts off course and you have to put a little power onto it to get back on course.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am glad you are **aware** of that.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: I suffered from a little bit of wind shear and I will get back on course. I am just making the point very briefly that I think we must take this opportunity. The reason that I am raising this at this time now is that I believe, Sir, it is current and that common

sense should prevail throughout the Caribbean region and that we should not allow insular attitudes to prevail that will eventually lead to the demise of a carrier that can properly service the needs of the Caribbean people. I am clear in my mind, Sir, that with all of the arguments about fitting up we are one people in the Caribbean. We have one image to protect. If we do not rise above these petty individual positions where this country is fighting to save jobs in that country or this person wants this here or this person wants the next thing there, we have to be big enough as people to ensure that the aviation network which is available to the Caribbean is one that is properly run, it is well set out and **planned**. I have no problem with the fact that the Resolution noted that the Light Aeroplane Club will seek to upgrade the hangar facilities and so forth, because that is precisely what is to happen. This is 1996 and the standards are very high and people are going to demand throughout the world that standards are kept whether it is a Light Aeroplane Club or whether it is a commercial aircraft.

I think this is the point that I want to convey, Mr. Speaker. We have to continue to upgrade our standard whether it is in our hangar or whether it is the maintenance of our aircraft because, as I said, accidents should not occur. They really should not occur. I will defer a lot of what I really want to debate when we come to probably the Estimates or another opportunity very shortly where we will be able to **have a** full scale debate on aviation in this country so that we will be able to clear up a lot of these matters rather than have to do it under an acquisition where you do not have the room to develop a full scale debate on aviation.

Sir, I am just seeking to give my stamp of approval on this Resolution and urge that my comment being taken note of by the respective persons, Ministries or 'the respective countries and we accept that this Resolution is in order and we support it.

Mr. SPEAKER: The **Honourable** Member for St. Michael North.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my full support to the Resolution presently before this Honourable Chamber, It is a Resolution which I am happy has not divided the House and I really wish to support it because it seeks to give assistance to an organisation that has played a very significant role over the years and a role that has substantially gone unnoticed. You hear the name of the Barbados Light Aeroplane Club so often but you never know what has been happening. You do not know, in fact, what has been happening, You do not know that this is an organisation that has **been collaborating** with Government and the Civil Aviation Authorities in Barbados to ensure that a large number of persons, obtain a

private pilot's certificate which is a certificate which meets all international standards and is highly respected around the world. Once you obtain that local pilot's **certificate**, it is then relatively easy to go on and obtain your commercial licence. The fact is that many pilots who have received the initial training at the Barbados Light Aeroplane Club **are** now employed and flying on airlines such as LIAT, **Carib** Express, Trans-Island Air, Mustique Airways, Delta and so on. So it is a licence that has some international acclaim. While therefore a number of people think of the Club primarily as a place to enjoy a hobby, the fact is that it has served as an institution that has provided training and has been a precursor to higher training and in fact served to **place** a lot of bread on people's tables and enabled them to earn a living for themselves and their **families**.

I am aware that the Club has plans to try and have the commercial licence training done in Barbados rather than to have to send people overseas to do that training. **They are** not in a position at this stage to do it because they do not have **the** facilities or equipment, but they plan to do that as well,

Mr. Speaker, the Club not only plays a role in relation to individuals, but I am submitting that it actually plays a role more directly in relation to the economy of Barbados. Because of the very high reputation enjoyed by **the** certificate that is awarded by the Club, we have a situation now where a Canadian company, the Toronto Flight Centre, because of the bad weather in Canada and the inability to get enough flight training for pilots, they actually are now in collaboration with the Barbados Light Aeroplane Club seeking to get us to do the training for their pilots. Now if that in fact comes on stream, it means that a large number of people as students will be coming to Barbados and thereby bringing some foreign exchange to the country. In fact, I would like to make the point too that since the Club has training facilities here it thereby prevents the need for students here to go overseas to train and that in itself saves Barbados foreign exchange. Of course, Mr. Speaker, when all that is taking place there is a benefit to the tourism industry which the Honourable Member for St. Michael East started to speak about. More visitors come to hotels and spend money at restaurants and so on. But it is really not only that tourism role which I would like to see the Club playing. The Club right now is the owner, Mr. Speaker, of 2 two-seater basic training aircraft and a four-seater aircraft as well and it also has access to two other four-seater aircraft privately owned by members. I would wish, Mr. Speaker, to say that with this fleet of 5 aircraft the company can easily play a role in tourism in the area of sky tours or island tours for tourists coming to Barbados. I certainly intend to discuss with the Minister and the company in further detail that possibility to see if and how that can be achieved.

Mr. Speaker, I think that I really need to make the point that a number of small entrepreneurs and small

businessmen must realize that with some creativity and discipline they can play a role and achieve some success in this area of tourism. Take for example the development of **cruise** tourism **over** which I have responsibility. The projections in Barbados right now are extremely good for **cruise** tourism. The projections **are** that by the turn of the century we shall **see** some three-quarters of a million tourists. We have projections of three-quarters of a million cruise tourists by **the** turn of the century. There is nothing that **says** that every cruise tourist who arrives in Barbados has to walk down Broad Street and shop at the big shops there. There is nothing that says they must go to **Harrison's** Cave. They can go equally to Swan Street, Suttle Street or anywhere at all once local entrepreneurs can come with a suitable and attractive product, I would be happy **to** see **more** attractions because cruise passengers **are** anxious for attractions, the more the **merrier**. **There** is nothing to pin us down to the existing stock, as it were, of attractions so I am happy to see that the Barbados Light Aeroplane Club is anxious to play a role in this area by way of the provision of sky tours and island tours for passengers. I, therefore, Mr. Speaker, commend the Club.

5.50 p.m.

The question raised by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, I am stating categorically that I have no intention whatsoever of going into any aspect of the air crash that recently took place off Barbados. The matter is under investigation. I thought the Honourable Member would have respected that and refrained from any comment whatsoever on the matter. The fact is that it is under investigation and I am not going to make the sort of comment he made. At the same time, I am going to recognise that a club such as the Barbados Light Aeroplane Club is also well equipped to operate in the area of emergency response, search and rescue as well. The aircraft are small. They are fully **instrumented** and they can easily take off or land on short runways, and even in some cases they can operate on grass strips.

I would like to see the day come when aircraft of that size recognise that even in Barbados they can play a role in terms of rescue or emergency response in Barbados itself. If, for example, an emergency takes place in St. Lucy and someone is trapped behind a steering wheel, there is no reason why a light aircraft, helicopter, or whatever, should not be allowed to take off from a point in Barbados and fly down to that area and perform a role that is needed to save a life. I recognise the role the Club wants to play and I want to give the Club the assurance that I certainly will be doing all in my power to ensure that it can, in fact, play a meaningful role in Barbados.

With regard to the **terms** of the lease, the terms are reasonable. I know that when the Club was first started in 1966, and I say this with no apology, I commend the

late **Errol** Barrow for the role he played, and the flight enthusiasts, who set the company up, and that is a fact. At that time the lease given to them was for some **25¢** per year for a 25-year period. Now that was obviously unrealistic and it was the Land **Tax** Commissioner, I believe, who went in and **assessed** a rental value some 10 years or so into the old lease and found that it was worth some \$8 700 per year, so it was then raised to that. We now have done a reassessment and that has placed a higher rental value on it than we have agreed to. I think so, but we are not going to go to the level that was suggested.

At present, I think the terms are reasonable, I **think** they intend to perform a very worthwhile role in Barbados, I would like to see the day come when at some stage, in **terms** of the tenure of the lease, that perhaps the terms for that could be revised downward, if possible, if circumstances warrant and permit, I am happy that on all sides we are in agreement with the Resolution and there will come a time - the Honourable Member for St. Michael East is anxious - when we would be able to debate all aviation issues, and I, also, will have a lot to say.

The Honourable Member spoke about the fact that there should never be crashes. I would just like to remind him that, in fact, when we assumed office we found some investigations in relation to crashes as well so that it is not as if crashes have begun under this administration. The Honourable Member must realize and remember that fact,

Now, the Light Aeroplane Club is located to the south side of the Airport. I do not think that a discussion of this nature would be complete without some reference to plans to develop the Airport and I think I should say a few words because that is where the Light Aeroplane Club operates. It is at the south end of the Airport.

It is obvious to anyone making even a short visit to the Airport, especially on a Saturday afternoon, that the Airport as presently configured has really outlived its usefulness. In fact, when the airport was built and designed in the **1970s**, it was built to cover a 20-year period and, the 20 years are now pretty much up. You have a situation where, on a Saturday afternoon especially, I tend to go there on Saturday afternoons, and you see great congestion at the Airport. That is good for us because it means a lot of tourists, but it is grossly inconvenient to those people **trying** to get out and using the premises. Obviously, we have to do something about that sad state of affairs.

The plans are on stream. We are now, in terms of the Airport Expansion Plan, at the design phase and the plan is to have the existing structure, arrivals and departure, become just departure with an extended check-in counter area, lots more duty-free shops for tourists and so on.

The other problem too is that even now you have a situation where because of the number of flights there have been back-ups on some days with aircraft as far down as the present cargo terminal so there **are** plans as well to extend and upgrade the **parking** apron and indeed the runway as well, The cargo facility as well is going to be rebuilt. There is going to be a new Arrivals Hall separate and distinct from the existing physical structure, and we **are** really **catering** for 1 600 visitors at peak hour. That is the present plan so we are **taking** this airport project very seriously.

The Honourable Member spoke of the need for some safety mechanism, I am not going into that in any **great** detail. He spoke of the need for some mechanism to be put in place so that an accident should never happen, I am not sure if the Honourable Member would really expect that in these days there is not going to be some accident at some stage. It happens all over the world,

There are also plans on stream to have in place on Airport Authority as well to manage the entire affairs of the Airport because it is amazing that for all **these** years the airport has been run, in fact, strictly by an Airport Manager. I do not think anyone could accept that to be a satisfactory state of affairs, but the plans now **are** to put in place an Airport Authority. A study is being done now to see exactly the best option to adopt in **terms** of the structure of that Authority.

Sir, I assure the Honourable Member that a number of steps are now being taken in relation to the **Grantley Adams** International Airport.

Mr. Speaker, I see you indicating that you would wish me to come home but I assure the Honourable Member that the time will come when there would be **the** opportunity to have a very full debate on all aspects of aviation **matters** affecting the industry. I too, then, will have a number of things to say.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will again endorse my support for the Resolution.

Thank you.

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER: Mr. Speaker, I **rise** to support this Resolution, but in view of the fact that I have been drawn into the debate, I felt I should say just a few words.

Now, the Light Aeroplane Club is established in an area which lies within my constituency and I have to address the implications for the residents of this **area**. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East alluded to my representation of the people of Christ Church East so therefore I felt compelled to rise on this occasion. I

just want the Members of the House to know that my concern in this regard is only that the safety of the residents in the area just below the airport be assured and that I am aware of the situation where there are plans to remove some of the residents in the flight path. I have spoken to the relevant Ministers about this and I am hoping that something can be done about it as soon as possible so that the residents can be moved to an area of greater safety. 6.00 p.m.

I know sometimes people might not want to move from an area, but when one looks at the recent incident - I am not going to comment on it in terms of any matter that is going to affect the legality of the issue, but I am dealing with the principle - when one looks at air traffic and at the possibilities for accidents within that area, especially when airlines are approaching the airport, I think it is important to address the issue of houses just below the airport. There is also a situation where we have a number of cars which are either parked or parked out just below the airport, and I do not think this is really advisable to park in an area just where the aeroplanes are descending, in the Thyme Bottom area. I think we are going to have to look speedily at addressing that situation, because one never knows when a disaster can occur.

Another point I want to make, Sir, is the need to have simulation exercises done, on a regular basis, which will involve the residents of that area, in case there be some disaster in that area, where rescue teams can be put immediately into effect. I am hoping that this can be given consideration, because one never knows when a disaster is going to happen. We had the case of an airline going 17 miles out to sea, but it could have been a mile out. The point I am making is that we need, as a matter of urgency, to address those houses which lie in the flight path and to look at emergency simulation exercises in the whole general area of Thyme Bottom, Chancery Lane, Wilcox and Fairy Valley. Those areas need to be addressed and I hope it will be done as speedily as possible.

I am glad to see that the Light Aeroplane Club is continuing its efforts to train pilots. It is important that the pilots become very skilled. I know we have produced a number of good pilots in Barbados. The history of air traffic safety is nearly 100% sound and I think that the presence of the Light Aeroplane Club in Barbados is a good move and we should do everything to make sure it continues so that the pilots can be well trained and can assist in averting any disasters, such as has happened in the past.

With these few words, I want to say I support the Resolution, but I am just hoping that as an extension to this whole exercise that we look at the precautions against loss of life in the constituency of my dear people, Christ Church East.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I would just like to assure the Honourable Member for Christ Church East that the question of the relocation is presently engaging the attention of both the Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of International Transport. It will be resolved very shortly.

With those few brief remarks, I now move that this Resolution do now pass,

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn to the 23rd day of January, 1996, Tuesday, at 11 o'clock in the morning.

Speaking further on the Adjournment, Sir, it is proposed that on the 23rd January - and mention has been made of this to the Leader of the Opposition, I have in my hand the draft of the letter to Your Honour which will be copied to the Leader of the Opposition - we would wish for the debate on the Protocol for the implementation of the Prices and Incomes Policy to commence. The Government would wish for that debate to be broadcast on radio and television.

It is further proposed, too, Mr. Speaker, that the White Paper on Education Reform would also be broadcast both on radio and television, and we would wish to commence that debate on the 6th day of February, 1996.

It would appear, Sir, that we should anticipate a very busy first half of this year in terms of the Order Paper for the House of Assembly. There are some weeks, because we must bear in mind that in this quarter the Estimates of Expenditure will be debated, and certainly in this half year the Budget would follow on to that as well. It is quite clear to me that there are going to be some weeks when the House will meet on more than one day. I would propose to discuss with the Leader of the Opposition the proposal that the House should start meeting at 10 o'clock in the morning, rather than 11 o'clock, and certainly when we get down to Estimates of Expenditure naturally we will be meeting every day of the week until that debate closes here and in the Other Place, and then of course we go into another full week's debate on the Budget whenever that occurs, so there is quite a lot of business expected to come on. There is quite a bit of legislation in the pipeline, the Attorney General advises, which will come before the House of Assembly before the end of this month and through February, March and April, and quite sizeable pieces of legislation which would, I think, excite considerable debate in the House.

I am just sort of putting people on notice, but **formal** written permission will be on ~~its~~ way to Your Honour **tomorrow** and that, as I said, will be copied to the Leader of the Opposition,

May I **take** the **opportunity**, Sir, to welcome all back from I think a well-deserved recess over **Christmas** and to say that we on this side **are looking forward** to vigorous

and interesting debate on a broad range of issues during the year 1996,

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: I beg to second that, **Sir**,

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 23rd January, 1996 at 11.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly,
6.08 p.m.

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