
THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION OF 2003-2008

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10:15 a.m. on Tuesday, December 13, 2005.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, G.C.M., B.A., Dip. Ed. (Speaker)

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Q.C., LL.B. (Acting Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs) (Leader of the House)

Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A. (Oxon.)

Mr. G. W. PAYNE, Q.C.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., J.P. (Minister of Public Ministry of Public Works and Transport)

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL (Chairman of Committees)

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY (Minister of Social Transformation)

Mr. R. St. C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Hons.)

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN

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

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE, J.P. (Minister of State, Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports)

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD, B.A.

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY, B.A., B.Sc., J.P. (Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney-General and Minister of Home Affairs)

Hon. N. A. LYNCH, B.Sc., M.B.A. (Minister of Tourism and International Transport)

Hon. A. P. WOOD, B.Sc., M.Sc., M.Phil. J.P. (Minister of Energy and Public Utilities)

Hon. R. R. FARLEY, B.Sc., J.P., (Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports)

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL, B.Sc. (Econ.) (Hons.), M.A. (Public Finance) (Leader of the Opposition)

Dr. W. F. DUGUID, B.D.S. (Comm.), F.D.S., FDRCS., J.P.

Hon. Dr. J. X. WALCOTT, M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S.(Edin.), J.P. (Minister of Health)

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS, B.A., LL.B. (Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade)

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL, LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Minister of Industry and International Business) and Acting Attorney-General

Mr. R. D. JONES. B.A. (Hons.), M.A. (Ed.) J.P.

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY, LL.B. (Hons.)

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK, B.Sc., M.B., B.S.

Mr. R. L. SEALY, B.Sc., M.B.A.

Prayers were taken by Reverend Canon Ivan Harewood

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, December 06, 2005.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes for the Honourable the House of Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday, December 06, 2005, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. SPEAKER: I beg to report to this Honourable House that I am in receipt of the following

1.Report from the Accountant-General of the Accounts and Statements for the month of September, 2005.

PAPERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following

1.Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Deutsche Banks Securities Inc.,) Order, 2005.

2.Excise Tax (Rate of Tax) (No.4) Order, 2005.

3.Value Added Tax (Refund) (Innotech Services Ltd.,) Order, 2005.

4.Value Added Tax (Refund) (Hide and Seek Leisure Limited) Order, 2005.

5.Sugar Industry (Sugar Workers(Provident Fund) Order, 2005.

6.Report on the Social Investment Fund for the Quarter ended September 30, 2005.

ORDERS OF THE DAY SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44, be suspended for the rest of this day's Sitting.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS ORDER NO. 13 ARTS AND SPORTS PROMOTION FUND(AMENDMENT) BILL, 2004/2005.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, this is a small amendment, one though necessary, to the Arts and Sports Promotion Fund Act, 2004/2005. As you will recall, that Act was debated and approved by this Honourable House. It related to the establishment of a fund, to promote the arts and sports generally. It was created out of the recognition that the arts and sports provide some of the most lucrative careers available these days, as well as to provide opportunities for individuals and their country, to gain international recognition in the area of arts and sport, and to bring great honour and glory to their country and to themselves.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation was passed in this Honourable House, and in process of working with the Chief Parliamentary Council to create the regulations and otherwise to give effect to the practical implementation of the fund, it was recognised that

there needed to be an additional change. It was recognised that there was no provision in the principal Act, for a committee to advise the Accountant-General on the matter of the allocation of these funds.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members would recall that the fund, as proposed, was intended to consist of monies voted by Parliament, but more especially the principal source of funds was to be revenue generated by lotteries operating in Barbados. Sir, you would recall, there was a policy decision of Government that 60 per cent of tax revenue that would have otherwise gone into the Consolidated Fund, would be placed into the Arts and Sport Promotion Fund, to be specifically earmarked for the promotion of arts and sports in Barbados. Sir, as you would recall, the Act provides that the fund be administered by the Accountant-General and would be under the general control of the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment before Parliament today is being proposed to allow for the establishment of an Arts and Sport Promotion Fund Committee, which will be charged with the responsibility of evaluating requests and proposals, made to the fund, for the funding of various projects and activities, in the area of arts and sports.

Mr. Speaker, this committee will obviously set up its own constitution and procedures pursuant to the regulation. It will also be chaired by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, and will consist of five other persons. These persons will be the Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office; a representative of the National Sports Council; a representative from the National Cultural foundation; a person engaged in arts; and one engaged in sports. Mr. Speaker, therefore, the regulations which are made pursuant to Section 9 of the Act, will detail the operations of that committee.

Sir, there are a number of things in that Act which I want to draw to the attention of this Honourable House. Sir, the committee is anxious to discharge its responsibility to provide funding support for arts and sports in Barbados and in this process, will want to make sure those proposals meet certain criteria. Sir, as the committee will be looking at the kinds of projects, which would be those that have a long-term perspective, it would want to be satisfied that, for example, the funds which are required to allow organisations or persons to contribute to that sustainable development in the area of arts and sports, would be duly applied to those areas. In addition, the committee would want to be certified that even though actions may be short-term or immediate, that those actions would contribute to the long-term sustainability in the area of sports and arts.

H:No.86(3)1020 a.m.

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation of Hon. R. R. FARLEY:

The fund is intended to provide support for Barbadians and Barbadian based organisations. Therefore, the issue of residence would be important and the applicant would need to satisfy the Committee that there are residents of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, you cannot make an application to the fund on the back of an envelope or by speaking a word around the corner. Clearly, the regulations make provisions for a written report containing the description of the activity. Also, in the case of a body corporate whether a company, group club or association, one of the mechanisms for making sure there is good governance is that audited financial statements for previous years be submitted as well.

Mr. Speaker, we recognise that there are some challenges in the area of governance in some sporting organisations. We are making sure that these funds are put to good use, that we are not throwing good money after bad money and that we are not putting the money in organisations that are so poorly administered that the money is likely to go off in unintended and undesirable directions.

Mr. Speaker, I must make the point that the Government through the National Sports Council and the Ministry of Sports, in association with the Barbados Olympic Association, have been mounting a number of training programmes for sports administrators to help sports associations at the national level as well as at the community level to be able to better administer their affairs.

Mr. Speaker, in most of the associations, the issues which plague them with respect to governance like elections, financial management and other issues, most of the associations have settled those issues which have arisen during 2004/2005. In fact, the Ministry of Sports and the National Sports Council have used their good offices on several occasions, quietly but effectively, to mediate between the parties to ensure that where members of associations felt they had been wronged by their associations, they had been able to use our good offices to resolve those conflicts rather than have the spectre of national associations in perpetual turmoil.

Sir, I am looking forward to these proposals coming through particularly in the area of arts and sports, so that in 2006, we will have good order, good governance, openness in sports associations and also, to again ensure that good governance is the order of the day.

Mr. Speaker, one of the regulations also provide for the applicant or the association to have two sureties in place to sign for the funds and to guarantee that there would be used for the purposes which are listed. You cannot send through a wonderful proposal prepared by and expert claiming that you want to have funds to develop youth cricket, football or swimming and then the money is used to send the national team overseas. Sir, those associations which have found themselves unable to access funds and to get sponsorship are typically those that have questions over them concerning probity in financial matters. Mr. Speaker, we want to work with them to improve that situation.

Mr. Speaker, I do not propose to labour on this because it is a simple amendment to make provision for the establishment of an arts and sports promotion fund Committee, which would receive applications, make decisions and judgement on those applications and to ultimately ensure that the funds which were

derived from the lottery and were intended for the use of artists, sportsmen and their organisations in Barbados that they do go towards their intended use.

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

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

On the motion of Hon. R. R. FARLEY, seconded by Hon. G. A. CLARKE, the House resolved into Committee, Mr. R.D. MARSHALL, Chairman of Committee, in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable House is in Committee.

Clause 1 - 4 were called and passed.

The Schedule became the Schedule to the Bill.

On the motion of Hon. R. R. FARLEY, seconded by Hon. G. A. CLARKE, Mr. Chairman reported to His Honour, the SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. R. R. FARLEY, seconded by Hon. G. A. CLARKE, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Arts and Sports Promotion Fund (Amendment) Act, 2005.

ORDER NO. 12

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE GUARANTEE BY THE CROWN OF THE PRINCIPAL AND INTEREST NECESSARY FOR THE REDEMPTION OF THE BOND ISSUE TO THE BARBADOS WATER AUTHORITY IN THE SUM OF \$150 MILLION.

H68/10:40

Sequence 4

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Phillip South.

Hon. A.P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise to lead off the debate with the provision of this guarantee of \$150 million bond issue for the Barbados Water Authority. Sir, not long ago, we had a fairly lengthy debate in this Honourable House on the Barbados Water Authority, on that occasion the main focus was the motivation for the adjustments in the tariffs. We took the opportunity, and certainly the contributions of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, to look in depth at the financial situation of the Barbados Water Authority and its implications on the investments in the capital works of the Barbados Water Authority.

We all realised that (1) the adjustment in the tariffs were carefully calculated that those adjustments in the tariffs were indeed, necessary. We will recall that those adjustments would have allowed the Barbados Water Authority to raise an additional \$22.1 million on an annual basis, to deal with its operating deficit and, certainly, maintain a sum just over \$5 million to help further its capital works programme.

Sir, on that occasion, I felt that debate would give us the opportunity to look at some of the key projects the Barbados Water Authority has been pursuing in recent times, but more specifically to address that aspect of its work for which the funds would be used.

Mr. Speaker, without rehashing a lot of what was said on that occasion, it is clear to all that the Barbados Water Authority faces financial challenges and it is within that context that this \$150 million is being sought.

Sir, one of the key uses of these funds is to finance the restructuring of the debt of the Barbados Water Authority. It allows for less onerous terms for the Barbados Water Authority, as it seeks to deal with the various loans accessed over the years. Sir, out of the \$150 million, the refinancing of the loan portfolio of the Barbados Water Authority represents approximately \$100 million. The other \$50 million is to be used to finance capital works and other initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, the service provided by the Barbados Water Authority is extremely essential. I am of the view that we in here, from time to time, some with constituencies in the rural parts of Barbados more so than others, do appreciate why it is extremely necessary for the Barbados Water Authority to launch into a capital works programme.

Sir, let me say at this juncture in this presentation, that we in Barbados have a habit of taking things for granted. We have been very fortunate over the years, through the efforts of both administrations, to lay out an infrastructure for the delivery of service in this country, which allows Barbados to have virtually universal coverage for this particular service. We are also very fortunate that the percentage of homes bearing pipe water is very close to 100 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, a few years ago, this Government, as part of its poverty alleviation programme, resolved through the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission, to ensure that those remaining houses at the time without water-borne facilities did have access to this vital service because pipe water might be available but no water borne facilities.

Sir, I do not have the exact numbers to indicate the performance of these two agencies in that regard, but I can say that both agencies would have been working very assiduously, since their establishment to ensure that those persons who were without pipe water into their homes have that deficiency corrected. I am happy that programme has been going reasonably well over the last few years. I can speak of the success of that programme in the case of the constituency of St. Philip South.

Mr. Speaker, I alluded to this particular point to make a bigger point. It was in the context of my saying that we tend to take things for granted in this country. I was fortunate, having been the host Minister of the Caribbean Water and Waste Water Association Conference, not long ago, to be privy to some statistics with respect to the provision of water in other countries. Also, to get a greater insight into the percentage of houses in other countries with pipe water in the region. I can safely say that Barbados is very well advanced in both areas when we compare ourselves to other countries.

Sir, the Conference would have taken note of the experiences in the other countries and would have discussed ways to improve the situation.

Mr. Speaker, another thing which came out clearly at that conference, which was held between October 9 to 14, 2005, was that investment in the waste water sector is a characteristic of many countries in the region, if not all of them. I can tell you that, notwithstanding the windfalls that Trinidad and Tobago has been experiencing, occasioned by the favourable prices of oil, there is tremendous work to be done in the water and the waste water sector in Trinidad and Tobago to modernise their programmes and, certainly, to improve the integrity of the infrastructure.

Sir, it is to that particular point that I wish to turn. One of our challenges is to deal with the state of the infrastructure that obtains in respect of the provision of water service in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, in 1997, a study was commissioned by the Barbados Water Authority to look at the ins and outs of that particular operation.

H85: 10.50 a.m. Sequence 5

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

House 86, sequence 06, 10:50 a.m.

Continuation of Hon. A.P. WOOD:

At the time, the estimate provided for what it would require to modernise the infrastructure of water mains in Barbados was just under BDS\$300 million. One would appreciate that since then, the figure might have increased. It is incumbent on us as we seek to deal with our challenges in a water scarce country, to pay a little more attention to the integrity of the mains. Sir, the Government has to provide the most reliable water service that is practically possible and to deal with the issue of the main(s) infrastructure of mains in a comprehensive way.

Of course, this \$150 million, with a residual of \$50 million to deal with such purposes would not allow us to deal with them altogether. This can be considered the first phase of this Government(s) attempt to launch into a significant rehabilitation programme for the mains in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I will speak to specific areas in which some of these funds are to be used. We will deal with the issue of under investment in the technical aspects and the Capital Works Programme of the Barbados Water Authority in a very

professional and comprehensive way. One of the things that we are certain about, is that water will remain something that is heavily sought after by each and every Barbadian and tourist coming into this country.

Mr. Speaker, you will be aware that a couple of years ago, the Government had to respond, by way of emergency programmes to deal with problems in the northern and eastern parts of Barbados. On one occasion, a sum of \$3.5 million and on another occasion \$2.6 million would have been provided to deal with those programmes.

Mr. Speaker, you would also remember that just over a year ago, the Government had to seek funding from the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) to the tune of \$14.5 million, in order to pursue a series of water augmentation projects. The expectation at that time, was that when the arrangement for this \$150 million was finalised, some of this money would go towards dealing with that loan from the National Insurance Scheme, which was for just a one year term.

Mr. Speaker, implicit in the work that was to be handled by that \$14.5 million was a West Coast Mains Project. This is vital. I am happy to report that progress on the project is fairly encouraging. Sir, that project is designed to move water from areas which can be considered in surplus to areas which can be considered in a deficit.

Sir, the project would also move the mains on the west coast. Those of you driving there during the last couple of months, would see the work that has been going on, where the laying of that main is being done in such a way so as not to cause any disruption to traffic because it is being done inland. We are not digging up the road as we are going along. We are putting it beside the road and we are going further and further inland. Therefore, persons living along the main road on the west coast might be affected but those who use the west coast road would not be experiencing any problems.

Mr. Speaker, you would appreciate that there are a number of developmental projects in the pipeline for the western parts of the country, so it is extremely important that the Barbados Water Authority is in a position to complete the work that is being done on that main. There are also major projects planned for the northern part of the country, which would put tremendous demands on the limited water supply that is available in Barbados.

One of the things that we have said, certainly the Prime Minister spoke very clearly to it, is that water should not turn out to be an inhibiting factor to this country's development. It is to that particular challenge, Mr. Speaker, that the Barbados Water Authority had to look very in-depth at its functioning, and come up with a water supply augmentation programme that would not only allow the authority to deal with the various challenges that are here and now but to allow it to meet the tremendous demands that will be placed on the water supply going forward.

I am not going to stand here and tell you that the Barbados Water Authority is without fault and that, notwithstanding the fact that we have been able to engage in a larger programme

than was the case last year and the year before, that we are without problems. Indeed, in some areas of the country there are still problems of periodical outages, water discolouration and ruptures, occasioned by the fact that the infrastructure is an aged one. Sir, I can tell you that with access to these funds, the Barbados Water Authority these would be in a better position to deal with the various problems being experienced.

Mr. Speaker, let me just complete the presentation of the west coast main, so that this would be very much centrestage in the \$14.5 million package of works. We are hoping that within the next couple of months, we would be in a position to complete that work. Two contractors have been engaged, namely, Arthur Construction and Rayside Construction. This is vitally important so that we are able to give more capacity and greater flow to the western and northern parts of the country.

Mr. Speaker, within that \$14.5 million package as well, a number of other works, most of which now have reached the stage where contracts have actually been awarded and very shortly into the new year, we should see various contractors performing vital work on behalf of the Barbados Water Authority. For example, one such project is the 1 700 feet of 16 inch main going from Westbury Road to Lewis Gap, St. Michael, which has been awarded. The 300 feet of 6 inch main from Spring Garden to Fontabelle has also been awarded.

House 86, sequence 06, 11:0014

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation of Hon. A. P. WOOD:

The contract for the laying of 3 500 feet of 18 inch main from Paddock Road to Dayrells Road has been awarded. I made mention of the 25 000 feet of 16 inch main on the West Coast which is perhaps the key project on this list. The contract for the laying of 500 feet of 8 inch main along Highway 2A from the Lancaster junction in St. James has been awarded as well.

The Honourable Member for St. James Central would be happy to know that those problems which were lasting for the constituents in Bagatelle Development would soon cease because the authorities are in a position now to dig up all of the mains in Bagatelle Development and to put down new ones which should see 10 000 feet of 4 inch main going into Bagatelle Development. That contract has also been awarded. We know, from listening to the call-in programmes, that there has been, for some time, a problem with water discolouration in Bagatelle Development.

There is also going to be the upgrading of the 3 inch main to a 6 inch one to run from Colleton to Six Men(s) in St. Peter. The contract for that has been awarded. There will be the upgrading from the 3 inch main to a 4 inch main from Lighthouse Road to Maycock(s) Development in St. Lucy. That contract has been awarded as well. There will be a 4 inch main in Maycock(s) Terrace in St. Lucy and that contract has also been awarded.

Mr. Speaker, we can see that the planning for the works for

which this \$14.5 million package is required is very advanced. As I said, this money was accessed from the National Insurance Scheme with the expectation that once we get the \$150 million from the financial institution - and I will go through the characteristics of this arrangement soon - that we would be in a position to repay that \$14.3 million, which was borrowed just for the one year.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make the bigger point because what we have to do, while recognising the importance of these water augmentation projects, is for us to look at dealing with the provision of water in a more comprehensive way. Mr. Speaker, in a water scarce country, one that does not draw heavily on the desalination programme and one with a maze infrastructure that has to be dealt with, all options for the capturing of water would have to be pursued. This brings me around to this issue of the reuse of wastewater.

Mr. Speaker, when we have problems in this area one may think that the easy way out, if there is under investment, might be to get the private sector to come and put down desalination plants to give you access to another source. Mr. Speaker, I am a firm believer that in a water scarce country like ours what really should be the key is for us to retain more of what is available. There have been various estimates of our water loss which range from 29 per cent to almost 50 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, whether the loss is 29 per cent or 50 per cent, if we are in a position to retain more of what is available and to reduce that to an acceptable level of around 5 to 10 per cent, could you imagine what would be the tremendous implication of us seeking to gain access to more of this valuable resource. This would be happening in a country where the infrastructure, as I said, is extremely well-developed, so that quite unlike, for example, the National Petroleum Corporation in which the infrastructure per capita is one of the best in the world, the fact of the matter is that we have to continually push out that infrastructure so there is investment in new mains to expand the coverage.

Mr. Speaker, in the case of the provision of water, because the island is so well-served, unless infilling is taking place as a result of new projects, be it commercial development or housing development, the real challenge is for us to reduce the water that is lost to negligible proportions. That is where the heavy investments in the mains rehabilitation programme is extremely important. That obviously would be one of the solutions going forward for our water supply augmentation programme.

Mr. Speaker, what is also important is for us to reflect seriously on what happens to the wastewater that is generated in Barbados and for us, once the technical work has been done, to look seriously at retaining that water that goes out to the sea in the form of wastewater. Sir, what would be required for us is not only to retrofit the plants but also to treat that waste water up to the appropriate level so that it can be brought back into the system and use for non-potable purposes first and foremost.

Mr. Speaker, in a water-scarce country with a reasonable high incident of water loss as a result of the lack of proper integrity of the mains, for us to be sending just under five

million gallons of wastewater out to sea, cannot be an ideal thing in this country. Therefore, what we have done, and we got the blessings of the Cabinet on this particular matter, is to engage a consultant to look in a very detailed way at the water supply augmentation options in which particular emphasis will be paid on the wastewater reuse option.

Mr. Speaker, for a country with a maturing tourism product and for a country that has projects within the tourism sector that continues to place heavy demands on the limited water supply, I think we have reached a critical juncture in which serious decisions will have to be made in respect of wastewater reuse. Mr. Speaker, I am saying that the Barbados Water Authority and this Government is eager to see the work of that consultant come to an end so that we will know, in a very definite way, the steps to take in trying to make waste water reuse an integral part of our water supply augmentation programme.

Mr. Speaker, that five million gallons a day that we can retain and treat to the appropriate level and use for non-potable purposes first and foremost, that is, to meet the requirements of golf courses and agriculture, would indeed take some pressure off the potable water system for those particular uses.

House 86 Sequence 7

11:10 a.m.

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation of Hon. A. P. WOOD:

Mr. Speaker, that is where we are heading, and that is where some of this money will be utilised because this is a very valuable programme.

Mr. Speaker, not very long ago, all of us would have been made aware of the fact that situation would have reached its high point, that is in relation to the functioning of the Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment Plant. At that time, the Government had indicated that the situation could not have persisted and that it had to be brought under control. We said that if the Barbados Water Authority had access to requisite levels of funds, it would have engaged in a very thorough repair of the Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment Plant, so as to ensure that all its equipment required to be changed, would have been done so, via a systematic approach. In addition, it was decided that whatever else that was required to have the plant functioning at its optimum, notwithstanding the fact that the plant is being called upon to carry loads that are well in excess of that for which it was designed, that we needed to repair the plant and not in a piece-meal fashion, as was previously the case, so as to have that plant functioning at its optimum and on a sustained basis.

Mr. Speaker, I am also happy to report that the Barbados Water Authority has had access to funds in requisite amounts, to allow it to move forward in a very assiduous way with the repair of that plant. Sir, this is not to say that we are (out of the woods) altogether because it is a very old plant, but the systematic changing of equipment has led to what can be considered a significant improvement in the functioning of that

plant. Sir, there is still more work to be done and the authority will remain committed to completing that task.

Mr. Speaker, in that context, we would all agree that what was required was the establishment of a septic handling facility, to take some of the pressure off the Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment Plant. Sir, some days that plant handles up to nine or ten times more than that for which it was designed to handle. Therefore, one would appreciate that, having to undergo stress on such an ongoing basis, the plant would fail from time to time. Sir, we said there is a need to establish a septic handling facility, so as to do a proper screening of the material that is to be sent to the treatment facility.

Mr. Speaker, I am also happy to report that the arrangement or planning for that facility is well-advanced. The Barbados Water Authority engaged a consultant to do the preparatory work on the septic handling facility, and what is extremely important is the choice of location for the placing of such a facility.

Mr. Speaker, while addressing the issue of location, the consultants considered five such areas. Those five areas have now been narrowed down to two. Indeed, those two areas have now been narrowed down to one preferred location. Sir, once the consultants have dealt with the social and environmental impact assessments studies, we would be in a position, from that study, to say whether or not that preferred location would, indeed, meet all expected criteria.

Mr. Speaker, this is a vital project with which the Barbados Water Authority is pressing on. Some would say that it is time-bound, but what I would say is that it is an extremely important project. Therefore, if the authority needs to utilise a portion of the \$50 million, out of this \$150 million loan, in order to deal with the establishment of a septic handling facility, as long as we would have cleared all environmental issues, then the authorities would now be better placed to deal with making such a facility become a reality.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to address the matter in relation to the \$150 million loan. Sir, earlier I looked at some of the challenges facing the Barbados Water Authority, both from a financial and a technical view point. I also looked at the under-investments of the Barbados Water Authority, which would have hampered its capital works programme. Sir, I reminded the Honourable Chamber of the need for us to have adjusted the tariffs, but we have done it in a very clinical way, so as to shield almost 50 per cent of the consuming public from any such adjustments.

Sir, I wish to say that, at this stage, the manner in which it was approached in Barbados, in which we shielded 50 per cent of the consuming public, is being studied by neighbouring countries in the Caribbean, because they too have to face up to the financial challenges of their water and sewerage systems authorities. They have to deal with the need to expand and to modernise their infrastructure and are, therefore, having a careful look at what we have done in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I made mention of the fact that the \$150 million will go towards the financing of the loan portfolio and financing the Barbados Water Authority capital works

programme, along with other initiatives. I also mentioned some of the ongoing projects. Sir, in respect of the loan itself and in recognising the quantum of the funds, the Barbados Water Authority has engaged the services of an accounting firm, Ernst & Young Services Limited. This firm, which was selected by a competitive basis, have evaluated the various submissions. Sir, submissions came from five financial institutions, while the recommended submission was one provided by BNB Finance and Trust Corporation.

H:No86(8)1120 a.m.

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation of Hon. A.P. WOOD:

Sir, some of the terms of this loan are as follows:

The loan is 25 years. There is a moratorium on interest for three years and a moratorium on the payment of principal for five years.

There is an effective interest rate of 5.7 per cent per annum over the terms as follows:

For the first two years the rate is 4.9 per cent per annum. For the next five years it is 5.25 per cent per annum. For the next five years it is 5.8 per cent per annum and for the following five 6.4 per cent per annum, then it rises to 6.85 per cent per annum and the final three years, it is 6.95 per cent per annum.

Mr. Speaker, we have to understand where the Barbados Water Authority is at the moment and where it would like to be in the next few years in order to put the choice of this financing option in its proper perspective.

I have said earlier that there is a moratorium on interest payment for three years and a moratorium on the fiscal payments for five years. I also said that the Barbados Water Authority is in need of an injection of new technological systems and in need of some level of operational restructuring and with the opportunity not to have to meet the interest payment over the next two years and not to have to deal with the principal for another five years.

This means that it is incumbent on the Barbados Water Authority to seek over those periods to do some of the vital things relating to the introduction and employment of new technological systems which would allow management to operate with a higher level of efficiency but which would allow the Barbados Water Authority to become more technologically efficient and which would allow the Barbados Water Authority to see the early warning signals as it relates the performance of its infrastructure to respond in a timely manner over the next few years.

Mr. Speaker, these things are inevitable for an entity which provides this sort of service in an economy that is developing nicely. Sir, there is a point of inevitability which would be reached when a utility of this type will have to function in a particular way. The point in time when the Barbados Water Authority, like any other similar entity functioning in a very

efficient way elsewhere, will have to introduce technological systems, for example, a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system, a hydraulic network model system and a GIS system.

Mr. Speaker, Government said that these technological systems are important because the benefits to be derived for similar entities elsewhere can be checked. Sir, at the moment, a cost benefit analysis is being undertaken about these systems. Once this analysis is completed, it would allow us to be in a more definitive position as to the benefits to be derived by the Barbados Water Authority for the deduction of these systems. It would also put us in a better position to determine the cost of introducing these systems at this point in time.

Mr. Speaker, the \$150 million, which we are dealing with here today, is extremely important and would allow us to deal in some way with some of the challenges which faces the Barbados Water Authority. In respect of the terms and conditions and the choice of this financing option, the accounting firm determined that the Barbados National Bank offer had the most attractive net present value of future debt service payments, and that it gave us the most favourable cash flow repayments during the initial five-year period in light of the planned capital expansion programme and the plan for restructuring certain aspects of the Barbados Water Authority.

Mr. Speaker, the consequence of having the moratorium for three years on the interest payments is that the interest would be capitalised for these three years so once we start to deal with the loan, we would not be looking at \$150 million but at a higher amount. This is why it is important for us to put the Barbados Water Authority in a better position to deal with the delivery of the service and the generation of revenues in future.

Mr. Speaker, I close this presentation by saying that we understand and appreciate at the Barbados Water Authority that there is a lot of work to be done and that certain areas in the country are still experiencing difficulties of one kind or another. Sir, the Barbados Water Authority is trying its best and will use the funds over and beyond what is required to restructure its debt to ensure that...

H86/11:30

Sequence 9

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Continuation Hon. A.P. WOOD: ...those problems are sorted out in the best way possible, but more important, to ensure that it is in a better position to deal with any future difficulties.

Sir, I made mention of the work done at the level of cost and benefit analysis on the management tools and the technological systems. I also made mention of the need for us to look at water supply augmentation in a more comprehensive way. A consultant has been engaged to complete that work. In that context there was a need for us to pay closer attention to the waste water reuse option; the fact that it was important at this critical juncture to deal with the rehabilitation of our

infrastructure and that it is incumbent on us to deal with the Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment Plant. That work is very advanced and we have been receiving very good results. Sir, we are also trying to complete the work that is required on the plant at the south coast.

Mr. Speaker, while all of this is ongoing, the Barbados Water Authority has been busy with the implementation of the \$14.5 million water augmentation programme. As part of its ordinary capital programme, the Barbados Water Authority has been doing some very important work in particular sections of Barbados. The areas that come to mind are those of Welchman Hall and Lion Castle in St. Thomas.

Sir, this gives a fairly quick overview of where we are with the work of the Barbados Water Authority. It also places the importance of this \$150 million bond issue, to deal with the guarantee in this Honourable House, in its proper perspective.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, certainly we could have gone on and on, I beg that this Resolution be now passed.

Hon. R.R. FARLEY: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy. Before you begin, may I ask if you are leading the debate.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, I will not be the lead speaker on this particular matter but I will do my thirty minutes now, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, this Resolution has been brought to this Honourable House in the wrong season. This is supposed to be the season of merriment and not confusion. It is regrettable that this Resolution has been brought in this season, when the person bringing this particular Resolution has gone across Barbados telling the public, that it was the Democratic Labour Party who transferred that money from the Barbados Water Authority to the Consolidated Fund. It was the Barbados Labour Party that told the public of Barbados that it was the Democratic Labour Party that took the savings of the Barbados Water Authority to finance projects like these and transferred them to the Consolidated Fund.

Sir, for that reason, we on this side plead guilty. That money was transferred to the Consolidated Fund to be spent on the people of Barbados. I am saying that if the Barbados Water Authority now finds itself into this particular position, we should not be before Parliament borrowing money on behalf of the Barbados Water Authority. If the Barbados Water Authority's money was used by the Treasury of Barbados, it is only fair that the Treasury should be repaying the Barbados Water Authority.

Sir, I want the Barbados Labour Party to apologise to the Democratic Labour Party for accusing it of putting the money in the Consolidated Fund, to which we plead guilty. What is more guilty, Mr. Speaker, is that the Barbados Labour Party is guilty, a continuing government from the Democratic Labour Party, used the money that was taken from the Barbados Water Authority and now they are committing them to another \$150 million, a double debt. Sir, they accused us of the first error but

now they have created the second.

Sir, I am saying that this Resolution should not be before this Honourable House. We should be debating a Supplementary for the Barbados Water Authority for \$150 million. We should be debating a Supplementary and not a loan because we should have been repaying the Barbados Water Authority the money taken by the Government of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Water Authority lent the people of Barbados money and it should be repaid. I want to hear the excuse from the Honourable Member for St. Philip South on this particular matter, because they have now doubled the debt for the Barbados Water Authority.

I also want to know how is it they have increased the water rates in Barbados for persons like me by over 300 per cent, yet they are in this Honourable House begging for more money for the Barbados Water Authority. If I were to present a water bill from two years ago with a corresponding bill for this period, you would see that my bill has tripled. I want to know from the Honourable Member...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, on what do you rise?

Hon. A.P. WOOD: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is seeking to grossly mislead this Honourable House by claiming that the Government has increased the water rates by an excess of 300 per cent. Sir, nothing could be further from the truth.

In my presentation this morning, I made mention of the lengthy discussion which we had in here about the adjustments in the tariffs and each category. I would have explained the percentage of persons who would have been shielded from the increase and how the rates had increased.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, what is your point of order.

Hon. A.P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, the point of order is that none of the increases were anywhere close to what the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is saying. If he paid 300 per cent more that is something different. He might have paid 300 per cent more because the volume of water that he used would have increased, but the basic rate would not have increased by anything close to 300 per cent.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, the Honourable Minister likes to jump you.

Mr. Speaker, do you know that there is a cheaper rate for commercial service than for domestic? Let the Minister deny that. He wants to deny everything. He also wants to tell me the cost of my water bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please address the Honourable Member.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, that is a slip and I apologise. You are aware that I am not disrespectful in this place or any other place. So, I can be forgiven.

Sir, the Honourable Member is saying that I am not making any sense.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I did not hear anything.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, you are not allowed to hear that.

I am saying that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South said that it is a waste of time replying to what he told the Honourable House today because there is no sense in what he has stated. That is what he said, Sir. At least, I would credit his contribution to mean something to the Honourable House and put some sense to it.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that the Honourable Minister has completed a year of punishment for the people of Barbados. I have to tell you, he started with the Barbados Water Authority, the telephone company, gas and everything else under the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities; this Ministry in some brilliant way had been able to triple the cost.

H86: 11.40 a.m.

Sequence 10

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House 86, sequence 11, 11:40 p.m.

Continuation of Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

I want the Minister to tell this House, Sir, while he is in charge of protecting the Barbados Water Authority...

Hon. A.P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member has repeated his untruth by saying that this Minister has been able to triple the prices of certain services in Barbados. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy should be made to produce the evidence which is not available because it is not true, or those statements should be withdrawn.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, as you know, Sir, there is a public core out there...and I want to thank the Minister for telling me that the Barbados Water Authority has been overcharging me and many others. I would expect, Sir, that when I receive the next bill, I will see the credits for all those additional charges that have been placed on the bills of the public of Barbados.

I am telling the public that based on what was said in here this morning by the Minister, there is an error in the calculation coming out of the Barbados Water Authority and they have to refund the public of Barbados. The Minister is telling this House that if what I am saying is correct which is true, then the bills I am receiving I should not be receiving. I know, Sir, that it cannot be anything political so it has to be an error and everybody in Barbados should expect a Christmas bonus by a reduction in their water bills, based on the argument put down by the Minister.

Sir, the Minister is not going to get away. The Minister has joined his Party in saying that the Democratic Labour Party used the money. They put the money that belongs to the Barbados Water Authority into the Consolidated Fund. It means then, Sir, that the money was borrowed from the Barbados Water Authority for the people of Barbados. If the Barbados Water Authority wants that money today, all they have to do is borrow it back from the Consolidated Fund without charge.

Why should the Barbados Water Authority have to pay the Barbados National Bank for 25 years, for a loan that has an interest rate that is higher than the \$150 million we just borrowed from overseas, even though starts at 4.9 per cent, it goes to 6.95.

The Minister must tell this House why this loan is more expensive in the last years than the other loans we have just borrowed. The Minister must also tell this House if this is a contingent liability by the Barbados Water Authority on behalf of the Government of Barbados, and if the Barbados Water Authority is expected to get back this money from the Government.

My advice to the Barbados Water Authority, seeing that the Government already has the money that belongs to you, not to treat this as a contingent liability, you have no reason to service it. Sir, the Government of Barbados should service this loan. If you do not service it, they have to pay. They owe you the money, so there is no reason to pay it, because you already gave the Government the money to hold for you, so that when you are ready for your capital works, you would know where the money is, and this was a good decision.

Sir, I honestly believe, had that money remained with the Barbados Water Authority they would not have it today. Since it went into the Consolidated Fund, one would expect that the Barbados Water Authority would be able to go the Minister of Finance and say, I loan you some money and I have now come back for the money I loan you years ago. On top of that, seeing that you held it and used it so wisely, we will give you a reduced rate of interest, so instead of you having to pay the Barbados National Bank 6.95 as stated in this document, we will only take 4.95.

Sir, what we have to do now is to go back and see the original amount that was placed in the Consolidated Fund and you can give them some compound interest, not on the simple interest but have some mercy on the Government for borrowing. Sir, you also need to calculate the interest that is owed on this loan over the years - and it should be a simple calculation - then apply the amount of money that is owed by the Government of Barbados and then multiply the total cost of this loan. If you want to do it, Sir, subtract the cost of this loan from what is owned by the Government of Barbados and then the difference should be paid to the Barbados Water Authority, and the loan should be serviced by the Government of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, this is the first time I know of an entity borrowing money to lend the Government of Barbados. Sir,

what is actually happening is that the Barbados Water Authority is borrowing money to lend the main Government of Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, the Barbados Water Authority had the money and they put it with the Government of Barbados and now they do not have money, and the Government is saying we will guarantee it for you.

The Government cannot be guaranteeing any money for the Barbados Water Authority, they would have to be guaranteeing the money for themselves because the Barbados Water Authority has the money already. They lent it to the Government of Barbados so this loan cannot be a Barbados Water Authority loan, it has to be a loan for the Government of Barbados, sanctioned by the Barbados Water Authority. This is no contingent liability for the Government. This is a real loan for the Government. I am calling on the accountants of Barbados to discuss this, because this is a very serious matter.

Sir, can you imagine that you have given your comrade some money to hold for you and when you go and ask for your money, the comrade tells you that he has arranged a loan for you with the Barbados National Bank. This is exactly what is happening here. They have arranged a loan for the Barbados Water Authority, Sir, at the Barbados National Bank.

What does it mean for the consumers of Barbados? It means that in their calculation, the Barbados Water Authority now has to zero in the interest cost of this loan. Sir, based on certain facts, if they have not used it in their calculation previously, we can reasonably expect an increase in water rates again. They have new costs to service. It is not only the capital cost. There is also the interest cost that has to be added into this, Sir, so it means that the expenses at the Barbados Water Authority, as of today when this loan is approved and accepted, will increase and the consumers of Barbados have to pay it, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that the Minister has to explain this to the House because he might be able to come in here and get away with this among his comrades but he will not get away with it with me. He has to account for this and tell the public of Barbados how is it the Barbados Water Authority had money in deposit for the Government of Barbados, and the Government is now asking the Barbados Water Authority to borrow money, when the Government should be repaying the Barbados Water Authority.

Sir, this argument was not created by us. This argument was created by the Barbados Labour Party, who told the public of Barbados that the Democratic Labour Party as a Government took the money from the Barbados Water Authority and used it in the Consolidated Fund. Everybody knows that the money went into the Consolidated Fund. Sir, if they are now looking for the money, it has to be taken from the Consolidated Fund and given to the Barbados Water Authority. There is no justifiable reason for the Barbados Water Authority to borrow money.

The Democratic Labour Party did it and now the Barbados

Labour Party is accepting that and now telling the Barbados Water Authority to borrow more, when they have money. What the Barbados Government should be doing is telling the Barbados Water Authority that we are grateful to you for giving us an interest free loan for so many years, and we are now giving you back the principal so that you can now carry out your capital works.

Instead of that, Sir, they are saying to the Barbados Water Authority that we are not paying you back one cent. Furthermore, go and face the National Bank. I mean the Trinidad National Bank because it is now owned by Trinidad and Tobago.

House 86, sequence 11, 11:5014

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation of Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

Sir, this is a rather interesting thing. A couple of years ago when I spoke in here about what will happen to Barbados and how certain countries within the Caribbean were (mashing up) the minds of my brother and sisters, it was a big joke. I warned then that if we do not do the necessary thing that one day we would see Barbados just like Trinidad and Guyana, and everybody thought that was a joke.

Mr. Speaker, we are now worst than those two countries, and let me tell you why. The capital base of Barbados now belongs to Trinidad and the labour base now belong to Guyana.

Mr. SPEAKER: Sir, what are you talking about now?

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: This loan, Sir, because the consumers of Barbados who do not have capital and capital base anymore and the workers who do not have any work anymore still have to pay water bills. Do you understand what I am telling you, Sir? I am telling you that Barbados is now controlled, not by the people inside, but the people inside have to pay. The private sector is now being commanded from Trinidad and the labour movement is now being commanded from Guyana.

Mr. Speaker, we will soon have to beg for (a pick). We have to work real hard to remain in here because if we do not, we would not have any control.

Mr. Speaker, what I am saying is that when the Minister gets up he has to defend this charge because it is a very serious charge. I am telling this Government that it has unfair the Barbados Water Authority and that the Barbados Water Authority has no right facing the Barbados National Bank. Sir, it should be the Government of Barbados facing the Barbados National Bank to get a loan to repay the Barbados Water Authority the money the Democratic Labour Party took from it.

Mr. Speaker, I am not scared to say that it was the Democratic Labour Party that took the money from the Barbados Water Authority, that is a fact. What is also true is that the Barbados Labour Party held on to the money taken by the Democratic Labour Party and is now forcing the Barbados

Water Authority to go and borrow again.

Mr. Speaker, I have nothing further to say on this matter, all I am calling on the Minister to do is to apologise to the Board and the management of the Barbados Water Authority because all the Minister has done is to create headaches for the workers of the Barbados Water Authority as if they do not have enough headaches with leakages, et cetera.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before the Honourable Leader of the Opposition speaks, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy said that he was speaking first and that he was speaking for 30 minutes. I would just like to let this House know that this is the last time this will occur in here. Our rules clearly state that the Honourable Member speaking first, speaks on behalf of the Opposition. The Honourable Member who speak first would have the unlimited time because he speaks on behalf of the Opposition, so this is the last time that would happen. I know that you have tried that a few times already and I am just making it clear now, please.

The Leader of the Opposition will now have unlimited time. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to join this debate fully conscious that the Minister laboured over his presentation this morning. That is not a characteristic that you normally associate with the Minister, he is normally very enthusiastic but I suspect something is wrong, I do not know.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the Minister owes the House and the people of Barbados a statement on what level of finances has been raised by the hikes in January of 2005. The Minister came before January and announced an increase in water rates and suggested to the public of Barbados that he was seeking to raise \$22.1 million to ease the financial difficulties at the Barbados Water Authority. I would think that almost 12 months later that the Minister should have been in a position to say whether or not the hike that occurred in January was in fact raising the required revenue and therefore, give us a feel as to the kind of financial status the Barbados Water Authority is currently in.

Mr. Speaker, I know what it is in, because last Budget we explained that the Barbados Water Authority was experiencing considerable losses over the previous four years. In fact, in the year 2000, the Barbados Water Authority had a loss of \$10.9 million, in 2001, \$15.9 million, in 2002, \$19.5 million and in the year 2003-2004, \$21.5 million.

Mr. Speaker, this had nothing to do with the loans that were accumulated between 1997-2002, to the magnitude of \$100.1 million. In addition to that, the Barbados Water Authority had also incurred a loan from the European Investment Bank of US\$10.2 million. Beyond that, the Barbados Water Authority was expected to repay all of the loans associated with the building of the South Coast Sewerage Project, which was in the tune of US\$62.2 million. Mr. Speaker, you could therefore see the extent to which the Barbados Water Authority is struggling.

Mr. Speaker, what I need to tell the Minister is that until the Government seriously approaches the issue of the Barbados Water Authority by looking at the two studies that were done between 1996 and 1997, one by Stanley Associates out of Canada and the other by Cole and Crippen, which identified that in our distribution system we were losing almost 60 per cent of our water, then nothing is going to happen to really correct the current problems existing within our water systems. Therefore, the Government needs to address how to stop 60 per cent of our water from being lost in the distribution system before it can begin to analyse anything. Sir, unless it does that, what we are seeing here really is money going down the drain.

Mr. Speaker, let me explain why we need to look at this matter even more seriously. We seem not to want to analyse things in Barbados appropriately, adequately and in the best interest of our country.

Mr. Speaker, I will now digress just to make a comment to the Minister with respect to Trinidad. Every time Barbados wants to prove a point or to prove how well-advanced it is, it cites an example from either within the Caribbean, North America or somewhere in Europe to suggest that Barbados is far more developed and far more efficiently and effectively run than other countries.

Mr. Speaker, Trinidad was cited by the Minister this morning in his presentation. Trinidad is eleven and a half times the size of Barbados. Trinidad's population is five times the size of Barbados.

House 86 Sequence 12

12:00 noon

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation of Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, therefore, even to put the infrastructure in place in Trinidad and Tobago and given the topography of that country, it would be far more difficult.

Sir, Barbados has to be thankful that it is a flat country, in some respects, and that it is very accessible. Therefore, when one seeks to consider whether or not 60 per cent of the people in Trinidad and Tobago would be getting water, one needs to look at the bigger issue, not just to identify Trinidad and Tobago as having money but that is not yet catering to the needs of 60 per cent of its people, with respect to the distribution of water. Sir, it really is a simplistic approach to a very critical problem and, therefore, it is unfortunate when Government officials seek to identify a country like that, then to suggest that Barbados had made considerable strides beyond.

Mr. Speaker, the another thing is that one now notices every time this Government speaks to the issue of unemployment, it identifies Germany. Sir, East Germany and West Germany came together. It is known that communist East Germany was substantially down, in terms of economic performance. Its unemployment level was extraordinarily high and, therefore, in the process of bringing the two countries together, you are talking about years of reform and restructuring before you can

get the entire German country to be equivalent to what West Germany used to be. Therefore, every time this Government needs to cite a developed country, they are embarking on identifying Germany, a country that has only unified within the last 15 years, and had considerable problems with its economy. This is an unfortunate example to cite when comparing Barbados with other industrialised countries.

Mr. Speaker, I think that before Government can talk about Trinidad and Tobago and about how much money it has, they must look at its typography, its size, and at the fact that the population of Trinidad and Tobago is five times the size of Barbados, but that the country is 11.5 times the size of Barbados. Therefore, there would be several other factors to be considered in the process.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about the Barbados Water Authority and about whether or not it is being directed in the way that would solve the problems that have been identified. We know from studies that the real issue in Barbados has nothing to do with the scarcity of water. If we accept those two studies in the 1990s, which told us that 60 per cent of our water distribution is being lost...

Mr. Speaker, Barbados is not a water-scarce country, something which has now become a popular thing to talk about in Barbados and internationally at conferences. Government must to tell people the truth. Government should tell the people that Barbados loses 60 per cent of its water in the distribution system. Government should not tell them that Barbados is a water-scarce country, like other countries in the world, when Government knows that the major problem confronting Barbados is the question of the distribution network, which is poor and needs to be redone, retooled, restructured, and simply to be gotten rid of.

Mr. Speaker, instead of doing that, what have we done? We have allowed a private sector entity to build a desalination plant, and for just over 27 000 cubic metres of water, we are paying \$9.4 million per year.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, the information is in the Barbados Water Authority report. When I quote figures, they do not simply come out of Clyde Mascoll's head; they come from within the report of the Barbados Water Authority, unless you want to dispute that report. Sir, therefore, if Government is paying the desalination plant \$9.4 million per year for water, of which 60 per cent will go into the ground, it would make more sense to invest that \$9.4 million into correcting these distribution problems that are there. It may take Government ten to fifteen years to do so, but it would make more sense.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, I am saying that because that ought to be the focus of the Barbados Water Authority, in its restructuring programme.

Mr. Speaker, what do we have here today? Today we have a situation where Government is now seeking a loan of \$150

million, to restructure its debt. Sir, we were not given any information about the maturity of the debt. We were not told whether or not the debt would mature in five years or in ten years. We were not told how much it would cost us to write the debt. Sir, nothing has been provided by the Minister but we are here, seeking to get \$150 million, of which \$100 million has been identified for the restructuring of that debt.

Mr. Speaker, it, therefore, means that the infrastructural development that we are talking about, that there is a balance of \$50 million that will, in fact, be used in the distribution chain. I am, therefore, saying that Government cannot approach it this way. If Government accepts that the Barbados Water Authority is currently making losses, then even if Government pays off that debt, the Barbados Water Authority would continue to make losses.

Mr. Speaker, there is also no guarantee that the \$50 million, which has been identified for infrastructural development, will be used in that regard. In fact, I have my doubts about whether or not the \$50 million will go anywhere close towards infrastructural development that is so necessary and so required at this point in time.

Mr. Speaker, the problem is that we have not treated water as a priority, even though we knew of these problems since the latter part of the 1990s. We had seen the studies which have been commissioned by Stanley Associates, and Cole and Crippen, both out of Canada, in support of these findings. Therefore, why are we here discussing issues of rate hikes that were imposed on top of individuals, for the inefficiencies identified at the Barbados Water Authority?

Mr. Speaker, this was not in relation to the inefficiencies or incompetence of staff. It is the failure to deal with matters that have been provided for in terms of recommendations, which the policymakers had not made any intention to resolve. Sir, there is no way that one could be aware of the problems that have been identified in the studies, where Barbados is losing 60 per cent of its water, and Government can continue along the present path of policy direction which we are on. It does not make sense.

Mr. Speaker, raising \$22 million in a year by way of a rate hike, pretending that certain individuals are being excluded on the basis of social justice and economic equity, not allowing 50 per cent of those who use water to pay and then selling that policy on the basis of that particular criterion, will not solve the problems at the Barbados Water Authority. Therefore, when you make your sales pitch and give it the political essence that you see, by suggesting that 50 per cent of those who use water will not have to pay, but then you impose a 63 per cent increase on high-volume domestic users. What you would have effectively done, would have been to transfer the burden of the Barbados Water Authority, onto the backs of Barbadians who currently pay all of the income taxes.

Sir, the tax threshold accommodates all of those persons in the low income category. Therefore, persons who are currently paying National Insurance contributions, high income tax and who are carrying such burdens, are also being called upon to pay the high increase of 63 per cent in the water hike.

Mr. Speaker, we understand that low income Barbadians cannot carry anymore burden, because within the last 18 months, they have had high food cost, high water bills, high electricity bills and high telephone rates. We, therefore, cannot now expect that a rate hike will solve the inefficiencies at the Barbados Water Authority and, therefore, I am suggesting that what is being planned is not a policy to correct the problems there, neither in the short-term, medium-term nor in the long-term.

H:No86(13)1210 p.m.

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation of Mr. C.A. MASCOLL:

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South said that the Government would not have to pay interest for the first three years of the loan and that the actual payment of principal would only start in the fifth year. All the Minister is telling John Public who would not be able to determine or decipher what is happening, is that the interest, so-called capitalised, would become part of a bigger burden of debt down the road to the Barbadian taxpayers. Sir, the pretty talk about capitalising interest means that it is pushed into the principal part of the loan and would become a burden in the future.

Mr. Speaker, this is precisely why Barbados National Bank - which is predominately owned by a company called Financial Limited, which Barbadians do not know is CLICO - is really owned by Trinidadians. Sir, that is not the important part. The important thing to note is that once you push the interest higher from year one to year two and the interest rate is capitalised, you are going to feel the burden of this loan some time down the road.

Mr. Speaker, I have said repeatedly that this Government has found a way of borrowing money without it being reflected in the national debt. This is a perfect example of Government finding a way to borrow excessively but when you look at the national debt figures the borrowing would not be reflected in it. Sir, I do not know in what commercial bankers across Barbados are trained because they go to Canada or North America, identify that Barbados has a debt problem, that Barbados is overspending, that Barbados is not earning foreign exchange but still say that the economy is okay. Mr. Speaker, that has to be a diplomatic and political statement all in on.

Mr. Speaker, any time a trained man could identify problems of increasing debt and overspending on the part of Government, that there is no effective growth in the economy but yet can conclude that the economy is safe and good, Sir, what could you describe it as but a political comment? Sir, the important thing to note is that C.L. Financial Limited owns Barbados National Bank. I have said earlier that when RBL bought Barbados National Bank, RBL recognised that it could afford to pay a much higher value than the share value offered at the Stock Exchange. If I were Barbados National Bank and I had all the loans for Barbados Water Authority, the National Housing Corporation, The Transport Board and the Barbados Port Authority, Sir, I have money that is guaranteed, I am

living sweet and happily ever after. I could afford to pay Government not \$1.80 per but pay Government \$3.45 per share.

Mr. Speaker, apart from that, Barbados National Bank has the portfolio for the Sugar Industries and the portfolio of the Sugar Industry is guaranteed sweetness incorporated. Sir, Barbados National Bank also has the portfolio for the airport and the port. In actual fact, we have a bank called Barbados National Bank, which now is not Barbados National Bank but is owned by C.L. Financial Limited, a company that is involved in real estate, insurance, banking and now is going to get involved in construction by owning Rayside Construction Company. Sir, it is involved in almost every aspect of the economy of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, if you could control the financial arm of any country, you could control the economy. Sir, we are seeing an interesting relationship emerging between a powerful financial entity and a Government that has discovered a way to borrow without it being reflected in its national debt. You are actually seeing that rather than dealing with this matter frontally, this Government has been engaging and finding itself in bed with a major financial institution which it appears to reject publicly but privately is accommodating to such an extent that this financial institution, sooner rather than later, is going to own almost every major arm of the economy of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, when I speak like this, I speak like this because I own no one anything politically. I owe it to myself and my conscience to tell the people of Barbados what is going on in Barbados. It takes a while for Barbadians to recognise what you are saying because they find all kinds of reasons not to hear or believe what you are saying is correct. They talk about doom and gloom but the reality is that time is the greatest Saviour that you have when you tell the truth but when you tell lies, you can hoodwink in the short term but time is about truthfulness.

Asides.

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, there is a truth about what I am saying to Barbadians. I listen on a daily basis to issues on the call-in programmes...

Mr. SPEAKER: Sir, what about the Resolution?

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I have been speaking to this Resolution ad nauseam since I got up to speak so I do not understand what you mean. Sir, it is \$150 million in bonds and I am speaking to the financial issues of the Barbados Water Authority.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I am asking you to get back to the point of the Resolution.

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, the health of the Barbados Water Authority will determine whether these types of loans which it is currently engaging in, will be to its benefit or to the detriment of the Authority in future. This is why when it seeks to borrow, like an individual, if he seeks to borrow from a commercial bank, the bank would have to

determine what the capacity to pay is, his financial status, what the future earnings would be and whether that individual could carry the burden.

Mr. Speaker, this is precisely why the Barbados Water Authority needs to be put under the Fair Trading Commission. Sir, the Barbados Water Authority needs to be put under the Fair Trading Commission because it owes it to the people of Barbados to justify rate increases on the basis of its financial statement and performance. Therefore, it has every right to come before the Fair Trading Commission and justify it.

Mr. Speaker, in similar vein, in order to be able to get such a loan, the Barbados Water Authority should have to go to the Fair Trading Commission to make such a determination on the basis of its financial statements. It cannot come simply on the basis of being an entity owned by Government and make these kinds of suggestions to the people of Barbados.

H86/12:20Sequence 14

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: Sir, the Barbados Water Authority has to go soon. There is no good reason why after two-and-a-half years the Ministry should not have arranged for the Barbados Water Authority to comply with the Fair Trading Commission. What could be the good reason? There is one and I feel that I know what it is. If the Barbados Water Authority had to go to the public domain to justify rate hikes and such borrowings, it would not be able to do so on the basis of any financial data. Therefore, the Barbados Water Authority is avoiding such scrutiny. The slow nature of the Minister to ensure that the Fair Trading Commission controls the Barbados Water Authority is connected more to the inability of the Barbados Water Authority to provide such data and, therefore, justify such increases.

Mr. Speaker, think about it. It is the function of the Fair Trading Commission to give a fair price and a fair rate of return on your investment. Those are the two principles that control the Fair Trading Commission.

Sir, if the Barbados Water Authority in its current state had to approach the Fair Trading Commission for a rate hike, and the Fair Trading Commission discovered inefficiencies at the Barbados Water Authority, with 60 per cent of water lost in the distribution channel, do you feel that the Barbados Water Authority could justify a rate hike, having admitted that it is losing 60 per cent of its water to the sand and mud? It could not, therefore, justify it.

Sir, what would be said to the Fair Trading Commission is simply this... It is the production cost your problem? Therefore, you cannot justify an increase in the price of the commodity on the basis of your production cost. It is your own inability to ensure that the consumer has access to your product that is denying you a fair price. Therefore, the Barbados Water Authority would not be given a fair price.

Mr. Speaker, how could you have something that nature provides, you purify it and make it available, but that is not the

problem. The problem is, you are unable to ensure that the consumer has access because of your own inability, yet you make a recommendation for a rate hike, Sir, not on the basis of the product itself but on the basis of your own inadequacies in getting the commodity to the consumer. It cannot work. Mr. Speaker, that is the important thing.

Sir, you do not allow a private sector company to establish a desalination plant and pay it \$10 million per year, when you should be correcting the distributional problems at the Barbados Water Authority. Sir, all of this talk about Trinidad, whether it can supply its people with water and that Barbados is at a more advanced stage, has nothing to do with the reality of life in Barbados. Let us stop fooling ourselves, that in order to be a bright student in a class, you have to be better than the dumbest person. That is all that is happening. In order to believe that you are doing well, you look at people who are not doing well and on the basis of their failure, you claim to be a king. You are a one eye man in blind man country. Sir, that is true of some of the political analyst in Barbados.

Asides

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: Sir, that is true of the political analyst in Barbados. They are one eye men in blind man country. Therefore, they make all kind of prognosis and come to all kind of conclusions based on false analysis, but analysis that suits them, then they get away with it in the public domain because people are unable to challenge the foolishness of which they speak, like Barbados being a one-party State.

Sir, when an Opposition gets 45 per cent of your votes can you have a one-party State? Sir, when there is an increase in the popularity of the Opposition to exceed 50 per cent, is that a one-party State?

Mr. Speaker, that is a slight digression. The point that I am making...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, Sir, could you get back to the Resolution?

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: Sir, I am back to it. The point I am making is that it is important to do the necessary analysis, in order to reach the right conclusions, having done your prognosis or diagnosis, you then prescribe. You do not prescribe on false basis. This is what is happening in Barbados every day.

Sir, they are people who pretend to be analyst, making false analysis and reaching false conclusions, similarly, the Barbados Water Authority.

Asides

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: Sir, information that is glaring. This is a policy issue. If it is clear that studies have shown your distribution system to be poor but you continue on the same path, you cannot resolve the problems at the Barbados Water Authority. It has nothing to do with the staff. You are supposed to follow policy. Sir, the Minister and Government are responsible for setting policy but they have failed. They

have failed to produce policy guidelines. We have instead all kinds of wastage of money in areas in Barbados that are not relevant. However, we return to Barbados and say that we went to an international conference that identified Barbados as a water-scarce country, and it provided a sense of comfort when we know that it is not true.

Sir, Barbados cannot be a water-scarce country if it is losing 60 per cent of its water in the distribution system. It is comforting to say that Barbados is a water-scarce country, therefore... but what happens to the therefore, there is no policy directive after the therefore. There is a lot of hoodwinking. You provide an environment in which all kinds of people now have access to all kinds of things in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, inefficiency is, in fact, the basis for wastage and wastage is, in fact, the creation of opportunity for people to make themselves larger. Once you waste you have to correct the wastage in Government, because Government is a place that takes care of wastage. It does not seek to resolve the problems. Wastage, in fact, is comforting to Government because Government thrives on inefficiency. It gets larger, employs more people, gives greater opportunity to people to do other things, and therefore, it can speak and boast of progress and that it has done so much.

Mr. Speaker does not offer me any latitude in this debate but, Sir, the unemployment data is similar; you create inefficiencies and then you say that you have created employment. That is rubbish. It is time that this Government gets its act together.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I am saying that we have had many opportunities in Barbados. We have had opportunities to restructure the Barbados economy, and we refused. We have had the opportunity to look at the water system in Barbados, transportation system and sewerage system in Barbados and we have refused. Do you know why we have refused? We have refused because it is convenient to have inefficiencies in government.

Sir, they have so discovered, well a way now, that it is remarkable that an energy related matter such as PetroCaribe was rejected on the basis of increasing the debt of Barbados. Now we have borrowed in less than a month considerable sums. No latitude for digression.

Mr. SPEAKER: Sir, please.

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I continue. That is a perfect point which I will elaborate on later.

Mr. Speaker, the point is this...

Asides

Mr. SPEAKER: Sir, you are getting a little out of hand now. You have to have some respect for this Chair, please. You cannot refer to Honourable Members in that way, Sir.

Asides

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: Sir, they are certain Honourable

Members of this Parliament who cannot speak to anything about lacking aptitude, or even in attitude and who have only just come into contact with World Trade Organisation and globalisation...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you cannot refer to any Honourable Member in here like that. Honourable Member, you will have to withdraw all of those words, please.

H86: 12.30 p.m. Sequence 15

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House 86, sequence 16, 12:30 p.m.

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: I will withdraw but the point of the matter is that I do not want any additional time. My half hour is soon up but I will say that this Government continues to play with the lives of Barbadians by not dealing with the real substantive issues and by dealing with matters that are trivial. The more substantive issues that ought to become really matters for Government policy and concerned, they have avoided. This is a perfect example of it and it continues to be the case in several aspects of our economic dealings in Barbados.

We have not really addressed the fundamental issues affecting Barbados. We have not addressed the fundamental issues that impact on people, like water, transportation, sewerage, health and certain aspects of health care delivery.

Sir, what we have decided to do is just to come every time and put some bandage on top of problems that we ought to address in a more serious way, and hope that would assist those involved in the day to day management and supervision of the product, to be able to correct the issues or deal with them effectively but, Mr. Speaker, not to come every now and again and ask for \$150 million. To do what? To cover up a problem?

We should deal with the issues and not come and ask for increases at the start of the year, and give no assessment as to how the increases have impacted on the financial status of the Barbados Water Authority; no impact of how the increases have impacted on individual consumers, the incidence of the rate height; no assessment of the capacity of the WTO to repay loans; no assessment of the impact of the BWA to deal with the real fundamental issues affecting Barbadians and the Barbados Water Authority.

Sir, the modus operandi of this Government is cosmetic treatment to everything. Sir, they come, quote a few statistics from abroad, compare unfairly itself to Trinidad and Tobago, suggest that Trinidad and Tobago has all the money but has not developed the social services commensurate with Barbados, not recognising the peculiarities of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, it has to stop sometime. If the Government is tired, there is a way out. If the Government has run out of ideas, there is a way out. If the Government wants to move on, there is a way out. If the Government wants issues to be dealt with, there is way out. It has to do with giving people who

have shown that they have the capacity to do what is right for Barbados. Do not worry about the personalities and images but about the competencies of people who have demonstrated their ability over the last several years, and who have shown clearly that they understand the issues impacting on Barbadians.

Mr. Speaker, if the Government is tired, let the Government go. It is time, therefore, for us who are capable, who are able, who are willing and ready to take the mantle and solve the problems affecting Barbados.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. R.R. FARLEY: I beg to move that this House be suspended until 145 p.m. today.

Mr. R.D. MARSHALL: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the House be now suspended until 1:45 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

House 86, sequence 16, 12:3425

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation of Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I have to say that the Honourable Member has shown a very strong resolve because sometimes in the face of criticisms or, more often than not, desperate requests from the Honourable Members for St. Thomas, St. James Central, St. Andrew, and myself, assaulting his ears saying that the water supply in these rural areas is not meeting the needs of the people, the Honourable Member has remained strong and committed.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware that Barbados is a water- stressed country and that it is a difficult thing trying to get home to constituents that while rain falls daily, they, on the other hand, have had to go sometimes two or three days without the benefit of water coming to them. Sir, I have anguished constituents coming to me, saying they do not know why the Barbados Water Authority is bothering to send them bills. Sir, that is the desperation that is being felt among them.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, when I support this measure, I am not doing so from a purely Party or political stance, but from the fact that because of this measure, this \$150 million bond, I am being assured by the management of the Barbados Water Authority and by the Honourable Minister, that relief would finally be coming the way of the people of St. Joseph.

Mr. Speaker, I have come to understand that the supply of water is a complex thing. It boggles the mind that it is possible for a main to be passing outside of one's home, while, at the same time, it is not possible for that person to tap into that main for that water supply. I must admit that it defied logic to me at first but on engaging on further discourse with the engineers at the Barbados Water Authority, I began to understand that the way in which water is distributed, is sometimes like cells, where a person may be next to a cell, but not would not be in that cell. Therefore, I admit, I face the challenge of trying to

explain to those constituents who are feeling the immediate pinch, that a district next to them has water and they do not, or that sometimes persons on one side of the road may have water and they may not have, or that people at the bottom of the hill may have water and that they, who live at the top of the hill, where the water has to pass, may not have.

Mr. Speaker, I accept that it is a complex thing and I do not know that I would want to explain all of the complexities of it, but as complex as the solutions in engineering might be, for the residents of St. Joseph, there is only one solution. Therefore, the fact is that whatever the complexities that may be faced by the Barbados Water Authority, as a Honourable Member of Parliament, I stand for constituents, who, I must say, are not happy with the supply of water that they are getting.

Mr. Speaker, I am not, at all, trying to criticise the Honourable Member. As I said, the Honourable Member has shown great resolve and commitment. Sir, I have never approached him on the water problem in St. Joseph, and he has not lent a ready ear. I have written him many letters and he has used his good office to arrange three town hall meetings for the residents of St. Joseph. Two of those meetings were at Bathsheba, while a larger one was held at the Lester Vaughn School, and was made up of the entire senior management of the Barbados Water Authority, along with its engineers. This was a meeting for the residents of St. Joseph, St. Thomas and St. James Central. Sir, it takes a tremendous amount of courage to sit face to face with people, trying to explain to them the kinds of challenges that we are facing.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member has repeatedly spoken to the country about the situation in the Barbados Water Authority, about the fact that we have an ageing plant. Sir, I do not raise these as matters of defence but out of a sense of solidarity with the Honourable Member, because I understand only too well the kinds of challenges that he faces. Sir, on the behalf of the residents of St. Joseph, I am asking that the staff of the Barbados Water Authority understands too, the kinds of challenges that my constituents are facing.

Mr. Speaker, I was once tempted to call the Barbados Water Authority, to ask if its senior staff would come and walk the area of St. Joseph, where they could feel the agony of the constituents, who are forced to plan their lives around an intermittent water supply.

Sir, for most of us in Barbados, the water system works well. Some persons have no fear of turning on the taps on mornings and finding no water. Therefore, in that kind of situation, without doubt, one would take it for granted, but the picture in rural Barbados is very different.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware that the water augmentation project is going to see the installation of additional mains. It is going to see an increased number of wells being accessed by the Barbados Water Authority, so that more water can be pumped into the system. It is also going to see greater attention being paid to maintenance and monitoring. Sir, I am, therefore, satisfied that all of these things are designed to bring relief, not just to rural Barbados, but to assure all of Barbados of a consistent and safe supply of water.

Mr. Speaker, I honestly hold the view that this \$150 million bond issue, will be applied in a sensitive fashion, and I sincerely hope that the Barbados Water Authority shares this view with me. Sir, I will argue that the people who are suffering most, are the people who should be first in line for relief. It is not an easy thing representing a rural constituency, where you are already so plagued with problems, in terms of slippages and other challenges that we face, then along with that, we are faced with a fundamental human attribute, something that is seen as being so basic as running water, is not readily available for the homeowners and entrepreneurs of my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that we all have to play our role, in terms of installing water storage systems and in terms of water conservation, but in the face of those arguments, one elderly lady asked me: (Mr. Marshall, it is one thing to tell me to put in a water storage system, but where am I going get the water to put in it? If I have no water in my pipes, then I cannot fill my tanks. It is alright to tell me to conserve water but the water is being conserved for me because I cannot get it to use, (far-less(to waste.)

Mr. Speaker, these are the realities that my constituents are facing. Therefore, I want to call on the Barbados Water Authority ...

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House, by trying to give the general public the impression that rain does not fall in St. Joseph and, therefore, those tanks would not catch that rain water for reserve.

Asides.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, the Christmas season requires charity of us all. Therefore, I will extend all charity to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, for trying to lighten up my spirit in the face of such a burden. I appreciate the effort at injecting mirth and levity into this debate but unfortunately, as we go into the Christmas season, I speak on the behalf of a number of constituents who are not going to be able to share that mirth.

H:No86(18)200 p.m.

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation Hon. D.D. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker, I will conclude by saying to the Barbados Water Authority that the residents of St. Joseph are crying out for relief. I would also like to challenge the staff of the Barbados Water Authority that when there are difficulties that they should go to the people who are immediately affected by them. I honestly believe that part of the Barbados Water Authority's public relations campaign should not be just to paint the good side of the Barbados Water Authority but should involve the senior staff going to those areas that have not had the benefit of water for two or three days to sit down and explain the challenges which they face, that they are not hiding

behind any big wall but are explaining the situation that obtains.

Mr. Speaker, I am optimistic that the people in my constituency would see relief but want to assure the Honourable Minister that if the relief is not forthcoming with some haste that I would be forced to raise these matters again in this Honourable Chamber. I end by saluting the Honourable Minister for his resilience. I can say personally that on any occasion that I raise the matter of water with him in St. Joseph that he has readily called to task the Barbados Water Authority. He has thrown his full weight and support behind us and I am confident that he would be able to resolve our issues. Sir, with those few comments, I beg to support the Resolution.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

Dr.D.C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to enter this debate. I believe that the provision of water services in Barbados can have a fundamental on the future socio-economic impact of a country. Therefore, it cannot be a matter to be trivialised. It has to be a matter that is discussed openly, where all of us attempt to put our heads together to look for the best possible ways of making sure that the Barbados Water Authority works in the best interest of all Barbadians

Mr. Speaker, I too, like the previous speaker, have some problems with respect to how the Barbados Water Authority has been engaging and executing its services. I do not want to be overly critical because the authority has been doing a job, which is difficult because of the sort of challenges that exists in a country where not only do we have population shifts but where the level of development occurring is beginning to stress that fundamental resource.

Mr. Speaker, problems do not develop overnight. The problems with respect to the Barbados Water Authority did not occur overnight. I have been looking at the financial statement with respect to the various reports. We have been having a steady racking up of losses every year for many years, from \$10.9 million to \$15.9 million to \$19.5 million to \$21.5 million. At the same time, when one looks at the time frame between 1997 to 2002, there has been over \$1.1 million in loans racked up.

Mr. Speaker, when one analyses that precarious set type of scenarios and juxtapose that to the level of service that is still being delivered in such a way that many rural districts go without water for two days... Sir, when they open the taps, the water comes out brown or other colours and in many areas many districts may go without water for longer periods of time. When I look at the debt problem and the problems with service, I have ask myself a few question and, therefore, I want to ask the Minister a few questions today.

Sir, after the \$150 million bond, I want to find out whether the Barbados Water Authority is still going to be in debt. I am hearing about restructuring the debt to allow for greater cash flow and that there is going to be a residual of \$50 million that is going to be used for capital development. I want to

understand from the Minister what is true level of financing required to put the Barbados Water Authority on the type of developmental path required because it cannot be \$50 million.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member, the Minister responsible for public utilities has gone on public record indicating that the Barbados Water Authority would require about \$350 million to solve the distribution problems alone, yet we are being told that even though you are borrowing to pay off debts that you have not yet begun to solve any of the fundamental problems which exists in the Barbados Water Authority.

Mr. Speaker, for me that is a problem but I will speak to the implications of this \$150 million to the public sector debt in Barbados later today. Sir, no statutory entity, which is already in debt will have the capacity to pay back the level of debt we are speaking about so it will end up being part of the overall public sector debt in Barbados, which is a fear that must be looked at closely.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, the questions are:

Do we have an obsolete management structure at the Barbados Water Authority?

Do we have inappropriate policies directives from a Board of Directors that are not themselves seized to appreciate the new developments with respect to the level of distribution in Barbados?

Is it part of the problem that the Minister seems to believe that the Barbados Water Authority is part of his own personal employment bureau and, as a result, there is the placement of square pegs in round holes and a type of over-employment and supercession that could be harming the official function of the establishment? I will also discuss that later, Sir.

Is the Barbados Water Authority not making a fundamental mistake when it is punishing demand for consumption when it should be looking at ways to servicing the supply and developing it so that we can deal with the demand?

Mr. Speaker, I started by saying that this could have fundamental implications for the socio-economic development of Barbados. I want to link that to the operating philosophy of the Authority.

H86/14:10

Sequence 19

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation Dr. D.C. ESTWICK:

What is that operating philosophy, Sir? Is the Barbados Water Authority seen as a social good or is it seen as an economic good in Barbados? Is it service delivered by the a service that we believe should be subsidised, that is, because of the interest of the country, or should it be a service that we

expect to make a profit on?

Sir, therefore, I want to find out if it is possible for the Minister to tell me whether a tariff could be placed on water that can adequately make it an economic good, given the dynamics in Barbados at this time. If such could occur, what is that target?

Sir, I am an Opposition politician and it is not my business to find solutions for the Government. Let the Government find their own solutions. I am here to ask why the Government has not been able to stymie in any way the losses that have been racking up at the Barbados Water Authority yearly. That is my job. My job is to also ask the question, why should the Government be at this stage increasing the public sector debt from 88 per cent to over 90 per cent with this loan, when the International Monetary Fund in its Article 4 consultation had been warning the Government about increasing net domestic assets of Barbados? For those who may not understand, it is increasing the public sector debt of the country by domestic borrowing.

Sir, I had to ask that question because I have tied it into the fact that a Barbados Water Authority in debt will not be in a position to service this loan in any significant way. It is going to be a burden on the taxpayers ultimately.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Honourable Minister if inefficiencies exist and if they are related to finance. If there are not related to finance, I want to know if they are related to employment, I want to know if they are related to operations or organisational structures. I want to know what is the problem that after eleven years, we are having a worsening of the situation, and at the eleven-year point we are coming to borrow \$150 million.

Sir, most of this money is to restructure debt. So, you are going into debt to restructure debt, using one credit card to pay for a next. This is where we are after eleven years.

Mr. Speaker, it bothers me that this is happening within a social sector, where there are certain social impacts that all Honourable Members of Parliament have to deal with daily. I am talking about the sequential water outages morning, noon and night that we all have to deal with. Sir, burst mains that may take twenty-four or forty-eight hours to be repaired. We have a twelve to sixteen-hour Barbados Water Authority in a twenty-four-hour Barbados.

Sir, I am talking about the organisation and the patterns. This is not an attack on labourers, et cetera. There is a problem. This administration feels that when there is a problem, that the problem is always money. That is the point. You go to borrow to solve a problem, build larger prisons. Every year it is continuing to mount and worsen.

Sir, I am convinced that the problem at the Barbados Water Authority is not only one of finance. It has to be organisational structure, it has to be management and it has to be policy. It has to be.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask about two decisions. I want the

Honourable Minister to tell Barbadians if the problem at the Barbados Water Authority relates to the fact that the majority of the water being pumped goes into the ground. If the Honourable Minister says yes, I want to ask him how he is solving the problem. I also want to ask the Honourable Minister if the \$50 million that is supposed to be residual, could in any way go close to solving the problem or if by the time you enter a phased arrangement to solve the problem, other problems would be created.

Sir, I want the Minister to explain to Barbadians, why the short-term solution of paying for desalination plant at the rate \$9.4 million per year to pump water that is going into the ground. It would have to be a short-term solution, it cannot be a long-term solution.

Sir, I would then ask the Honourable Minister if this is so, what about the desalination plant that was recently closed in the north, when in St. Peter we had people without water for at least two weeks. It does not make sense to me. I want to know who is benefiting from these deals. I also want to know what is the duration of the lease with Ionics at Spring Garden, so that I can calculate the \$9.4 million by that duration. If I am told that the duration is ten years and you are telling me that it is \$9.4 million, and the plant was built at approximately \$22 million, then I want to ask what is the cost of the plant in the north that was closed and how much was paid for that. This is taxpayers money.

Sir, I know it is Christmas and this administration likes to give out a lot of Santa Claus charity. It is Christmas but for whom?

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Honourable Minister again, what is the problem at the Barbados Water Authority? Is it money? I want an answer. Please, tell Barbadians. Is it poor management? Tell Barbadians. Do you need more staff? Tell Barbadians. Do you need less staff? Tell Barbadians. Is there a problem with competence? Well, train the staff. Do you need new consultants? Then, find them because the problem still exists after eleven years. I do not know what would be your particular answer to these questions.

Sir, is the problem the Minister? If the problem is the Minister, then he should say so. Is the problem the Minister and the Board? Well then the Minister should say so and let Barbadians deal with it at the polls.

Mr. Speaker, I now want to come to a very fundamental question, to which the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West spoke. That is, whether the Barbados Water Authority should be under the Fair Trading Commission. I looked at the Fair Trading Commission's Annual Report for 2003 and in its organisational chart there is supposed to be a Director of Utility Regulation, under which water falls. I want the Minister to tell the people of Barbados why it is that after two years, the Barbados Water Authority is not placed under the ambit of the Fair Trading Commission, as was required under the fundamental mandates of the Fair Trading Commission. I want the Honourable Member for St. Philip South to say why not.

Sir, I also remember making it quite clear that there were going to be problems with ministerial conflicts, because I could not see a minister of a utility coming to a policy position and then going to another minister to ask for permission.

H86: 14.30 p.m.

Sequence 20

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

House 86, sequence 21, 2:20 p.m.

Continuation of Dr. D.C. ESTWICK:

You would not listen, (hard ears wunnah won't hear, burn burn wunnah going feel).

Asides.

Dr. D.C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, even though we joke around, I feel fundamentally that water is a natural resource and you need it to live. Deep inside of me at a philosophical level...you do not pay for the air you breathe. I know you do not have to pump air out of the ground and purify it.

Asides.

Dr. D.C. ESTWICK: The Barbados Labour Party may want you to pay for air very soon. Sir, you are already paying VAT on death.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that it must be a social good because it is a fundamental necessity of life, just like breathing air, it must be a social good. I would want to say to the Minister and his Board to so structure the policies that the delivery of that service is seen as a social good and I feel very strongly about this.

Sir, I have people in my constituency who are on welfare. I have people in my constituency who get \$33 disability benefit and they have heavy water bills to pay. I know people in my constituency who are without water because of their inability to pay. This is close to death. This is not a function of a Government. It cannot be a function of an authority and an arm of Government. It is wrong.

Where is the social conscience that I always heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East speaks to? I am not saying that you are not supposed to pay for certain things. The problem is that do not tell a man on welfare or disability that he is to pay a water bill of \$30, when he only gets \$33. Then, you turn off his water if he cannot pay. I know of cases like that and if you want me to call their names, I can and tell you exactly where they are in St. Philip West.

Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate my position. The decision must be at a philosophical level whether the Barbados Water Authority sees water and its distribution as a social good. I believe, Sir, that there can be no tariff placed that will allow the Barbados Water Authority to be economic. Therefore, I think we have to accept there are going to need subsidies from the

Government but that is not a reason for poor management. It should be a reason for proper management. Sir, even the managers themselves will end up paying because it is the taxpayers' money.

Therefore, I have to ask the Minister some questions and I would hope that I could have some type of answers to them. Why this is important is that I am hearing talk now about recycling waste water for usage. I am also hearing talk in some circles about damming certain parts of Barbados from some old agriculturist in Barbados. They are asking why we do not look at it with respect to some gullies, where we use the run-off water to try to help us with some of the problems.

Sir, does all this go to the crux of the matter? Is the problem water on the surface or water underneath the ground? Do we have too little water in the aquifers under the ground? Yes or no? If the answer is yes, Mr. Minister, then damming the surface water, if it takes three or four months to get down into the aquifers, cannot be the solution to the problem. Some goes to the aquifers, if you know how far it is, Sir. It has to be a policy position.

Mr. Speaker, this brings me to my final point. I do not believe in the zonal distributions around where water is pumped and classifications, based on the rate of movement of particulate matter and non-particulate matter into the aquifers, defining the zonal elements that we now call zone 1, 2, 3 and so on.

I think, Sir, it is a mistake that in the 21st Century in Barbados, we could be having housing developments to the tune of 1 800 or 2 000 houses in one location, and we do not appreciate the significant impact that clustering could have on the aquifer. It does not take a magician to understand that if this type of concentration is reproduced around Barbados, and you do not have a special septic facility that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South speaks to, we would get into problems eventually. On top of that, Sir, I do not believe those developments would be occurring unless there is serious evaluation, with respect to mini-sewerage system operations. It does not make sense. It is how we protect ourselves for the future.

Sir, when I went to Kingsland with the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, it was the first time that I found out there were more than 1 800 house spots in Kingsland. Do all of them have septic tanks or do they have wells? This is what I am talking about. I can now speak to St. Philip West because I grew up around Hampton and ran around those areas when I was a boy. There are many homes in close proximity that have been there for many years.

Sir, it is the proximity to the pumping area. If development is going to occur further up east, or the east of Emerald Park of more than 300 new houses and you are going to require that septic tanks are put down, why such a requirement does not also exist for other zone 1 areas or other similar developments that will counter the damage to the aquifers.

It is just like the crying out for agricultural land, yet you would take the best agricultural land and put it in housing and

then ask why agricultural land has gone out of Barbados. It is who has money. When you are poor, the Government is not going to build any septic system for you. You cannot get a septic tank yourself, so you have to leave the zone 1 area. This is the Christmas gift to poor people.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken and I hope the Honourable Member for St. Philip South would answer some questions for me because I really want to understand. I would just want, in the minute I have to ask him whether the problem is one of money; whether it is one of management; whether it is that you need more staff at the Barbados Water Authority; whether you need less staff; whether you need more competent staff; what sort of training you have, if you do not have the competent staff; if you have political square pegs in round holes and if you, the Minister, is the problem. I have nothing else to say.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central.

Mr. R.D. MARSHALL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to support this Resolution.

House 86, sequence 21, 14:3014

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation of Mr. R. D. MARSHALL:

Sir, I spent four years as Minister responsible for the Barbados Water Authority and during my sojourn there I can safely say that the Barbados Water Authority has a competent staff of workers.

Sir, today is our last Sitting, I suppose, for this year, and at this time, before I get into the meat of my discussion today, I would like to wish the good people at the Barbados Water Authority a merry Christmas and best wishes for the coming year.

Mr. Speaker, because of the money that is being voted here today, we will know that when the new year starts they will then be asked to put their shoulders to the plough more so, since the resources would have been voted for and given to them here.

Sir, the Customer Service Department headed by Mr. Miller is doing a fantastic job. Since Mr. Miller took over that Department, he has been an asset to them where their communications are concerned.

Mr. Speaker, over the years, the constituency of St. Michael West Central, have had good service and good relationships with the Barbados Water Authority. In that respect, I would just like to mention people like Miss Jarvis, Miss Wall and Miss Powlett, whom I would have dealt with quite often as they try to bring the service to the people of St. Michael West Central. In the Maintenance Department, Mr. Herbert is always one of those people who was ready to give the service to the Barbadian people from the Barbados Water Authority. Mr.

Maloney who is deceased now and Mr. Forde who has retired were examples of good service.

Sir, we know that over the years Barbados has always been known as a country that has one of the best water supply in the world. Sir, we have been having some setbacks lately because of the many housing projects that are going up which are as a result of the success of the country. More and more people are going out to work, and hence, they are building houses.

Sir, many tourist developments are going on - and I could probably thank the Minister of Tourism for that - and many commercial projects, which mean more and more demand on the Barbados Water Authority for the good service that Barbados has been accustomed to providing to business persons as well as the residents of Barbados.

Sir, we have water mains in Barbados which are probably 100 and 150 years old which are iron mains. Sir, over the years these mains would have to give. Sir, I guess that the Barbados Water Authority would have their own blue prints, but we have water mains which go through cane grounds and sometimes these mains can burst and we then have many problems where people would have a shortage of water. Sir, sometimes when you find that the water pressure is low in some areas, it could be because of a burst main somewhere, maybe in a cane ground or under some building or so, where you cannot reach it and you do not know that the leak exists.

Mr. Speaker, I would believe that some of the money that we are voting for capital infrastructure for the Barbados Water Authority would be going to the replacements of these mains and to supply other fittings and equipment that are much needed to keep the supply of water going through the pipes to the businesses and the residents in the country.

Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Water Authority has a new fleet of vehicles and I hope that with this new fleet of vehicles that we would be able to get a better service. Sir, although we might say that a service is good, there is always room for improvement. The Barbados Water Authority is a utility company that has to make sure that it provides a better service, update its equipment and update the staff by the way of training. It has to spend money in some of those areas. As I said, I would hope that some of this money would be used for outfitting in the departments and for fittings for use in the pipes and the stores.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to see the Barbados Water Authority get in line with all the other utility companies where the service is concerned. When I look at the Barbados Light & Power Company Limited and at Cable & Wireless (Barbados) Limited, we can say yes that there are more advanced than the Barbados Water Authority where prompt attention is given to users of their product. Sir, if I have a problem in my area, I can make a telephone call to the Barbados Light & Power Company Limited and before the night is out someone is there to replace that light or to make sure that the light is working. Sir, these are things I would like to see happening in the Barbados Water Authority.

Mr. Speaker, I am talking about having a 24/7 service, where

when you make a telephone call about a burst main, someone could be there within 24 hours and you would not have to wait three, four or five days, seeing water running alongside of the road or spouting in the air for a couple of days. I would love to know that we can have this 24/7 service going.

Sir, I know that the Barbados Water Authority is heavily unionised and I would hope that management and the Barbados Workers Union which work on behalf of these workers, probably some are also represented by the National Union of Public Workers, could get together and make sure they come to a decision soon because at the end of the day it is the same people who work there and the same people who work for the union, who are all recipients of the water of Barbados and they and their families are the ones who will suffer as long as this service is not implemented.

Sir, I would like to see the Barbados Water Authority and the Ministry of Public Works get their act together where road repairs are concerned. Sir, when I was there as Minister, we always encouraged the Barbados Water Authority to work in conjunction with the various depots throughout the island and brought them up to date on when they are doing their work in the area so that when they are finished, the roads could be repaired in a quick manner. I know that those things were put in place when I was there. However, Sir, I have found that here of late not only in the residential areas but in the main roads you would see a road cut by the Barbados Water Authority and weeks and months would pass and the road is not rehabilitated. Sir, I do not understand how personnel from the Ministry of Public Works can be travelling on those roads on a daily basis, seeing things like that and nothing is done to have those roads rehabilitated.

Mr. Speaker, a large number of claims go into the Ministry of Public Works for repairs to vehicles. People meet me on the road and would say to me: (Mr. Marshall since...(

Mr. SPEAKER: We do not really want to go into that now, please.

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL: Sir, we are talking about road repairs and drain on the Barbados Water Authority, the ones who cut the roads, so I see the connection, Sir.

Sir, as I said, there are claims on the Barbados Water Authority and the Ministry of Public Works because they are the ones who rehabilitate the roads. The roads are cut by the Barbados Water Authority.

House 86 Sequence 22

2:40 p.m.

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation of Mr. R. D. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to see the introduction of a number of desalination plants in Barbados. Sir, we know that the Desalination Plant in Barbados can handle a certain capacity but I believe that presently, it is being under-utilised.

Sir, we know that the Barbados Water Authority is in the process of running a main from the St. Stephen(s area, down to Sandy Lane, on to connect to Mollyneaux. Sir, for over a year, these pipes have been left lying at the side of the road but during the last few weeks, I have realised that some work is being done. Therefore, I would like to know that work can be completed, to carry some of that water into the desalination plant, which Government is still paying for its service.

Mr. Speaker, this plant has a contract with Government and, therefore, it has to make sure that water goes into the West Coast, to service the number of commercial works and constructions that are going on. Sir, another problem has to do with the discoloration of the water in the Sunset Crest area, where rusty water flows through the taps. Sir, as people put their white clothes into their machines, those clothes become destroyed because of the rusty water. This, therefore, becomes a bill, which is then passed onto the Barbados Water Authority by the residents of Sandy Lane/Sunset Crest areas.

Mr. Speaker, as was already mentioned, to take some of the burden off the Barbados Water Authority, it can probably look at building another desalination plant, both in the north and south of Barbados. I believe that we would be able to get more done in supplying water to the people.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Honourable Member for St. Philip West speaking about water being a social good. Sir, I would say to the Honourable Member that Barbados is not a welfare State, but that I believe there has to be a safety net. Therefore, if there are people who cannot afford to pay their water bills because of disability, old age or poverty, they can apply for assistance to the Ministry of Social Transformation, through it Poverty Alleviation Bureau. Sir, I believe people should still pay their bills.

Mr. Speaker, another issue with regards to the Barbados Water Authority is that of its system of collection of arrears. The Barbados Water Authority has a large energy bill to pay. Sir, in 2003, when I was Minister, the Barbados Water Authority(s energy bill to the Barbados Light and Power Co. Ltd., was in the region of \$1.2 million per month. Sir, this is not a small figure. I am also sure now that with the high energy cost, the Barbados Water Authority(s bill to the BL&P, would be in the region of \$1.8 million per month. Sir, the Barbados Water Authority has to do something about its collection of arrears. If it could collect what is owed, it would be able to do a number of things, including staff training and giving better service to the people. Therefore, I do believe that the Barbados Water Authority should do everything in its power to collect its arrears.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is time that the Barbados Water Authority gets a new headquarters. As it is now, when persons leave one section, going to management upstairs, there is a stairway where two people cannot pass side by side. In addition, the building is an old one, with books packed everywhere. Sir, there is also the need to have all of its departments under one roof. I believe it is time that the Barbados Water Authority looks at ways of acquiring funds to have a new building, where it can house all of its departments under one roof.

Mr. Speaker, in 2001, the Nation Newspaper carried an article about the unsafe conditions which exist at some pumping stations and reservoirs in Barbados. At the time of that article, the Barbados Water Authority had attempted or had planned to have a number of repairs done to these places. Again, when visits were made at these sites, it was found that a number of things that had been planned, had not been corrected.

Mr. Speaker, at the time that article was highlighted, people believed that, in doing so, it was a security risk. I remember plans were to have these fenced-in premises, which would have cost approximately \$700 000. I would, therefore, like the Honourable Member to look into these things, to make sure that those problems are rectified, including any lapse in security at those places.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise the Honourable Member to speak with the management of the Barbados Water Authority, to verify if all those ills have been corrected. If they have not been corrected, then the Honourable Member would see to it that plans are put in place to have them corrected, as they would still remain security risks.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to make comments in this debate. Sir, I would be failing in my duties, if I did not speak in connection to the situation in the parish of St. Thomas, which I represent. Sir, I am sure that the residents of St. Thomas are going to be very happy to learn that there is a systematic plan, to ensure that the upgrades in the water system will be further pursued, and that they too will benefit as a result.

Mr. Speaker, other Honourable Members would have spoken earlier and would have made mention of water being a scarce commodity, and of the necessity of water in this society being provided to residents on a 24-hour basis. Sir, I believe that I should give credit where credit is due, but I shall make my comments regarding the water situation in the parish from 2003. We know that for many years, we have had challenges in rural Barbados, and much of it was placed on the sugar factories utilising most of the water supply during the crop season. Indeed, in the year 2005, the situation is not the same, and king sugar is not with us any more, in the same way as it was ten or fifteen years ago. Therefore, we cannot blame the sugar crop anymore. I believe there would have to be other reasons and, therefore, the efforts here today with this \$150 million bond, should address some of those challenges.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, as Minister of Energy and Public Utilities, would have made every effort in respect of the issues that I would have raised with him, to see how best he could allay the fears of the people in rural communities and to introduce a system, in which a measure of comfort could be sought.

Mr. Speaker, I must also commend those members from the Barbados Water Authority, who have been very consistent in responding to the challenges that we have highlighted. As was

mentioned by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, there were four town hall meetings, to discuss with the locals exactly what was the situation.

H:No86(23)250 p.m.

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation of Miss. C. Y. FORDE:

I believe the dialogue is healthy and important and I recommend it in any other area, not only to water but when it comes to the disposal of garbage, the education system, tourism and in any other sector. It is important because it softens some of the concerns and the harsh criticisms that some of the residents have at that time.

Mr. Speaker, you would join with me to express that if you have a system that has been working for more than half a century and little has been done over the last 30 or 40 years that there would be tremendous challenges as we are now seeing. Therefore, I can speak with a fair measure of authority about the woes of the people in Bagatelle Gardens, Welches Terrace, Jackson and Shop Hill in particular when it comes to the testimony of really worn main systems. Sir, for many years, those persons have been having water coming through the taps which is the colour of mahogany. They have bought all types of filters to ensure that the water they drink would not impact on their health. When they hear of the 10 000 four inch mains that would be placed in Bagatelle, would bring a measure of hope to them. Sir, we are waiting to see this come to fruition.

Mr. Speaker, I will not throw cold water on it because I can praise the Barbados Water Authority because in 2003/2004, I had a (dusty) time in some communities especially at the time of the elections because people did not have water for four days leading up to the General Elections. Sir, you would understand the anger and the need for people to say they were not voting unless they got water. I understand that because I would have responded in the same manner. I must say thanks to the authorities for the efforts put in mid 2003, to install a main running from Apes Hill through Hillaby, Farmers, Airy Cot, Canefield, Carrington(s) Village on to Sturges, which has helped to alleviate some of the challenges in that area and I want to say thanks.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go further because the General Manager hears from me often and is accommodating. At times I am angry but he is never ruffled. Sir, his spirit and mine would go well together because when I am angry, he is charming and I get results from the staff at Barbados Water Authority. They have acceded again to the request and the old mains that were in the general Welchman Hall, Lion Castle, First and Second Avenue Welchman Hall area, those mains are being replaced by four-inch mains and six-inch mains. Therefore, the access to the people is more available as long as there is water in the reservoir. Sir, the people in Lion Castle who had a one-inch main now have a four-inch main.

Mr. Speaker, one lady told me that when she turns on the pipe in the bathroom, it almost blew off the head of the shower

and that she had never seen water like that before. I am proud for the project that was started last January and which came to conclusion in October and November this year. Sir, we know that the challenges still exist in some of the areas. I believe that this amount should help to erase some of the challenges that the people in the northern areas have been experiencing. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Barbados Water Authority needs to seriously look at the system of arrears. We know that the taps of small people are still being turned off but, Sir, Barbadians should pay their bills. Our parents and foreparents always ensured that the utility bills, limited though there were in those days, were looked after first. They took a hanger and pinned the bill on to it, to make sure that if they were questioned by anyone that they could prove it was paid. I believe Barbadians should try as best as possible to pay their bills. I acknowledge that some individuals are unemployed or because of the small wages they receive that they would not be able to meet all their commitments. I know from speaking to the public relations person there that systems are instituted for persons to pay smaller amounts in order for them to lessen the amount due.

Mr. Speaker, I have a tremendous challenge when big businesses, hotels and other institutions in this country who owe \$10 000 do not seem to be challenge at all. We go home and find that the neighbours pipes are turned off, and that big locks are put on them but when it comes to big businesses, these entities are not touched. I want the Barbados Water Authority to go after every single Barbadian who is delinquent so that they can put systems in place to repay the bill because, at the end of the day, the equipment must be bought, the pipes must be purchased and the workers must be paid. Therefore, every Barbadian should look towards paying his or her bill.

Mr. Speaker, where there is unemployment, the Welfare Department should address those issues and make sure that no time is lost in paying the bill and that persons are not embarrassed in the communities where they live.

Mr. Speaker, I want the Barbados Water Authority to go after those persons who owe debt that amounts to millions. Sir, some of them are not paying house rent or water bills but they are paying the electricity and telephone bill. I think that is wrong, that the priorities are not in place. Mr. Speaker, I wish for that to be examined as a matter of urgency and measures instituted to ensure that those bills are paid.

Mr. Speaker, I have another concern which I wish to express in here as well. It has to do with the public relations component that was mentioned by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph. I believe that every Barbadian should be treated with dignity. Therefore, when taps are going to be turned off for whatever reason, if there is a burst main or low water in the reservoir or whatever the situation, I believe that people should be told.

Mr. Speaker, I have a problem when people in communities where I have worked and those surrounding me, do not know that taps are off until they turn them on. Sir, sometimes people have to wake up at 4 o'clock in the morning to get a shower because by 6 o'clock the taps are off for the entire day and do not come back on until after midnight. I can understand

parents staying awake to see their children who cannot get home after midnight but not waiting to get a shower because a shower is a basic thing.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that in communities where there are hotels, businesses, heights and terrace, that these residents should be told in the same way as those people in the valleys, alleys and the communities. Sir, this seems not to happen in the way that I would like it to happen when it comes to the Barbados Water Authority. Sir, they publish in the newspapers when pipes are going to be turned off in other communities but when it comes to St. Thomas, we hear nothing about it. I believe that all Barbadians should be treated well because we are all taxpayers, pay our bills and that we deserve that respect coming from the Barbados Water Authority to indicate to us when things should happen.

Mr. Speaker, if it is an emergency, it should be put on the radio. There was a time when people went around with bull-horns from the Barbados Water Authority, sensitising individuals and households as to what is happening. I believe that the attitudes of some of our people are lacking when it comes to how our fellow man is treated and giving people equal opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, the work ethic aspect of life is a cry across the length and breadth of Barbados, so it is not only in the Barbados Water Authority but in the police force and the teaching system, where people seem to think that despite whatever happens, that they will get their salaries because they are appointed. They pass a tap which is burst which is running gallons of water, they return to the Barbados Water Authority and wait for someone to call them back out. Sir, it is a foolish thing but I believe this would be tackled in this exercise.

H24/15:00

Sequence 24

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation Hon. Miss C.Y. FORDE:

Mr. Speaker, I too would want to call for a twenty-four hour system. I have grown tired, having lived for more than half a century, of calling the Barbados Water Authority

Asues

Hon. Miss C.Y. FORDE: It is half a century with a bit of wisdom. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the unfortunate experience on occasions of calling the Barbados Water Authority where no one answered the telephone for more than two hours, then when the telephone is answered, that person gets the brunt of your tongue. That person is only the watchman who seeks to answer but cannot say when the pipe water will return or from which reservoir your water service is coming, but he gets the cursing.

Sir, I believe that we have reached the stage in Barbados, if we are talking about globalisation, Caribbean Single Market and Economy and National Initiative for Service Excellence, that we need to institute a twenty-four hour service at the Barbados Water Authority. I am referring to the office as well because I may not want to trek through traffic at midday or at 4.00 o'clock in the afternoon, perhaps, the operators may not be on duty at that time, but for me it is the prime time for work. I do not want to deal with it. If I could pay my water bill at 7 o'clock at the Barbados Water Authority's office that would be convenient. If I could pay my water at any time of the day, or if I have a complaint I should be able to speak to someone who listens, understands and treats my concern with respect.

Sir, I had a bad experience when a lady called at 5 o'clock in the morning and said, Miss Forde, I hope that you are aware that I am using the last two blocks of ice to make a cup of tea. My taps were off for three or four days. Another lady said that she had a baby that is four days old and she could not give her baby a bath because the taps have been off as long as the baby had been born.

Sir, then there are businesses and schools, there are farmers in the rural communities who have to give their chickens water and feed the pigs, but there is no water. It has been happening for a long time, although I said it has eased a bit, my folk in Shop Hill are still angry. Those residents in Welches Terrace, Edghill Heights and so on are without water for many days. As recent as week before last Saturday, the pipes have been off for more than forty-eight hours without a single word from the Barbados Water Authority. Thank God for the new officer, Mr. Miller, with whom we can communicate, he seems to be able to communicate and tries very hard, but there is need for us to have a better public relation system. The notices for outages are limited, if we hear them at all. The treatment to clients who are depending on the services is awful, sometimes there is no response at all after 4:30 p.m. It looks as though the pipes seem to know when it is after 4:30 p.m. because they seem to get worse or the pressure of the vehicles causes them to spout all over the place after the 4:30 p.m. closure, which creates further confusion.

Mr. Speaker, there is a slow response to the repairs of the mains. Sir, my heart is (in my mouth), when the roads are dug up to facilitate a burst main, sometimes it takes six months to cover those small areas. For me, you need to reseal the areas as soon as possible to avoid injury, this was mentioned by another Honourable Member. The Honourable Member also mentioned the services offered by the Barbados Light and Power Company as soon as they are on the spot. They do not pass lights that are not working, go to the office to be told to return to Welchman Hall, another forty-five minutes away.

I think that the system needs to be properly revamped and workers in Barbados must understand that we have to offer a proper service for which you are paid.

Mr. Speaker, what I am going to be saying next is not the nicest thing, but it will not be disrespectful. Sir, I believe that some of the overtime should be removed. If you have different shifts, then different individuals should be working, reducing the possibility of confusion.

Mr. Speaker, I have observed certain government employees who prefer to sit back during the day, go into a rum shop, watch a movie and in the evening work overtime. They would not have turned a straw against the wind for the entire day. That is killing the work ethics in our society. Young people are observing and they too are taking advantage of a situation that is already bad. At the end of the day you must spend \$150 million, most of it is overtime pay. Therefore, I believe that we need to institute the twenty-four hour system so that other individuals could carry out the work. Some will work in the day, evening and the night, a system that is efficient in this particular respect.

Mr. Speaker, the dislocation for schools, I cannot help but mention that before I sit, where taps are turned off have created loss in quality time in the classrooms. It hurts to see at 9:30 a.m. some children have to return home, but the Ministry has tried to institute measures. It is not a project that can happen over a year, but, indeed, every year we are trying to make sure that ten of our schools are outfitted with water tanks, so that when the taps go off, children do not have to go home. It causes a lot of dislocation. Sir, parents cannot be found; five-year-olds are involved; when the children return home you are not sure whether certain unsavoury individuals waiting on the side are there to pick your children up. You do not know because the society is changing. Therefore, the Ministry of Education has instituted a plan of outfitting schools with water tanks to avoid children having to return home when the water is turned off.

Sir, children in a school are different from persons who work in an office with files. When children lose quality time, two or three times a week from the classroom with Mathematics and English Language, that is time that you sometimes you can hardly replace. Children who leave school sometimes lag in their education. Therefore, we believe that if our water system could be better organised, it would eliminate the closure of schools on such a regular basis.

Sir, I have already mentioned the situation with businesses that are impacted upon in a very serious way.

Mr. Speaker, as a Government we cannot continue to speak about every household, especial those in the urban and rural corridors that are being upgraded. We want them to have water borne facilities. We are talking about the installation of the water tanks and other devices for water conservation. If there is no water, what would happen? We need to make sure that an effort is made for Barbadians to have access to water for their household purposes first, then other situations.

Sir, we are aware that they are people who still water their plants, even though it is raining. I am going to make the call to Barbadians that their plants cannot be more precious to human lives that rely on water to survive. Therefore, they must minimise the use of water, especially when the water in the reservoirs is very low.

Sir, I believe that if we work together as a people, we can make the difference. If the Barbados Water Authority continues to replace mains, it would cost millions of dollars.

As I said earlier, it would cost millions of dollars, for example, if you have a house, without maintenance, the changing of a window, door, replacing a few boards and upgrading over a four, five or ten-year period, then the entire house has to be replaced. Sir, you know the kind of cost that entails. Therefore, if we have old worn out systems, replacements would cost millions of dollars in these times. I believe that at the end of the day every Barbadian should have equal access so that he or she could pursue their goals.

Mr. Speaker, the other two comments have to do with construction of commercial works as well as housing development. The Honourable Member for St. Philip West mentioned it, the construction of commercial works as well as housing development. When we look at what is happening now and the way that Barbados is expanding, especially in areas where there were few houses in the past, for example, the parish of St. Thomas has grown by leaps and bounds. Therefore, new developments are going up. I understand that there are three developments that will facilitate, perhaps another three hundred houses. What will happen in that kind of situation, when the water resources that we are now relying on become so limited that it cannot even reach our property? By the time we add another three hundred households, you could imagine that the water would be limited for use in all forms.

H86: 15.10 p.m.

Sequence 25

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

House 86, sequence 26, 3:10 p.m.

Continuation of Hon. Miss C.Y. FORDE:

I believe that the less discomforts we have, the better it is for us. It eases the temper. It helps us to develop better health habits. The health conditions are extremely important. I have a tremendous difficulty and I hope the General Manager and the Chairman of the Board and others are hearing me because I do not wish for the Christmas of 2005 for the residents of St. Thomas or any other parish in this country to be without water.

Christmas is a time when you want to celebrate and every time there is a breakdown on whatever is happening in the system, it impacts on people, their personality and the way they treat to one another. The anger is there and I believe that if we work together and if the authority ensures that it institutes proper systems for meeting the needs of Barbadians, then the Resolution for this \$150 million bond has my fullest support.

I look forward in the year 2006, if the Lord spares our lives, that these works will come to fruition bringing a measure of comfort to those who are large; those who are small; those who are rich; those who are poor; whatever status they are in; I believe that this measure will help to ease the situation in the various communities across the length and breadth of Barbados.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Mr. R.D. JONES: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I know that you are familiar with the rhyme of the ancient mariner, a poem classify as an epic, and its illuminous stanzas, you have one stanza which goes like this:

(Water water everywhere

And all the boards did shrink

Water water everywhere

Not any drop to drink)

Sir, one would hope that particular situation would not happen to Barbados or Barbadians, who depend on the water supply of this country to ensure that they maintain life and blood flow. I am sure the Honourable Member for Christ Church South would tell you that the human body is essentially made up of liquid and stuff of that ilk. We should be concerned about how we manage our scarce water resources in this country. One can argue relative to the amounts of money that is being called for now at this stage, as introduced by the Honourable Member for St. Philip South...It is outlined that some of it is to realign the debt situation of the Barbados Water Authority and some \$50 million is to be used in the infrastructure of the mains network in Barbados.

At the outset, one would have to say that it is necessary for the distribution network of Barbados to be continuously upgraded. I believe that there is some work now going on in Christ Church South and when I saw the conditions of the mains as they were extracted from the ground, I marvelled that they were still able to distribute water to that part of Barbados, an area in which I live and the mains from which I am served.

This kind of effort, even though with the challenges which the Barbados Water Authority is faced, must be commended. One recognises that they operate in an environment of extremely scarce resources, particularly where sometimes that agency seems incapable of getting the amount of money that it is owed out of the hands of some people for the services that it provides.

Therefore, we have, outside of the criticisms, which most likely are justifiable, well-deserved and well spoken...Sir, on the other side when one uses a service, one has to account through the payment of the fees or the tariffs, as it is called by the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, for that particular service. One has to utilise whatever mechanisms possible to ensure that the service on which they depend, can continue to be provided and can continue to function.

Nevertheless, one cannot eliminate the poor policy decisions that have been taken in the past, which have effected the management and operation of the Barbados Water Authority. To me, sometimes it seems that the structure, its management and policies that come down to it; the attitude of some of those persons who work within the organisation; even if it is at the

basic level trenching the ground to repair burst mains, seem to be a bit archaic. In a time such as this, and for an agency such as the Barbados Water Authority, one has to become more proactive and conscious of the particular role which such an agency and the people associated with that agency must play, so that the people of Barbados can be adequately satisfied.

I believe that water is possibly the greatest resource to man. I alluded to that point earlier as I started my presentation. I want to quote briefly from some words of no other person than the Prime Minister of Barbados, the Rt. Honourable Member for St. Peter, when he spoke at the IADB seminar on Financing Water and Sanitation Services in the Caribbean, Almond Beach Resort, St. Peter, September 26, 2004, just over a year and a few months ago, in relation to the question of water in Barbados, even though he was setting his background against a broader world view, relative to Latin America and the Caribbean.

He stated that:

(There is probably no greater and almost severe constraint to Barbados' future sustainable development than the availability of a reliable and satisfactory distributed water supply.)

Sir, all of us recognise that there is a need for the future development of Barbados. We speak in this House and in other places about housing for our people but we are not talking about the establishment of nice stone structures with a pit toilet in the back. We are talking about water-borne facilities and we are seeing work over time of water-borne facilities to bring people from waking in the dark of the night to go treading across grass, bush and shrub to some toilet pit near some cane field.

Mr. Speaker, water is needed to flush whatever waste from your body. The important thing is you need that supply to take care of your needs, within the framework of the four walls of your home. Therefore, the work is not only to meet the future needs of those things that we call for, but to meet existing needs of our people who have homes and want to transform them or change them from the pit toilet on the outside to water-borne facilities. This will demand more and more of the water resources of Barbados.

The water resources of Barbados have become (scarce) as a result of a measure of factors. One can have poor rainfall in any given period. One can have difficulties in extracting the water from the aquifers. One can have difficulties of leakage into the sea and things of that ilk. One can have difficulties with the rapid expansion of businesses and domestic housing. All of these can contribute to the scarcity of the water supply of Barbados. Therefore, a well-distributed water supply is an absolute essential to the efficacy of the sustainable development of this country.

He said:

(Secondly, the development and management of water and sanitation systems raise complex issues in their right which require fresh thinking and innovative responses, if this area is not to become an area of sustained crisis in our national life.)

Sir, that needs no explanation.

House 86, sequence 26, 15:2014

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation of Mr. R. D. JONES:

Mr. Speaker, if you could have at the highest level of the Government and of the State, a recognition of this for fresh thinking and innovative ideas... One would want the Minister and his technocrats to sit down, to examine and to think beyond sometimes the construct of their minds, the four walls, the little square box in which so many people would like to operate from time to time. One would be criticised because a lot of people do not understand sometimes when one thinks outside the box until a few years down the road.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to encourage the Honourable Minister, under whose responsibility the Barbados Water Authority falls, to engage the gears and to think outside the box. Studies might very well be within the box as well. There are technical papers and descriptions, but they might very well be within the box as well. The Honourable Minister should utilise the fresh thinking, that is, thinking outside of the box, if one could use that, and the innovative ideas to ensure that the survivability and the sustainability of the development of Barbados can be ensured over time.

Mr. Speaker, the \$150 million is (a good piece of change), especially in a situation where there are developmental and economic issues affecting this country that are highly problematic. Mr. Speaker, what can we do? We are in a crisis situation caused by policies, judgements and issues that were not properly looked at and dealt with over time. The Prime Minister tiredly spoke about the volume of investment needed. Maybe that is why at this stage the \$150 million and the National Insurance money, the \$14.1 or \$14.2 million, which was used, is being called upon.

It was recognised, Mr. Speaker, that over \$500 million would have been needed to ensure that the distribution networks of this country... I do not know if all of that was for that purpose, the Minister would tell us if all of that would be for that purpose.

Mr. Speaker, we know that we cannot draw on one lump sum, either generated in the domestic market or borrowed from some foreign source, at any one time. We recognised that over time there must be the removals of those mains which are over 100 years old from the distribution network. I see that along part of the South Coast in Maxwell and in Welches in Christ Church, and I heard of other areas. These are all important gestures.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard people on the call-in programmes speak in a pained tone to the quality of their water. About a week ago, I heard people in Kingsland Heights complain about their water. I do not know if the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, who at this time has his residents in that area, rises, as most of those who rise at 3:00 a.m., 3:30 a.m. or

400 a.m. on mornings so that they can get a bath because by 530 a.m. the water is gone. So I hope that he rises earlier. Sir, he might venture to other climes to make sure he gets a bath, he is transported, but there are many who are not transported. Sir, in Kingsland Heights if you do not rise before 530 a.m. you cannot have a bath, you have to venture back into your district from which you came, and if by 600 p.m. you have not finished cooking, (hell's bell rings), you have to wait until 1100 p.m. when persons go to sleep and your supply builds back up.

Mr. Speaker, at this day and age one should not have to suffer what I call those indignities when we brag and boast that we are the best in the world, if we are, in fact, the best in the world. Sir, we want to compare ourselves with Trinidad, Jordan and all kinds of places, but I like us to compare ourselves with ourselves and always try to be better than whom we were yesterday.

Sir, if today we are good, let us be better tomorrow than we were today. We must challenge ourselves all the time to be better. Sir, I am not interested in the odious comparisons between Trinidad and Tobago and if they do Cou Cou the same way we do Cou Cou and use flying fish from off of Tobago. Let us start now looking at ourselves, comparing ourselves to ourselves and be better than we were yesterday, and since today becomes tomorrow, let us be better today and tomorrow. That is what we have to do, that is how we have to challenge ourselves to be better.

Mr. Speaker, I like to balance the scale, that is my nature. It was not the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, who has not paid any attention at all, that got the mains removed and new distribution systems put in. I believe that it is so because of the voice of the citizens themselves who now act on their own behalf because of lack of direction and leadership within the constituency of Christ Church South.

Mr. Speaker, I move on because sometimes when the duly elected representative does not act, the people themselves have to take on the challenge of acting on their own behalf. Therefore, they have to write to the Barbados Water Authority, they have to establish petitions and they have to make the calls because representation is not coming from the source that representation could have come from. Sensible people do not rely on those who cannot perform, they rely on their own strength, their own knowledge and their own mental acuity to ensure that their basic needs are well-satisfied. Therefore, I am telling the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, my duly elected representative, to get on with the work.

Mr. Speaker, there was a time when where I live there was more water than one could consume, flooding the streets. It is only after I literally had to drag the Honourable Minister for Public Works through the area with photographs taken with a digital camera, that the problem was 90 per cent solved. We still get a little residual flooding, but it moves quickly. Mr. Speaker, I like to give thanks where it is due, not because of the Honourable representative for the constituency, but because I dragged the Member and ensured that it was done.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Ineffective, inefficient, waste of time, bread basket mentality, I am tired of it.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have to stick to the rules of the House.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Yes, I take it back, Mr. Speaker, I do not normally break the rules.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I spend a little time on the words issued in April 2004, relative to this very point. The fact that Barbados has for some time now been in a fortunate position of being able to supply water, has masked many quite, profound water related problems. It is a scarce water country, with burgeoning demands by the tourist industry and housing. Mr. Speaker, one phrase that I would like to put into Hansard is that our water infrastructure is venerable, with parts of the supply network exceeding 100 years old. One of the consequences has been a high level of loss of water through leakages and equipment failure.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West spoke to 60 per cent leakage and that is captured in some document which I have here produced by the InterAmerican Development Bank. One would hope that the work, which has been going on for a while, would seek to reduce that drain of this important natural resource for the people of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, one would want to see that effort accelerated, but it calls for the management of the money. Mr. Speaker, sometimes we talk about Government resources, but Government has no resources. The resources that Government utilises are the people's resources that they provide. Therefore, it must be managed well and in a context of sensible management and a (freeing up) of the kind of rigid bureaucratic structures to make sure that the organisation functions, acts and works within a kind of 21st Century construct, with speed and alacrity in decisions and implementations, not with frustrated employees on the ground grumbling and carrying on.

House 86 Sequence 27

3:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation of Mr. R. D. JONES:

Mr. Speaker, I would not necessarily enjoin myself to everything that has been said by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, but there is a need for concern. There is a need for education and professionalism at the level of the Barbados Water Authority, even if it is from someone who is using a peck to take the ground out, to put in a main. It has to be done at the level of the people of Barbados, who must understand that the things we take for granted might one day disappear, and that like the stanza from the rhyme of the ancient mariner: (Water, water, everywhere, but not a drop to drink.

Mr. Speaker, we are an island surrounded by water but unless we are able to convert that water, which can sometimes be highly expensive... Sir, the desalination plant was approximately \$37.5 million. That was not a mere few cents,

but the people along the west coast of Barbados, who were crying out, had to be given some relief. This relief came in the form of a desalination plant, located at Spring Garden, which was then distributed to a major section of the Barbadian community.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that they are able to get that plant going, but when one looks at the \$9.4 million in the process of this built, operate and lease arrangement, it appears to be a little high, specifically since I believe it is a 15-year arrangement. Therefore, when one multiplies \$9.5 million by 15 years, if everything remains constant, that works out to \$141 million.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member has to provide us with the facts. If those facts are not provided, we could then use the figures from elsewhere. These figures are not my invention. Sir, as Honourable Members of this House, the Honourable Minister has to give us the correct figures, rather than skirting around the issue and pretending that these figures do not exist.

Mr. Speaker, when the Honourable Member gets up to speak again, he will clarify these issues. My responsibility is to put these issues to the Honourable Member, and to make sure that he responds and provides clarity to them, so that we can take informed decisions, so that we could make informed speeches when we rise on this Floor, rather than to hide and genuflect before the truth.

Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Member is going to attack anybody, he should attack the words of the Honourable Prime Minister, and not me. These are the words of the Honourable Prime Minister, when he said: (Over the next few years, over BDS\$500 million will be required as investment to improve both the water supply management and water waste management system.)

Mr. Speaker, I am quoting from the Honourable Prime Minister, because the Honourable Member for St. Philip South would get up and say that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, does not know what he is talking about.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, if I do not know what I am talking about, then the Honourable Prime Minister did not know what he was talking about, when he addressed the conference at Almond Beach Resort, on 26th April, 2004.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Prime Minister went on to say:

(Each day a water scarce society such as Barbados, put out to sea over five million gallons of waste- water that can and should be treated for reuse to treat some of our non-potable water demands, such as for irrigation and for augmenting groundwater, through recharge schemes.)

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the Honourable Prime Minister did not go about picking up this knowledge himself, but that this had to come the technicians and engineers at the Barbados Water Authority. Therefore, if that information is wrong, those persons should be fired because they would have been

supplying the Honourable Prime Minister with inaccurate information.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that there is an attempt but that attempt seems to be so lopsided. If there is money to be spent on providing a serious water supply in Barbados via the distribution network, installing a new desalination plant or whatever, because that is so essential, as an Honourable Member, I would support that, rather than the drip-drop, hopscotch mentality that is being applied to this matter. Sir, the people at the Barbados Water Authority are not the ones who are encouraging this. It has to be the person in charge.

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, at no point in time in my speech did I make mention of that fact. I would, therefore, ask that the Honourable Member withdraw that statement; however true it might be.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, were ordered to be expunged from the records by MR. SPEAKER.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, sometimes persons have problems in interpreting what is being said by the Honourable Member. Therefore, I was confused as to the level of his production relative to his speech. Sir, I apologise, because I hate to misquote Honourable Members.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw all comments relative to the Honourable Member.

Mr. Speaker, the issue does not relate to one minister, not even a minister of the Barbados Labour Party. It comes down through time. There are always difficulties that transcends time. Therefore, if the Honourable Minister wants to be extricated from being seen or from appearing to be culpable, in the circumstances, then the Honourable Member is excused, because there are some persons who always want to pass the blame onto others who are now in charge.

Mr. Speaker, even though I have thrown a lash or two in the Honourable Member who now carries that portfolio, those who have gone before must also be castigated for their lack of responsiveness, lack of policy direction, lack of policy initiative, lack of purpose, and most of all, for their lack of knowledge. Sir, these people pretend that they are the fountains of all knowledge and that they know everything, in relation to every subject under this sun. Therefore, in that regard, they would have provide neither leadership nor direction. That is why the management or the chairmanship of the Barbados Water Authority might be left to flounder, but it would not only be the fault of the Honourable Member for St. Philip South.

Mr. Speaker, alas, when you are in the captain(s) cabin, you have to take the wheel and use it effectively. You have to take that boat upon the waves and even if there are waves that are difficult, if you are travelling between St. Vincent and Bequia, you still have to make the journey because you are the captain of that boat. Sir, that is what our system demands.

Mr. Speaker, as the representative of the people of the Christ Church East Central, I was recently summoned by the

residents of Gall Hill No. 1 and the residents at Evergreen Road. They took me on a fact-finding mission, to show me the size of the water main that comes through

those areas.

Mr. Speaker, I am not a large person, by any stretch of the imagination, but the main which supplies water to some 14 houses in that area, is no bigger than my wrist. Therefore, if anybody from the water authority... Sir, the Minister is here and as I usually beg, I have no problem today in begging the Honourable Member. Please let us get a larger main. Do not tell me that the previous representative, who, thankfully through Rural Development Commission, got a road cut to facilitate persons in those houses, that you are going to tell me that it is a private development, and, therefore, those persons in Gall Hill No. 1 and in Evergreen Road would have to pay to have a larger main installed.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Barbados, through the Barbados Water Authority, is responsible for the supply of water. It is their responsibility to join one existing community with the other.

H:No86(28)340 p.m.

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation of Mr. R.D. JONES:

Therefore, they should put in big mains not half inch pieces of pipe to supply 14 houses. Sir, I want good pipe for good people.

Asides.

Mr. R.D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I could well understand the merriment coming from the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central when I mention the word pipe. Sir, I wonder for what he uses pipe.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, do not let us have any of that.

Mr. R.D. JONES: Sir, it does not seem to be sensible to me that if someone builds up a bill with the Barbados Water Authority and moves to another location that the next resident should have to pay otherwise he would not get a supply. You should not be punishing the new resident for someone else when there is no family connection because it is not original sin. This is one area of change that I would like to have the Barbados Water Authority to look at and to engage. This is thinking humanely. If the person with the connection does not pay, the Barbados Water Authority should turn the water off.

Mr. Speaker, I want to encourage the Minister and the people of the Barbados Water Authority to seriously and fundamentally address the question of water. I am not going to fight over the \$150 million because it is to help restructure the debt which the Democratic Labour Party will assume in its time, hopefully soon.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please conclude.

Mr. R.D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, we have to satisfy the demands of our people. I am asking that we be more open to people of Barbados. Let us understand what is going on and so that at the end of the day....

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: the Honourable Member for St. Michael East.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Mr. Speaker, I thank you. Once again, a very short intervention. Certainly, I support the present demand that would facilitate the Barbados Water Authority with \$150 million but I have a fundamental concern just like persons who express their concerns about the South Coast Project and some of the other projects around Barbados. Sir, obviously, my direct concern would be to people to whom I serve.

Mr. Speaker, for a considerable time you have known me to express my strong concerns about what is happening in the area of the Belle. I bring my voice to this debate because this is fundamental to the improvement of the quality of life of the people of the Belle. Sir, for a considerable time, I have been asking one simple question about the whole development of the lives of the people of the Belle, who at present are facing the encumbrance of not having access to all that we boast so proudly about in here today, the water service, and the \$150 million that we make available. My simple concern to this investment, especially in the area of capital investment, is if any of these funds would be spent to improve the lives of these powerless, innocent people who live on the Belle lands of the Zone 1 area.

Mr. Speaker, I have spent a lot of time repeatedly expressing concerns about the lives of these people and speaking about all the technical aspects, the abstract terms bandied about by the scientists and academics in the society about hydrogeology and all types of terms.

Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, it is about the lack of water supply to these people in the Belle. For a considerable time the Barbados Water Authority has been given the responsibility to try to correct this injustice which it has inflicted on these people. I have to say inflicted because, if as a consequences of negligence, you are causing harm to people, I consider it as an affliction as well.

It is not only to St. Michael East but, Mr. Speaker, you are also a victim of this negligence where a Government Department has been given the authority to put all the prerequisites in place to provide the service of water to poor people, who worked so hard over the years...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you did not say where in my area.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: When I say the Belle, people tend to believe that I am only speaking about the area of Licorish Village, My Lord(s) Hill and so on but this stretches up Station

Hill into Bellevue, which is in your constituency, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, many of the other social problems that people are experiencing in that area derives from the causalities that are neglected by the Barbados Water Authority. If they cannot have water, the chances are that they cannot have water-borne facilities. They also cannot construct houses on the area of land because of the water problem so it has a multiplying effect on the entire community stretching from Waterford Bottom right up to the Norman Niles Roundabout, people are experiencing difficulties as a consequence of the negligence of the Barbados Water Authority.

Mr. Speaker, apart from the shortfall in revenue, there is a need for us to see a more responsive, a greater level of efficiency and efficient administrative forms of execution coming from the Barbados Water Authority. I am concerned because they have given me the promise not only to provide the service but to make available to me a thousand different scientific studies.

Mr. Speaker, I have said over and over again that there are records of numerous studies on that particular geographical area. I do not know what are fundamental changes occurring with under the earth, in the geology of the land but they claim that they have employed the experts to carry out the study yet the parliamentary representatives of these two areas have never seen the studies. We have to express uninformed opinions about the changes which are ongoing. We cannot respond to the concerns of our constituents because the Barbados Water Authority refuses to make available to us the documentation of the scientific studies that were supposed to be carried out.

Mr. Speaker, every now and then, there is a threat from a department of Government about evicting people off the land in the area, land which is sometimes owned by the people but who do not have the right to construct a house on the land because the Town & Country Planning Department is in agreement, written or otherwise, with the Barbados Water Authority, that persons who cannot provide an affidavit indicating that they own a house on the land before 1972, that the Town & Country Planning Department would not be allowed to construct a house in the area

H86/15:50

Sequence 29

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: We have ended up with a body of persons in that area who are classified in the most negative or pejorative manner as squatters, being the victims of this high form of State administration negligence by the Barbados Water Authority.

Sir, I just want to enter the debate to express my concerns about that kind of behaviour. I think that it is total disrespect, not to me as the Parliamentary Representative, but for the concerns of those people who work on the Belle lands, Lower Estate and Waterford Plantation. There is a perception that

some people hold about the concerns of people of a certain social class. I will not stop saying that.

Mr. Speaker, if you see how people respond to concerns on the tourist belt, when you hear people talk about sewerage problems, soil erosion and water problems on the south and west coasts of this island, they are really responding to this because they can link it to tourism. They find it correct to do exactly what the Honourable Member for St. Philip North is saying. They want to respond to concerns of people that do not look like them because they believe that they are human beings and ought to be responded to in that manner.

Sir, you have people accommodating them with Town Hall Meetings and sending off letters to them and determining whether the State should pay for this or that. Mr. Speaker, people find it difficult to take money from the Central Government and spend on the poor people in Bellevue and the Belle Plantation.

Sir, is it a difficult decision for a Government to make? Should I spend money on the powerless people from Licorish Village, My Lord(s Hill or the surrounding areas? It is as though these people live as spirits or transparent entities and nobody sees them. Nobody is concerned about the multiple social problems they experience as a consequence of the negligence of the Barbados Water Authority.

Asides

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Sir, the Government is responsible at this time. It is not the Opposition, it is not an interest Group, it is not a pressure group or a church. Sir, the State is being controlled by a Government and they have to answer to the people. Sir, I as Parliamentary Representative and, Sir, you as Parliamentary Representative have to respond to the social concerns that are even bigger than what we are experiencing as a result of the negligence of the Barbados Water Authority.

Mr. Speaker, they believe that this is a problem that is unimportant, so infinitesimal in importance that nobody believes that they have to relate to it. We are caught in a position where we appear to believe to be coming to Parliament over and over again, almost in a monotonous way. I will continue to speak about it just like Christians speak about Christ, however monotonous it appears to be. Sir, many centuries and decades will pass and people will speak about Christ and Mohammed. I am going to speak about it religiously until I see a solution being brought to the people(s concerns in My Lord(s Hill, Licorish Village, The Belle Gully, Bellevue and the surrounding areas.

Sir, every year we have to witness ordinary people, with no place to go, on wide open lands, which were once plantations, where the plantations used all types of insecticides and foreign manures with strange chemicals which they mixed with the manure and produce food. Sir, when the Belle plantation was fruitfully producing, scientists did not identify these things. Even in the early days when they identified it, nobody was taking any austerity measures against the Belle plantation. Now, those who are living on the lands outside of the plantation, they are now the victims of the negligence of the

Barbados Water Authority and to some extent the State, because the Barbados Water Authority represents the State.

Sir, I am demanding answers to this important issue in relation to my people.

Asides

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: There is a pecking order in the system. In the pecking order, I am the representative of the people who are at the lowest level of the so-called plebeians stock in the society. I, myself, might be classified thereof as a plebeian as well. Even though you express your views repeatedly, even though the people you represent see some virtue in you being their representative and respect the calls that you are making... I do not want people to believe that it is a melody in the ears of those who are within earshot. I want to take the call as serious as they take the concerns of the people in the west and south coast projects, and all other projects that relate to the water and sewerage around Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to spend time talking about a shortfall in revenue and justifying a loan for \$150 million. I can understand that, whatever the rationale behind it. I am asking for a fair distribution of that capital in the \$150 million that should be spread all around Barbados and exclude St. Michael East and Bellview.

Mr. Speaker, if you are going to be using \$150 million to improve the technical demands of the department, to look for better quality persons or whatever form of expenditure which you have for the general improvement of the department, I am also asking that the services be better distributed in order to facilitate the needs of the people in my constituency.

Sir, it has been too long. All I have been hearing is about a million different types of studies being done. Both are scientific but one relates to engineers who have to deal with soil and the other is about social investigations, questioning how many families live on a spot and how much income they receive. Sir, you will be surprised to know the extensive nature of the social investigations that are carried out. They know everything about the residents and their lives. Yet there is no solution after all these scientific studies.

Mr. Speaker, I want a human solution. I do not want it to be an academic exercise or a justification for getting money to spend on other parts of the country. I respect the general development of the society but I also want to be able to feel a sense of pride. Sir, as a humanitarian, I believe that these people deserve, at least, some kind of respect and we need to do everything to help develop those people within those societies.

Sir, they have worked long and hard enough and they still remain in the same position today that they were in decades ago. I cannot transform or do anything to transform lives. Not even the Urban Development Commission can put a house there and connect a water borne indoor or outdoor toilet. Not even the State can do it because both the Barbados Water Authority and the Town and Country Planning must approve it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, not even with septic tanks?

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Sir, not even with septic tanks you cannot get through. Even if you offer them that... the unfortunate thing is that, the kind of economic and social mobility that other people in Barbados enjoy these people cannot enjoy, because water is at the core of making it difficult for these people to improve economic and social status in the community. They cannot improve their housing or they cannot improve their toilets.

Sir, I have asked to have an exemption to the archaic approach of providing water by stand pipes.

Mr. SPEAKERS: Honourable Member, there are no more stand pipes.

Hon. T.A. PRESCOD: I asked the present Minister about having stand pipes at strategic areas. I did that because the assumption was that if you install water in the homes, they would put in waterborne toilets.

H86: 15.00:

Sequence 30

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

House 86, sequence 31, 4:00 p.m.

Continuation of Mr. T.A. PRESCOD:

I told them to put the stand pipes at strategic points in the area, especially when the Barbados Water Authority decided that each house must have a water meter. People who used to receive assistance from friends and family, were denied the assistance as a consequence of each house having a meter.

I asked that you take all of these dynamics into consideration when you are going to introduce a new mechanism like the meter. You have to ask how would it positively and negatively effect the lives of the people in the community. When they put in the meters, we had a lot of problems. Sir, we had men hunting down people in the community to see if anybody had connections underground with lines.

Sir, what we have now is not just checking to see who is giving another person water or attaching a pipe in advance of a meter but we have the Town Planning Department going after the people, giving them notices. In some cases we have the Ministry of Housing telling people that within a certain amount of days they will be demolishing their homes. Therefore, people are living in constant fear in the communities.

Sir, what kind bureaucracy or ministerial responsibility we have, if these things in some way do not impact on our consciences as people. We have to be more concerned about these things. I know there is a culture of indifference that exists sometimes in ministerial Governments. I am not talking

about any specific minister because there are people in Government, when they walk out of the House of Assembly after all of these discussions, they forget about all the substance and abundance of what they might call foolishness that they heard today. All the feelings about the concerns of people go through the window. There is no discussion sometimes when they leave here or any place else outside of this place, about the seriousness of this same problem or other social problems in the society.

Asides.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Therefore, the people remain in limbo, not of ignorance because they are fully aware of their duties to the people but because of a culture of indifference that disconnect them sometimes from the concerns of what is happening in the various communities across Barbados.

We end up suffering the consequences, with all the goodwill in the world and all the passionate commitment to these people. We give them service 24 hours a day and we end up suffering the consequences every five years because other persons who are in authority would not do their duty to mankind. This is what this is all about so I do not want to touch on the technical aspects of it, or whether \$150 million would be enough to service the debt, or whether you had x amount of years before you have to pay back the interest on principal. This is not important to these issues.

Sir, what is important is how a policy like this, with \$150 million can be justified as developmental, in relation to poor people. Jesus does not study the others in the society. He studies the poor. The rest can take care of themselves. What is happening at present is that we are focusing our attention on south coast projects. I want them to come inland and pay some attention to the project of the poor, inland in the Belle, My Lords Hill and in the surrounding areas.

I do not want to hear anything about what is going to happen as a consequence of the World Cup, unless I know that it has positive benefits for my people. Every time I look at a project, my question, and the most fundamental question that underpin everything else that I say, is how it will effect the lives of the people to whom I represent I am selfish in that regard, . There are Parliamentarians in here who are to represent their constituencies.

I also have a national, regional and an international viewpoint but fundamental to my political existence, if it is to have years ahead of rewarding benefits for me and my people, I must focus primarily on the constituency of St. Michael East. Sir, other person who believes that this focus is on foreign policy and foreign trade, that is a matter for them.

Aside.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: I know, if that is your job, you do your job.

Asides.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Sir, I am not speaking about the

Honourable Member for St. James Central. I am generalising.

Sir, he also understands there are parochial issues that he has to address, in relation to water and the social services within the community. All of us must understand that and we must be concerned about what is going on in the USA, Europe, Africa from north to south, from the Cape to Cairo. At the end of the day, if our voices and our contributions must remain meaningful, then we have to come back and play the role that local Government would have played for the society.

There is a lot of debate going on now, Sir, about the second layer of Government, which is excluded from our body politics. This is the role that the local Government would have played. Hopefully, at a later date we would have some debate on that and these people would have to pay attention to some of those issues.

Sir, I am no different from the others. They pretend that they do not deal with parochial issues. They are (big day(people and they can speak on esoteric matters of economics and philosophy. My friend in here likes to speak about utilitarianism, epistemology and tantology and sometimes he speaks about the philosophical principles of the positivist, which is Augustus Comte and Herbert Spencer, then, he comes back to Thomas Hobbes, John Jack Russo. He also talks about Marxist ideology, Max Webber and Emile Durkheim.

I understand these things too, even though people might not believe that this (peanut-brain(man from the Ivy and Tichbourne would be able to deal with these things that sound esoteric. I can follow the historic journey and the evolution of the philosophers very much like my learned friend. From the days of Socrates and Plato right through and look at it in terms of its evolutionary sequence and at what time in history the individual people come.

I must confess that although I believe in the holistic approaches, I also strongly believe that my principles are guided and grounded in the dialectics of Marxism. This is why you keep hearing me say over and over again that I speak for those who are powerless and cannot represent themselves; those who have been alienated and live in an atmosphere of anomie, hopelessness in the system. This is what you are doing to people when you do not give them the services that you are giving to other people.

It might be considered as academic but they are good instruments for measuring human behaviour, as well as to understand class snobbery and the whole concept of negligence that come as a consequence of class snobbery because people are put in the pecking order.

I believe that my people are the victims of a pecking order because every time I come here and I hear concern about sewerage problems on the south coast and water problems in all of these different areas, but my people have to suffer because of the this negligence, lack of focus on the people at the Belle. Sir, I said it to you and I will say it again. This will be a cry that you would hear religiously.

House 86, sequence 31, 16:1014

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation of Mr. T. A. PRESCOD:

It is a worthwhile cry and I would speak to it every time an issue comes up in relation to the environment, water, health, the availability of land, drainage, everything. These people were of great worth to this society when they worked at the Belle, Lower Estate and Waterford Plantations. These people are the offsprings, not of the hotel industry or the tourists who come to the hotel, but the people who work on the Belle, Lower Estate and Waterford Plantations.

Mr. Speaker, you do not think that these strong black men and women in here ought to focus their interest on these people first.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Sir, these people from the Belle and Waterford Plantations were in the struggle for the change with an understanding that when black Government comes to office or power - we like toying with these things about whether we are in power or in office, these are the little things that we deal with that we feel are fundamental - they would focus their interest on things that would have been beneficial to them, but that it not the case. We want to penalise them, we want to hunt them down, we want to push them off the lands of their foreparents and we want to scatter families across the land.

Sir, sometimes we have a focus and discussion on the importance of keeping communities and families together. Discussions ensue about keeping families and communities together and the cohesion that develops as a consequence of family and people who live within one community. Sir, the unfortunate thing that has occurred in the system is that as soon as people rise in education, they move out of the communities and add to social disorder. You hear that kind of logic being applied, and you think that it has some validity.

Sir, if you have a policy, whether perceives as the State policy or misdirected by those who are responsible for administration, you end up with people being scattered all about Barbados. The very thing that you hail as a positive, stabilising plank for the society itself is the very thing that you are now disrupting as a consequence of the policy, which you either neglect to apply or you apply as a consequence of a misrepresentation or a misunderstanding of what is the policy.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I could really listen to you for some time but your time has expired, so could you conclude, please.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Speaker, I got carried away with this discussion because I really only wanted to get up and asked a simple question.

Sir, in relation to the survey, I am concerned about what is the status of the survey, where are the documents and when can the representatives of the community have access to these documents so that they can study them and see what is being

recommended by the persons who carried out the research.

Sir, I do not have to wait on that. There is always a practical solution that we can put in place and save these people from having to go to different locations or make sure that if we are going to do anything which we cannot avoid doing that might hurt the harmony that has been developed in the community that we put an alternative programme in place to address the concerns of the people of The Belle, Belle View, Licorish Village, Flint Hall and the whole of My Lord(s) Hill.

Sir, I would also say to the Minister, one positive thing, that I fully support the request for this \$150 million, but I beg of him to share this distribution with the people of my area.

I thank you very much.

Hon. Dr. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this Resolution for the \$150 million bond issue to the Barbados Water Authority, recognising like some of my colleagues from the other side, notably the Honourable Member for St. Philip West and the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, the importance of water to all forms of life and indeed to our survival as a people and as a nation. Therefore, I empathise with the Barbados Water Authority, mindful of the very important role which that entity has in ensuring that not only is there an adequate supply of water being distributed throughout the island but also water of a quality which maintains the level of chlorides in the absence of bacteria, which are necessary, and so it cannot be an easy task.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard today from all Honourable Members of the various criticisms of the services being provided by the Barbados Water Authority, but when we seriously think about it, it cannot be easy for them. Throughout Barbados, a small country, we obtain our water supply via rain water percolating through our limestone into the aquifers, we have an increasing number of households being dispersed throughout the island, we have mains which were laid 50 or 70 years ago, which are leaking and we have wastage by householders across the island.

Mr. Speaker, we have complaints of water shortages in various parts of the island from time to time. We have an unpredictable rainfall pattern and in spite of this they are expected to provide water to all parts of the island even in times of drought. Indeed, in times where water is provided because of discolouration, because of rust from old mains, which are talked about, there is always complaints and concerns. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central speaking to this.

In terms of heavy rainfall, the water becomes discoloured, the pumps have to be turned off and we get complaints of water not getting to some areas and then if the water is allowed to go out discoloured, we get complaints about the composition, the colour and the quality of the water. Sir, these are some of the problems that the Barbados Water Authority has had to battle with.

There have been recurrent problems of the Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment Plant, and this has been topical this year.

The Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment Plant is now 20 to 25 years old and it is operating well-above its capacity and oftentimes it has to deal with substances which were not meant to be distributed and treated in that plant.

We have heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael East referring to the situation in the Belle and Belle View where the Barbados Water Authority, in addition to the zone 1 area, has to maintain water quality in the face of rising levels of nitrates, sodium, chloride and indeed rising counts of chloroforms in these areas. These are some of the issues that they have to address and to make everyone happy.

Of course, there are irritating and recurring problems of the South Coast Sewerage and problems of odours which residents are concerned about. The problems of easements and things like this still have to be dealt with. Of course, there are the recurrent financial difficulties which this authority has had to manage such as leaking mains, spontaneous ruptures of these mains, wastage of water, the need to replace these mains and financial difficulties. Mr. Speaker, one speaks of the rate adjustments and you know the contention that brings.

In addition, we have heard from some Honourable Members about their concerns regarding the work ethics and the human resource problems of the Barbados Water Authority. Sir, these are all of the things that the Barbados Water Authority has to deal with.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying to all Honourable Members that this cannot be an easy task. I read the brief and as I sat and listened, I get the impression as though all of these things are happening and the Barbados Water Authority, its management and its staff are not making a conscious effort or looking at possible solutions to many of these problems. As I reflected, I started to make some notes and indeed I found that they were addressing these issues in terms of the water loss and the old mains which are rupturing and leaking from time to time.

We heard the Minister speak about the plans for a major mains replacement programme throughout Barbados as part of this capital project. Mr. Speaker, further than that, he spoke of expanding the laying of mains in certain areas in which those mains were not present. We heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central alluding to the fact that in some parts of his constituency, the diameter of the pipe is too small. These are the sort of issues that the Barbados Water Authority has been addressing by looking at increasing the volume that can be accommodated in those mains. They are also looking at means of improving the efficiency at their pumping stations and ensuring that they are working on a 24-hour basis.

House 86 Sequence 32

4:20 p.m.

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation of Hon. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I know that there have been a number of discussions into looking at the feasibility of reducing the electrical and other costs of the Barbados Water Authority, in an effort to reduce its

expenditure on energy. I know that the Barbados Water Authority is looking at the possibility of having its own generators at some of these pumping stations, in an effort to reduce its expenditure.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, we heard the Honourable Member speaking about the new mains programme which is planned for the west coast. We have heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West speaking of the Desalination Plant. It is my understanding this plant has the capacity to produce about 6 million gallons of water per day but at present, it is only producing about 3 million gallons. It is, therefore, expected that by laying these new mains along the west coast, this would allow for an increase and a better distribution of water to the northern and western parts of this island. Sir, this shows that the Barbados Water Authority is indeed trying to address these issues of water shortages and problems on the west coast.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East spoke at length about the problems being experienced in the Belle area. Sir, the Barbados Water Authority then has a number of the challenges, such as an illegal settlement in a Zone One area, issues of rising nitrate levels and issues of rising phosphate levels, which have to be addressed. I know there have been a number of consultations and discussions in relation to this matter.

Mr. Speaker, I also know that a reputable consultancy has been awarded, to look at the concept in a two-phased process. They are looking at the problems being experienced at the Belle and at the quality of water. They are looking at the levels of nitrates, the chloroforms and looking at a reverse osmosis process.

Sir, in addition, they are looking at the social reasons, to which the Honourable Member has spoken, and at the possibility of having a limited sewerage treatment plant in that area. I believe this is ongoing and the Honourable Member will speak to it. I am, therefore, surprised that the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, does not know that these things are happening under his watch, and that the Barbados Water Authority is looking to remedy some of the problems that are being experienced.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, the Barbados Water Authority, along with the Ministry of Health and the Environmental Protection Department, have been looking at means of improving the quality of water that is distributed throughout this island. The Environmental Protection Department has responsibility for its distribution water at source, the Barbados Water Authority has responsibility for distribution, and the Ministry of Health has responsibility for when it reaches the customer.

Mr. Speaker, these three entities are involved in monitoring water over the course of many years. In this regard, therefore, various samples are being taken on a weekly basis and we are looking at methods of strengthening this process. Sir, Cabinet has recently agreed for the provision, in next year's Estimates of Expenditure, to expand and to strengthen the laboratory facilities, specifically to deal with issues of improving water quality throughout this island.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central speaking in terms of waste- water. Sir, in this matter, I think we have to be serious and I have heard the Honourable Member for St. Philip West alluding to that fact. Sir, if we are pouring five million gallons of water per year into the sea...

Sir, for over 50 years, the French have been using treated water. Therefore, we are saying that we in Barbados have to look at a system of treatment of sewerage, where this water can be used for agricultural purposes, in terms of golf courses, hotels and other establishments, where it can be diverted and utilised in flushing toilets. Sir, this is water that we need to look at, in a country that is water-scarce.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to commend the Barbados Water Authority for the work they have been doing in connection with the Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment Plant. There has been a marked improvement in that area. I know that they have also worked with the Ministry of Health, in looking at the conditions of the residents of that area, to see how the residents could have been or might have been affected.

Mr. Speaker, I think what is vitally important is that in all of this, I know that the public relations of the Barbados Water Authority have been doing quite well but I think there needs to be a more vigorous campaign regarding the public of Barbados, in explaining to them some of the things to which the Barbados Water Authority is looking. This campaign should be advising and educating the public as to how they can play their part in improving the situation, in reducing wastage and helping to alleviate a problem which is affecting or would ultimately affect all Barbadians, if it is not dealt with immediately.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to commend the Honourable Member and the management of the Barbados Water Authority, for the very good work that they have been doing, in spite of the trying conditions, in the many difficulties which they face.

Mr. Speaker, I support this Resolution. I thank you.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to participate in this debate. Sir, we are here providing the wherewithal for the Barbados Water Authority to borrow a large sum of money, presumably to carry on with its programme.

Mr. Speaker, I think that if we are to look seriously at the work of the Barbados Water Authority and the fact that it is putting itself into more long-term debt, we have to carefully consider what plans and projections exist for the operation of the authority.

Mr. Speaker, I find myself irresistibly attracted to the notion that if we are going to restructure the financial situation of the Barbados Water Authority, then naturally we would have to restructure its operations, otherwise we would be back here, looking to borrow more money, to deal with a situation at the authority. Sir, we cannot continue carrying these operational deficits year after years and not find ourselves in trouble.

Mr. Speaker, I understand, as the Honourable Member for

Christ Church South indicated in his youthful intervention to these debates, that the Barbados Water Authority has a series of challenges. It is not easy. First, water has to be sourced; it then has to be distributed; it then has to be consumed before it can be disposed of through a sewerage system. Therefore, there are challenges at every stage of the process.

Mr. Speaker, what we, on this side, need to indicate to the Government, is that if it is that we are hearing that Government is going to restructure the existing debt with \$100 million and is going to use another \$50 million to deal with its capital works programme, in what precise context would this work be taking place.

Mr. Speaker, I am afraid what I have been hearing from Members of Government, have not been entirely encouraging. I do not think it is good enough for a Minister of Public Utilities to simply rise and say that he needs \$100 million for existing debt and \$50 million for capital works. Sir, I feel that more details should be in the offing. It is, therefore, very clear to me, on the basis of what I have heard from the Minister responsible, from his Cabinet colleagues and for that matter, from his Parliamentary colleagues, those details do not exist. Sir, water is too precious a resource for us to operate in this slipshod manner. It cannot continue to be like that.

Mr. Speaker, there are no two questions about the fact that the Barbados Water Authority needs to borrow money, to deal with its myriad of problems, especially in its distribution system. Sir, the distribution process alone, could probably use up this money. Therefore, with that in mind, I think that if Government wants to convince the Opposition, this Honourable Chamber and the people of Barbados, that they require this \$150 million for the Barbados Water Authority, it has to be within a specific context. We need to have a holistic plan.

H:No86(33)430 p.m.

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation of Mr. R.L. SEALY:

While we are on that subject, I am not only talking about a plan for the duration of the loan for 25 years but if we are serious about issues pertaining to the supply of water in this country, we would look even longer than that. We need to think in terms of a plan for 50, 60 or 70 years. What are we doing now to ensure that there would be a source of potable water for not only the present generation but for generation to come. Clearly, the situation going on right now does not inspire a lot of confidence.

Mr. Speaker, on one hand we hear that we are water scarce but, on the other hand, we hear that there is an immense amount of wastage in the system through badly maintained lines. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West quoted the figure of 60 per cent, which is nothing to doubt because, according to Report of 1997, the Barbados Water Authority said that 60 per cent of the mains in Barbados were not up to standard and that there were leakage in the system. If you analyse it, the figure of 60 per cent would be accurate of mains not useful in the system.

Mr. Speaker, there a serious problem which has to be addressed but it could only be addressed within the context of an overall plan for the supply of water for the next 50, 60 or 70 years. This plan should take into consideration population growth, the pace and nature of development, golf courses which require a lot more water than agricultural enterprises considering that agriculture may be on the decline.

Mr. Speaker, these are the sort of question that definitely need to be looked at as we consider a plan for water supply. In that context, we can look at what sort of debt arrangements may be best suited for the authority because, in the absence of that plan, we are borrowing \$150 million, two-thirds of which is just to deal with existing debt, I suspect that Government would be back in this Parliament before the end of next year in search of further funds to do other works.

Sir, the main relaying programme, which was trumpeted here recently, was almost \$20 million in work which is only a drop in the bucket. Let us understand what we are confronting. Therefore, the overall plan of which I speak is essential for Government if it is to move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned the first aspect of the process, which the Barbados Water Authority deals with, which is the sourcing of its water. Of course, this has been the focus of some attention by this Government and in my humble opinion, the Government has sought to solve the issues relating to an ineffectual distribution system by increasing the capacity to source water, hence installing a desalination plan. Sir, that in itself needs to be looks at because, while I am not opposed to the ideas of reversed osmosis or a desalination plant, if it is affordable, it needs to be done within the context of an overall study that was looked at some time ago.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael East allude to this and I presume that in his wrap up, that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South would talk about that water resources study which was embarked upon by this Government a few years ago. I am not sure under whose tenure it was started but certainly it was a good idea because we need to review the question of the protection zones, which have been established by this Government, which have worked well to protect our aquifers but we need a review of that whole system. There may be some good merit in restructuring that system all together and shifting more towards other means of achieving our needs in terms of potable water.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, we may be able to use more desalination plants. We are not sure but other issues would come into play. Apart from the cost-effectiveness and so on, for example, do we want to have rampant development all over Barbados. Sir, I think not. While the protection zones were developed to protect the aquifers, they have served another purpose of saving areas of Barbados in leaving open spaces so that we have greenery. I do not think we want to see Barbados like Puerto Rico where every single corner of the island is developed. There may be merits in protecting the acquifers from that point of view also. These are the sort of things that need to be considered when we look at an overall plan.

Mr. Speaker, having said that, I would urge the Government to be careful with the snake oil salesman who come here and suggests that desalination is like manna from heaven. Sir, they have no problem with Barbados have desalination plants all over the place especially when they are getting \$5 per cubic metre when the Barbados Water Authority can produce it at \$0.90 per metre so they would gladly give us all the desalination plants that we need.

Mr. Speaker, we have to understand that water is big business. A senior executive in Williams Industries look me in my face and told me that the desalination plant here is the most profitable company in the entire network of companies and that it is the profit centre of the William Group at the moment. Sir, I am suggesting that Government needs to be cautious. Sir, if we are going that route, we should involve some other players as well because other business men would like to reap some of these sweets as well.

Mr. Speaker, while the Honourable Member for St. George North is taking his notes, I would urge him to be cautious because these are the same players that are behind the flyovers and they are not doing it for fun. They are doing it because they see an opportunity again to make some more of this money because they have done very well with the desalination plant. I am not envious of that fact but I am saying that we should take a holistic view of what is the best interest of all Barbadians and not necessarily in the interest of only a few.

Mr. Speaker, to that extent, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, in calling for a more clinical and serious approach to be taken towards the relaying of our mains, is indeed very much on the right path because if we could reduce the wastage of water, it would have a positive impact on the need for us to extract water from other sources.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that on the consumption end that the consumer also have a responsibility because it is not good enough for consumers to waste water. I gather there was a vigorous and aggressive programme at trying to recoup the arrears from persons that were seriously indebted to the Barbados Water Authority. It is interesting to see the point where the Barbados Water Authority financially is today. Having vigorously gone after so many Barbadians, it is unfortunate to see that they are still such heavy deficits and accumulating more and more debt.

H86/16:40

Sequence 34

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation Mr. R.L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, that suggests to me that the Government should also take a leading role in terms of paying its bills as well to the Barbados Water Authority. Sir, there was an incident, I believe about a year ago, when the Ministry of Health, Jemmotts Lane, had their water cut off, albeit only for a day or two, because of an outstanding bill.

Mr. Speaker, we heard that there was a disagreement at

Queens Park between the National Conservation Commission and the National Cultural Foundation over a \$250 000 water bill, as a result the water was cut off at Queens Park. My constituents and all Barbadians who supported the Spartan Cricket Club were deprived of cricket because there was no water to roll the pitch, all because of a disagreement between two Government statutory corporations, about responsibility for the bill at Queens Park; the National Conservation Commission versus the National Cultural Foundation.

Sir, I would think that Government should set an example, if it wants to rigorously pursue arrears, by not allowing a situation like that to develop. Sir, Government, I think, has an added responsibility to bring viability back to the Barbados Water Authority, to take the lead, pay its bills and, therefore, set an example for others to follow.

Sir, having said that, I believe the point that was made by many on both sides, that there should be compassionate in dealing with individuals who have genuine circumstances that may warrant a more humane approach. I have no difficulty with praising the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central, because nobody on that side is going to do it. I will praise him for starting the Customer Service Centre, while he was the Minister of Public Works. I thought it was a good initiative. The Barbados Water Authority is basically trying to catch up with the other utility companies that have Customer Service Centres. I thought it was a good idea. It is unfortunate that those that succeeded him maybe have not done all that they should have done to keep it in place, but having said that, I do not know if they are waiting to hire him as a consultant to advise them on how to do it. Sir, coming out of his experience as an insurance person, he obviously knows how to deal with people. It was good sense to give a human face to the Barbados Water Authority, because it was necessary. I have no problem in saying that to him.

Mr. Speaker, I also agree with the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. Maybe, he should get more involved in the debates in the Honourable House, the idea of public education is something that is quite important. Again, the Barbados Water Authority was involved in distributing water saving devices. I think that sort of thing is important and should be pursued further.

Mr. Speaker, while discussing the challenges that end users have. I heard the Honourable Members for St. Joseph and Thomas telling horror stories about rural Barbados where persons waited several days to get water. It is not a problem unique to rural Barbados. There is a similar situation in the Brittons Hill area where you have to get up in the middle of the night to shower because the pressure is too low or non-existent after a certain time. I do not know if it stretches as far as that section of Brittons Hill that crosses into Christ Church West. I know that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South and I can tell you about constituents of ours that have raised this issue, and it has been a longstanding one.

Sir, I think that we should understand that while the desalination plant has sufficed about one-sixth of the users of the northern part of St. Michael and St. James, that is so densely populated, there is still some sections of the southern

part of St. Michael that suffers. Sir, certainly there was the problem of water in the Brittons Hill area near Villa Road. Consumers were wondering whether their bills should be adjusted accordingly.

Sir, while I am on that issue, I want to amplify a little on a point that the Honourable Member for St. Philip West chose to glance at. Sir, that is the relationship between the Barbados Water Authority and the Fair Trading Commission, which as we understand it, is to come to fruition shortly. Mr. Speaker, we understood this since a few years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I really think that it was immoral for the Barbados Water Authority to adjust its rates for certain categories of users, having already told Barbadians that they will eventually be going before the Fair Trading Commission. It seems to me that the Minister of Public Utilities or the Government of Barbados had worked out...It is perfectly legal what they did because they have not fully brought the Barbados Water Authority under the Fair Trading Commission as yet. Having promised the consumers of Barbados that the Fair Trading Commission will protect and ensure that increases would be just, they turned around and increased the rates. It was, simply put, an immoral act. That is what it was. It was legal but it was totally immoral.

Sir, having established the Fair Trading Commission, travelling up and down the length and breadth of Barbados saying what a wonderful organisation it is to protect ordinary Barbadian from unscrupulous utility companies, you said that you are going to take the lead, placing the Barbados Water Authority under the ambit of the Fair Trading Commission but turned around and increased the rates before any such measure was implemented.

Sir, it is wrong. I am now starting to understand what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North was talking about when he spoke about the Fair Trading Commission being undermined. I did not understand that he meant the Honourable Members of the same Government, who have been speaking so highly about the same Fair Trading Commission. It was an unfortunate act. I guess that the Government may feel very smug about it because they got the rates increased. So, whatever happens when it goes under the Fair Trading Commission happens.

Sir, I could not possibly take my seat without making that point because, again, it reflects a lack of humanity in dealing with this whole situation. After all, the cost of everything seems to be going up in Barbados and it would seem a little more transparent if they had allowed the Fair Trading Commission to adjudicate on whether that increase was justified. They have taken the precautionary approach, not waiting for the Fair Trading Commission, so they increased it now that they can. That is basically where we are on that issue.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we need to take a holistic and long-term approach as we consider our use and disposal of water in this island. It is well-known that we do not have an abundance of sources for water. There are no large bodies of fresh water in Barbados. We have the odd river here or there. We are susceptible to long periods of droughts and on top of

that we are a densely populated country that enjoys a fairly high standard of living, so, the demand on water is great. I have not even gone into the aspect of the tourist industry, both long stay and short stay tourists. Sir, I understand that when these ocean going cruise vessels come into port, they too have needs that would naturally have to be met.

Mr. Speaker, all of it paints, to my mind, a picture of one that really requires a great deal of thought, long-term thinking. It is something, when you think about it, that should really go past Party lines. We are talking about water that is the basis of life. We also recognise that Barbados has myriad challenges.

Sir, it does not bring me any joy that this present Government, in my opinion, is not doing sufficiently adequate a job at preserving that reserve in the present or future. I would sincerely hope that they would see the wisdom for us to look at this matter in the correct and holistic way. So, we would not find ourselves struck with an authority that is just constantly going deeper and deeper into debt.

H86: 16.50 p.m.

Sequence 35

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

House 86, sequence 36, 4:50 p.m.

Continuation of Mr. R.L. SEALY:

I hope we could see an authority that is functioning effectively and that Barbadians have confidence in, which would be here to fulfill the needs of Barbadian consumers and users of water, in many years to come.

The Barbados Water Authority, in whatever incarnation has actually been around for over a century, and I believe it will be here for another century. We must recognise our role at preserving its future, not only its financial viability but the operational viability.

I am much obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Philip South will now wind up.

Hon. A.P. WOOD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to wind up the debate on this important subject. Let me begin by thanking all Honourable Members on both sides who made a contribution during the debate. The Barbados Water Authority finds itself in a position which will require us to have access to this \$150 million for the purposes outlined earlier. The Honourable Members spoke at length about problems, which they perceive that the Barbados Water Authority has to confront.

Mr. Speaker, the one thing that is certain about the functioning of Barbados Water Authority, notwithstanding the problems it faces, and the fact that it has to respond to these myriad problems, that the provision of this essential service, remains paramount. All Honourable Members spoke at length.

It is certainly not the case, Sir, that as you seek to put certain new systems in place at the Barbados Water Authority, you can take your eyes off the important tasks.

Sir, everything must be done in the context of us seeking to enhance this very viable service, which is provided by the Barbados Water Authority. It is not a case that you can stop, switch off and do everything that is required and then restart. You have to do it while still providing an enhanced service.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to rehash the challenges that the Barbados Water Authority faces. All I am going to say in closing is that we who have responsibility for shaping the policy of the Barbados Water Authority, understand the full extent of the difficulties it faces. We also understand and appreciate that the Barbados Water Authority does not only have financial difficulties, but access to requisite levels of finance will allow it to move with alacrity to deal with some of the technical and operational inefficiencies at the Barbados Water Authority.

Sir, mention was made of the need for us to deal with the infrastructure. It is very old in some cases. Contact was even made with the address given by the Prime Minister at the conference in April last year, when he spoke of the need for in excess of \$500 million to implement a comprehensive mains rehabilitation and replacement programme. This is a lot of money but, of course, a country has to identify its priorities and the provision of this service must rank high, given the importance of water to each and every Barbadian.

I said in my initial presentation that this \$150 million certainly would not allow us to deal effectively with the infrastructure. It should be treated as the first phase of a larger project, which should see the mains that have to be replaced in a prioritised way, that we will see that work being done in a more expansive way, relative to what happened in previous years when there was obvious under investment in the Capital Works Programme of the Barbados Water Authority.

Sir, Honourable Members are correct that the time has come when the Barbados Water Authority should be put on a sound financial footing, which will allow it to be more proactive, as opposed to having to be reacting to emergencies, and then seeking accommodating finance from the Ministry of Finance to deal with those emergencies.

I said earlier that the \$3.5 million and the \$2.6 million respectively, which would have been provided from the Consolidated Fund was in the nature of a response to emergency situations in the north of the island. In more recent times, we had to reconvene the task force on water to look at similar problems in central and eastern Barbados, hence the \$14.5 million package.

This \$50 million would allow us, at least to repay the loan we got from the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) for this work but it will allow us to press on with a highly prioritised, main(s) rehabilitation programme with the remainder of the \$50 minus the \$14.5 million.

All of us, experience problems in our constituencies, some

more severe than others. Sir, what I heard in here today tells me that members on both sides of the House would like to see a much better job being done by the Barbados Water Authority. I am also getting the impression from both sides of the House that there would not be too much resistance for the Government, using proper means, to have the Barbados Water Authority accessing finance to improve delivery of service.

As a matter of fact, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is normally at one end of the spectrum and he reminded us that we should not even be in here with any guarantee from the Government to support \$150 million because the entire \$150 million should come from the Consolidated Fund, and it should be seen as the Government repaying the Barbados Water Authority for monies they dumped in the Consolidated Fund in the 1980s.

There is another view, Mr. Speaker, that the Barbados Water Authority, in seeking to go forward with its work, in recognising the significant cost that will be incurred in trying to alleviate some of the difficulties in a very major way, might want to engage in other financing approaches to deal with these larger projects.

A lot of discussion would have taken place in recent times, and certainly a lot of discussion would have also taken place, at the conference mentioned by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central on financing options for the water sector.

House 86, sequence 36, 17:0014

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation of Hon. A. P. WOOD:

Mr. Speaker, the private/public sector approach is one financing option which has been discussed at some length in more recent times.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East returned to his plea for this Government to deal with the problems that his constituents in The Belle face. He has been very consistent in the way he has treated to this matter and is once again seeking to suggest that there should not be a dislocation of the people in that area and more so that the Government should find a way of being able to deal with their concerns while having them remained at that location.

Mr. Speaker, I can report at this stage that there has been some advance on The Belle feasibility study, which got started not very long ago. Hopefully, we would come to a point of final determination on which option should be exercised in order to deal with the nitrates and bacterial problem at The Belle. We hope that a definitive option could be arrived at in the not too distant future so that we could move to the next stage of giving practical effect to what is being recommended from this study.

Mr. Speaker, three main options have been recommended. One is the blending of the water from The Belle and Waterford sources with the desalinated water from the Spring Garden

plant. Two levels of blending were considered, 13 500 cubic metres a day or 27 000 cubic metres a day. A second option which has been identified is the seweraging of areas around The Belle. The third option is the treatment of all or part of The Belle and Waterford waters by either eyeing exchange reverse osmosis or electro-dialysis.

Mr. Speaker, there is some further work to be done which is being done at the moment which would allow the Barbados Water Authority to come to a definite position on either option or a combination of options to deal with the problems at The Belle.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East can rest assure that some time during the next year that we as a Government will make a definitive decision on how to treat to that matter and whatever decision is taken, once it is agreed to by all, we will have to live with it.

Mr. Speaker, I know that he has been making these clarion calls for some time now and we are closer, I would say, than ever before to speak in a definitive way to that particular matter.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members on the other side made contact with the need for the Barbados Water Authority to be brought under the Fair Trading Commission, and the Government has signalled its intent for that to happen. Particular mention was made at the time of the last adjustment in the tariffs, that it was to be treated as an interim increase. This Minister or any other minister on this side would not be in a position to determine the adjustments in rates for this service. The Fair Trading Commission will be the mechanism through which considerations will be given for tariff adjustments in the future. Mr. Speaker, that remains the position of the Government, so the Honourable Members on the other side or any side for that matter would not have to give any constant reminders about that to happen, it would happen.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West asked a financial question while he was searching for information on how the adjustments in rates would result in the revenue intake by the Barbados Water Authority relative to its initial projection. Mr. Speaker, when I came here I said that it would allow the Barbados Water Authority to raise some \$22.1 million over a 12-month period based on average trends in consumption. After the first nine months of assessing the revenue implications of those new rates, it appears, Mr. Speaker, over the 12-month period the Barbados Water Authority will get in excess of the \$22.1 million, no more than about 9 or 10 per cent. The Honourable Member has asked a question, and I have provided an answer. We are pretty much on course with the projections and we will get about 10 per cent beyond the \$22.1 million.

Mr. Speaker, when the Barbadian public understood the necessity for us to have a rate adjustment and the way we handled it by shielding categories of users of this vital resource, they accepted that there was a need for an adjustment. The rates were extremely low for a very long time, whereas operational cost was being incurred over the 10-year period before that adjustment. We had movement in wages and

salaries, we had movement in the cost of electricity, which is a very high cost at the Barbados Water Authority. Sir, of course the continued escalation in the oil prices would have its impact on the electricity cost at the Barbados Water Authority, added to that, we had the cost of the desalinated water which is just under \$10 million a year.

Mr. Speaker, while all of this was happening, there was under-investment, I am not going to be afraid to say it, in some vital areas of the Barbados Water Authority, which are focused on when persons are asking questions on the quality and timeliness of the delivery of the service.

Mr. Speaker, the adjustment would give us an amount over and beyond what is required to deal with the operational deficit, which at the time was about \$16 million. The \$150 million from which we can get a residual amount of \$50 million after the amount required for the restructuring is taken out, would allow us to address some of those pressing difficulties.

Mr. Speaker, say what we may like in here, the fact of the matter is that every single citizen in Barbados, whether or not they have water-borne facilities, all have needs, which require them to have access to water.

Mr. Speaker, I empathise with the Honourable Members for St. Thomas and St. Joseph.

House 86 Sequence 37

5:10 p.m.

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation of Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, I empathise with the Honourable Members for St. Thomas, not only because of the concerns and problems that her constituents are experiencing, which are occasioned by outages and low pressure, but even too when the Barbados Water Authority has gone in to repair worn-out mains, the reinstatement work, along with the other aspects of accommodation works, are taking longer than necessary to complete.

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate because I have already impressed on the management of the Barbados Water Authority, that the job is not completed unless the service that is broken is reinstated to as close a state to that which was first obtained. Sir, it is unfortunate that these things continue to happen, as there must be a better management of the process.

Mr. Speaker, you would appreciate that, given the state of the infrastructure, there would be ruptures and that if some of this infrastructure is not buried very far enough into the ground, the ruptures would occur even faster. Therefore, the older the infrastructure gets and the longer it stays under the earth, the greater would be the likelihood that the Barbados Water Authority would have to break its services, in order to replace or to repair those ruptures.

Mr. Speaker, we are, therefore, saying that we have been doing it in this way for too long and that there must be a more seamless approach to dealing with these simple things. For

example, if we have to break the surface, we should repair it as quickly as possible. If we have to break a long stretch of road to lay a main, we should do it in segments, in order to minimise the inconvenience, which would be experienced by persons traversing or living in these areas. We need to provide better service while we are dealing with the deep-seated problems at the Barbados Water Authority.

Mr. Speaker, mention was also made of the challenges in relation to customers service and about the need for us to have a more caring customer relations. Sir, one of the things that was not mentioned with any force, was the need for us to address the isometry that exists in the business hours at the authority, and the hours for which this service is provided. Sir, we are working on that as well because we are saying that the essential nature of this service must require us, as a matter of necessity, to have the business hours of the Barbados Water Authority changed, to bring certain key department in line with the 24 hours in which the service is to be delivered. Sir, we have prepared a paper and have submitted it to the unions, in which we are seeking to address this isometry in the business hours, for which this service is provided.

Mr. Speaker, all Honourable Members have appreciated and have recognised the challenges of the Barbados Water Authority, including the need for us to go further away, or to take ourselves away from maintaining this designation of Barbados as being a water-scarce country. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West sought to suggest that the designation of Barbados as being a water-scarce country could change, only if we were able to deal with the incidents of leakages, et cetera. Sir, we know that is not the case and that the Honourable Member is tending to overstretch that point.

Mr. Speaker, in the initial intervention, I made the point that the incidents of leakages, which are called unaccounted for water, are unacceptably high. Therefore, I am not going to bandy around whether it is 44, 60, or 28 per cent. Whatever is the percentage, it is unacceptably high. Sir, the fact of the matter is that it can only be dealt with in particular ways. Sir, the problem relates to the worn-out infrastructure, which accounts for the incidences of the unaccountable water being too high. Therefore, there must be a commitment to launch into very aggressive programme, to rehabilitate and to replace broken or worn-out mains.

Mr. Speaker, I take no comfort, at this stage, in having to accept that the water which comes from the Desalination Plant, at an annual cost of \$9.5 million, is going into an infrastructure that is characterised by aged mains. Therefore, any minister responsibility for the Barbados Water Authority should only be extremely comfortable when we have launched a serious assault on the aged mains and aged infrastructure, for the delivery of this water service. Sir, as I said earlier, if we could only retain more of what is already available, through reducing the incidents of leakages down to negligible proportions, while, at the same time, introducing a wastewater reuse programme in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, if we do not do these things properly and quickly, while, at the same time, deal with restructuring the authority, including introducing modern management and

technological systems, I dare say that we might only be limping along, as opposed to breaking the back of the difficulties the Barbados Water Authority is experiencing.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to say that while we are doing these things, we cannot switch off; the service still has to be provided. Sir, funds such as these will be necessary, from time to time, in order to allow us to provide an enhanced service, while we plan for the longer period, in respect to a more enhanced delivery of service. Sir, I accept that it is not only about access to financial resources. A modern utility company like the Barbados Water Authority, must find it fit and must have access to enough resources, to introduce new technological systems.

Mr. Speaker, these are tools which help to make a more effective management. Sir, obviously some of them would have implications for staff. It is true that a cost-benefit analysis is being done on three such systems. When that work is completed, I would, therefore, be in a position to treat the country to a discussion on the full benefits to be derived from the introduction of the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition system (SCADA), the hydraulic network modeling and the geographic information system.

H:No86(38)520 p.m.

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

Continuation of Hon. A.P. WOOD:

Sir, it is when you have reached that juncture and when a utility company has employed these things, we know that we are seeking to modernise this operation.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to close by once again thanking Honourable Members on both sides for the contributions made. Sir, all of us are in support of this \$150 million access at this juncture.

I beg to move that Resolution do now pass.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

ORDER NO. 16

TO MOVE THAT THE HOUSE RESOLVE ITSELF INTO
COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER THE GRANT
OF

MONEY FOR THE SERVICE OF THIS ISLAND.

On the motion of Hon. J.X. WALCOTT, seconded by Hon. G. A. CLARKE, the House resolved into Committee of Supply, Mr. R. MARSHALL, Chairman of Committee, in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable House is now in Committee of Supply.

RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$1 295 664
FROM
THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND TO PLACE IT AT
THE DISPOSAL
OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE
ESTIMATES 2005-2006 AS SHOWN IN THE
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 7 2005-2006
WHICH FORMS THE SCHEDULE TO THE
RESOLUTION
AND THAT THE EXPLANATORY NOTES TO HEAD 23
and 27

BE AMENDED
AS SET OUT IN THE SCHEDULE II TO THIS
RESOLUTION.

HEAD 23 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH - \$1 295 654

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member Christ Church South.

Hon. J.X. WALCOTT: Mr. Chairman, this matter, under Program 040, Subprogram 070, an amount of \$92 984 is required to meet the balance of Barbados(contribution to Caribbean accreditation Authority for education in medicine and other health professionals for the financial year 2004 to 2005 and 2005 to 2006. This is Barbados(contribution of 10.03 per cent of the total budget. Barbados is required to contribute US\$30 190 per year, equivalent to BDS\$61 442 00. However, for this financial year only \$30 600 was provided, hence the need for an additional sum of \$92 284.

Under Program 365, HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control, under Supplies and Materials, an additional sum of \$610 000 is required to purchased anti-retroviral drugs for the rest of the financial year. This year \$606 954 was used to pay for encumbrances from drugs from the previous financial year. I should say that almost 600 persons are now on anti-retroviral drugs. We are seeing eight to ten additional patients per month. Obviously, once the therapy is started, it cannot be discontinued and \$3 million is approved for this. The balance is \$372 000 and the estimated expenditure is \$982 000, so an additional \$610 00 is required.

Mr. Chairman, under Professional Services, we are requesting an additional \$593 000 to pay consultancy fees to Gary Struther Associates Incorporated, who are currently doing a design for medical waste management systems. This is part of the agreement under the Government of Barbados World Bank HIV/AIDS Programme. Sir, \$415 000 was approved this year and the estimated expenditure is \$670 587 for the rest of the year so the supplementary required is \$593 380.

I beg to move that Heads 23 stand part and that the Explanatory Notes to Head 23 and 27 be amended as set out in the Schedule under this Resolution.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

Mr. R.L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, I believe that it is appropriate now as we are about to break for the yuletide season in the spirit of togetherness that I very much support the efforts of the Ministry of Health in trying to deal with the HIV/AIDS pandemic. I sincerely hope that the 600 persons on anti-retroviral therapy would be expanded so that all persons would have universal access to anti-retroviral drugs and that this would become a reality. I believe that is the thinking in the Ministry and we on this side very much support that.

Mr. Chairman, there have been encouraging signs in our fight against HIV/AIDS given the fact that transmission from mother to child is down but, unfortunately, infection rates in young people are still menacingly high. We would want to encourage the Ministry in this effort. Sir, I note that the office of the Prime Minister is also involved in the education component of the HIV/AIDS fight. I also hope that we could harmonise the work of the two and deal with this scourge.

Mr. Chairman, the matter relating to Barbados(commitment to international organisations is necessary. I am happy to see that we are recovering those arrears and that we can continue to hold our heads up high when we have to present our cases in the various regional forum. Sir, we on this side do not have any difficulty in supporting this effort. We look forward to see that it would reap returns in the long run.

Sir, I am grateful to you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member Christ Church South.

Hon. J.X. WALCOTT: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 23 stand part and the Explanatory Notes to Heads 23 and 27 be amended as indicated in the Schedule.

Miss. C. Y. FORDE: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that Heads 23 and 27 stand part and that the Explanatory Notes be amended was put and resolved in the affirmation without division.

On the motion of Hon. J.X. WALCOTT, seconded by Hon. A.P. WOOD, Mr. Chairman reported the passing of one Money Resolution in Committee of Supply to Mr. SPEAKER and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. J.X. WALCOTT, seconded by Hon. R. R. FARLEY, the Resolution was read a first and second time and agreed to.

H86/17:30

Sequence 39

Tuesday, December 13, 2005

RECOMITTAL
PAPERS

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am committed to lay the following documents

1. Annual Reports for the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation for the years 1999, 2000 and 2001.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, this brings us to the end of today(s Sitting. As I move the adjournment for the Christmas recess, may I take this opportunity to thank, first of all, Mr. Speaker, yourself, all Honourable Members, The Clerk, THE Deputy Clerks, the staff of Parliament, catering staff of Parliament, the Royal Barbados Police Force, who ensure that we are secure as we go about our business in here, the media for allowing that which we say to be communicated to the public of Barbados. I wish them all a very Merry and Blessed Christmas and hopefully a Happy and Prosperous and Healthy New Year. I am not the Lord and, therefore, I cannot guarantee it but I wish them what would hopefully be for them a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous 2006.

Sir, this year seems to have flown in a way that, perhaps, all of the other years that I have spent in Parliament have not necessarily flown. It seems as though just yesterday we were wishing everyone a Merry Christmas. I think that it is fair to say that the work of this Parliament has continued apace and we look forward, after the rest at Christmas, to returning and working as we have done, certainly, in this post-summer session at a pace that will allow us to do the work that we are supposed to do as representatives of the people for the betterment of the lives of the people of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, next year promises to be one that would be full both on the legislative agenda, as well as in relation to preparing the country for what would be one of its major challenges since Independence, hosting the Rest of the world for World Cup Barbados. It is a task that cannot be achieved by the Government, Opposition, Parliament or World Cup Barbados alone, but would really require all Barbadians putting their shoulders to the wheel. I trust that as a Government and a Parliament and certainly as World Cup Barbados, we would find the room and space for persons to be able to participate to ensure that we could show the world that in spite of our size and limited population, that we truly could punch about above our weight and can truly make a positive impact on an event which is global in nature.

Sir, with those few words, I beg to move that this Honourable House be now adjourned until January 10, 2006.

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to second the motion and to offer my heartiest, best wishes to staff of Parliament, certainly the Clerk of Parliament who has been very useful and helpful to the Opposition, the Royal Barbados Police Force staff, general members of the dinner and lunch table, who have provided us with sumptuous meals over the course of the year.

I certainly look forward to the Christmas vacation. In two days from now, I should be celebrating another Birthday. Mr.

Speaker, most of all, I am hoping that over the course of the next few weeks I would have had such renewal that our relationship in the coming year would be a more harmonious one. I know that you seemed to express a little concern about my manner. I am hoping that during the course of the next few weeks I would be able to come back and say to you, peace and goodwill.

Sir, therefore, on behalf of the Opposition Members who have done, again for me, an outstanding job in representing the interest of the people of Barbados during the course of the year, Mr. Speaker, we would like to wish each and every Member of Parliament a very prosperous 2006 and a happy, happy 2005 Christmas.

A decision was made to push back some work that we might have had to entertain next week. This time of the year is certainly not only cheerful from the point of view of receiving but certainly as politicians we enjoy giving. Sir, to have the time have the time to give and offer our constituents all kinds of merriment is indeed a pleasing and pleasant time of year for me. I am not afraid to say that Christmas is my favourite time of year.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, on behalf of the members of staff, who have always been very supportive to us, the officers of Parliament, the two Deputy Clerks and the Clerk, the Deputy SPEAKER and myself, I would like to wish all Honourable Members, including the Leader of the Opposition, a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year. I really wish the Leader of the Opposition all the best and I hope that I could so address him next year.

Asides

Mr. SPEAKER: I mean that most sincerely, Sir.

The question that the House be now adjourned until Tuesday, 10 January, 2006 was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

H86: 17.39 p.m.

Sequence 40