
THE SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2003 – 2008

THE SENATE

Wednesday, February 9, 2005

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Wednesday, February 9, 2005, at 11.20 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour Senator Sir Fred GOLLOP, K.A., (President)

Her Honour Senator Dame Patricia SYMMONDS, D.B.E., G.C.M., B.A. (Hons.) (P.G.C.E.), J.P. (Deputy President)

Senator the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH, G.C.M., J.P. (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development) (Leader of the Senate)

Senator R. W. GRANT, B.A. (Econ.), G.Dip., M.A. (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and International Transport)

Senator the Hon. Miss L. V. EASTMOND, LL.B. (Hons.), LL.M. (Minister of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development)

Senator T. E. BARKER, B.A. (Hons.), M.A. (Econ.), J.P. (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs)

Senator the Hon. J. E. D. WILLIAMS, B.Sc. (Hons.), M.Sc., M.B.A., J.P. (Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of the Civil Service)

Senator G. P. B. NICHOLLS, B.Sc. (Hons.), LL.B. (Hons.)

Senator Miss P. E. PARRIS, J.P.

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

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

Senator Sir John Stanley GODDARD, K.A., G.C.M., B.Com., F.C.A. (Hon.), LL.D. (Hon.) (U.W.I.)

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

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

Senator I. St. C. LINTON

Senator G. P. I. GOODING-EDGHILL

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

Prayers were led by Senator the Very Reverend H. E. Crichlow.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Senate is in session.

MESSAGES FOR HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

Mr. PRESIDENT: The following communication has been received from His Excellency the Governor-General. It is dated January 17, 2005. It reads as follows:

MESSAGE NO. 1 /2005

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL TO THE HONOURABLE THE SENATE

His Excellency the Governor-General has the honour to inform the Honourable the Senate that in accordance with Section 36(4) of the Constitution, Mr. Rashed Orlando Marville has been appointed to be a member of the Senate with effect from the 17th January 2005.

SIR CLIFFORD STRAUGHN HUSBANDS
Governor-General.

I understand that Senator Marville is in the ante-Chamber and I would therefore ask the Marshal to exhort him to his seat.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Marville, I extend a warm welcome to you to the Senate. I know that you have enjoyed a long and distinguished academic career and professional career and I believe you will bring a great deal of knowledge and experience to the work of the Senate.

The Senate, you know, goes back to almost the start of the Parliamentary system in Barbados and we have in this Chamber time-honoured traditions. We are governed by the Standing Orders, with which I am sure you will become familiar. I am sure you will uphold the Standing Orders of this Parliament.

The Clerks at the Table and staff of Parliament are available to give whatever assistance you may require. On behalf of all Honourable Members, I would like to wish you well.

Asides.

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: I Thank you, Mr. President.

As you know I have had considerable experience. However, I do not know that any of the experience I have would be directly related to what happens here. I do hope that I could extrapolate from that experience and I promise that whatever intellect God has given me that I would use assiduously in the pursuit of the work of this body.

It is an honour for me to be here.

I thank you, Mr. President.

Asides.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE PRESIDENT

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have received apologies for the absence of Senator Husbands, Senator Dr. Lowe and Senator Sir Allan Fields.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I am commanded to lay before the Honourable Senate, the following:

1. Customs Tariff (Amendment) (No. 3) Order, 2004.
2. Customs Tariff (Amendment) (No. 5) Order, 2004.
3. Value Added Tax (Refund) (The Barbados Military Cemetery Association) Order, 2004.
4. Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of the Insurance Corporation of Barbados Limited for the Year 2003.

5. Annual Report for the Securities Commission for the Year ended March 31, 2004.
6. Annual Reports of the Barbados Vocational Training Board for the Years April 1, 2001 to March 31, 2002 and April 1, 2002 to March 31, 2003.
7. Reports on the Audit of Accounts of the Severance Fund for the Years 2000, 2001 and 2002.
8. Annual Report for the Barbados Port Authority for the Year 2002.
9. Report on the Barbados General Election, 2003.
10. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Caribbean Regional Environmental Programme) Order, 2005.
11. Annual Report and Financial Statement of the Fair Trading Commission for the Year ended 2003.
12. Annual Report of the National Conservation Commission for the Year April 1, 2001 to March 31, 2002.
13. Financial Statement for the National Conservation Commission for the Year April 1, 2001 to March 31, 2002.
14. Half Yearly Report on the Revenue Collecting Departments of the Ministry of Finance for the period April 1, 2003 to September 30, 2003.
15. Half Yearly Report on the Revenue Collecting Departments of the Ministry of Finance for the period October 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004.
- 16.

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF THE SENATE AND MOVED BY A MINISTER

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that Standing Order No. 45(2) be suspended for the remainder of this Sitting.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.
11.30 a.m.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to give notice of the Forensic Procedures and DNA Identification Bill, 2005. I also beg to move that the following Bills be read a first time:

1. The Travel Services (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2005;
2. The Health Services (Private Hospitals, Nursing Homes, Senior Citizens Homes and Maternity Homes) Regulation (Validation) Bill, 2005;
3. The Forensic Procedures and DNA Identification Bill, 2005.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 2 – TRAVEL SERVICES (AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION) BILL, 2005

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, the Travel Services Act, Cap. 373A came into operation by proclamation on June 1, 1983, and the Travel Services Regulations came into operation by an Order on June 20, 1983.

Mr. President, the purposes of the existing Act provide for the registration and control of persons providing travel services and related matters.

Mr. President, what occurred that has caused this matter to come before us at this point in time is that apparently the objective always was that the Act should refer not only to the travel agents but to tour operators. However, the Act, while mentioning tour operators in explanatory section, does not make any reference in the other part to tour operators, but makes specific reference to travel agents. Nevertheless, persons responsible for administering the Act, functioning on the presumption that the Act also covers the operation of tour operators, as it relates to the collection of fees from travel agents and the issuing of licences to travel agents, did a similar thing in relation to tour operators, the result is that it has now become necessary to validate that action. Therefore, the Bill before us is seeking to do just that and is taking the opportunity to make the appropriate amendments to the existing Act so that specific reference would be made to tour operators.

Mr. President, there are 24 clauses in the Bill before us. Clause 2 is where there is now a definition section that refers to a general sales agent, which is the amendment that is being taken care of. Clauses 3, 4, 7, 8, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22 and 23 are seeking to make amendments to the Act to include tour operators in addition to travel agents.

Clause 5 tries to strengthen the Act in relation to the need for compliance in the local tax laws and a new clause 4(a) is inserted at that point which requires certificates from the Commissioner of Inland Revenue, the Comptroller of Customs and the Director of National Insurance prior to the issuance or the renewal of a licence.

Clause 6 seeks to amend the existing section 5 of the Act to make sure that companies, 75 per cent owned by CARICOM nationals, may become eligible to apply for a travel agent or a tour operator licence. In clause 8 there is a slight amendment where the word “cancel” is to be replaced by the word “revoke”. Hence, the Registrar of Travel Services may now revoke a licence instead of cancelling it.

In clause 9 which deals with fees, the Minister responsible for Finance is deleted and the Minister to whom reference is now made is the Minister responsible for matters relating to travel agents and tour operators such as the issuing of licences *et cetera*.

In clause 10, travel agents and tour operators would now have to display their licences in conspicuous places and a duplicate licence must be displayed in each place of business where there is more than one place of business. In clause 11 the Minister responsible for Finance is omitted and reference is now made to the Minister responsible for travel services. In clause 14 mention is made of an annual list of approved travel agents and tour operators.

In clause 17 there is a time frame of 60 days, which is being introduced, within which the travel agent or the tour operator must make good any increase in security as is required by the Act. After that time the Registrar may suspend or thereafter revoke the licence. Clause 19 is being strengthened to deal with matters relating to financial data which is to be submitted to the Registrar of Travel Services.

Clause 21 through to clause 23 of the Act introduce the specific procedures to be used by the Registrar for the suspension or revocation of a licence. It is at clause 24 where the issue of the validation of the licences for tour operators and the fees collected from those persons after June 20, 1983 is being dealt with.

Mr. President, the Bill before us is simply seeking to make the amendment that the appropriate provisions will now apply to tour operators and to validate the action which was being taken since 1983 in relation to those persons even though the Act did not specifically mention them.

Mr. President, I do not think that this is a contentious matter, therefore I do not consider it necessary to speak at length on it, but will simply ask that the Bill be read a second time.

11.40 a.m.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, the Senate resolved itself into Committee on the Bill. Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Madam CHAIRMAN: This Senate is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 – 5 were called and passed.

Clauses 6 – 10 were called and passed.

Clauses 11 – 15 were called and passed.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Madam Chairman, Senator Chandler would like to make an intervention.

SENATOR Dr. F. L CHANDLER: Madam Chairman, I wish to make an intervention. At section 18(b)(3) and 4:

“Where a decrease in the amount of any security is not made good within the time stipulated in subsection (2) the Registrar shall suspend the licence of the travel agent for a period of 60 days.”

Madam Chairman, there is still mention of “travel agent” and not “tour operator” at these sections.

(4) Where the travel agent

(a) makes good the decrease referred to in subsection (2) before the expiry of the period of suspension the Registrar shall revoke the suspension immediately.

(b) fails to make good the decrease, referred to in subsection (2) by the end of the period of suspension referred to in subsection (3) the Registrar shall revoke the licence.”

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Madam Chairman, if I may crave the Honourable Senate’s attention. I will have to refer this matter to the Chief Parliamentary Council because I notice that it is stated at clause 17:

“Section 18 of the principal Act is amended

(a) by inserting immediately after the words “travel agent” the words “or a tour operator”.

Madam Chairman, at this stage I do not know. I would have to seek guidance from the legal department. I cannot make any pronouncement at this stage.

SENATOR THE HON. Miss L. V. EASTMOND: Madam Chairman, I think it is correct because Section 18(3) reads:

“Where a decrease in the amount of any security is not made good within the time stipulated in subsection (2)

the Registrar shall suspend the licence of the travel agent for a period of 60 days.”

I think here the expansion is clear. It is referring to a particular agent, or specifically to a travel agent.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Senator. Are they any other comments?

SENATOR F. J. STUART: Madam Chairman, the object of the Bill is to bring travel agents and tour operators under the same umbrella. I think the law applies equally to all persons in all respects.

Clause 17, section 18 of the Bill cannot stand for if a subclause (a) seeks to amend section 18 by inserting the words “or tour operator” after “travel agent”, then at subclause (b) would not be referring to a travel agent only.

Madam Chairman, the object of the Bill is intended to make sure that the law which applies only to travel agents in the past, should now apply equally to tour operators. Therefore, wherever the expression travel agent appears in this legislation, the amendment is now saying that you should now add “or tour operators”. Therefore, the law should apply to both.
11.50 a.m.

Madam Chairman, I would respectfully suggest that we suspend discussion on this matter which would give me the opportunity to consult it with the legal experts and we can resume discussion afterwards.

The question was put and agreed to.

Madam CHAIRMAN reported to Mr. PRESIDENT and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair.

ORDER NO. 3 – HEALTH SERVICES (PRIVATE HOSPITALS, NURSING HOMES, SENIOR CITIZENS HOMES AND MATERNITY HOMES) REGULATIONS (VALIDATION) BILL, 2005

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, there is some similarity between what occurred in this instance and what occurred in the matter which we just suspended. The Private Hospitals and Nursing Homes Regulations of 1969 were put in place at a time when the family structure which we have in Barbados was different from what now exists. At that time much emphasis was placed on the extended family and it was a normal thing

for children and elderly persons to be cared for by the adults of those families. Unfortunately, as society developed some aspects of the family declined and, in my view, this is one area where we have not done well.

In addition, all of us know that Barbados has now reached the stage where it can be described as an ageing society and there are a number of reasons for this. One of them is the improved healthcare that we have and in spite of any deficiencies which may exist in our institutions, persons are living longer because they have access to better healthcare.

Sir, then our society witnessed the unusual phenomenon of persons taking the elderly to institutions like the Queen Elizabeth Hospital when they had illness and leaving them there because of the difficulties of looking after them. Sir, because family members are working now to improve their financial status, they do not have the same amount of time they had previously even if they have the will and desire to look after the elderly.

We have witnessed the unfortunate development where a number of persons were taken to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and after they overcame their illnesses, were left there. They had nowhere to go because the persons who took them there did not return to take them back to their original homes.

Sir, the truth is that from time to time, all of us who have to interact with the elderly know that they prefer to be in a setting which allows them to have some degree of independence, if not all of it, to which they were accustomed. In 1998, Government through the Minister of Health started to put more emphasis on alternative care of the elderly. We have the Geriatric Hospital but there are many institutions which are not appropriate places to take the elderly because they do not give 24 hours attention to the elderly so the Government through the Minister of Health entered into a partnership with a number of alternate care providers some described as nursing homes and so on.

Sir, in instances where those homes were identified as nursing homes, there were many cases where the persons in charge of the operations were not medical doctors or qualified nurses. They were not qualified in gerontology or any area of discipline that would equip them to pay proper attention to the elderly in the event that they became ill. Therefore, the Government sought to put in place a new set of regulations which would require that in instances where owners or operators were not medically trained that they had some kind of relationship with another institution to which they could access the care for the elderly if they became ill. In essence, that was the objective behind the regulations developed in 1992. Those regulations were taken to

Parliament and were approved but unfortunately they were never brought into effect legally because the Order which was necessary to give them legal effect was never passed.

The Minister of Health in its enthusiasm to the new programme proceeded to apply the new regulations for these new homes because they need to bring them up to a certain standard to be satisfied that the physical conditions were appropriate and that the necessary care was available in the event that the elderly in those homes became ill. The legislation before us seeks to validate the action taken at that time in relation to the enforcement of these regulations for the operation of these homes.

12.00 noon

I would simply like to urge that, without trying to put blame on any person, a person must be more careful and must make sure that all of the necessary actions are taken so that these various proposals, when they are developed, are properly put in place, legally and otherwise. In this case, action which transpired is not action that would be injurious or disadvantageous to anyone. The proper functioning of the society and the care of the elderly were of good intention but still we have to make sure that all the legal requirements are in place so that there is no question about whether people have the appropriate authority. My simple warning is to those persons who are responsible for looking after those people.

The alternative care programme has been functioning quite well and the Ministry of Health now has a relationship with about 17 homes where they now place elderly persons and who do not have the support system in their original homes or community and do not require twenty-four hour medical care but who still need care and attention.

I have some knowledge of how they function since I have an elderly friend and a relative who are in one of these homes. Whenever I visit my relative, she speaks highly about the care she receives in comparison with the care she received elsewhere. I know that there are a number of those homes doing an excellent job and it is my desire to see that approach is widened so as to be able to accommodate all those elderly citizens who are in need of care.

It is important to note that when an elderly person is kept in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, simply because their relative is not able to look after them or provide the care for them, there is a certain cost attached to it in the vicinity of \$350 a day. It is cheaper to keep that person in one of the geriatric hospitals. In that case it is about \$100 a day.

The cost of the arrangement which the Ministry of Health has with private nursing homes is even lower. In fact, it is in the vicinity of about \$85 a day. The Government

makes a saving, the individuals get good care, because of the requirements that the nursing homes have to meet, and more people are accommodated than would otherwise be accommodated. The programme has been very successful and it is a programme that the Government wishes to continue with and expand.

Sir, there is a long list of people waiting to get into homes because of the circumstances which they now have to endure. Mr. President, from that point of view, I am quite satisfied that it is a programme that needs to be looked into. I, therefore, fully endorse the necessity to put it within the correct legal framework and on that basis I beg to move that this Bill be read a first time.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Stuart.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: Mr. President, I have lost track of the number of validations which this Government had to bring to this Chamber, since the last General Elections. I commented in the past on this matter because the Barbados Labour Party in the early 1990s excoriated the Democratic Labour Party on an occasion when it had to validate an action which the Government had taken previously. The assurance was given to the country then that as long as the Barbados Labour Party was in Government, that under the Barbados Labour Party Government that kind of irresponsibility, as it was termed, would never occur.

Sir, as I said, I have now lost track of the number of validations which this Senate has been called upon to deal with. I believe that by now the Honourable Leader of Government Business is embarrassed by the frequency with which he had to come to this Senate on issues of this kind. I am, therefore, not surprised to hear him sounding to those who are responsible to show greater care and exercise a greater sense of responsibility when trying to put Government's actions within a legal framework.

I appreciate the pain and embarrassment that he must feel but of course that does not help explain the self-righteousness of a regime that showed a remarkable impatience to a Government during a structural adjustment period and held itself up as some model of perfection and certainly gave Barbadians the impression that these mistakes will not occur during the Barbados Labour Party Government.

I do not expect to see any more of this. Like Senator Griffith I am very concerned that there are so many Government agencies in this country acting illegally and then at such time as it suits the Government to come into this Parliament to have the legality whitewashed.

Sir, I want to place on record again for the umpteenth time the Democratic Labour Party's dissatisfaction with the

state of affairs. When it was our misfortune to have to validate, the Barbados Labour Party had its say and I must have mine on this issue. I do not care what the mumbling may be, the reality is that we were promised and assured that this could never happen under the Barbados Labour Party, and it is happening too frequently, so frequently, indeed, that they have now embarrassed the Leader of Government Business who is called upon to introduce these matters to the Senate.

12.10 p.m.

Mr. President, having said that, I am able to associate myself fully, with the sentiments expressed by the Honourable Member, Leader of Government Business so far as those sentiments relate to the functioning of Private Hospitals, Nursing Homes and Senior Citizens Homes and Maternity Homes. These have been rendering a useful service to Barbados over the years. Of course, commitment to the support of these homes bears, I think, from previous Barbados Labour Party policy which was to promote home help to as many aged persons as possible in their homes, in the late 1970s and the first half of the 1980s when they were last in Government.

Obviously, there has been some change in the approach to the care of the aged as the Party now seeks to promote these institutions, but they do render a very useful service to the people of Barbados. As the Leader of Government Business indicated, the character and organisation of the society has changed.

Barbados is no longer a pure plantation society with villages of chattel houses attached to the plantation and with what is commonly called, the extended family. Although anthropologist of the African experience would say that the extended family is the natural culmination of Africa history and anthropology, the society has so developed that we become a lot more impersonal.

In any event, the shortage of land in the society, the fact that educational opportunities have expanded and people have developed, have encouraged the impulse to move away from their homes. The amount of land in the village has been quite limited and, therefore, children had to move far away from their homes. In those circumstances, they had to leave their aged parents and grandparents by themselves and, like all human beings, these are vulnerable to bouts of loneliness. I have personal experience of that, since my mother has fallen victim to that feeling.

Therefore, these homes fill a gap which cannot really be filled by aged persons staying at home and hoping that a son, daughter or some friend will pass by. The Home Help Service, of course, has been very limited, so that private hospitals, nursing homes, senior citizens homes and maternity homes have tended to proliferate.

The Democratic Labour Party of course is not opposed to the existence of these institutions, although we have always believed that keeping the aged in their homes and providing for them there is a much better option. We accept that reality is against us and, certainly, economic circumstances and social changes have tended to make these homes necessary.

Mr. President, we hope that as we come to grips with the fact that we are an ageing society, that emphasis will continue to be placed on making and keeping our aged as comfortable as possible and administering to their varied needs.

We have come a long way in terms of how to treat the aged. In earlier years, of course, we adopted what I would call a geriatric approach to the treatment of the aged, in many cases because of our benightedness on these issues, treating ageing as a form of illness. A more enlightened approach has now taken centre stage and we treat the aged with a more gerontological approach, where we look at the total needs of aged persons and come to grips with the fact that as infancy and childhood have their own special and specific needs, ageing has its needs and challenges.

This gerontological approach which is an improvement on a development on the old geriatric approach has tended to make the lives of the aged much more tolerable and abundant. This has contributed, in my view, to the society benefitting from the accumulated wisdom of these persons whose contribution to Barbados, in the many facets of its development has been massive, substantial and wise.

With those few words, Mr. President, I reluctantly give my support to this Bill, but having regard to the fact that its object is to take care of the aged population of Barbados, I give it my support.

I thank you, Mr. President.

HER HONOUR SENATOR Dame Patricia SYMMONDS: Mr. President, our Leader Senator Griffith and the Leader of the Opposition have both indicated, it is now commonplace that we are an ageing society. Indeed, 12 per cent of the population is 65 years old and over and, as a consequence there is a high demand for institutionalisation.

Most of the institutions have at least one person with care of the elderly training. There is a course at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, the Extramural Department, and there are courses conducted by private persons, but, Sir, there is a need for accreditation for all courses training nurses aides to ensure that everyone is trained to the same standard.

As has been said, the demand for institutionalisation is caused by the disappearance of the extended family, as mothers and aunts are all going out to work. Elderly people

on the whole do not mind living alone but some lack housing stock. Unfortunately, there are still some who live in deplorable conditions where there are fire hazards and the houses are in a state of disrepair.

However, I have to say that the Barbados Labour Party Government, over the years has made tremendous provisions for the elderly, in improving safe and comfortable conditions. Home care has been expanded and it is a wonderful means of support for those who need help. Greater support is given to organisations like the Soroptimist and other agencies. The level of pensions which at one time was ridiculously low has been increased over the years. We now have senior games which showcase the talent of the elderly and demonstrate one of the means of bringing the elderly into the mainstream of society and keeping them there. We have dramatic presentations that are given by the elderly, the Golden Girls, I know some of them are called. 12.20 p.m.

The Vauxhall Senior Citizens Home, which is a national committee on ageing and the Members of the Barbados Association of Retired Persons (BARP) have.... It is a very beautiful design for senior citizens, and this is a Government project. I know BARP is thinking of building homes for the elderly, so is the Methodist Church and if other denominations are doing it, I am sure that the Honourable Senator on my left will let me know.

Mr. President, because of the abandonment of elderly people, as Senator Griffith mentioned, the Government has introduced this alternate care programme. There are 35 senior citizens homes and 15 nursing homes, so all in all there are 148 senior citizens in the alternate care programme. There is an advisory and inspections committee. A public health nurse is the leader of the team. They have a community nutrition officer. They have an environmental health officer. There is drug inspection for checking on the handling of drugs to see that they are properly stored and records kept.

Mr. President, the nursing homes are full. Although older old people are relatively healthy, the younger old people are not as healthy as they used to be and it is a reflection of our funding the disease burden. There is what might be considered an epidemic of chronic diseases and disabilities, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and arthritis. We have problems like these and so more people may need to go into the homes. Nevertheless, the quality of life has improved for senior citizens. This alternate care programme has done a great deal to help in this regard.

Mr. President, to use a cliché, there is always room for improvement. For instance, I think that systems are needed to strengthen community nursing so as to identify those who are vulnerable because there are some who will slip

through the cracks and if we have more community nursing, those will be identified and help given to them.

There are a great many nursing homes springing up. Generally speaking, there is need for more stimulation, I think I have mentioned this before in this Honourable Chamber. I agree with Senator Griffith that we have some excellent nursing homes. I had a relative in one which I would say was first-class in many ways but I still think that overall there needs to be more stimulation in these homes. When you visit, you see the elderly just sitting around. Sometimes we think that these people have Alzheimer's disease when in fact they are just depressed and they need more to do. They do get visits from church people and things like that, which is wonderful and which is necessary but at the same time I think that overall they do need more stimulation. Nevertheless, this alternate care programme is desirable. It serves a very great purpose. Therefore, with those few words, I totally support this Bill.

Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR I. St. C. LINTON: Mr. President, I rise to support the validation of this matter that is before us without any reluctance whatsoever. I have had the experience in my organisation and in the Seventh Day Adventists Church to be part of the establishing of a senior citizens' home in Barbados in the mid-70s at the corner of Brittons Hill which is now Brydens Avenue.

Mr. President, caring of the elderly in such a manner is a very expensive undertaking. Some of those who are cared for in such homes, all the income they have is their non-contributory pension, and institutions like churches as we are, have to come up with means and ways to assist the elderly in that regard. Therefore, it is heartening that after many years in which Government institutions were overburdened and in which they had no room to care for some of these folks, that this could be happening. For years, not just during this regime, elderly people were being left on hospital beds and this became a very urgent matter of concern and the Government stepped in to do something about it, in spite of the fact that we are now validating the matter. I certainly know that these institutions are happy to have this kind of alternate programme, the care of the elderly, under the Ministry of Health.

However, Mr. President, I am somewhat concerned in another way. There are persons in Barbados who are suffering similar problems, but who are not categorised among the elderly, I am talking about persons with disabilities. I wish that this matter did not only mention persons that are elderly but had also included persons with disabilities who are not among the elderly.

12.30 p.m.

Mr. President, as far as this matter is concerned, I would like to know about these elderly persons or persons with disabilities being able to access their medicines through the Barbados Drug Service. Sir, there are persons under 65 years who, because of their particular problem, get their drugs from the Drug Service free.

Mr. President, I would like to know if persons with disabilities, who can range from age 18 to 64, can be assisted through the Barbados Drug Service with the medicine that they may need for their particular problems, or that they can be assisted with their need for accessories because there are persons with disabilities who need hearing aids or who need care with their joints; those who cannot afford some of the things which they need to assist them to get around. For example, some of them may have misshaped feet that may need a special kind of shoes.

Mr. President, I am wondering, since we are looking at providing assistance for persons with disabilities, if the Barbados Drug Service should not be extended in such a way as to assist them in the area of orthopedics, where Government, through the Ministry of Health, should not be looking at giving assistance to such persons who do not have the financial resources to afford such. Sir, without any reluctance, I am calling for the assistance of Government with regards to the care of the elderly and for persons with disabilities, to provide these people with much needed assistance.

Mr. President, I certainly support the matter that is before this Honourable Chamber.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I have listened to the issues raised by Senator Stuart. I share his concern about the failure of persons to make sure that a correct and appropriate environment is put in place by Government when implementing the various policies. I trust that each one will be given some attention, so that we would not have these same issues developing in the future.

I would like to remind Senator Stuart that it is not correct that Government is skipping these policies. The Government still pursues programmes in trying to assist people who stay in their homes because it is the policy of Government to assist the elderly.

Sir, I know of someone who lives alone, who has never had any children but who regards me as her son. Her request to me always was that she wanted to stay at home. The time came when that was not possible, she had taken ill and had to be hospitalised. When that time came for her to be discharged, she said that she does not want to go back home, even though she can move around but she does not have anyone to do things for her. I, therefore, had to find a home for her. Now she is very happy. I go to see her,

unfortunately not very often, but fortunately my wife and my relatives would go to see her regularly.

Madam Deputy President, she is always speaking and expressing to me about how happy she is where she is staying because she recognises that though she is not at her home, that it is the nearest thing to home that she has, particularly as she is getting good attention but I know that her dying desire would be to go back home. There was a time when I had to take that decision. I had the same issue with my father before he died, with him having lived for 99.6 years.

Madam Deputy President, Government still pursues the policy of Home Help where that is appropriate during the day time. The issue is at night when there is no one to care for these elderly persons, as the Home Helpers will come during the day to cook and to clean but then they leave. Therefore, unless there was a 24-hour service Home Help system, some of those cases cannot depend on Home Help Programme.

Madam Deputy President, Government has not abandoned its position, Government is providing a number of over-riding varieties to make sure that it can take care of all the particular circumstances. Therefore, this is in addition to the Home Help Programme. As I said earlier and has been acknowledged by Senator Stuart, it is working well but will have to be expanded, as there will be more and more cases that will be needing Government's attention.

I wish to thank Honourable Senators for their contributions and support to the Bill. I, therefore, beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, the Senate resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Madam CHAIRMAN: This Senate is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 – 3 were called and passed.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, Madam CHAIRMAN reported to HIS HONOUR the PRESIDENT, the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.
12.40 p.m.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, Madam CHAIRMAN reported the passing of

one Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Health Services (Private Hospitals, Nursing Homes, Senior Citizens Homes and Maternity Homes) Regulations (Validation) Bill, 2005.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 1.45 p.m. today.

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

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

ORDER NO. 4 – TO APPROVE THE GUARANTEE BY THE MINISTER OF FINANCE OF THE PAYMENT OF THE PRINCIPAL OF \$15 MILLION AND INTEREST THEREON TO BE BORROWED BY THE GRANTLEY ADAMS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT INC. FROM THE NATIONAL INSURANCE BOARD TO ASSIST WITH THE FINANCING OF THE AIRPORT EXPANSION PROJECT

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Griffith.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. is charged with the responsibility of the airport expansion project and with borrowing from the National Insurance Scheme in the sum of \$15 million to assist with the continuation of work at the airport and the Government is being asked to provide a guarantee in that amount. I am sure that all of us accept the fact that the airport has outlived its usefulness because of the tremendous expansion that has taken place over the years in tourism and the aviation industry. Therefore, I know that they have many problems with the work being undertaken. The project at the airport covers several components. It is estimated to cost in the vicinity of \$261.7 million. We have already seen the result of some of the work. Part of the departure lounge is being used at the moment and there is a significant improvement over what had been there before. That is only a part of what is going to be done with the departure lounge. The area which presently serves as the arrival area eventually will be part of the departure lounge because retail shopping will become part of the departure area.

Sir, as I understand it there will be a completely new arrival area which will be available for use in April 2005 at the airport. There will be more facilities for the immigration officers, customs and better arrangements for the movement of luggage with the installation of a new carousel. The whole idea is that the airport, when completed is going to be a vast improvement over the present area. Even now as you visit the airport, you can see that additional office space, and counter space for the airlines are being put in place.
1.50 p.m.

The project is funded by the Government which is the shareholder of the company. There is also a loan from the Caribbean Development Bank for \$22.2 million and there is a loan from the European International Bank of EURO15 million which is about BDS\$28.8 million. The Government to date has put in about \$75.5 million to do the project.

The contract for the terminal work was awarded to a Swedish company and the original tender was \$123.8 million. The total work was subsequently increased by about \$2.7 million, and then there is provision for VAT. The revised value of that work came to about \$139.1 million and, up to a few months ago, the certificates which were presented for payment totalled \$75.4 million.

There are a number of issues we have to deal with, such as what is the chance of the company being able to repay the loan. The Government is guaranteeing on the understanding that in the event that there is some good reason why the company cannot repay it, the Government would pay but that is only in the event that the company is unable to pay.

Therefore, you have to ask what are the chances in the company not being able to repay the loan, in which case, it would become an issue for the Government. If it reaches that stage where it becomes an issue for the Government, you would then have to ask what then would be the Government's situation in relation to its ability to repay that loan, in addition to the other debts which it might have guaranteed.

Sir, there is also the issue of the decision by the National Insurance Board to invest in this venture. Now, I will start there because every now and then, I hear people making statements about the National Insurance Board (NIB) which are not based on any facts that relate to the soundness of the portfolio of the Board, but are related to complaints that people make, from time to time, about late payment or claims being submitted and not honoured on a timely basis or something of that sort. Sir, for some strange reason, people move from that to making claims about the viability or otherwise of the National Insurance Board.

All of us know from the facts that have been presented to us from time to time, that various documents are laid here, that the National Insurance portfolio is well-managed. It is

on a sound financial basis and the issue of the Board failing to meet its obligations to individuals over time, really is not correct. There is, however, always need for National Insurance to make investment in the Fund to earn income that will assist it in honouring its future obligations, so that it does not have to rely entirely on the monthly payments by workers.

For many years, Mr. President, I sat on the Committee which had the responsibility of advising the National Insurance Board on its investments. I know that there is always a situation where they have more money to invest than there are opportunities in Barbados. The policy has always been, and I hope always would be, to make sure that the money is invested in areas where there is the maximum certainty that the funds are not obliterated, so they have always chosen carefully where the funds are invested.

When you look at the domestic situation, this is not what you will find. You have Government paper. There were opportunities occasionally for fixed deposits at some commercial banks, so what they have done over the years is to make investments abroad but in similar areas where they have chosen Government paper in respected countries, looking at the risk involved. All of us who study the operations of capital markets would know that Government paper is relatively free of risk, and stands better in that, particularly if you choose the Government that you are dealing with carefully.

Sir, in going abroad, they have always chosen to deal with certain countries in terms of questioning Government paper.

Sir, there is the issue of whether you get involved by putting money in companies, but this is a limited amount. What has always been in my mind though in this, yes, the National Insurance Board needs to have opportunities to invest the money and it needs to make the maximum return. I have always asked myself and I know that others have always asked themselves the same question, whether we should be content on taking the money that is paid by persons who live here and work here and use it to support other people's economies. Why can we not do some of the things that people would want us to do in supporting other countries, in our own domestic scene and look at opportunities that go outside of simply using Government paper and fixed deposits at commercial banks.

Once you have deposited the money in the commercial bank, you do not have any say over it, yet you get your interest. They use it, and sometimes some of the workers may not be able to access even a small loan to repair a house from the same commercial bank, but you would have no say over that matter.

My view is that wherever possible, the funds should be used to help develop the country from which the funds originate, bearing in mind that we always want to be sure that the areas they are put in are safe and there would be no lost to the Fund in due course. Apart from the fact that the company is operating a facility that is growing, it is a facility that would be reverting its revenues over time.

You have individual sources of revenue for Airport Landing Fees. Barbados is doing well. The aircraft business is expanding in terms of more and more planes coming in, so there are always landing fees. There is revenue that is also occurring from other sources, so there is an opportunity for the revenue, which formerly went into the Consolidated Fund to go into the companies pocket. There is the added benefit in that the Government is proposing to guarantee the money in the unlikely event that the company cannot repay, so in no circumstance is there likely to be any problems in the National Insurance Fund. The Fund will earn income on this loan.
2.00 p.m.

The arrangements are that over a fifteen-year period the interest rate would be 6.5 per cent, there would be a moratorium on the interest payments for the first 24 months after the funds have been drawn down and thereafter the interest will be payable on a half-yearly basis, so the National Insurance Board is going to earn on it. There are no difficulties in terms of the repayment by the company but in the event that becomes a problem the Government has offered a guarantee.

Mr. President, in my view this is a safe investment for the National Insurance Board. It is an investment that will help to expand the productive capacity of the country so that it will earn more foreign exchange and will provide additional employment for people to the various facilities and the citizens who have paid the money into the National Insurance Board will benefit in other respects.

Mr. President, I have pleasure in supporting the passing of this Resolution and therefore beg that it be read a second time.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: Mr. President, I will be very brief. I believe that the Government and the Opposition are in agreement on the need for this expansion at the Grantley Adams International Airport. We are all aware that the traffic coming through the airport has increased over the years. In fact, the airport needs to handle that traffic in a way that makes it comfortable not only for locals but for the tourists as well.

Mr. President, as you know, there is no gainsaying that the airport which was built and completed around the year 1978, is no longer able to competently deal with the

challenges posed by the increased in traffic. Therefore, it is understandable that if the Government is embarking on the physical expansion project that it would need money for that purpose. Therefore, the basis for the Resolution before the Senate is understood and accepted.

Mr. President, I listened with care to the Honourable Leader of Government Business in his introduction of the Resolution and I had hoped that he would have adverted to and would have spent some time on the controversy in which that project has been mired at the Grantley Adams International Airport. There is no secret that they have developed this new team of contractors and subcontractors, and the Government is involved, and it has cast a cloud of uncertainty over the project itself.

I am surprised that the Honourable Minister has spoken so calmly and so clearly about this Resolution and about the project without mentioning the fact that the project is mired with difficulties and controversy, which I believe has reached so far as the law courts. I certainly would like to hear something about that and how the project got into that state and what the risks now hold to potential lenders as a result of those difficulties.

In addition to that, there is the question of the status and the state of uncertainty of employees at the Grantley Adams International Airport. For some time now I have been badgered by telephone calls and by visits from workers at the Grantley Adams International Airport who, ever since the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. came into existence incorporated under the Companies Act have been uncertain as to their status as employees there, and these issues need to be dealt with.

The establishment of the Board at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has been replicated at the Grantley Adams International Airport and there is a prevailing atmosphere of uncertainty among the workers as to where exactly they stand in terms of their employment contracts and their relationship between the new company and their relationships with the Government. I should like to hear some clarification of that issue as well.

Senator Griffith also mentioned the fact that the National Insurance Board has limited opportunities for investment of its considerable fund and that projects like this represent good opportunities for the National Insurance Board to diversify its investment portfolio. When the Board take steps like this, people would want to imagine that the National Insurance Board funds would not be put in peril as a result of these steps.

The truth, Mr. President, is that for some time now there has been a cloud of uncertainty cast over the National Insurance Board as people who were accustomed to the

timely receipt of benefits and the timely processing of their claims, have had to make do with a versatile range of explanations and sometimes excuses as to why they are not receiving their benefits or having their claims processed.

The explanation given is that the Board has introduced some new computer system and that it takes time and so on, but these explanations are no longer credible. It cannot be that there is some special kind of computer at the National Insurance Board that is different from all of the others in Barbados that is putting persons relying on the services of that department with the inconvenience to which they have been put over the last year or so.

Mr. President, the Government must understand that whenever issues relating to the National Insurance Board and its investment and so on arise, that unless the public is satisfied with the quality of service which they are getting from that department, questions would be raised as to its credibility.

I take the Minister at his word that the fund is viable and that there is no need for alarm, but I am just asking him to understand why the public jumped to these conclusions when the issue of the National Insurance Board lending money to projects like this one or any other one arise.
2.10 p.m.

Mr. President, we are not opposed to the loan. We agree that investment opportunities to the National Insurance Board are quite limited in Barbados and that where attractive opportunities present themselves, that the National Insurance Board should avail itself of those opportunities.

Mr. President, before availing itself of those opportunities, the Board has to face the reality that the public, for over a number of years since 1973, has become accustomed to a very high quality of service, including the timely posting of claims and the time it takes to receive benefits. That situation has now changed. It is, therefore, natural that we would wish to ask the question of which the man in the street should be aware. I am hoping that either the Minister or some other Member of Government would at least reassure the public of the questions which I have raised, so that the project at the airport can proceed apace. I would like to hear, for example, whether there are cost overruns and if there is a scheduled date for the completion of the project. Is it on schedule or is it lagging in terms of the schedule? Have there been any cost overruns to date? These are fundamental questions with which Government needs to deal.

Mr. President, over and above those issues, we have no difficulty with the Resolution, which is to improve standard and accommodation at the airport.

I am obliged to you.

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: Mr. President, I have no specific difficulty with the Resolution. I wanted merely to find out from the Honourable Minister whether the Euro loan was done in Euros and what is the translation of the Euros into Barbados dollars.

I thank you.

SENATOR R. W. GRANT: Mr. President, I rise to give my support to this Resolution before this Honourable Chamber and to join with the comments made by the Honourable Leader of Government Business.

Mr. President, as all of us have agreed that the Airport Expansion Project is of critical importance and of critical economic development to Barbados because the tourism sector is, as we all know, the main engine of economic growth of our country. As the Honourable Senator and Leader of Government Business has pointed out, the existing airport has, by virtue of the increased number of passengers coming through the airport and by virtue of the increased numbers of aeroplanes coming into Barbados, really outlived its usefulness. The Honourable Member would have communicated that the existing airport has the capacity to deal with some 800 passengers at one time.

Mr. President, with the expansion work that is taking place at the Grantley Adams International Airport, the arrival and departure lounges will be able to facilitate up to a maximum of 1 000 passengers. Therefore, the Airport Expansion Project is very important. Sir, I note some of the concerns that were raised by Senator Stuart.

Mr. President, the project continues to be executed. The Honourable Leader of Government Business would have communicated to this Honourable Chamber that the new arrivals terminal is expected to be completed between March 31 and April 1, 2005.

Senator Stuart made reference to a myriad of difficulties at the airport. I cannot say that I am aware of those difficulties. I am aware that there are some differences between some of the parties at the airport but Government is not in anyway involved. Therefore, while we are concerned with the many issues that exist between a contractor and subcontractor, at the end of the day, the contract for the execution of these works is between the Government and the contractor.

Mr. President, the work at the airport is continuing. The expansion is being facilitated and the new arrivals terminal is expected to be completed by April 1, 2005.

Mr. President, in relation to the overall project, it is approximately nine months behind schedule. The reason for

that relates to a variety of things. When excavation work was done, there was some clay in the area of the new arrivals terminal, which was unforeseen, which has contributed to the delay. At the start of the project, there were a number of industrial issues which were properly dealt with, which helped to contribute to the delay. There were issues in relation to the airport being in use and being expanded at the same time. There were a number of interfacing problems which would have contributed to the delay.

Mr. President, the project is, in fact, in the vicinity of nine months behind schedule and I have outlined the reasons for that. The project is at this time within budget but as you know, with projects of this magnitude, there are always aspects relating to claims. There is every possibility that when these claims are finalised, that we may be a bit over-budgeted. Sir, I cannot say that with any degree of certainty. What I can say is that, at this time, the project is within budget. In fact, the latest expenditure figures I have is \$100 949 631.55, which represent approximately 73 per cent of the project's budget, which is estimated to be about 75 per cent completed.
2.20 p.m.

Mr. President, Senator Stuart also made reference to the state of the groynes at Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. (GAIA) and said that there is a prevailing atmosphere of uncertainty there.

Mr. President, the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport, the Ministry of the Civil Service and the union representatives of the workers at the airport have been in constant dialogue in relation to the issues surrounding staff. Sir, Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. would have formulated for the staff at the airport a handbook and there would have been discussion in relation to aspects of that handbook. There would also have been a meeting with representatives from GAIA, the union, the Ministry of International Transport and the Ministry of the Civil Service to speak with staff in relation to the options that would be available to them with the company taking over full responsibility of the airport as of April 1, 2005.

Mr. President, I admit that because of the security of tenure within Government that there were concerns expressed by some about moving away from working with the Government to working with a private company even though it is fully owned by Government and that this has caused an atmosphere of total uncertainty.

Sir, options were put to the staff. They were clearly outlined and the Ministry of International Transport has sought always to have dialogues with the National Union of Public Workers which represent workers at the airport to identify clearly the options that are available. Mr. President,

workers can make the determination that they wish to go and work with the company or that they would continue with the Government and be placed in a position comparable to what they presently hold at the airport.

Mr. President, Senator Stuart made reference to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital but you would recognise that in the Press there has been no significant reference to labour issues at the Grantley Adams International Airport. This has been so primarily because the Ministry of International Transport, the Ministry of the Civil Service and the National Union of Public Workers have been in constant dialogue. Mr. President, I have communicated in this Chamber before that the Government of the Barbados Labour Party is interested in the workers in this country and you can be assured that we would do absolutely nothing to disadvantage the workers of this country.

Mr. President, with those few words, I have the greatest pleasure in supporting this Resolution.

SENATOR THE HON. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: Mr. President, I rise to support the Resolution. I will just say a few words about the National Insurance Scheme. I am extremely pleased and happy that the Board of the National Insurance Scheme are investing solidly in the economy of this country and it is interesting to note that the investment would be made in the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Sir, as far as the project at the airport is concerned, the previous speaker gave a vast amount of knowledge about the project which I think would have cleared up some of the problems which Senator Stuart alluded to.

There are two matters I need to enquire about. The first has to do with the appointment of the General Manager of the airport. Sir, some time ago there were questions as to whether the person appointed would be a national or a non-national but we have heard nothing about it in recent times. Secondly, I gather that the workers and the travelling public have been greatly inconvenienced by the fact that part of the airport had to be closed to accommodate the expansion and I wonder how long this situation would continue.

With those few words, I support the Resolution.

SENATOR I. St. C. LINTON: Mr. President, I want to speak briefly on this particular Resolution. One of the points I want to draw to the attention of this Chamber is the development of ports in Barbados under the Barbados Labour Party. I want particularly to make reference to the Grantley Adams International Airport.

2.30 p.m.

I happened to be among the first workers in March 1958 when the first real development took place at the

terminal building at Seawell International Airport. Sir, I remember the first day when we removed the ruined fences. We had to remove wild grass and I hope that someone would be able to produce at least a quarter of the crops that were once at the then terminal building at Seawell International Airport.

Mr. President, I am going to contrast the situation at that airport and the current one. I remember there were about six international airline carriers, British Airways, Air France, BWIA, Air Canada and one out of Venezuela. We had a small amphibian plane that travelled across the Caribbean and made trips to Barbados three or four times a day. I also remember the Democratic Labour Party sought and obtained funds to develop the Seawell International Airport. They demitted office and changes were made. Sir, there was another attempt to further develop Seawell International Airport.

Mr. President, now that we have come to this tremendous development, it demonstrates to us as Barbadians our capacity to meet the requirement of air travel in this extensive and expansive development. When we are developing a country's infrastructure and economy, there are always changes. Sir, for example, we should never look at the stridency of the trade union movement in regards to workers' rights and conditions because such must be married to the concept of development. We must never look at differences between contractors on development in infrastructure as negative. It is natural that each contractor would seek to get what is best for him.

Sir, we must move away from the idea of this negative approach to development and look at the challenges for the further development modes of Barbados. We must understand that we live in a world where we must match the development of America, otherwise we would be left behind.

Mr. President, we cannot get away from the politics of the situation but these must not be seen as negatives either because that is part of the developmental process of the country of Barbados. We must desist from continuing to discuss the problem regarding the non-receipt of pension payments because it has been resolved. When problems have been solved we should support the effort. We must understand that when we challenge areas of development and we have the capacity to address these challenges, it is a demonstration that we are becoming mature in the management of our government affairs and the business of this country and we must look at them as successes.

Mr. President, we must not always seek to draw the lines of sorrow over success. I believe that it is time that both in our economic and political development in relation to political parties that we should mature and understand that as long we strive to cut a niche in our development, that these things will occur. When we are successful, we must say thanks to those who have brought it.

Mr. President, there is no sense carrying on situations where we are achieving success. My interest in this particular aspect of Grantley Adams International Airport is that when it is finished, that we receive the kind of returns for the dollars which we expended on such development. There is no doubt in my mind, and there should be no doubt in any Barbadian's mind, that having a modern Grantley Adams International Airport is an asset that would bring tremendous benefits to the economy of Barbados.

There is nothing that is good to human endeavour and the country that comes easy. Any time something comes easy, we have to wonder why it came. When there are struggles and challenges and we succeed, let us all join hands together and give thanks to God and those who put their hands to the wheel.

I have no doubt that there were problems regarding workers and working conditions at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Now the parties are sitting down and things are being resolved. There is no doubt that with the experience of the trade union movement in Barbados, they would have been strident in regard to the workers' position and we must salute them for this. Without the trade union in Barbados doing its work, we could never have reached where we are today. Therefore, I am urging all of us that when it comes to the development of the economy and infrastructure that we could proudly look at what we have achieved thus far and, certainly, have the vote of achieving greater things in the future.

I support this matter before this Chamber.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Gooding-Edghill.

SENATOR G. P. I. GOODING-EDGHILL: Mr. President, I will be supporting the Resolution that is before this Honourable Chamber. The Leader of Government Business was clear in setting out the requirements for the Resolution.
2.40 p.m.

Mr. President, I believe that the Government must be congratulated for having the vision to expand the Grantley Adams International Airport at this time. It was in 1979 that the Grantley Adams International Airport was opened and I believe that it was in 2003 that this expansion project commenced. Sir, outside of the servicing of the department, this is the first major expansion of the Grantley Adams International Airport in over two decades.

Sir, for a Government, having recognised the contribution of travel and tourism to the economy of Barbados and having the necessary vision not only to expand the Grantley Adams International Airport but other port facilities, it says a lot to the tourism partners in Barbados and, indeed, should say a lot for those who are

interested in continuing to make investments in Barbados in the travel and tourism sector.

Mr. President, it is absolutely necessary that the airport infrastructure is protected and improved. Sir, in Barbados now, there is a significant increase in aircraft traffic and year on year visitor arrivals except when we had the setback after 2001 in Barbados. There is also a scenario where travel and tourism is growing in Barbados and the only critical thing we should do is to seek to expand the facilities and to support the whole development of travel and tourism.

Therefore, we are attracting the types of people who are travelling long distances, people who are coming to Barbados to stay in villas who are paying daily rates in excess of US\$300 a night, people who are used to travelling in the best conditions and people who are used to having world-class facilities as they travel.

Sir, on top of that we also have a situation where our locals have to use our airport facilities and we have to cater to them as well, so it is absolutely necessary that the Government continues to demonstrate its commitment, through its planners in this sector, to support other initiatives relating to travel and tourism.

Mr. President, I travel often and I have been through other airports when they are doing major works, Miami International Airport is a prime example, and there is not a lot of disruption happening at the airport, so I would like to congratulate the planners and certainly the airport management for doing an outstanding job in their attempt to minimise the disruption to travellers. The fact that we have a situation where there is minimal disruption to both locals and visitors, says a lot of the Airport Expansion Project in Barbados.

I am pleased to hear from Senator Grant that there would be an expansion of the Immigration facilities at the airport. This is an area which is often criticised in Barbados. The Immigration Department does an excellent job in my opinion and with expanded facilities at the Grantley Adams International Airport, I am confident that this would expedite the immigration process for travellers.

It is absolutely clear to all of us when we look at the whole business of cruise arrangements when we have to process people coming through Barbados that we do an exceedingly good job and we must compliment the men and women at the Immigration Department.

Mr. President, I am also particularly pleased to see a change in the investment attitude to travel and tourism. I must compliment the Investment Division of the National Insurance Board for having the foresight for making such a substantial investment in travel and tourism.

You would have heard me, Sir, on more than one occasion in this Chamber speaking to the whole issue of

investment, particularly local investment in the tourism sector, and for the National Insurance Department to have responded in making such an investment to tourism, they must be commended for a job well done.

We require more investment in Barbados and we need more institutional investors in tourism in Barbados. The time has come when we have to look beyond national insurance. I would hope that the credit unions follow that example set by the National Insurance Department and make substantial investment in travel and tourism in Barbados.

Mr. President, there is a feeling in Another Place that there is a fear that the overnight workers at the airport are going to be substantially disadvantaged. I do not understand this, Sir, because you have a situation where, if you do anything that is contrary to existing terms and conditions, then you create the scenario of discontent. The Government has it on record that the Government will not engage in any such acts.

Sir, on top of that the National Union of Public Workers has a representative sitting on the Board of Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. Their representative I am sure will protect their interest in whatever has to transpire at the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. If you are sitting at regular attendance at Board Meetings, all major decisions, including a staff handbook must come through the Board of Directors.

Sir, the Government has indicated that we are not going to do anything to disrupt the length of service, we are not going to do anything to create a situation where the workers are worse off and that is on record, so I do not understand why people would want to continue to engage in a discussion to even give the suggestion that the workers are going to be seriously disadvantaged. It is not true and I would like the workers at the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. to know that they have a representative on the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. Board who is there to represent their interests. Sir, as far as I am aware, there is not a great divide.

Mr. President, it is important the message goes forth and this is very important because it is not good to have an environment where workers believe that there is a lot of uncertainty. I hope that I have explained this in my contribution.

In conclusion, Mr. President, it is important that one thing I could say about the Barbados Labour Party Administration is that there is vision, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, the Rt. Honourable Member for St. Peter. A lot of people throughout the region would be

happy to have the same leadership. We have to recognise that, as Senator Grant made the point earlier, tourism is the main economic earner and we have a Government responding to the requirements and needs of a sector that continues to lead the way in foreign exchange earnings. The more we continue to develop Barbados, and the more we continue to lay a foundation for those who would come after us, in terms of where we are and where we are going, the better Barbados would continue to be, Sir. We are fortunate that we have a travel and tourism sector that is improving year after year. We are fortunate that we are having the best seats in the tourism sector, be it the construction of hotels or be it villas. Sir, you can see that we are developing. With Cricket World Cup 2007 coming to Barbados we are now witnessing locals who are not on the scale as the large hotel owners getting involved in what some might call community tourism and making their new apartments ready and even some construction on those old apartments to help with the bed requirements that would be needed for Cricket World Cup 2007.

2.50 p.m.

Tourism is a sector that is growing and I want to compliment the tourism planners. I want to say thank you for a job well done to the project team at the Grantley Adams International Airport. I would also like to thank the officials at the Ministry including Senator Grant who is present here today for the excellent job that they are doing as a team in tourism in engineering the continued success of Barbados' tourism and Barbados' national development.

On that note, Mr. President, I am much obliged to you.

SENATOR THE HON. J. E. D. WILLIAMS: Mr. President, I shall be brief, but I rise first of all to lend my support to the Resolution and secondly to speak to an issue already addressed both by Senator Grant and Senator Nicholls which has to do with the staff at the airport.

I want to assure Senator Stuart and more importantly the staff at the airport that their interest is important in the Ministry of the Civil Service of which I have some responsibility. There is no doubt, Mr. President, that in any transition from one entity to another or from one organisational structure to another that the greatest challenge would be that of the human resource. You can put figures together, you could put systems together but when you start to deal with people it is something different, you have to pay specific and careful attention to those issues.

Mr. President, I am satisfied that the Ministry of the Civil Service, along with the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport, the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. and the National Union of Public Workers, has been monitoring the progress of the process accorded thus far in respect of the transition. They have all been seeking

to ensure that at the end of the day there is as smooth as possible a transition to the new operations in respect of the human resource.

Mr. President, a handbook was developed for the staff. As would be expected, Mr. President, if people are going to have to move from one entity to another, they are going to want to know what would be the terms and conditions such as the salary structure and so on. Both the union and the staff have been saying that these are the kinds of information they want in order to allow people to be able to make informed decisions. Yes, there will be some people who may want to go over in terms of their options. There are others who may have put in the years of service and may simply say they prefer at this point in time to take early retirement. That is an option that people would have. There are also some individuals who may say that they would prefer to remain within the public service and Government has a responsibility to ensure that those persons are taken care of.

However, I would want to feel within my heart that persons having worked in an environment not as a ... and when the airport is finished would be the individuals who would be given every opportunity to be able to transition over. They were working not under the very best of conditions, and I cannot believe that at the end of the day we would end up with a situation where the majority of people are not going to be transitioned over, but of course people have an option. I can say that there is not a one to one relationship in terms of the number of jobs that existed in the old airport agreement and the number of jobs at the new structure, so therefore there is no equivalent position where you can move over automatically.

Clearly, the new Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. is going to want to have the best structure in order to provide the very best results because we want an efficiently run airport and to do that you have to have important structures to help you along the way. But as I said, I am hoping that at the end of the day the majority of the people who work at the airport will be able to transition over to the new airport.

Mr. President, in the transition from the old to the new stakeholder, there are a few issues to be resolved. I am satisfied thus far that everyone has been working in the interest of a satisfactory resolution. I must congratulate the National Union of Public Workers for the position it has taken in respect of the transition. A transition of this nature is not an easy thing from my own experience but I want to assure the workers that the Ministry of Civil Service will continue to monitor what is going on at the airport because we have a responsibility to each and every worker at that airport.

Mr. President, as I said I would not be long, but I am happy that in the shortest possible time we would be able to resolve a few outstanding matters in the interest of everyone at the airport.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I wish to thank all Senators for their contribution to the debate and I also want to respond to some of the questions that were raised.

The first question was raised by Senator Marville. The loan from the EIB is 15 million Euros which when converted at today's rate is BDS\$28.8 million. Senator Stuart queried whether there is any risk to the investors as a result of the.. my answer is no, as there are some differences between the individual contractors, but the work at the airport is still progressing. My advice is that the terminal works will be completed by October. Bearing in mind that the new arrivals hall will be in use from April it means then that by October what is now the arrivals hall will be turned into part of the departure area. So the work is still progressing in spite of the few difficulties as Senator Grant pointed out. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the contractor to deliver and by some means, that is being done, so there is no problem resulting there. In any way the investors are at no risk in terms of the payment of their monies, so there are no difficulties there. 3.00 p.m.

Mr. President, Senator Newton made reference to the Agricultural Credit Fund, and those issues that were mentioned had nothing to do with the insolvency of the fund. There were issues that resulted from the change of the system and the difficulties which were encountered in that process but it had nothing to do with the insolvency of the fund. My advice is that those issues have been taken care of and, in very short order, will be moved out of the way. I wish to say that while all the focus was on the delayed payments, *et cetera*, because people were waiting on money to carry on their legitimate business and we all sympathise with them during that process.

Mr. President, the change-over brought some order to the system, which did not before exist because they were able to detect a number of instances where strange things were happening, not because of any action on the part of the employees but instigated by recipients. Therefore, it had that added benefit of cleaning up the system and cleaning up those cases that should not have been there as well, so that we are fortunate that the work was done but we regret that there was some delay to the recipient.

Mr. President, there was never a case of any problem in relation to the insolvency of the fund because it is a solvent fund and hopefully, would remain in that manner.

Sir, even if we as individuals do not stand to benefit from it, our relatives or friends would have to depend on it for their future livelihood. Sir, we will all want to make sure that the fund is one which can stand the test of time.

Mr. President, as I said, our only concern in this matter was whether the fund would have been put into any jeopardy in the event of a failure on the part of the company. We are assured that is not the case. The company has provided the coverage. The money is safe and we will get a good return on the investment and the company will be able to benefit to that extent.

Mr. President, on that basis I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put to the Senate and agreed to.

The Senate reverted to Committee. Madam CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

ORDER NO. 2 – THE TRAVEL SERVICES (AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION) BILL, 2005

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Madam Chairman, you will recall when we were considering this matter this morning, I sought leave of the Honourable Chamber to have this matter suspended so that I can seek consultation through the Chief Parliamentary Counsel, with regards to the issues that have been raised by Senator Chandler.

I have carried out that consultation and my advice is that the issue raised by Senator Chandler is in order and that I should proceed to make the appropriate amendment. I, therefore, proposed that Clause 17 be amended as follows:

- (a) That the words "or a tour operator" be inserted immediately after the words "travel agent".
- (b) That the words "or a tour operator" be inserted after the words "where the travel agent".

SENATOR G. P. B. NICHOLLS: Madam Chairman, my submission is that it should be "travel agent or a tour operator" for consistency.

Asides.

SENATOR G. P. B. NICHOLLS: Madame Chairman, if you would revisit all the other amendments and insertions and just say for sake of consistency, perhaps we

should follow what has already gone, in relation to provisions of that article.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Madam Chairman, I do not have a problem with the words “or a tour operator”. Therefore, those words will be inserted.

Madam Chairman, I beg to move that this amendment be agreed to.

Madam Chairman, having done that, I beg to move that we continue to deal with the other clauses to the Bill.

SENATOR Dr. F. L. CHANDLER: Madam Chairman, I would like to recommend that there is a security in that amended clause that we are discussing.
3.10 p.m.

If my information is correct, a travel agent can hold funds for customers for only seven days to the tune of \$100 000 while a tour operator who would be holding a comparatively larger sum of money, since it includes, accommodation and ancillary services and can hold the money for a longer period. Sir, on the other hand, airlines are not required to have a bond at all.

Madam Chairman, I thank you.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Madam Chairman, I will make a note of what Senator Chandler said and draw it to the attention of the drafter.

SENATOR I. St. C. LINTON: Madam Chairman, are we settled on the amendment.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Yes, it has already been settled and discussed.

The question was put and agreed to.

Clause 18 was called and passed.

Clause 19 was called and passed.

Clause 20 was called and passed.

Clause 21 was called and passed.

Clause 22 was called and passed.

Clause 23 was called and passed.

Clause 24 was called and passed.

3.20 p.m.

On the motion of SENATOR HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, Madam CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour The PRESIDENT the passing of one Bill in Committee with amendments. Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Travel Services (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2005.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, we have come to the end of Government Business for the day and beg to move that the Senate do now adjourn *sine die*.

The question that the Senate do now adjourn sine die was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly.

3.23 p.m.

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18. Customs Tariff (Amendment) (No. 5) Order, 2004.

19. Value Added Tax (Refund) (The Barbados Military Cemetery Association) Order, 2004.

20. Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of the Insurance Corporation of Barbados Limited for the Year 2003.

21. Annual Report for the Securities Commission for the Year ended March 31, 2004.

22. Annual Reports of the Barbados Vocational Training Board for the Years April 1, 2001 to March 31, 2002 and April 1, 2002 to March 31, 2003.

23. Reports on the Audit of Accounts of the Severance Fund for the Years 2000, 2001 and 2002.

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25. Report on the Barbados General Election, 2003.

(z) Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Caribbean Regional Environmental Programme) Order, 2005.

(aa) Annual Report and Financial Statement of the Fair Trading Commission for the Year ended 2003.

(bb) Annual Report of the National Conservation Commission for the Year April 1, 2001 to March 31, 2002.

(cc) Financial Statement for the National Conservation Commission for the Year April 1, 2001 to March 31, 2002.

(dd) Half Yearly Report on the Revenue Collecting Departments of the Ministry of Finance for the period April 1, 2003 to September 30, 2003.

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