
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2003 – 2008

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, July 17, 2007.

PRESENT

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

His Honour J. M. EDGHILL, J.P. (Deputy Speaker)

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

Sir Louis TULL, K.A., Q.C., M.A. (Oxon.)

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

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

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY

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

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN

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

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

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD, B.A. (Minister of Social
Transformation)

Rev. J.J.S. ATHERLEY, B.A., B.Sc., J.P. (Minister
of State, Prime Minister's Office)

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

Hon. R.R. FARLEY, B.Sc., J.P. (Minister of
Housing and
Lands)

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

Hon. J.X. WALCOTT, M.B., B.S., FRCS (Edin.),
J.P.

(Minister of Health)

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

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

Hon. C.A. MASCOLL, B.Sc. (Econ.) (Hons.), M.A.

(Public

Finance) (Minister of State, Ministry of Finance)

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL, Q.C., LL.B. (Hons.)

L.E.C.,

(Attorney-General and Minister of Home Affairs)

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

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

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

FDRCS, J.P.

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

Prayers were led by Rev. Cannon Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: This House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: Minutes of the meeting held on
Tuesday, July 10, 2007.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to
move that the Minutes so cited be confirmed, subject to any
omissions, observations and/or corrections.

Hon. R.C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

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

1. The Public Officers Loan and Travelling
Allowances (Amendment) (Regulations) 2007.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded
to lay the following:

1. The Annual Report and Financial Statements of CRL Limited for the year, 2005.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the first reading of the following Bill:

1. The Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill, 2007.

Hon. R.C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the suspension of Standing Orders 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 for the remainder of today's Sitting.

Hon. R.C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is now the order of the day.

ORDER NO. 6 – AIRPORTS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2007.

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

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, thank your for the opportunity. This debate, even though seemingly is not complex in its offerings, really is a critical debate, and in our opinion vital to our existence as a nation. The actual legislation is not complex but it offers a huge opportunity to speak to some matters at an institution, which is vital to our own economic existence. The essential elements of the legislation speak to the protection of airspace and the physical surroundings in and around the Grantley Adams International Airport. It also speaks more broadly to the issue of the protection of our national assets, particularly when we have invested as much as we have in an installation like Grantley Adams International Airport.

House 141, sequence 02, 10:20:14

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Symbolically, it speaks more broadly to the wider protection of our livelihood as a nation. Mr. Speaker, even though the legislation speaks about bird strikes and the protection of the environs and the airspace in an around the airport from birds and other animals, it is clearly an opportunity to speak to the overall protection of the Grantley Adams International Airport and to our livelihood as a tourism destination.

The civil aviation environment, Mr. Speaker, is vital to our economic fortunes, but it is not often spoken of in those specific terms in most debates. Sir, the legislative process offers an opportunity to have a fuller debate about international transport as it relates to the protection of that environment as well as to the Grantley Adams International Airport and its future within the wider context of how we protect Barbados and our economic and social fortunes.

The debate, I suspect, Mr. Speaker, would take many forms. One could also reduce it to some things that may on the surface be considered minor, but which, in my opinion, are not minor, particularly if we have done as much as we have at the Grantley Adams International Airport. We therefore speak primarily to a vision for the airport and for international transport and the civil aviation environment in which the Grantley Adams International Airport plays a very critical role.

Mr. Speaker, I intend to give you, the House and the wider public, a total exposition of many of the things that affect our international transport business, civil, aviation, specifically to bring the public into the know about a lot of the myths that are in the public domain relative to civil aviation and international transport, particularly to the airspace and the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Mr. Speaker, the Grantley Adams International Airport that we know now is a totally different installation from what it was a decade and a half ago. Mr. Speaker, since 1991/1992, a study was done that spoke to the protection of the Grantley Adams International Airport and its expansion. The study also spoke to issues relating to its capacity and how it could live through an influx of airlines coming into Barbados.

Sir, in 1991, a previous administration took the view that the Grantley Adams International Airport needed to be part of a comprehensive study, that study was undertaken formally in 1992 by British Aerospace. Sir, the results of that study were put into the hands of the previous administration. Sir, it is true to say that it took long for us to get to the point where we got to and to have an installation of the kind that we now have.

Mr. Speaker, the Grantley Adams International Airport, like any other place in Barbados, has its challenges. However, I would say in a very deliberate

manner that the Grantley Adams International Airport is one of the best airports of its size and of its kind anywhere in the globe. Sir, it has issues, there is no doubt about that, but I would repeat again that the Grantley Adams International Airport is as good as any airport of its size to be found in any developing country in the globe. Mr. Speaker, the Grantley Adams International Airport has won numerous accolades in the past decade for being the best airport in the Caribbean, and it remains the best airport in the Caribbean.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to be very frank and up front. I am going to speak to the challenges we have at the Grantley Adams International Airport. Mr. Speaker, I am going to tell you as well that the challenges that we have pale by comparison to the outstanding facility that is the Grantley Adams International Airport that we have built out.

Mr. Speaker, one could readily imagine that with the influx of visitors and airlines that clearly the issue of protecting that airspace from birds and other animals crossing the runway and even within the airspace is relative and important. Sir, what has happened is that this particular Bill speaks specifically to the protection of that airspace.

Sir, the Grantley Adams International Airport has been concerned about these threats of bird strikes as early as 1971. As a matter of fact, Sir, bird strikes pose the danger of serious damage to aircraft, loss of revenue and a loss of human life wherever aircraft are to be found.

Sir, people know about the global incident that happened with the Concorde, I believe, in New York City when a set of birds got into an engine and caused a serious accident. Sir, in 1985, which is the best record that we have here in Barbados, a British Airways 747, on its final approach to the Grantley Adams International Airport was affected by a bird strike caused by cattle egrets, which resulted in us spending over US\$200 000 to fix the aircraft engine. In addition to that, it suspended service to Barbados for a couple of days. Sir, because of that, one can easily imagine the loss of revenue to the tourism economy as well as to the wider economy.

Sir, while the airport has from time to time implemented several strategies to deal with the problem, many of them have not been effective enough. Sir, the main obstacle preventing us from solving the problem was the Wild Birds Protection Act, Chapter 398, that prohibits the elimination of cattle egrets. Therefore, Sir, this legislation is meant to deal with that.

Sir, these birds and other animals at the airport must be eliminated to ensure that space because a lot of the projections that we have had relative to the numbers at the Grantley Adams International Airport were totally and

completely off-base. Sir, that is not to say that the scientific study that was done was not a comprehensive and complete study.

Mr. Speaker, at the time when British Aerospace talked about the expansion of the Grantley Adams International Airport, we were seeing, in the early 1990s, as many as 600 to 700 passengers per hour at peak passing through the Grantley Adams International Airport. The following year, passengers were up by another 100 per hour at peak. Sir, British Aerospace projected that by 2010, we would have somewhere in the region of 1 200 to 1 500 passengers per hour at peak, passing through the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Mr. Speaker, if we had built an airport or expanded a terminal to deal with 1 200 to 1 500 passengers per hour at peak we would have been way off-base in terms of what we were doing. As a matter of fact, British Aerospace told us that there was no way we would have had that many, when there were local experts who were saying that with the growth of airline traffic that we were bound to exceed that capacity even before we got anywhere near 2010.

Sir, the reality now is that through the increase airlift and the work that has been done through the Barbados Tourism Authority and the Grantley Adams International Airport, we are at the point now where we are seeing as many as 1 600 to 1 700 passengers per hour at peak, passing through the airport. Mr. Speaker, by 2010, we are going to be somewhere in the region of about 2 200 passengers per hour at peak. Sir, that is what the Grantley Adams International Airport has been built to accommodate.

Sir, at peak periods during the winter, particularly with the expansion of the home-porting programme, it is not unusual to see as many as 12 to 15 wide body planes at the airport at any one time. Sir, what that does is to put excessive pressure on the new installations that have been built. Therefore, the departure area is now under severe pressure because of the air and sea transfer effort which we now have.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Sir, there are some who want an additional airport, but this Administration does not think that there is a need for any additional airport.

House 141 Sequence 3

10.30 a.m.

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, we need to build out the existing departure area that we presently have. That existing departure area is going to move from where the old Departure Terminal was, down to as far as Gate 18. We are going to build additional space, to accommodate up to one thousand more people than we are presently accommodating. Sir, as I have explained, that reason has a lot to do with during the peak capacity period in the winter, when the home-porting programme is on, flight-cruise departing passengers fill up that lounge and therefore the existing movement of traffic is clearly compromised.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, British Aerospace has projected between 1 500 to 1 600 passengers by 2010. We had projected that we would see between 1 200 to 1 500 passengers by 2010 but we have already passed that figure by 2007.

Mr. Speaker, we are victims of our own success. There are many people who would like to have the problem that we have, where we have a congested airport, but many cannot have that luxury, if it could be so called. Sir, the expanded passenger capacity from every major international gateway coming into Barbados, is what has put us in this position. Sir, let me speak to some of the issues.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, London is the major source for routing passengers through the Grantley Adams International Airport, and this needs to be protected. Sir, British Airways has, in the peak winter period, 11 flights per week, that is a double-daily on three days during the week. In addition, Virgin Airlines has eight flights during the day, with two flights on Saturday. In addition, Virgin Airlines also has another flight that comes, during the winter period, from Manchester, totalling nine. British Midland International (BMI) has four times per week; 1st Choice Airways has flights three times per week. In addition, we have Lauda Air coming out of Italy; Martinair coming out of Amsterdam, Holland; and Condor coming out of Germany. Sir, this tell us something about that particular aspect of it. But I will repeat, five to seven years ago, we did not have these flights.

In terms of the flight cruise, there can be as many as seven wide-bodied aeroplanes per day, to fill up a ship in the Port. In terms of the market of the United States of America, seven years ago, we only had American Airlines coming out of New York five times per week and daily from Miami. We also had BWIA, which was daily coming out of New York and Miami, and Air Jamaica, which came three times a week from New York.

Mr. Speaker, since 2000, we have added a double-daily flight coming out of Miami, on American Airlines.

There are 11 times off-peak daily from New York. We have added US Airways from Philadelphia and from Charlock. We have added Delta Airlines from Atlanta four days a week, and Air Jamaica from New York, five days a week. On Sunday 22nd, July, we are inaugurating a new flight from Fort Lauderdale into Barbados on Air Jamaica, flying three times a week. Mr. Speaker, this tells of a story that needs to be told because a previous administration, through a study that had been done, had an opportunity to bring more people into Barbados, and they did not bring many. Sir, I suspect we will hear their own version of what happened during that period.

Mr. Speaker, the charters from the United States of America in the winter also caused serious problems. In addition, Air Canada flies 11 times a week from Toronto during the winter period. They have also expanded a weekly flight out of Montreal.

Sir, in the last winter period, we had as many as 500 private jets landing in Barbados. As a matter of fact, IAM, who are the jet centre people, has handled over one thousand private jets coming into Barbados in one year. This says a lot about what this administration has done, to change the economic fortune of this country.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, I will repeat, so that every could hear clearly; IAM Jet Centre has handled one thousand private jets coming into Barbados, in one year. Sir, this says something about where our economic fortunes are going. Sir, I mentioned about the jets and the other aircraft landings. In addition, there are LIAT, the former Caribbean Star, and American Eagle, including the number of smaller planes that ply the region. Therefore, you can see why we are at this stage now.

Mr. Speaker, in 2001, we had a total of 1 996 000 passengers embarking and disembarking Barbados; by 2006, that number had reached 2 460 075, an increase of 20 per cent, in five years of operation. Again, these are vital to our fortunes and need to be protected. The legislation speaks to the protection of the airspace, the aerospace and the space around us, because we now have so many passengers and people coming into this very small destination and that small space, that we need not only to ensure issues of scheduling and the like, but it is also clear that we need to protect airspace in and around us.

Mr. Speaker, with the influx of visitors, it became clear the we had to expand the terminals at Grantley Adams International Airport. That work started in 2002, the scheduled completion date was December, 2004. The initial contract value for the expanded terminals work at the airport, was \$139 149 905. The entire effort was to rehabilitate the existing terminal, to use that strictly for

departures and to add an additional 33 000 square feet for a new arrivals facility.

Mr. Speaker, the airport work was substantially completed and achieved in April, 2006. It was 16 months, late in terms of its delivery to substantial completion, but I am pleased to say that even though there were substantial delays, it never, in any way, seriously compromised the operations of the airport.

The reasons for the delay were very clear: there was slow productivity by the contractor; there were delays in the tenants relocation in certain terminals in the airport; there were serious clay pockets and caves found at the site of the new arrival terminal. These problems delay the entire operations. As a matter of fact, the engineers sitting in this Honourable House will tell you...I am not an engineer but it is my understanding that when the boreholes were first done at the airport in the area which is the new arrival terminals, these clay pockets and caves did not show up, but that once the excavation started and the area was being cleared, numerous clay pockets and caves were found in that area.

In addition, the acquisition procedures for the contractors were delays. There were some serious industrial action at the airport, I believe resulted out of the fact that the contractor on the site was not a local contractor, even though he was using Barbadian labour. Therefore, many of the issues, mainly cultural issues, related to how they dealt with the staffing and people with whom they subcontracted. There were then a lot of internal problems with the main contractor and subcontractors at the site.

In December 2006, the Grantley Adams International Airport entered into negotiations with the contractor. You would remember I said substantial work was done in April, 2006. In December, 2006, we entered into negotiations with the contractor over claims of variations and additional works and other differences. The estimated total of those claims of variations and additional work was \$70 372 033, which was inclusive of interest and VAT.

10.40 a.m.

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

(Edited)

Hon. N A. LYNCH: We settled in March with the contractor at \$155 million inclusive of interest and exclusive of VAT. Sir, a one-year warranty period was completed on April 26, 2007. The contractor is currently working towards completion of some remedial action and on a few defects and the retention sum of \$598 000 is being held, pending that completion. Sir, \$15 million Euros of

this money was borrowed from the European Investment Bank and we have already drawn down \$13.5 million Euros of that money. Mr. Speaker, as regards the other outstanding amount, one of the issues related to that AIB contract had to do with a public offering for a portion of the shares at Grantley Adams International Airport, for which we have asked an extension, that extension has been given until October 2007.

Mr. Speaker, in November of 2005, we started work on an additional five new parking positions. We had already built out an additional three parking positions between 2000 and 2005; we were now moving from positions 13 to positions 17. Sir, work commenced in November 2005 on position 18 and completion was on February 2006. Sir, work on position 19 to position 22 began in March 2006 and the completion date was set for December 2006 and it was completed then. The value of that contract was \$32 000 765. Mr. Speaker, positions 18 and position 19 were completed in December 2006; position 20 and position 21 were completed in March 2007 and position 22 and 23 were completed in May 2007.

Sir, regarding the final accounting pending the contract to date, we have already paid \$26 000 382 for the parking positions and there are no significant defects from the work that was planned. Mr. Speaker, the delays on these particular contracts were occasioned by the normal issues of rain, excavation and slow productivity. Sir, when you speak about all that has happened at Grantley Adams International Airport to protect this vital asset, the airspace and the physical installation that is Grantley Adams International Airport, there are some things that would arise.

Sir, I want to tell you about some of the issues and challenges surrounding much of what happens at Grantley Adams International Airport. Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of talk about issues relating to rain and water at Grantley Adams International Airport and I want to clear the air. Sir, it is an important issue because part of the challenge is that you do not expect to spend this type of money and have issues relating to rain and leakage at the airport. Sir, I will deal with them bit by bit, chapter and verse and give the House a full explanation.

Mr. Speaker, there is a checking area at the airport which is label 4A. Sir, for those who are familiar with the airport, this is the area outside the counters of Caribbean Airlines and LIAT. Sir, if people remember the old counter space, there was absolutely nothing there at the time. As a matter of fact, where you check in at American Airlines counter at the moment, there were no counters to the east of that and we have put as many as 20 counters in that space. Sir, the canopy on the outside of where that building ends, was never extended outward in the original airport because the space was bare. Sir, because that is shorter than the

original part, when it rains heavily, water blows in and this is causing challenges for those persons checking in at Caribbean Airlines, LIAT and the like.

We have already done a few things. There is a terrazzo non-slip which surface has been applied because it is particularly dangerous during the rainy season. Sir, in addition to that, we will extend the canopy area to meet where the original building was so that you do not have that amount of water blowing in. Mr. Speaker, the estimated cost of renovating this has been estimated at \$1.5 million. It is not an easy solution but it is our intention to solve it and we have started to seek tenders for the particular work.

Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify another issue. It is clear to all of us that eventually we are going to have to enclose the departure area of Grantley Adams International Airport because water blows in when it is at peak period and we have to protect the livelihood of those people who work there and passengers moving through the airport.

I have said that surface is slippery and that a number of people had accidents in the area and we have applied a non-slip surface, but even with the extended canopy, I suspect that if there is severe rainy weather that some of the same issue would arise. Therefore, in the future, we are going to have to contemplate closing up Grantley Adams International Airport, particularly in the departure area.

Mr. Speaker, there is an air-side courtyard that has also been the source of some debate. It is an open courtyard between departures and arrivals and was never intended to be covered. Sir, it was the architectural design. Mr. Speaker, if you walk through a courtyard in Japan and it is uncovered, you will get wet and, Sir, if you walk through a courtyard that is uncovered in China, and it rains, you will get wet and, therefore, I cannot understand why you would not get wet in the courtyard in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, people have made heavy weather of this but the reality is this. The place where you come under the last concourse and actually go into the arrival area, cannot be longer than 40 feet and when you come out of the covered area and go across the court yard, you cross about 40 feet to get into the arrival hall, so I do not know what is the issue but, Sir, people have made a big issue out of it.

Mr. Speaker, there have been complaints about people leaving a covered and walking through an open area, where they are apt to get wet when it rains as they go into the arrival terminal. Sir, there have been enough complaints to make us understand that it is a serious matter.

Asides.

Hon. N A. LYNCH: Sir, this is the Administration that listens to the people and accommodates them. Therefore, the fact that people are walking through an area in which they believe they should not get wet at Grantley Adams International Airport, we are working on a solution to deal with partially covering that particular space so that people do not get wet. Mr. Speaker, it is not going to be an easy solution and, upfront, I will say that it is going to be a costly solution but the initial contract never called for that area to be covered and that is where we are today.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that there are issues relating to leaking at Grantley Adams International Airport. The old terminal roof was not part of the new terminal works carried out at Grantley Adams International Airport but wherever there is a concrete roof, all the best engineers in the world would tell you that concrete roofs seem to have problems with leakage.

Asides.

Hon. N A. LYNCH: Sir, this was the old building that was built under the Democratic Labour Party and it had a concrete roof. The Honourable Member from St. Michael South Central is an engineer and he knows that better than I. Sir, the issue of concrete roofs leaking is not a phenomenon only to Barbados.

H141/10:50

Sequence 5

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Sir, we are sealing that roof now, but I must say that new cracks have turned up in the concrete roof, during and after the period of construction of the new terminal. Sir, the jackhammering and the other external work going on, clearly showed up in some of the beams and walls, some hairline fractures, which allowed water in, but they have not compromised the overall structural integrity of the building. Sir, clearly, there is some leakage, and we are in process of sealing that entire concrete roof to avoid, in the future, that type of leakage. Sir, people are going overboard with water trickling down a space. They are just trickles. I agree that we do not expect with the type of money that we have spent, to see leakage.

Mr. Speaker, there is a space where the old building was joined to the new building. It is my understanding, as a layman and a non-engineer, that whenever you join an old building to a new building, you can expect some leakage. Therefore, we are working on sealing off the space where the two buildings are joined, to avoid further problems. Sir, I do not believe that we are compromising the structural integrity of the building. We are going to have it fixed.

Sir, it is estimated that by October, 2007, we will have the extended canopy over the check-in area, and repaired fixed many of the leaks at the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Mr. Speaker, for an administration that is protecting us so heavily, one of the other issues has arisen, with regard to the protection of that particular installation, like the birds flying in and the animals crossing the runway... The departure tax became a matter of concern. The IAA Clearing House is the new clearing house responsible for the passenger handling charge from February, 2007. The only people who are exempted from the passenger service charge, which was called the old departure tax, are children under two years. Sir, Grantley Adams International Airport submits passenger flight information to IATA, eight days after the end of each month, and three weeks later, Grantley Adams International Airport collects its money from IATA.

Sir, we believe that it is a much more secure system of ensuring that we receive the departure tax. It eliminates much of the pilferage that was going on. Sir, I will be very blunt with you; we had incidents relating to stealing departure tax at Grantley Adams International Airport. We have now been able to create a system, through IATA, which ensures that we receive the majority of money paid in.

Sir, some people wrote about the departure tax. The former amount was BDS\$25, which had not been changed in twelve years. In Barbados, with everything on the increase, the departure tax remained the same. It remained at \$25. Mr. Speaker, we built the airport at approximately \$155 million.

Asides.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Sir, it would clearly assist in the cost recovery at Grantley Adams International Airport. We added another BDS\$30 to the departure tax and \$5 as a security fee, an overall amount of BDS\$60. That is what we did. Sir, we added \$30 to the passenger handling charge, clearly to aid in the cost recovery. There are more people moving through the airport, so there is a lot more wear and tear; we added \$30. The security fee was always paid, all we did was to move it from \$3 to \$5; \$2 more, an overall total of \$60.

Sir, the charge is more than justified, because of the increased security upgrades at the Grantley Adams International Airport. Sir, we live in an environment where we cannot ignore the difficulties of security. We have six additional passenger scanners, six additional baggage scanners, and personnel to deal with them, clearly, we needed to increase the security fee.

Mr. Speaker, when I hear people talking about how high the departure tax is, let me give you some good examples. The departure tax in Trinidad and Tobago is US\$21; in the Dominican Republic, US\$90; St. Maarten, US\$35; and St. Kitts, US\$32. I am saying that our fees, which have not been increased for more than twelve years, are parallel and in fact cheaper than most other places in the region.

Sir, again, I say, if there is an issue, we are dealing with it. I must tell you that the increase is more than justified. The tax is now included in the ticket cost, so a man or woman does not have to pull his or her pocket and pay the tax at Grantley Adams International Airport. Sir, when the ticket agent bills you, the departure tax is already included in that cost. Mr. Speaker, I think that our cost is more than justified, given what we have done at the airport.

Mr. Speaker, there is too the protection of the Grantley Adams International Airport hub. Sir, we need to protect the hub, because most people in the Eastern Caribbean, those without international airports, like Dominica and St. Vincent, rely on Barbados. Therefore, we have to protect this particular hub. We have to protect the movement of small planes, but also ensure that the big planes continue flights to Barbados.

Sir, the departure tax has been imposed on transit passengers, and it is a source of concern to some of our regional neighbours. We are actively pursuing and reviewing departure taxes on transit passengers. However, let me make it clear that transit passengers are taxed everywhere the IATA system, is in use. In other words, it is difficult to discern whether a passenger is transiting or not, once he or she has a ticket which says that they exit Barbados, this is done everywhere.

In addition, transit passengers use the facility, sometimes more than most passengers who are just coming and going. Therefore, they spend longer periods in the terminal. Sir, for clarification of many, and specifically one person, who does not understand very much of anything...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Sir, if you are using the IATA system, it is difficult to distinguish a passenger that especially, with a ticket that is exiting Barbados. That is how it is relayed in the system. Therefore, at most places on the globe...

Asides.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Sir, that is the way it is done. A transit passenger has a ticket which says that he is exiting Barbados. He pays the departure tax. There is nothing wrong with that, since it was included in his ticket, even

before he reached Barbados. Sir, do not be thrown off by anything you may not hear, but I am hearing it.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to transit passengers, we are seeking to do as much as we can to help our regional neighbours by protecting them, as well as ourselves. Therefore, we are looking at all possible options to deal with the transit matter.

Sir, the other area of contention, relative to with Grantley Adams International Airport and its future, is the food and beverage concessions. I want to clear the air on the procedure of concessions at the airport, and how we continue to protect that particular aspect of the development of Grantley Adams International Airport.

Sir, in March, 2004, requests for proposals were issued for food and beverage concessions. Those concessions closed on June 22, 2004. Sir, fourteen were received for seven packages offered.

11.00 a.m.

Sequence 6

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

House 141, Sequence 07, 11.00 a.m.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Sir, those concessions closed on June 22, 2004. Fourteen were received for seven packages offered. No suitable proposals were received for one package which was an air-side food counter and kitchen, so that was returned to tender, until October 2004, at which time two additional requests were received. Six tenders were awarded. The awards for those particular tenders were in a very transparent process, and I will explain.

Sir, in Package one, there was a land-side quick service restaurant, which went to Chefette Restaurants. Package two; a land-side gourmet coffee bar went to Café Blue. A land-side bar went to Banks Holdings; two air-side counters and kitchens went to Airport Restaurants Limited; two air-side counters and kitchens went to Kevin Investment, Inc; an air-side bar went to Caribbean Liquids, Inc; and an air-side gourmet coffee bar, which went to Christophe's Café & Patisserie.

Sir, in addition, the retail concessions, duty-free and duty-paid were issued in December of 2004 and they closed in May of 2005. Fifty-one proposals were received for 16 duty-free retail concessions and 13 for six duty-paid concessions.

Sir, of those, the duty-free concessions that were awarded were Liquor and Tobacco, BADMC; Liquor and Tobacco, Caribbean ARI, Inc; Chocolates and

Confectionery went to Caribbean ARI, Inc; Jewelry and Watches Duty-Free Caribbean went to Columbian Emeralds; T-shirts and Barbados Logo Products went to GCS Limited, trading as Ganzee; Fragrances and Cosmetics went to Caribbean ARI Limited; Fashion and Accessories went to Caribbean ARI Limited; Liquor and Tobacco went to Refinery Limited, a \$20 Concept Store Duty-Free Caribbean BGU Turner; Jewelry and Watches went to Diamonds International; Books and Greetings went to Byway Stationery and Office Supplies; Liquor and Tobacco Duty-Free Caribbean and a Beach Hut, Caribbean ARI Limited.

Sir, in addition to those, there were some other concessions: a convenience pharmacy, which went to Seashell Convenience Store; a convenience pharmacy land-side, went to Aunt Polly's Gifts and Floral; a general convenience mini-mart went to Travel Essentials; Local Arts and Crafts, Best of Barbados; Local Arts and Crafts, Tamarind Seed; and a new convenience store and local crafts store to BADMC and BIDC.

Sir, I want to explain the issue because a lot of talk has arisen, relative to these concessions. Sir, all the proposals were evaluated by an independent consultant, Sypher Mueller International, Inc., which made recommendations to a Concessions Committee of Grantley Adams International Airport Board. The Concessions Committee received the consultant's recommendations and then made further recommendations to the wider Board of Grantley Adams International Airport, and the Board accepted these recommendations.

In the case of car rentals, there were two car rentals awarded. One to Courtesy Rent-a-car and the other to S and W Car Rentals, which is a joint venture between Stoutes Car Rental Limited and Drive-a-matic. Those recommendations were made to the Management, who in turn recommended it to the Board and the Board accepted them. Sir, the Cabinet mandated that BADMC, BIDC and BIABI (Barbados in a Bottle Inc), be accommodated at Grantley Adams and so they have been accommodated at Grantley Adams International Airport.

Sir, there is a decision as well, in terms of the protection of the space to prohibit itinerant vending in the car park at Grantley Adams International Airport. Sir, for five years, vendors were allowed to sell in the car park at Grantley Adams International Airport, with the permission of the management of Grantley Adams International Airport, an act that if it was not so, would have constituted a trespass. I am not an attorney but this is what the best counsel we had, told us.

Sir, once the actual building site was being built out, and the concessions were closed at Grantley Adams International Airport, we allowed five concessionaires to

sell at the car park at Grantley Adams International Airport and to sell on the building site, with the clear understanding that once the F&B concessions had been awarded, they had to vacate the car park.

Sir, it so happened that once the last F&B installation was built out, they were notified by letter on June 7th. The opinion was received that the vendors who went to the newspapers, had no interest in the actual land at the Grantley Adams International Airport. Sir, there was a follow-up letter asking them to cease operations on June 28, 2007.

On June 26th the Barbados Association of Vendors requested formal contractual rights to sell in the car park. Sir, they could not be given rights because it would contravene the formal contracts that we have with the existing concessionaires at the Grantley Adams International Airport. Therefore, we told them clearly that they cannot be accommodated.

Sir, we told them to apply formally, and if there is more build out of the airport, they would be given an option to be there. Sir, the issue is a transparent process. They could not be selling in the airport because it is private property and it would have affected our contracts with the existing concessionaires at the airport.

Sir, on the matter of the "Red Caps", on April 23, 2007, an amended contract and business proposal for the operation of Red Caps and Porter service was submitted to the Ministry. Sir, that particular business proposal states very clearly that we believe there is accommodation that can be given to both red caps and having trolleys in our arrivals terminal.

I want to repeat. Sir, it is our belief that we can accommodate both the Red Caps and the individual passenger trolleys at the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Sir, we received a letter from the Barbados Workers Union requesting recognition as the bargaining unit for Porters and I must explain. Sir, the matter was referred to counsel and the reply received. The Porters have individual contracts with Grantley Adams International Airport. We are accommodating them, Sir, by issuing them with as much as uniforms and equipment to operate in the airport terminal.

Sir, the fact is that they are independent contractors and therefore we could not have them under a bargaining unit. Sir, on June 8th the BWU wrote back stating that they were simply interested in discussions about the welfare of the Red Caps. Sir, we understand that but the Red Caps are independent contractors, therefore, collective bargaining does not apply.

Sir, it is our belief that they can be accommodated alongside the passenger trolleys. I believe that there are somewhere in the region of 50 Red Caps working at Grantley Adams International Airport. We understand that they need to work. We have been sympathetic to their cause and have not displaced anybody at the Grantley Adams International Airport, in terms of the Red Caps.

Sir, the Grantley Adams International Airport has a present staff complement of 353 employees, and 57 Red Caps. There are 108 persons that went over to the company from international transport. Sir, of those 108 persons, 31 persons were appointed and 71 persons were temporary.

Sir, it is clear that Grantley Adams International Airport has been performing well. There are some issues that relate to the protection of the airspace. More expansion is to come at Grantley Adams International Airport. We are going to install four passenger boarding bridges, in the existing arrival and departure terminals.

Sir, one of the reasons we did not do this before the World Cup was that we were receiving quotations that were very high. In October 2006, tenders were invited for four bridges and each quotation we received averaged approximately \$32 million.

House 141, sequence 07, 11:10:14

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: The consultants expressed the view that in their opinion the tenders have been seriously overpriced, and therefore we have decided to wait until after the Cricket World Cup to be able to do it. Sir, we are going to continue to pursue this issue. We have already gone back out to tender for the boarding bridges.

Sir, the more expansion that comes in terms of the passenger base at the Grantley Adams International Airport, the more we will be in this expansionary mode of constantly building out the airport.

Sir, it is not unusual to find airports in the developed world being constantly in some expansionary mode. Sir, it is not unusual to find Miami, JFK and even San Juan constantly in some expansionary mode. Sir, the issue of the Grantley Adams International Airport being in this expansionary mode speaks to our successes.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to add the four boarding bridges and we are going to build out the departure area. Sir, there is a probability that we may need another runway at the Grantley Adams International Airport in the future. Sir, we do not need it in St. Lucy, we need it at the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Sir, out of the upgrades at the airport have come things like the Concorde Centre, the jet centre and new airlines started by small indigenous people. Sir, that is the kind of action that we have had.

Sir, we have added a lounge in the departure area. We have added four apron buses to the operations of the airport. We have added passenger hostesses and accommodations in the arrival and departure areas. We now have more immigration and customs counters than have ever existed before in Barbados. We have implemented a new parking system which is not only protecting the revenues of the airport, but once it is used correctly, it is more than accommodating. Sir, we have tightened the accounting systems at the airport. We have implemented an ambulance service at the airport.

Mr. Speaker, there was much talk about persons who died at the airport. Mr. Speaker, for an airport of our size, we really needed to have an ambulance placed there. Mr. Speaker, we had a five-year period without any incident and then we had two people who died. Therefore, it was recognised that we needed to have an ambulance service at the airport, and we now have an ambulance service there.

Sir, we have more people at the airport. We have guards and more custodians at the airport. There is better security. There are six more passenger scanners and six more luggage scanners. We have added more parking positions and more are to come in the future. Sir, we have created an environment that we believe is more than secure for the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Sir, as I said in the beginning, the main obstacle to protecting the problem of the bird strikes was the Wild Birds Protection Act, Cap 398, which prohibits the killing of the egrets. Mr. Speaker, the Cabinet therefore asked for permission to amend this Act. The Cabinet amended the Act and considered a paper and agreed that the Wild Birds Protection Act, Cap 398 should be amended. Sir, Cabinet has instructed the Chief Parliamentary Counsel to do the same.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Sir, the Chief Parliamentary Counsel examined the draft and indicated that in amending the Airport Act, we also needed to amend the Wild Birds Protection Act so that authorisation is given to an authorised officer to kill or seize wild birds notwithstanding the provisions found in the Wild Birds Protection Act, Cap. 398.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: In the meantime, the Grantley Adams International Airport (Transfer of Management and

Vesting) Act 2003, was enacted to make provisions for the Grantley Adams International Airport to be managed by the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. On June 16, 2006, the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. took over the management of the airport. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Bill was therefore redrafted and took into consideration the concerns of the relevant ministries, the airport new status and the fact that the airport company now has to deal with the danger of other animals intruding upon the runway, and the disposal of the same. Therefore, Sir, the amendments to the Airport Act are thus:

1. Section 2 of the Act is referred to as the principal Act and is amended by deleting the words "Airport Manager" and inserting the words "Chief Executive Officer" who is defined as the most senior managerial officer of the Grantley Adams International Airport.
2. It also deletes the current definition for "authorised officer" and replaces it with the following:

"authorised officer" means, except in section 5, in relation to any of the functions of authorised officer under this Act or any regulations, the Chief Executive Officer or any other person authorised in writing by the Minister."

3. Section 5 of the principal Act is deleted and a new subsection has been substituted which should read as follows:

(5) (1) An authorised officer may,

"(a) notwithstanding the provisions of the Wild Birds Protection Act, kill or cause to be killed any birds, that in the opinion of the authorised officer, are considered to be a danger to aircraft operating at the airport;

(b) cause to be killed or seize any animals considered to be a danger to aircraft operating at the airport."

4. The authorised officer may provide for the disposal of the carcasses of these animals.

Sir, in addition to that, it deletes the words "Airport Manager" wherever they appear in the Act and substitutes the words "Chief Executive Officer."

Sir, this piece of legislation is important to Barbados given the size and expansion of our airport as well as the influx of visitors that we have seen, given the hard work that this Administration has done. Therefore, Sir, I commend this piece of legislation to the House.

Sir, before this Administration came into office in 1994, arrivals figure never reached 400 000. Sir, in 1994, when we took over, the average number of arrivals was 450

000. Sir, for the last five years the average number of arrivals has been 550 000. Sir, this is 100 000 passengers on average since that time. Sir, this tells you something about the tremendous work that has been done to increase the socioeconomic fortunes of the Barbadian populace.

Sir, that is an act and a state of mind unknown to the Democratic Labour Party because under them Barbadians were going down and down. Sir, under this Administration, they are going up and up. Sir, the efforts are clear. They have been rewarded. We will continue to protect the rights and fortunes of our people. We will do so, Sir, through the protection of the first port of entry for most of our people, the Grantley Adams International Airport.

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

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

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to this simple amendment. The Government is concerned about the impact of bird strikes and other wild animals on our aviation industry.

Sir, where the airport is concerned, I am concerned with the strikes from some other wild behaviour, which I would deal with.

House 141 Sequence 8

11.20 a.m.

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, on the issue of the bird strikes, I think it is known that it is costly and therefore naturally the airport authorities would need to have the relevant legislative capacity to deal with it. I would imagine that a bit of commonsense would be applied and clearly if there is an issue with bird strikes that the authority would look at solving the problem of why the birds are coming there in the first place and would deal with issues such as their nesting sites, feeding sites and maybe eliminate those, so that it would only be a last resort to have to dispatch officers, to go out there with firearms to shoot down birds. I would imagine that would be the thinking.

Mr. Speaker, even from what we heard in here today, I do not think the largest threat right now to the operations of the airport, is that of wild birds. There are some other things this Government is doing, some other things that we have heard here today, which I think are far more of a concern than birds and wild animals. Again, I would imagine that with appropriate fencing, the question of stray

livestock should be thing of the past, but again I take it that those matters would have been dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister spent some time explaining the increase in capacity, in terms of the flow through the airport, and the pressures that the airport is being brought under, but he went on the defensive with respect to a number of issues that have been in the public domain, issues that have been raised by this side and have been raised by the public generally. Of course, in an attempt to pad out, the Minister thought that he would basically offer a plaster for every sore.

Sir, I think that even the Honourable Member has admitted that given the amount of money that has been spent, given the amount of debt which we are now in on this issue, given the way in which the Public Enterprise Fund has been decimated to accommodate the expansion to the airport, some of these things clearly should not be issues. The Honourable Member spoke about a courtyard, where passengers are getting wet.

Asides.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: That is true, but you do not put a courtyard in the middle of your airport operations that would affect the natural passenger flow at the airport. The reason people were complaining is that they were getting wet, while going about their normal activity at the airport. People were not complaining they were getting wet when they were on some frolic of their own. The fact of the matter is that they were getting wet. Sir, we are talking of \$200-plus million that was spent on this project.

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, according to my friend, like the Eagle Hall Public Market, which is a dry-weather market. Sir, they spent \$155-plus million on the terminal work.

Asides.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, having spent these monies and in many respects, having wasted some funds, we now find ourselves with a facility that still needs to have a medical installation. We are told that medical installation is coming because of the fact that somebody died there.

Asides.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Well, it is a good thing there were not doing any work in the area of the Fire Station because we have not had a fire at the airport and therefore

they might have probably eliminated the Fire Station as well. I do not understand what kind of logic is that; no one has had a serious event at the airport, a facility like that, which has seen so many passengers, according to the Honourable Member, and did not have any medical facility. But that is now coming after the fact. Government is going to cover the courtyard, after the fact; Government is going to seal the concrete roof, after the fact.

The Honourable Member is saying concrete roofs tend to leak but that is the reason they are sealed. It only stands to reason that when you have an old roof leading to a new roof, that these are issues that should have been part of the original scope, we should not have to be scrambling to come back to correct these issues. Can you imagine after the cost overruns, that there is still major work to be done, with respect to the airport.

Asides.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, there is another issue of the airport being friendly to the disabled community. There are areas of the airport that are not properly accessible, for instance, I understand the lounge is not properly accessible to disabled persons. Again, that is an oversight, in 2006/2007, to be constructing a public facility of that nature.... It is the only airport in Barbados and according to this Government, it will be the only airport in Barbados, and yet the disabled have a hard time in terms of accessing the various facilities in the airport.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: That, in itself, says something about the conscience of this Government.

Sir, we have very real issues with the physical plant and the adequacy of the physical plant of the new airport, given the amount of money that has been spent. The Honourable Member dealt with some of them, he dealt with many of the issues. The Honourable Member claimed the reason for the delays had to do with a number of clay pockets and labour disputes, that, I understand, is the reason we had a two-year delay on the airport. Of course, the Honourable Member could expect persons to believe that but I know better than to believe that.

Mr. Speaker, we have had all sorts of issues in relation to the airport. We have had the baggage handlers and the Air Traffic Controllers complaining about the adequacy of the physical space, while this Government has spent all of that money.

Sir, do you know what is mind-boggling? Sir, having gone through all of that expenditure, we are now hearing that four jet bridges have to be added. Therefore, Government is going to have to literally take off the entire

air-side of the airport, to install the jet bridges, or Government is going to have to do significant work in areas where work would have already been completed, in order to install the jet bridges. Sir, a jet bridge cannot simply be tacked on, it has to be incorporated into the flow of the whole plant.

Asides.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: And Government would have just completed an airport, at a cost of \$155 million.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. Sir, the issue of having to rip off the front of the airport, to accommodate jet bridges, is not so at all. When the Arrival Terminal was built, it was built with a mezzanine floor that has been left specifically for the installation of jet bridges and therefore nothing would have to be taken off.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Asides.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, in essence then, the real value of the works is not \$155 million. In other words, it is an incomplete project, it is one which this Government is so good at doing. There is a cricket facility where half of it is exposed, it is incomplete, it is a similar type thing.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, do not worry with that now.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, therefore, the airport is still a work in progress. Therefore, the Honourable Member cannot say that it is \$155 million, the Honourable Member would have to say it is \$155 million, plus what has to be spent to bring the airport up to scratch.

Mr. Speaker, it is my view that the institutional arrangements at the airport, were put in place with a view of putting people first.

Asides.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please. You had your chance to speak. Let me hear the Honourable Member speak.

Asides.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, it is not a problem, I am not going to mention anything about integrity

legislation, which the Honourable Member was talking about, we are dealing with the airport.

Mr. Speaker, we are concerned about the vendors and contracts for the shops at the airport, and the Honourable Member thought that the would go into some details on those issues.

11.30 a.m.

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

(Edited)

Mr. R.L. SEALY: and had to give way for other persons in the airport. He spoke about a concessionaire at the airport, who has the same last name as somebody in this House, who was at the airport for 21 years and had to give way. The Honourable Member Christ Church West is smiling. His family apparently has been chased away and, Sir, chased away for whom.

The Honourable Member listed the persons who now have contracts and I will just take issue with a few of them. He said he was very, very transparent with respect to how these contracts were given out so, Sir, let us deal with “very, very, transparent”, which is the Minister’s own terminology. He glossed over a list of concessionaires and on six occasions he mentioned a company called Caribbean AIR Inc. I would like the Minister to get up on a point of order and be very transparent with me. They have six concessionaires in the area of duty-free operations. I want to know why would an Irish concern have to come to our airport to set up a beach hut. I just want to know what the Irish can teach us about a beach hut.

Sir, I just want to understand it who is Caribbean ARI Inc. What is the relationship with the international company? Why are they given so many duty-free concessions including a beach hut? I want to know what is the relationship with members of the Board or the former Board and I want to know the shareholding of Caribbean ARI Inc. Sir, it should be very, very transparent, those are the words of the Minister, they are not my words.

Mr. Speaker, I want to know the composition of the shareholding and what is the arrangement with respect to the repatriation of profits made by Caribbean ARI Inc. and the company in Ireland, who are their local directors and what peculiar skills do they bring? Sir, we have been doing duty-free here in Barbados for aeons and I want to know these things for my own benefit as are being very, very transparent.

Sir, people are at the end of their tether with respect to having to yield to make way for foreign interest. Sir, if it not Guyanese carpenters, it is Chinese labour or

Trinidadian businesses but they are giving way all the time. I am told that the friend of Honourable Member for St. Michael South East is not good enough for the new airport and if that is what I am being told by this Government, then I want to know how these Irish are so qualified.

Mr. Speaker, when vendors ‘act up’ about being put off the premises, you must understand the context in which it has occurred. I agree that you just cannot have everybody opening the trunks of their cars in the car park and selling, there must be some sort of regulation involved but can we not accommodate both. We need to look at ways and means of adding value to our experience. There is a shop called Pug’s Bar, located at the roundabout by the airport and you would be surprised that many visitors will go there for a last beverage before they take the flight or even on their way into the airport. The same mentality you have had on the beaches, in Bridgetown and in the schools with respect to the vendors, this hostility towards vendors, there is no need to take that to the airport without looking at the potential synergies that could be developed.

I am not against Mr. Haloute having his set up there but, surely, there must be room for more players because it is still a public institution and it still belongs to the people of Barbados. It may have been corporatised but it still belongs to the people of Barbados and, Sir, that is important.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member also mentioned the “Red Caps”, which is a fairly unique feature that we offer here in Barbados. I was happy that the decisions to unilaterally just put trolleys in the arrival hall was rescinded. I am now hearing that they are going to be returned but apparently they are going to be returned with a more conscientious type of approach and that the “Red Caps” would be brought into the whole negotiation of the process by which these trolleys are going to be introduced.

Mr. Speaker, I remember that one of the proposals that was put was that money earned from the trolley from the small fee that would be charged would go towards the “Red Caps” to help them deal with whatsoever losses they would experience.

Sir, let us face it that there would be losses because you are not reducing the number of “Red Caps”. Sir, you are having an increase in passengers generally over an extended period but, clearly, there are going to losses and we need to figure out a way in which we can accommodate them. I do not think that having served this country so well; having been ambassadors for so many years; there are actually “Red Caps”, who have been working for 20-plus years and probably do more to market this country than some officers at the Barbados Tourism Authority and that is not take away anything from what they are doing. I am saying that we should not underestimate the impact that the

'Red Caps' have; that point of initial contact for all our long-stay visitors. We need to be clear on this, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, the last time the Honourable Member for St. Michael South spoke in this Chamber about 'Red Caps' he had to be put in his place, so I am going to take him at his word this time. I am happy to hear that the Barbados Workers' Union is taking an interest, presumably as patriotic Barbadians, to see that these men and women are not totally discarded and put out to pasture.

Mr. Speaker, I need to say something about the so-called departure tax, which is now, of course, a service charge because it is now going to the airport company. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South sought to justify it on the basis of value for money. He said that there was no problem with the extra \$35, given the improvement at the airport, the wonderful facility and that it has not been increased for 12 years.

Mr. Speaker, there are a few problems with it. First, there is a moral issue here. When Government can increase a user fee by over 100 per cent, what signals are you sending to private sector players in an environment where prices are already going up and everyone is complaining about the cost of living. Sir, Government has to be careful in what signal it is sending by increasing the airport service charge by over 100 per cent. I think that is the first point that needs to be made.

Mr. Speaker, another point is the issue of the security charge component. I am a little mystified by that because it is my understanding that the principal responsibility of a State is to provide for the security of its citizenry.

H141/11:40

Sequence 10

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Mr. R.L. SEALY: Sir, we are now hearing that we provide for your security, until you drive to the airport and you have to pay \$5 towards the security, with respect to the airport. The airport is a different facility and obviously will require special security needs. Mr. Speaker, that is not washing with me. Sir, I know that the airlines and so on have added costs, which can be applied to their tickets, but I do not see why we are now trying to suggest that part of it is related to security. Sir, that is not really washing with me at all.

Mr. Speaker, what concerns me is, if the Minister is saying that the \$35 increase is justified on the basis of the \$155 million in work done on the terminal, and he has admitted that the work is incomplete - he basically said that

the preparatory work for the jet bridges was done. The jet bridges still have to be done, and they are not cheap, and we still have the remedial work with respect to the leaking, rain and so on - are we to look forward to a further increase in the service charge? Sir, if the logic the Minister is using stands, am I to understand that we are going to see a further increase as the airport is expanded to accommodate the homeporting programme, as we deal with the leaking issues and jet bridges? Are we to look forward to another increase? Is that what the Minister is saying? Sir, I am a bit baffled that the Government can look to increase the airport service charge by such a tremendous rate.

Sir, the Barbados Association of Retired Persons (BARP) has suggested - and I understand they will be circulating it to all their members - that the airport tax be waived for senior citizens, as apparently happens in some other CARICOM countries. They are making the argument that, in essence, since your tickets are heavily taxed already, since we are already paying more money in the cost of airline travel, what is not recognised is that taxes have gone up. In fact, the same tax we are speaking of is included in the cost of the airline ticket. Given that you are already heavily taxed, their argument is, senior citizens should have that tax waived.

Sir, I frankly think it is worthwhile. I will go a step further, and I think there may be other categories of persons as well, who should have that tax waived. I think it is too high, that is true, but certainly, persons travelling to represent Barbados, certain types of tours done by registered school and community groups, even children under certain age. I know it is under two years, but you could certainly set a higher age than that, maybe, children under the age of sixteen. Mr. Speaker, persons who are travelling on a budget, and groups that sometimes struggle hard to raise funds, sports teams and charitable organisations should have the tax waived. I think that we could look at other groups besides the elderly, who can have an ease with respect to this draconian increase that has been put on the backs of ordinary Barbadians. Sir, I believe that we need to look at that issue.

Mr. Speaker, we recognise that while, as the Minister pointed out, the staff complement of the airport is approximately four hundred, they are close to 3 000 persons that rely on the airport for a living. Sir, beyond the staff you have taxi operators, ticket agents, the catering personnel, and a host of persons. I think it is important that we recognise the need to put Barbadians first and deal with this feeling, that many Barbadians have, that the airport is all about foreign interest, at the moment.

Sir, I spoke about the duty-free concession. I think that there are ways we can improve the level of local involvement in the airport. I sincerely hope that those ideas would be kept upmost in mind.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make a point about the parking apron. We are complaining about the amount of money that has been spent. I am curious to know why the Government opted to put on four parking aprons at the same time. Sir, we heard in here before, that many airports are usually under construction, on a constant basis. Therefore, I would have thought that you could add the parking aprons over a period of time, in that way it would certainly ease the issue of cash flow and the need to borrow so much. There is a very high cost to borrowing money, especially on this project.

Sir, because of the nature of the contract that this Government, in all of its wisdom, negotiated, that required 70 per cent of the airport contract to be issued in US dollars and Euros, and because of the arrangements, with respect to the exchange rate, that is the difference between what the exchange rate was at the date of the transaction, as opposed to the date of the signing, Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. incurred over \$5 million in losses. Mr. Speaker, that is a statement of audited fact. I have the only recently laid financial statements for Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. Sir, that in itself said something about the management of the whole process.

Sir, I was of the opinion that they had an accounting expert, who was Chairman of the company, who was shepherding in the process. Obviously, he was not involved in negotiating the contract with respect to these issues, \$5 million in losses.

Asides.

Mr. R.L. SEALY: Sir, I am saying that in itself demonstrates the sort of mismanagement that has only added further cost to the average people of Barbados. I wait to see what will happen with respect to the future of the airport.

Sir, the Minister is very hot on what is happening at the airport, but looking at this balance sheet - I understand that this is the first one - Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. has not delivered much to jump up and shout about. The whole corporatisation issue is very much an experiment, and we wait to see what will happen.

Mr. Speaker, I remember hearing talk about a CEO being hired for \$500 000. You had to get a 'hotshot', a CEO from some far part of the world, because nobody in Barbados did not know how to run an airport. Sir, I can tell you, that I wait to see what will happen with this. What I would say on this issue, of how the airport is run, and even some of the people who try to perpetuate that kind of nonsense, is that all the years we have had one of the best airports in the Caribbean - it is one of the best small airports in the world - we never had anybody coming from

outside to run it for us. Even the Honourable Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, said in here that we have one of the best run small airports in the world; and then we were told that you had to get somebody for \$500 000 to come in. Sir, I am very serious. I think you need to have a Board of Directors that understand the peculiarities of what is a very dynamic and unique type of business activity, that is what you need. You cannot just have Party faithfuls on a Board like this to run an airport. It is not only about the management having to bring in any high flyer, because ultimately, the decisions still has to come back to that same Board. It is the quality of the persons you have and what they have in their hearts as well. It cannot only be about advancing anyone's interest.

11.50 a.m.

Sequence 11

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

House 141, Sequence 12, 11.50 a.m.

Mr. R.L. SEALY: I would hope that the Minister would keep that in mind for the few months that he has left when he would be responsible for these matter. We would hope that he would do that, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, I have touched on several of the issues. As I have said, we have no real problem with the bird strikes. I would hope that the CEO - however it is styled, because apparently the term airport manager is a problem - would be able to deal with some of these issues that I have raised and have been raised by the people of Barbados, in order that the airport can be run in a manner that not only continues to see good arrivals and encourages people to come but at the same time would be run in the interest of all Barbadians.

I am much obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Ernst and Young for presenting a well-prepared document, who for many years, have been able to demonstrate the capacity of their company, to be able to prepare documents of this quality.

The most interesting thing about this document is that they are not speaking about a profit and loss account, as one would expect when you pick up a document like this, but they are speaking about a loss account.

Mr. SPEAKER: What document are you speaking to now, Sir?

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, this is the Financial Statement of Grantley Adams International Airport, Inc., for the year ended June 30, 2006, which is a document of this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Proceed, please.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, at page 3, they said, “a statement of loss,” not a statement of profit and loss. When this company was brought to this Parliament, the impression was given that this company will be able to turn around the airport and we would not be seeing any more losses, and a serious accounting firm can recognise that this is not a company about making profit but a company about making losses because it says, “Statement of Loss.”

Sir, what is even more ridiculous, Lynch and Company Limited with chief Brewer as chief partner. That is the name of the accounting firm.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, what is even worse, is that on page 13 at Note 13, we were told that the Airport Expansion Project agreed to payments of 30 per cent in Barbadians dollars, 37 per cent in US dollars and 33 per cent in EUROS.

Mr. Speaker, anybody in Barbados who understood what occurred under the Barbados Labour Party in 1985, with the Japanese loan and floating currencies, could not accept this type of financing arrangement. Sir, if you go back to the records in here, you would see that I have said consistently in this Parliament that the EURO will rise.

Mr. Speaker, this Board belonging to the Grantley Adams International Airport, has signed a contract with the contractors for payments to be made in EUROS. Sir, what is interesting is that when they signed the contract, they estimated that the fixed contract will be BDS\$1.91733 to the EURO.

Mr. Speaker, take note, that in the Central Bank Economic and Financial Statistics at February 2007 - and because I said February 2007, I am not going to quote from February 2007 - as far back as 1999, the EURO was 2.1379. In other words, it took BDS\$2.13 to service one EURO. Sir, when this work started, they signed a contract way below the cost of the EURO, even though the Central Bank was saying that the EURO was much higher. Therefore, you know what it means.

Sir, when I said Ernest and Young earlier, instead of Ernst and Young, they jumped up. Let them jump up about these now, because I am saying that the Airport Board saddled this country with more than \$5 million, an unnecessary debt, when they knew that it would have

turned out like that, because if they want to tell me that they did not know, then the whole Board should have been fired, even before they started.

Sir, the Central Bank in Barbados produced the evidence, and you could find this every month. If they did not know, they could have called any bank in Barbados to find out what the EURO was trading at, and they deliberately signed a contract at a conversion rate of 1.91. Further, in the year 2006, the EURO went as high as 2.64, and they are telling me that we should not worry about what went on at the airport, Sir, no wonder the Chairman resigned.

Sir, we are not worrying about more than \$5 million given away without excuse, but we are here wasting the Parliament's time worrying about whether vendors should sell in the car part or not, or the “Red Caps” should make money, when people signed agreements up there to put money in other people's pockets, after we had the example in 1985 of the Japanese Loan. Sir, you are probably tired of hearing me explain to this Parliament about the Japanese loans, yet, with all of that talk, they have not learned anything in this House.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, I am saying that we have to find out why this occurred. The whole Board should be summoned to explain to the Minister of Finance why they did it, in an age like this with floating currencies.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, I would give some free advice. If the Government of Barbados wants to borrow money, the best loans to borrow would be the EURO Loan or a loan in the Pound (£), for the simple reason of the strength, there is more a possibility that it would fall, rather than increase. Sir, you do not borrow money when something is low and growing, and this is exactly what I have been telling this House for years.

Sir, I cannot forgive any Government in 2007 for signing any agreement with a floating currency, when we had the Japanese loan experience. Sir, do you know what is hurtful? In the 1880s, when the Barbados Labour Party borrowed the Japanese Loan, it was the Democratic Labour Party in the 1990s that had to find the money and it was the Democratic Labour Party that was blamed for it. Do you know what this means? When we take over the Government soon, we will get blamed for this too, Sir.

I am saying, Sir, that we are forewarning the public that the debt has been built up by the Minister of Tourism who appointed the Board, sanctioned by the Cabinet. Mr. Speaker, Note 13 is important.

House 141, sequence 12, 12:00:14

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, the Minister of Tourism needs to apologise to this House. The Minister of Tourism said in this House that at no time during the Democratic Labour Party reign did tourism arrivals went over 400 000. Do you remember that comment, Sir?

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, in 1987, tourism arrivals were 421 000; in 1988, 451 000; in 1989, 461 000 and in 1990, 432 000. Sir, he said that not once during our time did tourism arrivals went over 400 000.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, the Minister of Tourism needs to apologise to the House for deliberately lying to the House because he said that tourism arrivals kept going down. Sir, he is aware that there is a decline, so it tells me if he is aware of the decline, then he would have to know that he was lying to the House with the figures he gave previously.

Mr. Speaker, lest the Minister thinks that I am talking pie in the sky and is talking about Ernest instead of Ernst, let me deal with page 91, Table H10 in the Central Bank of Barbados Economic and Financial Statistics, which is a document of the House and of which the Minister is well-aware.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, the Minister said it kept going down because he knew that by 1991 it dropped from 432 000 to 394 000, which means that he deliberately lied to the House.

Sir, this has been given as a debate about wild birds, and you heard the wild birds flying the whole day.

Mr. SPEAKER: I was going to ask you what about the birds, you know.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Yes, Sir, you know Sir. I want to tell you, Sir, that this debate has nothing to do with wild birds at the airport.

Mr. SPEAKER: They must be all shot down by now then.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: No, no. Sir. I know you would intervene because the lashes are hot, but more are coming.

Sir, this debate deals with a bad piece of legislation which was passed in this House a couple months ago when we allowed the egrets to be classified as an endangered species, and when the hoteliers on the West Coast, after they recognised what happened, were up and down in Barbados saying what damage they were doing to their properties on the West Coast. Sir, that is why when the Minister spoke, he barely said egrets and slipped away like the Concorde aircraft because he did not want us to pick up the true reason for the debate.

Sir, they spoke about wild birds, but they have not classified what is a wild bird. They just cannot come in here and talk about wild birds. Sir, it means that one could go and shoot any bird. Sir, they need to tell the House what wild birds they are talking about. Sir, it is the egrets they want to deal with.

Mr. Speaker, they need to tell the House that they passed a bad piece of legislation in this House and they are now seeking to correct it. Sir, if they are saying that the egrets are not a problem, then they need to get up on a point of order and deal with it now.

Sir, the Minister is claiming that he is not aware that the wild egrets are...

Hon. Miss. H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House if in fact he is attempting to suggest that there is legislation in Barbados which classifies cattle egrets as an endangered species. That is not correct.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: The Minister is now saying that legislation came from her desk and she is not aware that was the classification. Mr. Speaker, I would have to give way to the Minister because it came from her desk, not mine, so the Minister would have to know of what I speak. Sir, I hope the hoteliers are listening to the Minister, because the Minister gave a commitment that she would deal with them and I thought that she was now dealing with them after a whole year. Sir, if the Minister is now admitting that she is not dealing with them, I cannot argue with her on that particular point. *Asides.*

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is rather interesting to see that the Minister is proud to come to this Parliament and brag about how many companies and how many concessions have been given to the Irish companies and in the next breath could brag to this Parliament how he has been able to chase the vans that were there supplying the airport workers with meals when other people did not want to service the airport when it was under construction. Sir, the Minister is now happy to say that those vans cannot operate in the car park anymore.

Mr. SPEAKER: He did not say that, Sir, you would have to withdraw that. That is a very serious imputation you are making.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Which aspect of it, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: You are making an imputation that the Minister was very pleased to say...

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: But he smiled when he said it, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Oh, come on, please.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Okay, Sir, if you want that one withdrawn, I will withdraw it, I will accommodate it, Sir. You are the Speaker and you are in charge. You know that I will not offend you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: What I would say is that when the Minister spoke...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not have that power, please.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: That is not true, I have evidence to that.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, the Minister was quite happy to brag about the number of Irish companies coming to Barbados and to give details about what they would be doing and when they were awarded. Sir, in the next breath, he could tell the House how people looking like us that were servicing the airport when it was under construction, when the big companies did not want to do the job they were doing, that we were so grateful to those persons that we have asked them now to leave the car park to accommodate persons who did not want to go to the airport because they thought that the flow of money would have been jeopardised because of the construction. Sir, they did not want their flow of revenue to be jeopardised, so they left it to the little boys to do what we would call the hard or dirty work, but as soon as the airport starts to look good, they were told to leave the car park and go elsewhere to look for business, so that the company that can brag about they have more outlets than parishes in Barbados, can come to the airport; and the Minister is happy about that.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, he is saying that the Board that is under his jurisdiction is exercising its rights. Sir, it is not about rights.

Mr. Speaker, the same van people are paying for the property and they are telling them that it is private property. They are paying taxes too. They have to pay departure taxes just like everyone else. Sir, the Minister is telling them that it is private to them but the other one is allowed to come in to the airport and it is open to them. Sir, I am saying that is wrong. If the Minister had said that they had allocated a piece of land across by "Frankies" and the other place for them, I could understand that.

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party, when it forms the Government, will have to find some place for those persons to work at the airport even if it is next door. Sir, we will do that for the simple reason that if they were there when the airport was under construction, they have a right to continue. Sir, one might be able to argue about the airport premises, but we will have to work on the land that is next door, because the taximen are telling me that they now miss good food from the airport, that they do not want any greasy chicken or anything so, that they want proper food.

Sir, I am a bit surprise that when the Minister was speaking that the Minister of Health was next to him, but he said nothing to him when he knew that those vans had vegetables and salads, good healthy food, and now they have been replaced with greasy chicken. Sir, the Minister is always on television doing a good job telling people what good foods to eat.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, what the Minister is saying from his seat is that you do not get greasy food from Moon Town.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am glad to hear that.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: That you would find that at Chefette, nowhere else. That you have a choice and a proper choice with salad and everything. I agree with him too.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am saying that this country Barbados has to be for everyone. I have no problem with the owners of Chefette Restaurant having a place at the airport, but it cannot be at the expense of the masses of people in this country. If they are there, the van people have a right to be there too. Sir, we are not here to displace the poor for the rich or the rich for the poor, we are here to embrace all. Therefore, it is time that the Minister of Tourism understands that and do something about it.

House 141 Sequence 13

12.10 p.m.

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, too often, the policy coming out of the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport is anti the masses of Barbados. It is this very Ministry that talks about all-inclusive tourism, yet is now speaking about condominium and about bringing Chefette to the airport. Sir, when one looks at the end of everything, it is the masses who are suffering under this policy, at the airport and elsewhere.

Sir, tourism is our business and must be so for every Barbadian. Therefore, we cannot ask Barbadians to smile to the tourists, while, in the next breath, kicking them away from earning a living from those very tourists. If you create a hostile society, you would be creating hostility for the tourists.

Mr. Speaker, I know the Honourable Member for Christ Church South is not happy because the Honourable Member understands the benefits of community tourism. Therefore, I am somewhat surprised by the Honourable Member's actions because I had expected that the Honourable Member would have joined in this debate. Sir, I know that Oistins, one of the tourist attractions, is in the constituency of the Honourable Members. Sir, I know your position is the same as mine and therefore I do not have to worry about you when I make this statement. I am saying that we as Barbadians have to ensure, when we find ourselves in privileged positions, that it cannot be to look after the interest of the 'too few' but to look after the interest of every Barbadian.

Sir, I have watched the policies of this Ministry of Tourism and International Transport. Those policies started from all-inclusive tourism, to getting rid of poor people from the airport to put in Chefette; they started from getting rid of profitable restaurants and hotels, to build condominiums. I am saying this is a policy of destruction and that it would destroy community tourism in Barbados, if we do not stop this Minister and his policies.

Mr. Speaker, today has to be the marking point, today I will call on the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, to speak on the behalf of those persons in this constituency, those persons he brags of, in relation to community tourism because this would be another blow on community tourism. Sir, I expect the Honourable Member, who serves as Acting Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, among other functions, to stand up and be counted. I want the Honourable Member to show his true colours as one who is capable to take over, when the master goes. Sir, if the Honourable Member does not do that, then

I would understand why his comrades would look at him differently. That is why I am calling on him to rise to the plate and to deliver the goods as is expected.

Mr. Speaker, I am also told that we do not need a second airport but what we need is another runway. I would like the Honourable Member to tell this Honourable House where he is going to put that runway. Sir, I am not aware that the Honourable Member is in the undertaker business. I never knew of any undertaker called "Lynch" but again, one does not have to be an undertaker called "Lynch", to have connections in the undertaker business.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, we do not have the airspace up there to allow that.

Asides.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, are you thinking that the new runway would be on land or in the air?

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is for you to decide whether or not you could have a runway in the air but I know it is not possible. I also know there could be two aeroplanes in the air, approaching the same runway. Therefore, that is for you all to decide.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that the Honourable Member cannot produce the statistics which he has produced today and then try to convince Barbados that we could continue to operate at the Grantley Adams International Airport, with all the private jets and with all the wide-bodied planes. Sir, do you know what is going to be worse? When the jet bridges are built, they are going to decrease the parking space at the airport.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, this Minister is so well-trained in statistics, that the Honourable Member speaks about an increase in airlift but the Honourable Member has never mentioned anything about an increase in passengers.

Asides.

MR. SPEAKER: I guess the planes would be coming empty then?

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: That is true. I am very glad that you have made that point, Sir, you are correct. The reason planes would come to Barbados and airlines would not complain like they would have previously done, is that there is now something called airline support.

Sir, the Minister is now an expense to the taxpayers of the country because he is allowing planes, not to come in fully loaded but to come in without many passengers, where the airline support would then kick in. Therefore, because of this airline support, the Minister of Finance now has a bigger challenge because the Minister would have been expecting passengers, based on airlift and increased aircraft, et cetera.

Mr. Speaker, this Minister is real sweet, this Minister is now telling us that we are now getting more planes coming out of the United States of America, than we were getting in the 1980s. Sir, I want to say that nobody would believe that during the 1980s, we were getting more passengers than we are now getting. Sir, that is a fact. Therefore, if, in the 1980s, we were getting less planes and more passengers, as opposed to now that we are getting more planes and less passengers, then you would be right, Mr. Speaker, the planes would have to be travelling empty. Sir, you deduced that for yourself, I did not have to tell you.

MR. SPEAKER: I was only asking a question.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, you have asked a very sensible question and if the Minister wants to challenge me, then he has to challenge the Governor of the Central Bank and her whole staff. Sir, this Minister is really a Minister of statistics. Sir, furthermore, in the 1980s, we gave no airline support.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am saying that if only talk could run Barbados, then the Minister of Finance would not need any more ministers; the Minister of Tourism and International Transport would have done a wonderful job, based only on talk. Sir, the mere fact that we do not run the country, based solely on statistics, is why the Minister of Finance has to rethink his position. Sir, not only is he the Minister of Finance, he is also the Prime Minister and therefore has to look after the interest of Barbados, as a whole. Sir, this Parliament and this country is not about talk, and we have been hearing too much talk from the Minister of Tourism and International Transport, and no delivery.

Mr. Speaker, I am told, in a debate a few months ago, when we spoke to the airport, that we had outgrown the capacity predicted for the present size of the airport. Sir, today, we are hearing a different story, we are hearing that we have not gotten there as yet. Mr. Speaker, I want to know when are we going to get consistency from this Minister of Tourism and International Transport, when he is prepared to talk about Earnest, instead of Ernst. Sir, this Minister attacks every error that is made and every frivolous thing but when it comes to delivering to the

taxpayers of this country, he cannot do it. Sir, I will continue to make a few more errors, so that the Honourable Member would have something reliable to talk about.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, as you would know, the Honourable Member is a very brilliant man. The Honourable Member has an MBA and other qualifications behind his name but at the end of the day, it is about delivering, and that is what we want in this Honourable House. Therefore, the Cabinet would have to tell us why they continue to have this Minister, who is only quoting statistics and is not delivering. Sir, for example, on Cricket World Cup, 2007, there was no delivery.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has two minutes in which to conclude.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: The Minister of Tourism and International Transport has admitted today that he does not know the difference between transit passengers and passengers belonging to Barbados. Sir, on the Floor of this House, I wisely said that I had not heard what the Honourable Member had said, only for him to repeat it, so that you could understand that the Honourable Member was contradicting himself. Mr. Speaker, do you know what is causing the problem? This Minister of Tourism and International Transport has misled the Cabinet of Barbados into believing that all of these home-port tourists could be counted as tourists for Barbados.

12.20 p.m.

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

(Edited)

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, this thing about moving 2 000 tourists tourists per hour means that we have now spent millions of dollars to build a new airport and to improve the seaport and all this money has been spent for transit people, not for Barbadians. Sir, he said that you should see how full the airport is when these people are coming back in and going out but, Sir, not a single cent is spent in Barbados because Barbados is now the hub for other countries. We are pumping and lifting our chests about this matter.

Sir, this is a serious matter because at the end of the day, the taxpayers have paid for the seaport and the airport. This is why I have said to the Minister that if he wants these tourists, he should make sure he signs with the airlines that at least they make a tour around Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

SUSPENSION

Hon. R.C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 1.30 p.m.

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

The question that the House be suspended until 1.30 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. Speaker suspended the House accordingly.

H141/12:23

Sequence 15

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

RESUMPTION

On resumption Mr. Deputy Speaker assumed the Chair.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. The Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

13.30 p.m.

Sequence 16

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

House 141, Sequence 17, 1.30 p.m.

Dr. D.C. ESTWICK: I rise to make a contribution to this debate, Sir, because not only do I believe that this debate moves way beyond the confines with respect to how one deals with birds and such like that may pose a risk to aeroplanes, but I enter this debate, Sir, because of the airport's important role in the development of Barbados.

As a result when more than \$150 million of taxpayers' money has been spent so far on an unfinished project, on expansion with further expansion, Sir, there are some issues that I would have to raise. The first issue that I would have to raise relates to how this administration does its business.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you do not wake up one morning and build an airport. You must have individuals who conceive a plan. You must have individuals who do site visits. You must have individuals not only who approve the plan, but you have surveyors, members from the Public Investment Unit, as a subcommittee of Cabinet, and Cabinet that must look at these various plans and by extension, may have done a site visit.

Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a real problem when after \$150 million are spent, I am going to hear a Minister come to this Honourable Chamber and give me some feeble explanations why we have an airport that not only does not have jet bridges, but when the slightest amount of rain falls in Barbados, there are puddles of water all over the airport, including the area of arrivals.

Sir, I can speak to it because my constituents are next door in Charnocks, and I get the complaints every day. I have many constituents that work there, so the Minister would have to defend the reality, or otherwise, he may prove himself to be a stranger to the truth.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it bothers me also immensely, when we seem not to remember when the airport was being constructed, the large numbers of strikes they had at the airport, because of the way the foreign contractors were treating Barbadian workers, and the issue of expatriate workers. We seem to have forgotten the complaints from the unions, and it is my job to remind the Hon. Members on that side, with respect to complaints regarding shoddy work done.

I would also want to say to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South that he needs to defend whether or not it is true, that the subcontractor used here in Barbados, fabricated the roof at the airport, at a time when all those persons who are involved in construction in Barbados suggested that you should not pour a concrete roof.

I also want the Honourable Member for St. Michael South to deny the fact that a consulting company from Denmark was brought into Barbados, went on the roof of the airport, when there were complaints about the leakage and the cracking that were occurring at the airport... Sir, this is taxpayers' money that is being spent and it is my job to talk about it, I do not mind the outgoing Members of Parliament.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reality is that the workers at the airport complained that the airport is cracking and it was the Honourable Member for St. Michael south...

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Sir, does he want me to tell him the date when the members of that company came to Barbados, and the fact that they drilled 15 boreholes in the roof of the airport, and the fact that when those holes were bored in the roof of the airport, what they found was that you had inferior concrete, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and there was moisture tracking down the conduits that were interfering with some aspects of electrical activity.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, he has the right to get up and defend this, and I have the right to bring my evidence to support what I am saying. I also want the Honourable Member for St. Michael South to suggest to Barbadians that when the Chief Engineer refused to sign off on the work done, that the Chief Engineer left Barbados under trying circumstances. I have my evidence.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will also say that when the Engineer refused to sign off on the work done, with respect to the roof at the airport and several other construction elements at the airport, he was brought under great pressure and had to leave Barbados.

I would also want, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South to explain two other issues. My colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy spoke to the issue of vendors. I have several constituents, who made applications through the Board of the Grantley Adams International Airport for the right to vend and they were turned down. I have copies of letters that were sent to the Board and to management and I have copies of the answers given by the management. Sir, there were a lot of non-tariff barriers raised by the Ministry, with respect to why it is that average Barbadians were not given certain privilege positions, on a first come first served basis, with respect to vending at the airport.

I deprecate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the view held by the Minister that the airport is private property, so as a result of that, you should have a situation where vendors would enter an arrangement and agree to vend there for a period of time, and then when that period of time is over, they should move.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, any agreement or arrangement could be modulated to make sure that both can coexist. In Bridgetown, vendors coexist with Kentucky and Chefette. Sir, because it is an airport and it is run by a private company, even though the company is owned by the people of Barbados, you are going to give me a spurious argument that it is private property, even though it is owned by the people? What rubbish I am hearing? Sir, this is a nonsense argument.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is an argument of an elitist, who believes that what should happen in Barbados is that large companies like the Irish Companies, which benefit from certain airline contracts should have first come first served basis, with respect to the best locations for vending at our airport.

House 141, Sequence 17, 13:40:41

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: When you hear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you have a situation where one company could have been given the privilege of six concessions and there are vendors who sell in the airport car park who are now parked up next door around the roundabout in vans selling food...

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can guarantee you that if this Administration gets its way, not only is it going to be the vendors who will move, but very soon "Frankies", "Pug" and many others would have to move from there.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is in my constituency, therefore I know what I am saying, and I will stand up and defend what I hear.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is what my constituents say to me and that is what I am going to relate in this Honourable House. You could rest assured, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the evidence is quite clear. They have already removed the vendors and the privilege has been given to certain big interest in Barbados. The pattern of action is therefore clear, Mr. Deputy Speaker. One would therefore soon find a Kentucky Fried Chicken on the northern side of the airport. Very soon that might be the plan. They would want a Kentucky out there, and all the people on the left side of the airport who are now using their shops and so on may be things of the past if this Administration gets its way.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was not sure if I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael South correctly, when he said that there are times when the airport is operating almost at peak capacity. Sir, I was not too sure I heard the Honourable Member spoke to the fact that when this occurs, that the airport is filled with transit passengers. I could not believe what I was hearing when the Honourable Member for St. Michael South spoke to that.

Sir, I now understand why the people cannot get a Transport Board bus because the Transport Board buses are used to transport the people from the airport straight down to the seaport, and they have nothing to do with buying food from the vendors or from "Frankies" or "Pug". Mr. Deputy Speaker, I now understand why the transit passengers have to pay another increase in fee because that is where the airport, I would have to assume, would have to generate another set of revenue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for a long time, my comrade from St. Lucy was arguing that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South was deliberating including transit passengers with respect to the arrival numbers in Barbados. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I never expected to get my confirmation from the Honourable Member today. Sir, he

actually explained, and clearly so he did, transparent it may be, and all Barbadians now get the truth. Do not believe any of the arrival figures from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, he has deliberately misled Barbadians for 14 years.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, to say that I have been misleading the people of Barbados is absolutely untrue. I have never misled anybody. I only gave the figures as they came from the Barbados Statistical Department. I cannot be accused of misleading the House.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceed, Honourable Member.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not going to get involved in whether or not we are in breach of Rule 28(5) or Rule 28(7). I would say that I am well-aware of rules and I tailor my speech most of the time, deliberately so, to stay within the rules. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member said this morning that the transit passengers were passengers that were actually counted within the arrivals.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I never said that transit passengers were counted among the arrival figures. Sir, the only way persons are counted among the arrival figures is if you spend more than 24 hours in Barbados. Mr. Deputy Speaker, no transit passenger could ever be counted among any arrival figures, so that is untrue.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes. Proceed Honourable Member.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very happy for that explanation because when one looks at the arrival figures within the Central Bank of Barbados Economic and Financial Statistics, there is a definition for long-term arrivals and also a definition for short-term arrival. Therefore, I would ask the Honourable Member for St. Michael South to acquaint himself with those definitions, if he is unaware of them. As a result, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would therefore reiterate my position. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that it is only a matter of time before we would hear confirmation again in this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to raise one other issue because I thought that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy dealt with a number of fundamental issues that were critical. I want to deal with the economic impact. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this has to do with the fact that it is indeed wrong to believe that any moneys or loans guaranteed by

central Government are not part of the debt of the country. What I can say to the people of Barbados is that under the old accounting system that might have been true, but under the new accrual system that now defines our Estimates publications, all of these inputs must be brought in as an annual expenditure of Government. What is even more important, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is for Barbadians to appreciate that when one speaks of public sector debt, one speaks of guaranteed debt as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want Barbadians to understand that they must not be fooled by this Administration because when a guarantee of a debt of \$150 million is executed, that guarantee ultimately becomes part of central Government debt. It is only hidden for a period of time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Auditor-General, in his Report for the year 2006, spoke to a contingent liability, which relates to guaranteed debt. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Auditor-General was at pains to comment on page 16 of that Report that during the course of the year a number of contingent liabilities or guaranteed debts totalling \$151 million were taken out by central Government.

In other words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the debt is guaranteed, somewhere down the line the debt creeps in and become part of the central Government debt that is part of yours and mine, even though for the period of time when they are calling it guaranteed debt, they boast that it is not debt to the people. That is hypocrisy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a use of a convention that does not tell the truth.

The true reality, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that all of it is part of public sector reality. This \$150 million will become that as well. That is why it bothers me to look at the so-called profit and loss account in the Grantley Adams International Airport financial statement.

House 141 Sequence 18

1.50 p.m.

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remember the debate in relation to corporatisation. The argument was that it was supposed to enhance efficiency. It was supposed to bring us closer to efficiency, in terms of private sector operations. I remember the argument well, it was supposed to increase profitability.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remember Honourable Members on this side arguing that they had corporatised the seaport, but there were a large number of public-sector led ports in the world that were profitable. We argued as well that corporatisation does not guarantee an

enhancement of efficiency, and that neither does it give you a more brilliant accountant, general manager or any other manager. The evidence of that fact is now clear, after the millions of dollars that are loss.

Sir, what I would predict today is that Barbadians should look out for further increases, with respect to user fees at the airport, in the very near future, because if this administration has to implement the International Monetary Fund (IMF) dictate of cost recovery programme, then it simply means that they have to be self-sufficient. If they are going to be self-sufficient with this type of overriding debt, they must, therefore, look for enhanced means. Sir, I sound my warning today, as we have sounded our warnings in the past.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South is a minister of superlatives. The Honourable Member speaks of the airport as being the best ever and the biggest ever, in such circumstances where people are still getting wet whenever rain falls. Whenever rains falls, a number of people normally have to walk through pools of water, with some either sliding or falling. The Honourable Member is also a man of hyperboles.

Sir, I was hoping that one of these day, when there is a strike up there, that people would hold him and give him a good lashing, but that has not happened. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wanted that to happen so that the Honourable Member would feel the wrath of the people, for taking them for granted. I wanted him to know about the lack of trust that they now have in him. The Honourable Member would have managed the building of an airport, with \$150 million of taxpayers' money, that would have been an airport par excellence. It should have been an airport that would have been most fitting for Barbadians, after spending \$150 million. The Honourable Member has said that it is one of the best. Sir, it is not the best; the roof leaks and there are cracks. Sir, according to the Honourable Member, it now needs further expansion, yet the Honourable Member is here beating his chest.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, next year, I would hear the Honourable Member saying that it was the best loss that Government has ever carried.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think none of us can underestimate the scope of the project. I think we appreciate that if we are going to act and use tourism as our fundamental engine of economic development in Barbados, we have to accept there needs to be a modern, an upscale and upperclass type of facility, not only to make our visitors feel welcome but also to make

Barbadians feel welcome. When Barbadians go to the airport, they must not feel that they have gone to a foreign land, Barbadians must feel that the airport is there to benefit them and that it is theirs.

Sir, I am not confident, given the type of mechanisms used to allocate the concessions at the airport, that is how Barbadians feel about it. Barbadians feel that they have been given a raw deal. My constituents, along with other constituents, feel that they have been given a raw deal, with respect to construction at the airport.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remember the Honourable Member for St. Michael North sitting on the Back Bench and castigating the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, on the same issue of the treatment to the average workers by the then Chairman of the Board. I remember when this Honourable Member came to this House, beating his chest, saying that the "Red Caps" had to go and that over his dead body would the trolleys be removed. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the thing that bothers me most of all, is that the Honourable Member travels too often. The Honourable Member is like the Minister of Foreign Affairs; he is a frequent flyer. Therefore, as a result, the Minister of Tourism and International Transport is imbibing cultures from all over the place, while rejecting his own culture.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not care whether or not there is a "Red Cap" in Japan or in Europe, "Red Caps" are part of Barbadian culture, let us keep them here, let us respect them.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: I am hearing that these "Red Caps" are involved in drugs and all kinds of corruption. There are people who are planting rubbish to get rid of these "Red Caps."

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a serious issue because when persons feel that they are not included in development, then there is a problem. Sir, all we are trying to say is that whatever development occurs in Barbados, in spite of the infrastructure and as good as it might look, it must involve the average man. It cannot be for the airlines alone, neither can it be for the big, mighty and wealthy in Barbados alone. It cannot be reasonable that you would do that, that is all we are trying to say to the Honourable Member, and that is the position held on this side.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will close by going back to the critical issue and if the Honourable Member does not

have the answers now, let him go and find them. I want the Honourable Member to tell Barbadians about the company from Denmark. I want the Honourable Member to tell Barbadians if he did not meet with them in his office. Sir, I can tell him about that meeting. I know about the arrangements. I also know and everybody in Barbados, who goes to the airport knows the evidence I brought here today, which says that when the contractors drilled those 15 holes in the roof at the airport, they found water.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying when those holes were drilled in the roof of the airport, that waterlogged concrete was found. They also found water and moisture that was tracking down the conduits. Sir, the Honourable Member could tell me I am wrong but I have the evidence.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reality is that these are critical questions because spending over \$150 million is serious money and therefore we expect the best product and the best work. Therefore, if I am to hear that there is retrofitting to be done, as there continues to be retrofitting every year at Greenland, with money being spent and hidden... Sir, because of the fact that Grantley Adams International Airport is a private company owned by this Government, when the money is spent, the audited financial statements or the expenditure component of that project are not brought here, until it is done. Therefore, they could take the money and hide the expenditure however they chose.

2.00 p.m.

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

(EDITED)

Dr.D.C. ESTWICK: Sir, the next thing they do is to come to Parliament for a Supplementary or a guarantee to a loan to keep the airport afloat.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the Honourable Member for St. Michael South would understand that we are not attacking him personally, because he is a reasonable fellow but that we are protecting the interest of the people of Barbados. Sir, we are talking about \$150 million and we want the Honourable Member to appreciate that our job is to find out how that money has been spent, whether it has been well-spent or whether it could have been better spent in the interest of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central.

Mr. R.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to make a few points. First let me say to you, Sir, that I want to compliment the Minister of Tourism, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, for the excellent job he has been doing in the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport. Sir, I would go as far as to say that he is the best thing that has ever happen to tourism for a long time in this country because the tourism sector has grown and continues to grow under his leadership. Sir, the new airport complements the tourism product in Barbados. When you look at the hotels, the condominiums and the whole product, they complement the product and when Barbados is seen internationally, the airport does a lot for the whole country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this morning, I listened to contributions coming from the Honourable Member from St. Michael South Central and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy and, Sir, when you have been in the Opposition for so long, you have to find something to say.

Sir, I want to touch on the concessionaires at the airport. I hold no beef for Chefette Restaurant, I eat their food and it tastes good to me. I believe they are making a contribution to this country, they have a large number of outlets, they find employment for people in Barbados and, as a good corporate citizen, I believe they are playing their part.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say that there is also a role for the vendors at the airport. I have read somewhere that there was some agreement at the airport, which said that the vendors in vans coming to the car park at the airport and trading their wares with the staff and anyone within the airport would continue until the new concessionaire in Chefette opens their doors at the airport. Sir, whatever agreement it was, I still believe that something could be put in place where these vendors can still be allowed to ply their trade.

Sir, all over the world, there is vending, and when we talk about Barbados it may be in Bridgetown; Speightstown or Swan Street, I believe in vending but I believe in controlled vending. I do not believe that people should just put up a 'box-cart' or van and sell as they like. I believe that vending should be controlled and I am going to ask the able Minister to make some arrangement that you can still look at having vendors at the airport to ply their trade.

Sir, everybody in Barbados does not like fast food, some people like a home cooked meal. I believe that if these vendors are bringing a service of a balanced meal to the airport of chicken, vegetable, macaroni pie and salad -

and, Sir, in some cases, it is cheaper than the fast food - there is a role for both the concessionaire at the airport and the vendor. Some people might say that the concessionaire has to pay high taxes but, Sir, the vendor has to live because he or she has a family and children and I believe that a case should be made by the Minister where you could look at having these vendors incorporated somewhere in the confines of the airport.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you go to the airport and park your vehicle in the car park, you park and you pay \$1.00 for an hour or part thereof. Sir, I have noticed a particular trend - I have watched two people - where people go to the airport for long periods of time and when they are about to leave might have a bill for \$5 or \$7 but they go to the entrance of the car park, press the button, a new card comes out and they pay the amount of that new card after a few minutes, after having spent a considerable amount of time at the airport.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying that people can go to the airport, park a car for two or three days, come back, go to the entrance, press the button, a new card comes out and they pay for fifteen minutes. These are things I hope that the Minister could look at. Sir, it happens at the airport and I have seen it happened.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have said that I would not be long, that I only wanted to touch on where the vendors at the airport could have the opportunity to share in some of the continued success of Barbados, and I wanted to look at the facility where people are able to take the airport for a ride, where parking is concerned.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am obliged to you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. James Central.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you for this opportunity to make a brief contribution to this debate. Sir, this might be a surprise but I would want to begin by acknowledging the usefulness of some of the contributions which have come from the other side in terms of their spirit. I think what we have to do, is to identify some of the policy challenges which have confronted Grantley Adams International Airport and to identify as well the solutions, which have been advanced towards confronting those challenges on the one hand and to bring a satisfactory resolution to a number of issues, which have arisen on the other hand.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the first thing I think has to be tackled in this debate, is the point of departure of the Honourable Minister who led the matter, and that is the question of aircraft parking aprons.

H141/14:10

Sequence 20

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: Sir, the single biggest challenge, in my view, that would have confronted Grantley Adams International Airport, was the situation which existed, perhaps, eight months ago, when we would have had a number of wide-bodied aircraft that would have been compelled to circle this island for over half an hour, in some instances, because there was literally no space on the tarmac for them to park.

Sir, equally, arising out of that same shortage of space, was the unhappy situation - and quite frankly it still exists with respect to the turboprop aircraft, LIAT and Caribbean Star, et cetera - of aircraft parking one behind the other on the parking apron.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is all well and good to come in here and make light about a number of issues, but the very major issue that confronted us begins there. Unless we rectify that situation, Barbados stood to be unable to maintain category one status, which by extension simply meant that safety and oversight issues were not being adequately addressed at Grantley Adams International Airport, and by extension the very precious right to enter the United States market would have been compromised because we did not have the level of safety requirements in place.

Sir, the reality is, this Government, having confronted that challenge, has moved to a position where you are now building out five new additional parking aprons. Instead of having seventeen, you would be going as high as twenty-two, an extension of the taxiway at Grantley Adams International Airport as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is regrettable, perhaps, that the major policy issue has not been dealt with in this debate. It raises the questions of the carrying capacity of the airport itself, how much longer can we continue this question of extension and expansion, and how much more are we realistically likely to have to do. Therefore, the whole future planning of this critical aspect of our tourism business comes into question.

Sir, the other issue, which I think has to be looked at, is the fact that much ado has been made about the unfortunate matter of the roof in some areas leaking. Sir, I do not believe that anybody on this side or the other side sees the roof leaking as a good thing. I do not believe, however, that is a major policy issue in governance. The simple solution to the issue is, if we look behind the contract, we would see that the contractor was

contractually bound to remedy the deficiencies once they have been identified, and, in fact, a retention sum was held in this contract, as is indeed the practice in most governmental contracts.

Sir, great political mileage is being sought, by the Opposition, on a matter which turns simply on the customary execution of a contractual relationship between Government on the one hand, and the contractor on the other. Sir, there are problems and deficiencies arising out of the contract, and there is a duty on the part of the contractor to remedy those deficiencies once they have been identified. Sir, Government held a sum of approximately \$1.5 million, to ensure that the contractor continues to do the remedial work that he is bound to do.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in addition to the question of the challenges, which we face in terms of the parking aprons, the other policy issue which arises, is the need for the society as a whole, but more important, in this specific case, Grantley Adams International Airport Inc., to manage the whole question of corporatisation.

Sir, we have seen instances at the seaport and we see it here now. Mr. Deputy Speaker, corporatisation, by its very nature introduces a new species of arrangements, we see it again at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, which did not exist before. In this particular case, it has manifested itself in the prohibition of vendors to operate.

Sir, I do not believe and I do not genuinely expect that Honourable Members on that side believe that anybody on this side is pleased to see the end result. Sir, I might, perhaps, be the best positioned person here to speak to that. Sir, when the matter was raised in April, either this year or last year, of the "Red Caps", I said here on the Floor of this House, that I thought it was a deeply unfortunate incident and I hoped that it would be remedied as quickly as possible. I feel the same way with respect to the vendors.

Sir, in my respectful submission, there is a larger issue at stake which we who are charged with the duty of providing leadership have to confront. Those who vend tend to operate on a laissez-faire and an unplanned basis. The question which we first have to start with is, how long can we continue to encourage our constituents, collectively, to operate on that type of basis and under that type of arrangement. We have to recognise that at the airport, in particular, vendors ply their trade on the basis of what was only a bare licence; a licence which was issued otherwise than for consideration. It simply meant that to be a vendor at the airport you only had to seek permission and you were granted the licence. You did not pay for a licence and, therefore, it did not create any interest in any particular space, kiosk, nor any geographical relationship with any aspect of the airport. The only thing that they traded on was

a bare licence, which really was a permission to sell over a period of time.

Sir, I go back to confront the point. I say so humbly, but I say so out of a sense of concern that we as leaders can, perhaps, succumb to the temptation of playing partisan politics, with an issue which really can be better dealt with along the lines of helping uplift those whom we have to represent.

Sir, it is not the ideal arrangement, BARVEN, which is the association in charge of managing the affairs of vendors, needs to understand this, if they do not already. Sir, vendors themselves, in individual capacity, whether they have joined the association, have to understand that a bare licence is not the ideal arrangement. The fact that you have been on a property for, let us say fifteen years, does not change that legal reality. What then is the solution which we have to encourage people to confront?

Sir, the fact of the matter is, the status of vendors has to be formalised. I do not for one minute agree with the Board of Directors at the airport, for having not gone out of their way to try to bring them into the Board room, not having gone out of their way to try to bring them to an understanding that these are the changes we are contemplating, ladies and gentlemen, let us see how these will impact on you, and you help us to help yourselves. Sir, that having been said, and that failure having been recognised, I also say it is a two-way street.

Asides.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: I have always spoken out of a social conviction, and I will continue to do so.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying that there is a solution to this problem. The solution to this problem has to come by providing the vending community with the type of leadership and assistance - I do not want to be interpreted in anyway attacking their elected leadership - that helps them to understand that, in what is becoming an increasingly competitive and commercialised atmosphere, they too have a role to play. The role that they can play, can be recognised if only you bring a simple shift in the legal arrangements which you have with the place where you are operating from.

Sir, it is my view, that it is, perhaps, not too late. It would depend, I concede, on the nature of the arrangement which has been granted to Chefette Restaurants; it would depend on the nature of the arrangement, a contract, which is being held by the various bars, mini mart and everything else up there. Sir, those contracts may have been so structured to be exclusive in nature, as opposed to inclusive.

14.20 p.m.

Sequence 21

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

House 141, Sequence 22, 2.20 p.m.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: The fact of the matter is, Sir, that the bare licence under which the vendors operated could, in fact, be legally revoked because it was a licence that only said you are permitted to stay here for a period of time. Sir, the solution has to be for vendors to be in a position to negotiate with the entity that is granting the licence, so that they get more than just a bare permission to be there, but they have a right to operate from a particular spot and to sell a particular product.

Sir, this matter manifested itself recently in the education sector, you also have to be prepared to subject yourself to the checks and balances of maintaining a certain menu, and that menu should be of a certain standard.

I cannot stand here, Sir, no more than the Honourable Member for St. Lucy can properly stand in his position in the House and utter the words that he uttered earlier today. I understand in the spirit of the debate what it is attempted to convey, but we cannot pass judgement on the quality of anybody's food being better or lesser. Sir, none of us is the duly authorised entity in governance and in Government to make that assessment but I am saying that the same way Chefette restaurant should be submitted to that kind of test, so too should the vending community.

Therefore, the point that I am making is simply this.

Asides.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: I am not attacking. Let me finish speaking. I am deliberately trying to make this speech without becoming partisan.

Sir, I am saying that the solution has to lie in embracing the vending community and helping that community to confront the challenges which it obviously is facing.

Asides.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: Sir, let me be very candid. There are vendors or parts of that community who did, in fact, bid for permanent places. The question is: Was the bid of a satisfactory level? When a bid is a transparent process and everybody is open to bid, it does not automatically mean that you are going to get it; so let us understand that too, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the point that has to be made is that a relationship has to be struck between the community and the corporate entity. This would allow that the corporate entity to be in a position to advise people before hand of what it is planning to do, and help the vending community to understand what the implications are for them, and to make the necessary adjustments.

Sir, adjustments and accommodation could have been made to the vending community outside of the bid process. I think we are all aware of that, and I am not charged with the responsibility for management at the airport, but I would urge both the management and the vending community to try to come back to the table to look at the way in which some sort of mutually satisfactory accommodation could be made in this matter. Sir, I do not believe that the Minister of Tourism would find fault that approach.

Asides.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to speak to the question of security. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is provoking me and would not allow me to speak in this debate without being partisan/political.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central raised the question of security. Security, Sir, has to be understood in the context of the day in which we live. The Grantley Adams International Airport as I have said and we all know, is now a Corporate entity. The security cost at the airport, if it is to maintain its category one status, and to be able to function in an environment, where we all know, especially coming out of the World Cup exercise that we just hosted...

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House by trying to give the public the impression that the Grantley Adams International Airport, Inc., is a public company and is liable to be merged. I would like the Honourable Member to correct that, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceed, Honourable Member.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: Thank you, Sir. The point that I am trying to make, with respect to security, is that there is an environment within which the Grantley Adams International Airport, Inc, must now operate. The simple point is that the majority of the commitments which the Grantley Adams International Airport Management must now honour, have been thrust upon the airport and its management, arising out of the nature of the activity which it conducts, and arising out of the times in which we live.

We all grew up in a Barbados, where the Airport did not have 8 km of security fencing around it, Sir, but it had to find the 8 km of security fencing in very recent times. We all grew up in Barbados and used an airport where you did not have to have the kinds of x-ray machines and security scanners that the airport now must have, but we now live in an environment, Sir, where you have to find the money to put them in place.

The point that I am trying to convey to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, is that those additional security requirements come at a cost, and there is really no politics in it. Sir, either we are going to meet those requirements at the airport, and let me say now, Sir, that we have to do it at the seaport as well.

Sir, a lot of people do not appreciate the extent to which some of the most unexpected types of activities have to be financed and paid for by both the seaport and the airport. I will not go into them now because they are matters of national security. Sir, there are things that we would not have normally in the ordinary course of things expected to finance, but we have to find money to finance them now, if we are to maintain the category of operation that we have, and continue to attract the broad international base of visitors that we continue to attract. Therefore, I think that the security cost cannot be treated lightly.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I understand the spirit in which the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central made his comments, but I believe it is a reality that the security costs are being foisted upon the Grantley Adams International Airport, Inc., and there is really no escaping that, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please allow me to go back to the issue of the vendors for one brief moment. There is again a level of at which we who are charged with the responsibility to govern, must speak in this matter. Sir, one thing that cannot escape the naked eye in this debate is that, in particular, one restaurant at the airport now has achieved by opening yet another branch, an unprecedented number of outlets on this small island, which it is entitled fully under law to have, Sir.

Sir, I believe that we must speak in the same way that our counterparts in the United States of America Congress speak. The question we to begin to ask those who are competing in the commercial realm out there is, at what point do you recognise that your produce obviously has so much going for it that the time has come to export that product across shores. Sir, in reality, that is the matter with which we have to make contact.

I know it is all too easy to say - and this is the temptation to which I refuse to succumb - that there is some political patronage involved. Sir, it did not get from 0

to 10 only through political patronage and it could not move from 10 to 14 through only political patronage.

Sir, the reality is that there has to be a level of suasion which comes from people who sit in here, who are sitting in a bird's eye position and seeing the Barbados economy and by extension the Caribbean economy being shaped, and the impact that certain types of services and, indeed, goods transactions are having on that economy.

Sir, I want to draw a contrast because there is a gentleman, and I hope it is not wrong to call his name because I do not see anything wrong with it, Mr. Paul Worrell, who is the principal behind the IAM Jet Centre, that the Honourable Minister spoke to today.

House 141, Sequence 22, 14:30:14

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, that Jet Centre is literally the only one of its kind in the Eastern Caribbean. Sir, Mr. Worrell is to be commended for recognising the excellence of his product and moving swiftly to open another version of it in Montego Bay, Jamaica. Sir, he is to be commended for embracing the CARICOM Single Market and Economy opportunity and not staying behind national frontiers and saying I am attracting 1 000 jets per year, all executive class treatment, and it is too much trouble to export the service.

Asides.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, it is an unfortunate thing when you do not realise that your product is capable of withstanding competition outside of Barbados. I am talking about Chefette.

Asides.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, I would say on the Floor of this House that when you have a Moon Town in St. Lucy that has been doing so well for so long, that the time has come for it to be doing the same type of thing as well.

Asides.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, the broader point that I am trying to make is that arising out of this debate on the Grantley Adams International Airport, are a number of issues of Government policy, which I think we would do well to engage in as a collective in Parliament.

Asides.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, rescue me from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not, as I said at the beginning, see it to be only a matter of partisan importance. I do believe that there have been a number of issues of great concern which have been raised from the Opposition benches.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also think it does a disservice to this debate if we locate so much emphasis on a leaking roof. I have not seen, I have not had the benefit, and I do not for one moment dispute the authenticity of that which the Honourable Member for St. Philip West said, because like the Red Caps, I have never known him to lie. Sir, the truth of the matter is that you could tell me as much as you like in here about digging a hole in a roof and finding what you find inside, but if none of us have seen that documentation, then none of us is any better off.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the point that we have to deal with is whether or not, as a matter of public policy, those who were charged with the responsibility under contract for doing the construction, had made enough provision in the contract for there to be a sum held in residue that deficiencies could be corrected. Sir, I believe it is correct to say that under that contract that can be identified. Therefore, Sir, once what that is done, then the only issue is whether the contractor is executing the remedial work.

Sir, perhaps it is easy politics, but I prefer to take the harder road, and I hope the higher road, by helping the public to embrace and confront some of the broader macro issues which are facing the development of the Grantley Adams International Airport and by extension the tourism industry more generally.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I entered this House about 20 years ago, one of the injunctions or suggestions or recommendations that was made to me, by political stalwarts who were then members of this House, was that we should always remember that we are not in here to talk to each other.

Sir, while I enjoyed the diversity of words and the wide vocabulary which the Honourable Member for St. James Central brings to these debates, I must remind him that we do not come in here to talk to each other, that we come in here to represent people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not think that anybody on this side said anything today, which, if the Honourable Member for St. James Central could lift himself out of the rarefied atmosphere of the VIP lounge and walk among the people who work in the airport, he would not discover

himself. In other words, if he would lift himself out of that rarefied atmosphere and move around the airport and speak to people who work and use the airport, all of comments that have been made by Honourable Members on this side and the comments of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, the Honourable Member talks about not wanting to engage in a partisan debate. Sir, you hear that whenever the Government is under pressure. Sir, the average Barbadian would ask how is it that after spending \$150 million and growing, some of these basic things that are so obvious even to a child are not functioning, for example, they would ask how could workers work behind the desk at the airport without fans working or adequate cooling. One of the airlines that hosts the largest number of passengers, American Airlines, if the rain falls...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: It is not that the roof leaks, the rain blows in and wet people. That is a design flaw that is obvious to anybody who goes through that part of the airport. Water settles in the area leading into the arrival lounge. I was acutely aware of it particularly when I was incapacitated because it was very dangerous and now it is getting mossy, so it could become even more dangerous if we are not careful. We have gone from having a smooth surface to having a surface that could become mossy. These are obvious things.

Sir, I came through the airport this morning and I was told that the members of the staff heard the contribution of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and they want to thank him and compliment him for the comments he made in the debate this morning.

Sir, they said they also heard the Minister. I did not ask, but I cannot say that I heard a good word in relation to the Minister and his presentation in this debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a fellow asked me how much money they really spent on the Concorde because they cannot solve these other problems here. Sir, he said that the workers cannot get airconditioning outside, the fans are not working and that the duty-free shops in the arrival hall are too small to stock a wide range of liquor and perfumes and so on. Sir, he went through a list of other things.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I then told him that I was only reading the Public Enterprise Investment Fund Report for the quarter ended March 31, 2007. It has been laid in here already, Sir. This Government has spent \$3.4 million or to be accurate over \$3.4 million in relation to the Concorde

project up to that time. Therefore, there is no shortage of money in Barbados. This Government's management apparently is supposed to be so extolled, they could only give \$100 000 for poverty alleviation but they gave \$3.4 million for the Concorde project.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said, I do not speak to Members of Parliament but I know that they are some who would be very interested in what I have to say along with their constituents and the people on whose behalf they speak and work every day. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a \$65 000 for a business plan design; \$250 000 for a hanger and pad construction; \$593 380 for airconditioning; \$136 025 for insurance of aircraft and hanger; and \$12 500 for public liability insurance.

House 141 Sequence 23

2.40 p.m.

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Junior Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs needs be aware of these things, Sir, but he is not making notes, and he should. Sir, the vendors needed a business plan too, they needed some help, but competition is to take care of them. What was the word the Minister used: "Competition and commercialisation". Those words took care of the vendors.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do not live in a society anymore, in which the role of Parliamentary representatives is to try to help those who are being marginalised, to find their way. You could knock out those vendors and tell them to go sell in the bush. You could tell the workers if they want the nutritious food the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central is speaking about, that they have to walk across the car park, to cross the road and to go and hide and buy. Therefore, the Minister has criminalised the vendors and those persons, who want to buy from that Barbadian vendor, who may have a small kitchen attached to his house, where our parents would have eaten pudding and souse and on Friday nights we all go and eat fried or grilled chicken and drink a drink. They are all now criminals and that system of operation is now to be knocked aside. These people have now become dispensable. This is an era of commercialisation and competitiveness.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I wish to compliment the Honourable Member for his use of language. I even compliment him for the letter he wrote to the people, who wanted to set up a Barbadian Association of Building Contractors. Sir, to show you how far this Government has gone from the mandate of the people who

voted for it, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of this sovereign Government of Barbados did not write to the Chinese, the Indians, nor to the people who are employing them illegally, the Honourable Member wrote to Barbadians and told them that under his understanding - which was erroneous - of the Protocol to the CARICOM Treaty, they are wrong to set up an association which limits their membership to Barbadians. Therefore, we can no longer have Barbadians associations...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: But he talked about BARVEN. What does BARVEN mean in English?

Asides.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. Sir, first of all, no reference was ever made to a protocol because we have long passed protocols. The second point in which he is misleading this Honourable House is that it was drawn to that association that all persons, who are practising in that profession in Barbados, would have a right to associate with the profession, if they were from within the CARICOM space.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a Barbadian Constitution that has not yet been repealed and therefore, I am free, as a citizen of this country. Sir, I hope I do not get a letter from any minister, about setting up any association that I wish as a citizen that I should limit it only to certain persons. The persons with whom I want to associate...

Asides.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of elucidation. It might be good if the Honourable Member would only reflect on his own profession and to realise that under the arrangements, which govern the Barbados Bar Association, there is no one who could stop a Trinidadian or Jamaican attorney-at-law from joining the Barbados Bar Association. If they want to practise here, they are compelled to do so. It is not a difficult thing to understand. Sir, the Leader of the Opposition is sometimes pathetically shaken on the law.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I do care about those words because I know there is a requirement in the law that you must join the Barbados Bar Association, in order to practise, but there is no such requirement in the Barbados law that you must join a contractors' association, to bid for public contracts.

Sir, under our law, no minister should be writing on a ministerial letterhead, to any group or individuals in this country, attacking them for establishing an association.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is wilfully misleading this House. In fact, were we outside, I would have to say that the Honourable Member is telling lies.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, could you please withdraw that statement?

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I said if we were outside but we are not outside. What do you want me to withdraw?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please rephrase what you have just said.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying the Leader of the Opposition is wilfully misleading this Honourable House. Sir, no attack was ever made on anybody and therefore I am challenging the Leader of the Opposition to present the letter and to prove the attack.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I said I do not speak to people in here, I want the public of Barbados to know.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am not interested in engaging in any banter with the Honourable Member or in producing any document for his satisfaction. If the Honourable Member does not remember what he wrote, that is his business, I remember what it was. Therefore, any group of individuals who receive a letter from a Minister of Government, should take it seriously or should be inclined to take it seriously, even if it has foolishness written in it. Sir, the fact that it comes on a letterhead, people are inclined to take it seriously.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying that the association took it seriously and members of the association asked whether it was true that Barbadians can no longer, under the laws of this country, establish organisations and limit those organisations to those persons who they want to participate. I said to them, this is not the Barbados Bar Association, there are certain rules that apply to chartered accountants, members of the Bar, doctors, et cetera, that does not apply to an association of contractors. Furthermore, there can be a group within a group in the Bar Association.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if tomorrow I wanted to establish a group of those who have been in practise for 20

years or more, I can do that and I can say I only want Barbadians to be in it. There is no law that says that cannot happen, we still have a right to freedom of association in Barbados. But the substance of my point is not that, the substance of my point is that I would assume that a Minister of Government, who takes an oath, would see it as his duty to protect and to promote the interest of Barbadians first.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have no problem with accommodating others. I have no problem with pursuing policies with others, policies that are in the best interest of the people who have elected me, but if you cannot focus on the challenges that are faced... Sir, we talked today about Irish companies. The Minister of Foreign Trade never wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to ask him why Irish companies were getting preference over Barbadians companies. He never wrote and asked why companies in Barbados were employing Chinese without work permits. He never concerned himself about the fact that there were East Indian workers at Kensington Oval, who were earning \$10 a week and a roti a day for lunch, but the Honourable Member rose up in vehemence... That is why we have a big problem in this country, that is why I am saying to you that the scenario of the vendors in Barbados is a similar scenario.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: On a point of order, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has been able to go on and on. The Honourable Member's choice of language - and he is, to all intents and purposes, an intelligent human being, so we must presume he knows what he is saying - continues to suggest that a position was taken that was not, in fact, taken.

I am saying categorically to this House, that which the Leader of the Opposition represents to this House is blatantly and patently false. Therefore, I am calling on the Opposition Leader to put his money where his mouth is and to produce the letter in this debate. Let us rest the matter. This is not a situation where innuendos from the Honourable Member would bully or badger me. The Honourable Member should put his money where his mouth is. He should also produce the letter. In other words, put up or shut up, "Thompson".

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you cannot refer to the Honourable Member like that.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: I am sorry, Sir.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, he is not going to fluster me. I did not write any letter.

2.50 p.m.

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

(EDITED)

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: How can somebody who wrote a letter ask me to produce a letter that he wrote? Sir, I have a copy of the letter but I have been in this House 20 years and I have never heard a man who wrote a document ask somebody else to produce it and make it a document of the House.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: Sir, on a point of order. I will continue on this because the Leader of the Opposition is an attorney and he should know and is expected to know that he who alleges must prove. He is making the allegation and I am calling on his yet again to not hide behind a world of words but to prove; produce the letter.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I leave the Honourable Member to the contractors and to all the other Barbadians, who may still feel that it is their right under the Constitution of this country to form associations and to exclude whomever they may wish from those associations and they can do it legally. Sir, that is not going to deflect me because I am not finished, I was talking about Concorde, that was a mere digression. Sir, \$74 860 on cleaning and security; \$149 725 on insurance of aircraft and hanger; \$102 000, which is the poverty alleviation vote, on maintenance of an aircraft that does not even leave the ground; \$215 832 on security. Sir, when I read these figures and I answered the gentleman's question, he could not believe it. I told him that there was a sense of unreality in relation to this Government and its detachment from the needs of people. The statements that Honourable Members on the other side make become more and more outlandish and weird as if they have no understanding of the concerns of ordinary Barbadians.

I am glad the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central fortified the point because I did not know about this until I went to check in a few days ago at the airport and the workers came from behind and said that they could not eat food from Chefette everyday, that they were young people in the gym or walking, as you do everyday Sir, and they looked good. They told me that when they go to the vendor, that they can get more variety, they can get fruit and other items they talked about. They felt that it was grossly unfair and unreasonable, but the excuse given in here is that this is a competitive era, that there is commercialisation and a commercialised atmosphere.

Sir, these phrases that this Government came to office on in relation to promoting a free trade agenda that protects ordinary Barbadians, these things are now being used as a sword against Barbadians and the war has been declared on the vendors of Barbados by this Government. It

is now the policy of the police, I read it in the newspapers, that when an activity is over you cannot go on to the streets and purchase a grill fish sandwich, a hot dog, beer or whatever.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot quote the report but Honourable Members can read today's newspaper. Sir, why are we destroying the lives of ordinary people in this country? We had it in relation to the so-called standards in relation to pork at one time that there should be no more backyard killing, which sent the people into a total tailspin. It is now happening with the vendors at schools in Barbados. Yes, there are some people that need to be investigated, and there are ways to do that. Sir, when I was at school, there were three vendors at our back gate, Miss Brown, Miss Beefer and another one, who came from Jacksons and they sold golden apples and dunks. Sir, I agree if there are concerns about people's diet, then there are things that could be done to improve it but there are young men at Combermere School, who grew up on rice cutters - a salt bread with rice in it and a little gravy - because that is all they could afford. Sir, some were not able to pay and a lady on the other side by the sight screen, on the stadium side, who ensured that a lot of young men in this country, some of whom may be sitting in this very Parliament...

Asides.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: I would not do that to the Honourable Member, Sir, but he would tell you that in the 1970s, the then Chairman of Combermere's Governing Body stepped on to the premises at lunchtime and chased the vendors off the premises and sought to expel a young man - I believe the Honourable Member was a prefect - and we told the headmaster that we were shutting down the school. They closed the back gate and said there was to be no more selling at the back gate. Sir, some people were getting ten cents from their mother to come to school and a sweet drink was eleven cents and they had to buy something in the morning in order to have something in their stomachs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is true that times have changed but they have not so changed that every single vendor in Barbados must be painted with horns growing from their forehead and as if they are demons and devils. I do not think it is fair and reasonable for us to target small people in the way that this Government has done.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I take the point made in relation to Chefette. Sir, I have nothing against Chefette and if they met the terms of the bid, 'bully for them', as the British would say. However, the Minister has it within his hands to encourage Chefette to move out into the regional market. One of the conditions that the Government could impose on them, is that if you want the exclusive operation

of the airport in Barbados, we are going to require you within the next five years to expand your operation into other parts of the Caribbean because that is what we want to see happen to Barbadian enterprises. Sir, I know that no such condition has been placed on them and that no provision has been made for the small man at the airport, never mind what the Minister would tell you because I know how the Minister thinks about those things.

Sir, he said a lot time ago that the Board is not the place for taxi drivers and those kinds of people and the same thinking has permeated the airport. It is only when you challenge the Minister that he remembers that he has some authority and that if he has power that he should use it on behalf of the people, who he represents, but he is not going to use it today because it is too far gone. Sir, it is the Democratic Labour Party that had to come in here and raise the issue of the "Red Caps" and the Minister dance all around, then hustle out of the House, met with the Chairman, reversed the decision, came back to the House in a windup of a debate and said that he was pleased to announce that the "Red Caps" could stay at the airport. Sir, if no noise had been made in here, the "Red Caps" would have been 'raced out' of the arrival hall at the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not worrying with the Minister because I agree with the Honourable Member for St. Philip West that the Minister has some good qualities, I am not sure what they are but he has some. One of the qualities that he does not possess is that of having empathy - when I think that he most of all on that side should have it - for people who need to survive in Barbados, whose lives should not be criminalise and who should not be 'ducking' and hiding just to make a living.

H141/15:00

Sequence 25

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, every international city that you visit, every African city, the central market is opened up on weekends, so that people can bring their wares and sell. I have seen it in Swaziland, Namibia, South Africa, the South African cities in Zimbabwe. Only this weekend I took a walk, from the hotel I was staying in New York, behind the State Supreme Court of New York. What did I see? Those cheap white tents, which you can buy from Ms. Ram and elsewhere, set up by the entrance to the subway. People were selling whole grain bread, flowers, vegetables and fruits. I asked a guy: "Do you have to get a licence to sell?" He said: "No, this is an open day for us, we are entitled and there are sites across the city where people are entitled to do this."

Sir, in some instances, I have seen in New York, entire roads being closed to facilitate flea markets. In the United Kingdom there are flea markets all over. You do not need any licences for those things. Sir, even in Miami, in countries in which the word commercial, the word competitive, the word transparent, and all the other things.

Asides.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON I have always supported it. Sir, the scenario needs to be freed up. This idea that vendors need to be cabined, cribbed and confined, that takes away the whole concept of vending.

Sir, the Minister is now saying that this is a new competitive environment, and that they must come to the table with something. They are already coming to the table, because as long as they are seeking to be self-employed, they are no longer a drain to the State, they are sending their children to school, supporting their families and investing that money, they have brought something to the table. What more do you want them to bring now?

Sir, I am not supporting that nonsense. Therefore, I am saying that the status of vendors has to be formalised. The Government has a duty and an obligation in this society to make provision for them, adequate provision for them to come and sell their wares in an orderly way, without breaking the law. Sir, this declaration of war on the vendors...

Asides.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, I have to be partisan, so I am going to end my presentation where the Honourable Member does not want us to go, because they do not like us to go there. I am saying that it is the policy of the Barbados Labour Party to declare war on the vendors, and it will be the Democratic Labour Party that is going to ensure that the vendors win that war.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I sat and listened to some of the strangest contributions that I have ever heard. The paltry contribution by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, the nonsensical contribution by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy and the energetic contribution by the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, energetic and nothing else.

Aside

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Sir, then it got worse. The ill-informed contribution of the Honourable Member for St. John, The Leader of the Opposition. Sir, let us start with some of the issues.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central started on the issue of us seeking out the breeding ground of the egrets. He said that one of the ways to prevent the bird strikes, and to deter them from the airport would be to find out where they are nesting, and poison them. What absolute nonsense?

Sir, could you imagine a flock of cattle egrets at the airport, not a lot of them. The concern is about one bird or animal crossing the runway. Sir, the Honourable Member wants a group of Barbadians to walk around the place, find where cattle egrets are nesting and poison them. I have never heard such nonsense in my entire life. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member got worse, as he went on. Let me give you an example of what he said. Sir, he said that we should fence the airport. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is almost ten kilometers of fence around Grantley Adams International Airport, that is consistently maintained to the highest. Sir, when small children play with sharp edged tools, they get cut. Let me explain that, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, part of the challenge of maintaining a fence around an airport is that metal fencing cannot be used to certain areas. A plastic fence must be used, because the metal affects the reading of aircraft, radar, et cetera, at the airport. Therefore, our fence can be breached easily. Although we have people who maintain the fence daily, there are times when the fence will be breached and animals would stray onto the runway.

Sir, if an aircraft strikes a cow, horse or sheep, or anything on the airport's runway, you could imagine what will happen.

Asides.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Sir, we are not allowing the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central to cross the runway either. We are dealing with wild birds not wild boys.

Sir, we have sought to ensure that if there is a breach, and animals cross the runway, that we could, under the law, without contravening the existing law, that protects these animals, be able to kill them and dispose of their carcasses, if that is necessary. I think this is very straightforward.

Sir, the Honourable Member then talked about the facilities for the disabled at the Grantley Adams International Airport. Every part of the Grantley Adams International Airport can be accessed by persons who are

disabled. Sir, let me explain the question of persons not being able to go up the stairs. There are elevators at every installation within the Grantley Adams International Airport. Sir, as far as the matter of being able to climb the stairs, I will advise the Honourable Member to go to the airport, and observe what goes on.

Sir, the issue of jet bridges - the architectural design was not, at the time, in the first phase, setup for jet bridges. I will explain. There are mezzanine floor and concourse that are there, to accommodate the installation of jet bridges, but in this first phase, the administration, at the time, which accepted the original design, in 1995, did not see the need for jet bridges. However, if in the future there were such a desire, jet bridges could easily be incorporated into the existing structure at the airport. Sir, you do not have to remove the front of the airport, 'lick' it down, or stop operations. That is not true. Sir, the point is, we have made provisions for that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with regard to the shareholding of AerRianta International (ARI) and about the Irish. Let me explain again. The Honourable Member for St. John was very long-winded on this question of making provisions for Barbadians, et cetera; an administration that devastated the lives of poor people in Barbados. I am coming to that fact, but let me deal first with this.

Sir, because of the environment that we are in, the bid at the airport for duty-free shops was made as a global bid. A company out of Ireland, AerRianta International, intended to bid here in Barbados for the shops. However, before they bid, they said that they wanted to be in local partnership with a local entity. Sir, Caribbean ARI is a 50/50 joint venture partnership between Caribbean Airways ...

15.10 p.m.

Sequence 26

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

House 141, Sequence 27, 3.10 p.m.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Caribbean ARI is a 50/50 joint venture partnership between Caribbean Airways which is solely owned by the Government of Barbados and an Irish company, AerRianta International Limited (ARI). This joint venture permits AerRianta, which has opportunities to bid on these things across the globe to carry with it a Barbadian entity, or Barbadian company, or Barbadian people, or Barbadian shareholders across the region.

I am pleased to report that AerRianta has already started the bidding process as Caribbean ARI registered in Barbados to do the same thing that they are doing at

Grantley Adams International Airport, at airports across the region.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of elucidation. Is the Minister saying that a Government company is going to be bidding for a Government contract? Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a simple matter. I will repeat. AerRianta or Caribbean ARI is a 50/50 joint venture between Caribbean Airways Limited, which is owned by the Government of Barbados, and AerRianta out of Ireland. Let me also say this about duty-free concessions and saying that we know how to run duty-free shops...Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is an entity that runs shops at the Airport, Duty-Free Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my understanding that Duty-Free Barbados is owned, 40 per cent by Cave Shepherd and the other 6 per cent is foreign ownership, through issues of Diamonds International or Columbia Emeralds, the same company that owns them. Sir, what they permit them to do is to be able to go overseas as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was a transparent bid and it was awarded to Caribbean ARI. Sir, they did not get all the concessions that they bid on. In a very open process Caribbean ARI Limited bid on shops at the airport and got some of those shops.

Asides.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I went through the entire list and I proved that the only people who did not get shops were not Caribbean ARI. When we went through the shops, Duty-Free Caribbean got shops, GCS Limited, trading as Ganzee got shops; Duty-Free Caribbean under Bijoux, Turner got shops, Refinery Limited in Barbados, solely owned by Barbadians got shops, Diamonds International got shops, Biway Stationery and Office Supplies Inc. got a shop, Duty Free Caribbean got a shop, the West Indies Cricket Retail got another shop. On the other side, Sea Shell Convenience, Aunt Polly's Gift and Floral all Barbadians, local owned Barbadians.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is all right to come with all the emotion but at the end of the day you have to finance and run the airport. The Honourable Member for St. Philip West said we are going to have to come back here for a Supplementary or to back a loan. The object is that the \$155 million has to be repaid. Therefore, the process was open and bid. It was done through a consultant and then the recommendations were made to the Board and they were accepted, so it was no political patronage. Anybody did not give away anything for this or that, so do not get into that.

Sir, I want to deal with the Red Caps. When the Red Caps issue was raised here some months ago, that was the

first time I had been notified by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central that there were trolleys in the airport in the Arrivals Hall.

Asides.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: It was no big thing. A Minister cannot be everywhere and know everything, so do not let anybody get into that politics of rubbish, because that is nonsense. I heard it from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and I thank him for bringing it to my attention.

Asides.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Sir, you cannot tell me what to say in here.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Something has to be wrong because the Chairman of the entity that brought in the trolleys has said publicly and privately that the Minister knew exactly what was happening from the outset.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this has to be the most ludicrous thing. I cannot speak to what the Chairman said. I am saying in here that I did not know and if the Chairman said so, the Chairman was not speaking the truth.

Asides.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am here to represent the people of Barbados. What foolishness you are telling me about the Chairman. I tell you now that when the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central notified me of the issue, I believe and I have always held the philosophy that the two entities can exist at the airport.

Therefore, we moved swiftly to remove the trolleys from the airport arrival hall and we have worked out a system which would allow the trolleys to work and exist alongside the Porters/Red Caps. We have also given them uniforms and trolleys. We are maintaining those trolleys. We have even lowered the amount of the concession for the porters at the airport. We have also stated very clearly that we will find some mechanism for allowing some portion of those revenues, if it proves that the red caps are being disadvantaged, to go to them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I cannot understand what would be wrong with that and I make the point here that the first time I heard about the entry of trolleys into the airport arrival hall was when the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central raised it and I immediately contacted the Chairman and dealt with it. Therefore I do

not want to hear this nonsense about what the Chairman said. The Chairman cannot tell me what to say. Rubbish.

Sir, I want to move to another issue. Sir, the other issue related to all-inclusive, as raised by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that this Minister of Tourism is against community tourism and all-inclusives coming in.

Asides.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me clarify this issue. First of all I have never said anything like I am opposed to any community tourism or all-inclusive. Sir, the first all-inclusive that we ever had in Barbados is an entity called, Almond Beach Hotel and Heywoods.

Sir, do you know how Almond Beach came about?

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The first all-inclusive was found in St. James and not in St. Peter.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the all-inclusive was pioneered by Ralph Taylor in Barbados. The reason that it came about in the first place is because the Democratic Labour Party Government of Barbados at the time, sold Heywoods to the Barbados Shipping and Trading (BS&T).

I want to clarify clearly because you hear this thing about we like big business, they like small people, we will provide for the big people, they will provide for the small people. Sir, they took our largest shareholding in the tourism industry, the lifeblood of this country and sold it to the largest conglomerate in Barbados at the time, BS&T.

Asides.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Sir, not one peep out of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. Further, the people bought the hotel.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member said that I stood in this House and watched the Democratic Labour Party give the largest all-inclusive hotel to BS&T, which meant that the Honourable Member is so confused that he does not realise that I came to this House in 1994, when the Barbados Labour Party was in Government and is still in Government.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceed, Honourable Member.

House 141, Sequence 27, 15:20:14

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, not only that, they sold Heywoods to Barbados Shipping & Trading, the largest conglomerate in Barbados, for less than what it cost to build. They sold our birthright in the number one industry in Barbados to the largest conglomerate in Barbados for peppercorn.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hate to interrupt the Honourable Member but Barbadians cannot sell their birthright to Barbadians. Barbados Shipping and Trading has over 3 000 Barbadian shareholders. Sir, 20 per cent of the shares in the hotel were sold to the workers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the condition under which the Democratic Labour Party sold Heywoods was that Ralph Taylor, a black Barbadian, and the first black Managing Director of a large shipping and trading entity would be the person who would be undertaking that particular investment. Sir, it has been a great success story so far throughout the Caribbean, but most of all in Barbados. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is a great beneficiary of that decision in more ways than one.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is not the crux of the argument. The issue is that the Democratic Labour Party sold our shares in Heywoods to the biggest conglomerate in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, this issue arose because of big business versus small business. Chefette Restaurant does not employ Russians or Japanese, Chefette employs Barbadians, so do not bring that argument to me. They sold what we had as a Government holding, to a small private sector entity. They should not bring the issue of how successful it is now.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going further. Sir, rather than keeping it as an EP hotel, they turned it into an all-inclusive. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, who is always up and down like a Jack-in-the-box, did not know at the time when he was talking about all-inclusive and how damaging it is and shutting out small people... Sir, they not only sold the hotel for peppercorn, they turned around and made it an all-inclusive hotel, that is a fact of life.

I see the Honourable Member for St. Philip West smiling because he knows that is true.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going further with them. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the licks start, the fellows will run. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I raise here the issue of tourism arrivals, and I said that in the 1990s the Democratic Labour Party never moved tourism figures over 400 000.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member said that the Democratic Labour Party never accounted for over 400 000 tourist arrivals, but the Barbados Labour Party always had over 400 000. Sir, I went back to the document and showed him that in the 1980s, the Democratic Labour Party brought in over 400 000 for four years.

Sir, the Minister has to tell this House why he cannot increase tourist arrivals out of North America to more than what the Democratic Labour Party did in the 1980s, for the simple reason that the Minister said that they hardly had planes flying in the 1980s and now he has so many planes flying.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me show you what I am talking about. When you talk about the deepest declines in tourism arrival in Barbados, you can attribute all of them to the 'minister of loss', he is constantly lost. Mr. Deputy Speaker, he went to 1989 and stopped. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 1989, under the Democratic Labour Party, we had 461 259 arrivals. In 1990, we had 432 067, down by 6.3 per cent; in 1991, we had 394 222 arrivals, down by 8.8 per cent; in 1992, we had 385 472, down by 2.2 per cent; and in 1993, 375 979, down by 2.7 per cent. As a matter of fact, at the beginning of the 90s, the tourism arrivals were falling and falling and falling, that is the fact of life. They cannot come to me with any issues of how much they dealt with the issues, they were constantly in a loss position. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to deal with this issue that the Honourable Member for St. Philip West raised about us spending \$155 million for an unfinished airport. Mr. Deputy Speaker, because of the constant increases in the passenger base at the Grantley Adams International Airport, we are going to be constantly in a renovation mode and in a mode of upgrading. What issue is this about spending \$155 million and feeling that is the panacea for everything that plagues an airport? Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the airport was built, the Administration at the time did not feel that there should be any jet bridges. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have come to the conclusion that we should have jet bridges at the airport. I do not think that you could build a modern airport and not have jet bridges, so we are including that component now.

Sir, the issues of rainfall, expatriate labourers, boring holes and the like, and that the consultants came in from Denmark, and that the next thing we would have is that across the road "Pug" and the like will go... Mr. Deputy Speaker, that politics of fear would not work.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the contributions made here today proved very clearly that these Honourable Members on the other side are a paltry lot. Their debating skills are few and far between and lacking. Sir, they want to impose the politics of fear on Barbadians.

Sir, no Minister builds any airport or any roof. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have said before that when all the construction work was going on, it caused construction hairline issues in the building itself. Sir, we are moving to fix it. Sir, this thing about people surfing and all this kind of talk...

Sir, the existing Grantley Adams International Airport that we have built is better than anything that we had before. It has its issues, but this thing about telling people that it is a bad airport and that it is leaking... Mr. Deputy Speaker, it has some leaks yes, but I am telling you that the leaks are being fixed.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: I do not know what is the issue. Houses leak, buildings leak and they are repaired.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. John raised an issue relative to the Concorde. The Concorde, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a commercial attraction. How could they compare the Concorde money with the poverty alleviation money? Sir, poverty alleviation has its place, and the development of commercial interests and commercial entities under any administration also have their place. The Concorde is not simply about spending money. The Honourable Member for St. John would not tell you, but the Concorde also makes money, it is a revenue earner.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, even though \$3.4 million was spent by the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated, it is an investment. It is operated by Goddards Supersonic Inc. and the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated will be paid the operating cost of the operation. Mr. Deputy Speaker, five per cent of the gross revenues up to a total of \$2 million will be paid to the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated. If the gross revenue exceeds \$2 million, the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated would receive 12 per cent.

Sir, the Concorde commenced operations on April 15th. Sir, up to July 15th, 7 381 paying people have passed through the Concorde exhibit.

House 141 Sequence 28

3.30 p.m.

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the revenue to Government in the first six months of the year is \$200 000. Sir, what nonsense is this I am hearing that you

cannot, under a Government, be more entrepreneurial and start a commercial venture?

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the 'minister of loss', who speaks about loss statements, is virtually lost, he is "Ernest Kellman" from 'Ernest & Young', St. Lucy.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was no guarantee because we formed an entity, that it was intended to make a profit in the first year. The Grantley Adams International Airport was only operating since the beginning of 2006. As a matter of fact, the projections were always for a loss, in the initial years of operations. I think losses are projected for the first three years of operations. It did not mean that because we formed a business corporation that it was going to be initially and immediately successful; that is not what was meant.

We believe it is more efficient now than when it was a Government department. In addition, I would also say this issue about the \$5 million loss... Sir, again, children and fools should not play with sharp-edged tools. There was a revenue loss, and this is the reason. When we negotiated the loan, it was negotiated in Euros.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: No, it cannot be a bad decision.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of international contracts of this kind - because we borrowed \$15 million from the Inter-American Development Bank - there was a requirement that a portion of that would be paid in foreign currency, given the many components that would have to be purchased from overseas. In terms of that particular contract, we were able to limit that non-fixed portion to a third of the value of the contract. Therefore, that loan worked out to 37 per cent in American dollars, 30 per cent in Barbadian currency and 33 per cent in Euros.

At the time, when we negotiated the loan, the American dollar was very strong against the Euro, but the American currency then fell. Therefore, once we were paying up the contracted portion back to PIHL International of Denmark, the dollar would have slipped against the Euro and that is where it was loss. It was a foreign exchange loss, conditioned by the fact that we had borrowed in Euros and that the American dollar had fallen against the Euro.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: That was not something the Government could have avoided.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we negotiated this loan back in 1995 and there was no way that, in 2007, Government could have predicted what would have been the strength of the American dollar against the Euro.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Grantley Adams International Airport is not perfect but it is a better installation than what we had in the past. Sir, I am not saying there would not be some disgruntled employees at the airport. Sir, in relation to the fact that rain blows into the departure area, the Honourable Member for St. John raised the issue that there was a design flaw. Sir, there was not a design flaw, I have already explained that where Caribbean Airlines, LIAT and American Airline counters are now located, there was nothing there before. When we built the airport, the mistake was not to have extended that canopy out as far as possible.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I envision that one day we would have to enclose that entire departure area. Sir, in relation to some of the issues we have raised here today, I say this to you...

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House, as it relates to foreign currencies and how foreign currencies work. The Honourable Member is giving the impression that when the money was borrowed, the Euro was in good standing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have already lectured to this Honourable House that you do not borrow a loan when the currency is weak, but that you borrow foreign currencies, especially those that are floating, when they are strong. Sir, that is why I said that if the Government of Barbados needs to borrow a loan now, it would be better for Government to borrow a Euro loan or a loan in the pound, as these currencies are strong and could only fall.

What we are seeing is that when the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc., entered into this contract, the Euro was low, and they allowed the contractors to protect themselves in two ways; those are, the contractors knew

that the currency would have appreciated, as this happened with the Japanese loan; the contractors further allowed Government to enter into an arrangement with them, with a low Euro rate, as has happened with the loan from the Caribbean Development Bank, and the sugar industry. Sir, when the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc., came to pay the money, the contractors would have known that the loan would have appreciated. Sir, that is what accounted for the loss.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the Honourable Member were correct, you would have seen that instead of seeing a foreign loss, you would have seen a foreign exchange gain on the behalf of the Government of Barbados. Sir, I do not want the Minister to try to lecture me on something like this.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have made your point. Please proceed, Honourable Member.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said, in 2007, nobody could have predicted where the American dollar would have been, against the Euro.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I close with this statement, for an administration that boasts so much about how they have treated the small man and about our commitment to the small man, I say that the facts I have outlined bear the truth. The Democratic Labour Party did more to decimate the lives of ordinary Barbadians between 1986 and 1994, than at any other time in the history of this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Barbadians should never be allowed to forget, and there are a number of young people who are going to be eligible to vote. Sir, this politics of fear will not work. The Democratic Labour Party has done more damage to poor people in Barbados, between 1986 and 1994, than any administration in the history of this country. It was the worst that we have ever lived through and Barbadians should never be allowed to forget it. Sir, I say that this Barbados Labour Party administration has done more to uplift the people of Barbados than any other administration and that even the airport workers are living better than they have ever lived.

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

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

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

On the separate motion of Hon. N. A. LYNCH, the House resolved itself into Committee on the Bill. Mr. R. D. MARSHALL in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is now in Committee. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Clauses 1 to 4, inclusive, were called and passed.

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

3.30 p.m.

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

(EDITED)

On the separate motions of Hon. N. A. LYNCH, seconded by Mr. R.D. MARSHALL, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Airport (Amendment) Act, 2007.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this brings us to the end of Government Business for today. I beg to move that this House be adjourned until Tuesday, July 24, 2007, at 10.00 a.m.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: I beg to second that.

The question that the House be adjourned until Tuesday, July 24, 2007 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

H141/15:43

Sequence 30

CONTENTS

MINUTES

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY.....	1
Hon. R.C. Eastmond, 1; Hon. N. A. Lynch, 1.	

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY.....	2
1. The Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill, 2007.	
Hon. R.C. Eastmond, 2.	

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY.....	2
Hon. R.C. Eastmond, 2.	

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 6 – AIRPORTS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2007.....	2
Hon. N. A. Lynch, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12; Hon. R. R. Farley, 11; Mr. R. L. Sealy, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15; Mr. D. St.E. Kellman, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20; Hon. Miss. H. E. Thompson, 17.	

RESUMPTION

ORDER NO. 6 (resumed)

Dr. D. C. Estwick, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25; Hon. N. A. Lynch, 23.

(EDITED)

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK.....	25
Mr. R.D. Marshall, 25; Hon. K. D. Symmonds, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32; Mr. D. St.E. Kellman, 28; Mr. D. J. H. Thompson, 30, 31, 32.	

(EDITED)

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON.....	33
Hon. K. D. Symmonds, 33; Hon. N. A. Lynch, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40; Mr. D. St.E. Kellman, 37, 38, 39; Hon. R. R. Farley, 40.	

(EDITED)

SUSPENSION.....	21
ADJOURNMENT.....	40
Hon. R. R. Farley, 40; Hon. K. D. Symmonds, 40.	

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

EASTMOND, Hon. R.C.

ESTWICK, Dr. D. C.
FARLEY, Hon. R. R.
KELLMAN, Mr. D. St.E.
LYNCH, Hon. N. A.
MARSHALL, Mr. R.D.
MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M.A.
SEALY, Mr. R. L.
SYMMONDS, Hon. K. D.
THOMPSON, Hon. Miss. H. E.
THOMPSON, Mr. D. J. H.

DISCLAIMER. This transcript was prepared with the assistance of artificial intelligence tools and is provided for reference only. It has not been reviewed, verified or approved by the Hansard Department of the Parliament of Barbados and does not constitute an official parliamentary record. It may contain errors or omissions, including inaccuracies in wording or speaker identification. For authoritative quotations or confirmation of proceedings, consult the official Hansard record when available.

EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

Prepared with the transcript; for checking against the recording and the Minutes.

EDITORIAL QUERIES

Points noted while preparing this report from the edited transcript. The text has not been altered except where stated.

Q1. Masthead. The session is not stated in the source, so no session line is printed.

Q2. Order No. 6, heading. The Order is headed ‘AIRPORTS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2007’, while the Minister speaks of amending the ‘Airport Act’ and the Bill is cited on third reading as the ‘Airport (Amendment) Act, 2007’. Printed as in the source.

Q3. Take-slips about 2.00, 2.50 and 3.30 p.m.. Each of these take-slips is followed by the word ‘(EDITED)’ set as a heading; it appears to be a reporter’s note rather than part of the record. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Order No. 6, Mr. R. L. Sealy. One of the Member’s speech headings reads ‘Hon. R. L. SEALY’; all his other headings and the PRESENT list give ‘Mr. R. L. SEALY’. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Adjournment. The Deputy Speaker was in the Chair from the resumption at 1.30 p.m. and the Bill was reported to him, but the closing sentence says ‘Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly’. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Opening. Prayers are recorded as led by ‘Rev. Cannon Ivan Harewood’ (presumably Canon). Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, 17th July, 2007, with His Honour I. A. Roett, the Speaker, in the Chair; prayers were led by Rev. Ivan Harewood. The Minutes of 10th July were confirmed. Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley laid the Public Officers Loan and Travelling Allowances (Amendment) Regulations, 2007 and Hon. N. A. Lynch the Annual Report and Financial Statements of CRL Limited for 2005. The Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill, 2007 was read a first time and Standing Orders were suspended for the rest of the sitting.

The only Order debated was the Airports (Amendment) Bill, 2007 (Order No. 6), moved by Hon. N. A. Lynch, Member for St. Michael South. He explained that the Bill replaced ‘Airport Manager’ with ‘Chief

Executive Officer’ after the transfer of the airport to Grantley Adams International Airport Inc., and allowed an authorised officer, notwithstanding the Wild Birds Protection Act, to kill birds and seize animals that endangered aircraft. He used the debate to review the airport: the settlement with the contractor at \$155 million inclusive of interest and exclusive of VAT, new aircraft parking positions, the IAM Jet Centre’s one thousand private jets in a year, an added BDS\$30 on the departure tax and \$5 security fee, the concession tenders, and average arrivals of 550 000 over the last five years.

Mr. R. L. Sealy accepted the need to deal with bird strikes but criticised the terminal, which he said still lacked a medical installation and was not fully accessible to the disabled, and questioned whether \$155 million was the real value of incomplete works; the Minister rose on a point of order. Mr. D. St. E. Kellman read from the airport company’s financial statement for the year ended 30th June, 2006, describing a ‘statement of loss’ and payments for the expansion project split 30 per cent in Barbados dollars, 37 per cent in US dollars and 33 per cent in euros. He cited tourist arrivals of 421 000 in 1987 rising to 461 000 in 1989, demanded an apology from the Minister over his earlier claim, and withdrew an imputation at the Speaker’s request. The House then suspended until 1.30 p.m.

After the resumption, with the Deputy Speaker in the Chair, Dr. D. C. Estwick questioned the corporatisation of the airport, the treatment of the ‘Red Caps’ and the waterlogged concrete found in the roof, and the Minister twice rose on points of order. Mr. R. D. Marshall supported the Minister and spoke on the vendors and Chefette’s concession. Hon. K. D. Symmonds discussed the bare licence under which vendors had operated and airport security, and clashed with the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. D. J. H. Thompson, over a letter; asked to withdraw a remark, he rephrased it as ‘wilfully misleading’. Mr. Thompson criticised the design of the arrival area and the treatment of the vendors.

Replying, Hon. N. A. Lynch described Caribbean ARI as a 50/50 joint venture between Caribbean Airways and AerRianta International, said that the \$15 million loan from the Inter-American Development Bank required part payment in foreign currency, and answered points of order from Mr. Kellman and Mr. Thompson. The Bill was read a second time, Clauses 1 to 4 were passed in Committee with Mr. R. D. Marshall in the Chair, and the Bill was read a third time and passed as the Airport (Amendment) Act, 2007.

On the motion of Hon. R. R. Farley, seconded by
Hon. K. D. Symmonds, the House adjourned until Tuesday,

24th July, 2007 at 10.00 a.m.