
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2008 – 2013

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Friday, August 7, 2009

met at 10.10 a.m. on Friday, August 7, 2009.

PRESENT

His Honour M. A. CARRINGTON, B.A., LLB.
(Speaker)

His Honour K. St.C. BEST, LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C.
(Deputy Speaker)

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND, J.P., LL.M. (Leic.) LL.B
(Hons.) (Lond.), B.A. (Hons.), Dip.Ed.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE, J.P., B.Sc., Dip. Ed.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN:

Miss C. Y. FORDE, J.P., L.C.P.

Hon. R. D. JONES, J.P., M. A. (Ed.)

B. A. (Hons.)(Minister of Education and Human
Resource Development) (Leader of the House)

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL, Q.C., LL.B (Hons.), L.E.C.

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

Hon. F. J. STUART, Q.C., B.A., LL.M. (Deputy
Prime Minister, Attorney-General and Minister of Home
Affairs)

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, M.Sc. (C. Eng.) (Minister of
Transport and Works)

Hon. E. G. HUTSON, F.C.C.A., C.A. (Minister of
International Business and International Transport)

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT (Minister of Community
Development and Culture)

Mr. J. D. PAUL, B.Sc. Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE,
M.Ed., B.A., Ed.D., Dip. Theology (Minister of The
Environment, Water Resources and Drainage)

Mr. S. A. LASHLEY, B.Sc., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C.
(Chairman of Committees)

Hon. P. M. T. TODD, B.Sc. (Minister of State,
Education and Human Resource Development)

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS, M.B.A., B.Sc. (Minister of
Health)

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, B.A., M.Sc. (Minister of
Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Rural and
Urban Development)

Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO, M.B., B.S.
(Minister of Family, Youth Affairs and Sports)

*Prayers were taken by Reverend Canon Ivan
Harewood.*

Mr. SPEAKER: This House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Minutes
of July 28, 2009.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Sir, I beg to move that the
Minutes of the Honourable House of Assembly for its
Meeting of Tuesday, July 28, 2009, which Minutes have
been circulated, be taken as read subject to any omissions,
corrections and/or observations.

Hon. F. J. STUART: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

H A44 10.20 a.m. Sequence 2

Friday, August 07, 2009

House A44, Sequence 02, 10.20 a.m.

PAPERS

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded
to lay the following:

1. Annual Report of the Enterprise Growth Fund
Limited for the year, 2008.

2. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Sir Garfield Sobers) Order, 2009.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. James Central.

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

The Financial Statements of the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. for the year ended July 30, 2007.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following:

1. The Public Service (Amendment) Bill, 2009.
2. The Constitution (Amendment) (No.2) Bill, 2009.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the First Reading of the following:

1. The Public Service (Amendment) Bill, 2009.
2. The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2009.
3. The Order of National Heroes (Amendment) Bill, 2009.
4. The Land Development Duty (Amendment) Bill, 2009.
5. The Student Revolving Loan Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2009.

Hon. F. J. STUART: I beg to second that.

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

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

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

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring to the attention of this Honourable House, the recommendations arising from the final report submitted by the team of consultants appointed to conduct the study of the Arch Cot Terrace, Brittons Cross Road area, following the collapse of an apartment building on August 26, 2007 as well as the decisions taken by this Government to rehabilitate the Arch Cot Terrace area.

It will be recalled that on the morning of Sunday, August 26, 2007, a portion of the Chalon Apartment Building, situated on Lots 23 and 24 at Arch Cot Terrace, Brittons Cross Road, collapsed in a cave between 50 and 100 feet in depth. This unfortunate incident not only shocked the residents of the Arch Cot Terrace community, and this entire island, but also resulted in the tragic death of a family of five persons.

According to reports received, at approximately 5:01 hours on August 26, 2007, the Fire Service Department received a call from the Control Room of the Police Department, indicating that a building had collapsed at Arch Cot Terrace. Immediately after this, a crew of four fire officers manning a rescue tender, arrived at the scene at 5:04 hours to carry out an initial assessment of this situation. Later, this crew was joined and assisted by three additional fire officers, operating a water tender.

Other officers from the Emergency Response Agencies including the Barbados Defence Force, the Royal Barbados Police Force and the Department of Emergency Management, later arrived on the scene. A team of officers from the Fire Service Department and the Barbados Defence Force was the first to enter the cave to commence the rescue operations.

The Department of Emergency Management, which was responsible for coordinating the National Emergency Response, activated the National Emergency Management System. The Royal Barbados Police Force set up and managed the Incident Command System from the St. Paul's Primary School location. A series of daily meetings with those engaged in the rescue and recovery operations were chaired by the Minister of Home Affairs at that time, to monitor and oversee the progress of the activities as well as to facilitate timely decision-making on critical issues.

Acting on a recommendation from the Commissioner of Police, a request was made for assistance from the Miami Dade Fire Rescue Department. A team of 15 Fire Rescue Officers arrived on the scene at 11.00 p.m. on August 26, 2007. This team brought along three dogs, sensitive microphones and cameras to assist in the rescue efforts.

After undertaking an assessment of the situation on the morning of Monday, August 27, one dog and its handler from the Miami Dade Team were lowered into the cave, with a view to detecting survivors. Having found no survivors, a second team of two officers, carrying sensitive listening equipment was lowered into the cave to detect sounds. No human sounds were detected and eventually, a cadaver dog was lowered into the cave and identified two areas where human flesh was located.

At this stage, the focus was changed from a rescue to recovery operations. Efforts to retrieve the bodies continued only to be halted at intervals when there was concern for the safety of the recovery teams, or when conditions in the cave became unstable due to falling pieces of debris, or when there was slippage, or the appearance of fissures in the sides of the cave, or inclemency of the weather. The final body was retrieved on Friday morning, August 31, 2007, when operations ceased.

The Cabinet at its meeting held on August 30, 2007, considered a paper, prepared by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, and agreed to the engagement of professional services to carry out a two-phase geological study and hazard assessment of Arch Cot Terrace, Brittons Cross Road area, where the collapse occurred, as well as in the wider Brittons Hill area.

The scope of works to be undertaken by the consultants was detailed as follows:

1. To conduct a site characterisation consisting of hydrological, geophysical and geo-technical studies in the identified area;
2. To map the extent of the cavern, in terms of its dimensions, height, width and depth;
3. To advise on the stability of the area, in relation to its present and continued use, as well as the potential impact of existing structures on the cave system;
4. To identify all areas of faulty lines and prepare a map of the same;
5. To determine the thickness of the sub-strata;
6. To identify any voids.

Phase I of the study included the area west of Brittons Cross Road, bounded by the access to St. Cyprian's School to the north, Mission Gap to the south and 20 metres beyond the ridge of the western side of the collapsed area at Arch Cot Terrace.

Phase II included the area bounded on the west by Brittons Cross Road, to the east by the ridge, south of the entrance to Highgate Gardens, to the north, by Highway 6, Upper Collymore Rock, and to the south by Lanne's Road and Burke's Land.

House A44, Sequence 02, 10.30 a.m.

Friday, August 07, 2009

Hon. F. J. STUART: 10. The study was expected to be completed over a period of nine months from September 2007, to May 2008, and the terms of reference were appropriately set out.

11. The consulting team engaged to undertake this study included:

i. Mr. Sydney Robertson, Civil/Structural Engineer of AEC Group Inc.;

ii. Mr. Arnold Boyce, Civil/Geotechnical Engineer, SB Testing and Engineering; iii. Mr. Leslie Barker, Geologist, Hydro Terra Inc.; and iv. Dr. David Farrell, Geophysicist, Caribbean Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology.

12. Subsequently, the Cabinet, at its meeting at September 6, 2007, agreed, inter alia, to the establishment of a Cabinet Sub-committee under the Chairmanship of the Attorney-General and Minister of Home Affairs, to focus on relief and response activities.

13. Later, during September 2007, a team comprising Dr. Farrell, Geophysicist, Caribbean Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology; Mr. Leslie Barker, Geologist, Hydro Terra Inc.; Mr. Arnold Boyce, Engineer, SB Testing and Engineering and Mr. Emile Trotman, Senior Technical Officer, Ministry of Public Works, prepared a Geo-Engineering and Structural Report, the objective of which was to provide preliminary information on investigations, focussing particularly on the safety of the buildings in the immediate area of the collapse, and to make recommendations for the continued occupation of the St. Paul's and St. Cyprian Primary Schools. This report indicated that these two schools suffered no structural damage which could be attributed to foundation sinking and deterioration.

14. The Consultants submitted two reports, one in November 2007, containing recommendations for the demolition of buildings in the Incident Zone, and the other in December, 2007 focussing on the Incident Zone itself. This latter Report was called the "Phase 1 Report." The November 2007 Report provided a geological and geotechnical assessment of the rock formation, and evaluated the impact of the collapsed cave on the safety and structural integrity of two houses on Lots 17 and 25. The Report also identified the risk and hazards of allowing the buildings to remain as they were in the immediate vicinity of the collapsed cave and, therefore, considered to be under threat from any continuing instability in the walls of the cave. This Report specifically recommended that:

(i) the house on Lot 17 be demolished as it was built on a sinkhole and overlay part of the cave; (ii) the house on Lot 25 also be demolished as there was considerable loss of support under more than one-third of its foundation.

15. The Phase I Report on the Incident Zone made a number of findings and recommendations, including that:

(i) there should be continued monitoring of ground movements in the area of the tension zone formed around the eastern wall of the cave; (ii) the houses on Lots 17 and 25, for the reasons earlier stated, should be demolished; (iii) the apartment buildings at Lots 19 and 20 and that on Lot 21 were outside of any active zones of ground movement and were unlikely to be ever under threat of ground movements over the economic life of the buildings, therefore, there was no geological, or technical basis to restrict the safe and continued use of these structures; (iv) the geology beneath the St. Paul's and St. Cyprian's Schools contained no structural features that would compromise the integrity of the buildings. Geological and geotechnical data indicated that these two schools lay on the same stable block, and it was safe to resume operations; (v) the properties and houses on Lots 13, 15, 18, 22 and 26 were not likely to be under threat during the useful life of the structures. While the structure on Lot 16 had not been impacted by the event, the property was within the zone of the sinkhole structure; (vi) with regard to the site adjacent to and west of the collapsed apartment, which was under construction, site investigations revealed that part of the cave extended under the site which might still be useable. The developers should, therefore, carry out the necessary investigations and obtain permission from the relevant regulatory agencies, should they decide to proceed with construction; and (vii) the collapsed areas stretched over parts of Lots 23, 24 and 25. The open cave now occupies what was Lot 24. This area is unusable in its present state.

16. The options proposed in this Phase 1 Report for the rehabilitation of the Arch Cot Terrace area included:

(a) the fencing of the immediate collapsed cave area, and the abandonment of the Arch Cot Road, except for the entrance around Lot No. 18; (b) construction of a new access road between Lots 17 and 18 and through Lot 16 to connect the existing road to service Lots 13, 15, 18 and 26; (c) adjustment of the fence lines and allowing the cave to remain in its current state. Construction of a new access road from Brittons Cross Road through parts of St. Cyprian's School playground to connect the road in front of Lot 16; and (d) filling of the cave starting with large boulders and grading up to fine marl fill.

17. The Cabinet at its meeting held on January 3, 2008, noted the November and December 2007 Reports, and agreed to the acquisition and

demolition of the houses on Lots 17 and 25. Subsequently, the Cabinet at its meeting held on May 29, 2008, agreed to the acquisition of the property of Lot 16 along with a strip of land to provide access to the residents of Lot 22, Arch Cot Terrace as was advised by the Consultants.

18. The final Report on Phase I of the Arch Cot Terrace/Brittons Hill Area was submitted by the Consultants to the Ministry of Home Affairs on September 4, 2008, and following this, a meeting was convened on October 15, 2008 under the Chairmanship of the Ministry of Home Affairs, to allow the Consultants to present their findings and recommendations to the representatives from the Ministries of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Urban Development, Transport and Works and Home Affairs. Following this meeting, a Revised Final Report was submitted in February, 2009.

19. This final Report reconfirmed the assessments and recommendations made in the earlier Reports with respect to:

(i) St. Paul's and St. Cyprian's Schools being under no threat; (ii) the properties or houses at Lots 13, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 26 being on stable blocks, under no threat of collapse and not affected by any geological conditions so that the occupants of these properties could return to their homes. The property at Lot 22 was never impacted; (iii) the properties at Lots 16, 17 and 25 being acquired and demolished; (iv) the observation that the building foundation which was being prepared encroached on one of the established watercourses which drained the upland sections of Brittons Hill. It was evident that the entry to a sinking stream located on this site was plugged during construction and it was, therefore, recommended that this drainage opening should be re-established; and (v) the lifting of the temporary road restrictions imposed on the heavy vehicular road traffic along Brittons Cross Road.

The Ministry of Transport and Works has confirmed since February 2009, this temporary road restriction has been lifted.

House A44 Sequence 4 10.40 a.m.

Tuesday, August 07, 2009

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, the study also proposed two options for the rehabilitation of the Arch Cot Terrace subdivision:

Option A proposed that backfilling of the Cave and the rehabilitation of the area to very nearly restore it to the original conditions.

The exercise of this option would necessitate the acquisition of Lots 23 and 24 (once occupied by the collapsed apartments.) Lots 17 and 25, the building site under construction and the open area which was used as a car rental business on the lower platform.

It was conceded that significant engineering challenges in the design and construction phases of the project would be presented, if this option were pursued. Some of the challenges include:

(i) construction of a retaining structure to relieve lateral pressure on the weakened face of the first High Cliff; (ii) placement of a very large quantity of graded engineered fill from approved quarries in compacted layers, up to some 60 feet in height; (iii) achievement of a high degree of compaction of the structural fill without undue vibration, because the propagation of such waves through the rock formation, is likely to trigger concerns to residents of Brittons Hill; (iv) mitigation measures to minimise the more severe environmental impacts such as dust, mud on roads, suitable and satisfactory measures for the control of construction traffic and dislocation to businesses in the area; and (v) provisions for down drainage and dispersal of the stormwater runoff from the upper areas of Arch Cot, to cater to a significant storm event similar to the 1970 flood.

Mr. Speaker, the cost of this work was estimated at BDS\$21 million. In addition, detailed soil investigations to establish designed parameters, preliminary and detailed designs, approvals, costing, tender and construction, would extend over a period of two years.

The Government considers that dislocation of persons for a further two-year period would be unacceptable.

In the final analysis, the rehabilitated site would

only be useable for recreational purposes, since negative settlement would occur in this depth of fill material over several years. In any event, there will be limitations in the redevelopment of this area for other purposes, at an economic cost.

Option B recommended by the Consultants as the preferred one, was accepted by the Cabinet at its meeting on July 7, 2009, and will necessitate the implementation of a number of activities, which will allow for the immediate rehabilitation of the remainder of the subdivision and an early return to normalcy in the lives of the residents of Arch Cot Terrace.

These activities include:

(i) the acquisition and demolition of the properties on Lots 16, 17 and 25; (ii) the acquisition of Lots 23 and 24

at which the collapsed apartment building was constructed, as this area is unstable, cannot be used in its present form and poses a danger to returning residents and the general public.

The Ministry of Housing and Lands is currently taking action to acquire these three properties at Lots 16, 17 and 25. Action is yet to be taken with respect to Lots 23 and 24.

(iii) establishment of fencing around the collapsed cave area; (iv) the construction of a new access roadway into the subdivision; (v) the re-establishment of the drainage opening; (vi) the establishment of a new double-line durable industrial grade chainlink fence around the perimeter of the crater with setback lines; and (vii) dense planting of bougainvillea inside of the fenced area, to act as a deterrent to intruders and the wider public, and attractive landscaping outside of the fence to maintain more dense plant screen, leading to a more enhanced appearance of the Arch Cot Community.

The Ministry of Transport and Works is currently preparing a detailed estimate of the cost associated with the remaining works under this Option. It is expected that this cost will be considerably less than BDS\$21 million under Option A. The Ministry of Transport and Works will assume responsibility for coordination of the road works and fencing, while the establishment of the drainage opening and landscaping will be undertaken by the relevant agencies under the Ministry of the Environment, Water Resources and Drainage.

21. It was anticipated that the estimated cost of their study would not have exceeded BDS\$650 000. The Ministry of Transport and Works has confirmed that the total amount expended on the study was BDS\$619 643.32, calculated as follows:

(i) AEC Group \$81 420; (ii) Hydro-Terra Inc., \$74 750; (iii) S B Testing and Engineering Ltd., \$177 675.74; (iv) Caribbean Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology, \$285 797.58, making a total of \$619 643.32.

22. Mr. Speaker, in concluding this statement, I wish to express sincere appreciation and thanks to the team of consultants who diligently undertook this study, and to commend the team for the professionalism, enthusiasm and expertise displayed during the various meetings and discussions.

I wish also to commend the Arch Cot Technical Review Committee, led by the Chief Technical Officer, Ministry of Transport and Works, Mr. Frank Thornhill, and other technical officers from that Ministry, representatives from the Ministry of the Environment, Water Resources

and Drainage, the Barbados Water Authority; Lands and Surveys Department, the Town Planning Department; the Energy Division of the Ministry of Finance, Investment, Telecommunications and Energy; the Department of Emergency Management; the residents of the Arch Cot Terrace/Brittons Hill Community, the business community in the area and the general public, for the invaluable assistance and information so selflessly provided to the consultants in the conduct of the Arch Cot Terrace/Brittons Hill area study. Particularly, I should like to thank the residents and the business community in the area for their patience and understanding during this very testing period.

23. We now look forward to implementing the plan recommended by the consultants, so that all those persons whose lives were abruptly affected and those whose businesses and means of livelihood were adversely interrupted by the collapse of the cave, may be allowed to resume their regular activities. I, therefore, wish to assure this Honourable House that every effort will continue to be made to ensure that the Arch Cot Terrace/Brittons Hill community is returned to its former state of normalcy.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

10.50 a.m.

Tuesday, August 07, 2009

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER 2

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE LEASE IN ACCORDANCE

WITH SECTION 5 OF THE CROWN LANDS VESTING AND

DISPOSING ACT, CAP. 225, TO THE TRUSTEE OF THE

BARBADOS DIABETES FOUNDATION OF A PARCEL OF

LAND, THE PROPERTY OF THE CROWN, SITUATE AT

LOT B, WARRENS IN THE PARISH OF ST. MICHAEL

IN THIS ISLAND FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONSTRUCTING THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE BARBADOS DIABETES FOUNDATION, A DIABETES CENTRE AND A DIABETES CLINIC.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Resolution before this Honourable House seeks the permission for the granting of a lease of the parcel of land measuring 3 335.3 square metres situated at Lot B, Warrens, St. Michael, to the Barbados Diabetes Foundation to facilitate the construction of the headquarters of the Barbados Diabetes Foundation, a Diabetes Centre and a Diabetes Clinic.

Mr. Speaker, the Cabinet on July 9, 2009, agreed that the Ministry of Housing and Lands should enter into a lease agreement with the Diabetes Foundation of Barbados in respect of the said land at Warrens, St. Michael for the construction of the headquarters of the Barbados Diabetes Foundation, a Diabetes Centre and a Diabetes Clinic. Sir, I believe it is my duty to express the terms and conditions of the said lease.

Mr. Speaker, the lease is for a period of 25 years with an option to renew for a further 25 years. Sir, the second term and condition is that the rate should be charged at a rate of \$100 per annum, but should be reviewed every five years. Further, at the expiration of the lease, all improvements should become the property of the Crown for nil consideration.

Mr. Speaker, the Diabetes Foundation of Barbados should be responsible for the term of the lease, for the development of the site and for all rates and taxes, and any outgoings associated with its use of the property.

Mr. Speaker, again, the Diabetes Foundation of Barbados shall be responsible for the insuring of the property and the Diabetes Foundation of Barbados indemnify the Crown against any consequential damage which may arise from the use of the property.

Sir, a further term and condition of the lease is that the Diabetes Foundation of Barbados shall surrender its existing lease at "Enmore", St. Michael because there is an existing lease arrangement at Enmore.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is my understanding and my information that the Diabetes Foundation of Barbados has been at the forefront in getting people with diabetes to modify their lifestyle and, of course, their eating habits. Sir, I am not a sufferer of diabetes, but I certainly have modified my eating habits long ago and I have been able to stay away from certain delicacies, I will minimise my intake of them, particularly on weekends and during the week and I am sure that Honourable Members on This Side have also modified their style.

Mr. Speaker, the modification of lifestyle and the modification of eating habits have proven to be beneficial to those suffering with chronic conditions and some form of cancer.

Mr. Speaker, it is noted that over the past six decades, evidence shows that medication alone does not hold the key, and that education of sufferers and those at risk, is much more effective in obtaining and maintaining control of the said disease.

Mr. Speaker, against this background, the Diabetes Foundation of Barbados is most anxious to expand its services on behalf of those services and, as a result, it needs a larger headquarters in order to develop an educational centre.

Sir, from my understanding, the foundation is seeking to have the lease of the land at the "Enmore" site exchange for lands at Warrens for the construction of an office block, a diabetes clinic and the diabetes centre, which was initially proposed for the "Enmore" site. It is considered that the land at Warrens provides more space and has the potential for expansion in the future and, as a result, the Diabetes Foundation of Barbados proposes to combine the facilities at Warrens, St. Michael.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health and the Ministry of Health have been working in collaboration with the said Foundation with the objective of improving and

strengthening the management of diabetes in this country. I know that the Minister of Health will expand relative to his Ministry's focus and intent and its relationship with the Diabetes Foundation of Barbados, when he speaks, as I am certain that he would be involved in this debate.

Mr. Speaker, to me, this represents a historical occasion, because another foundation is involved in terms of the financing of the same headquarters. Sir, we had to move in a swift manner to ensure that all the lease arrangements were put in place, and that we come to Parliament by virtue of Section 5 of the Crown Lands and Vesting Act, so that the authority would be there to have this matter settled, and to make sure that the Diabetes Foundation of Barbados could move forward in their objective, and in what plans they have, in terms of strengthening the educational path in relation to diabetes in this country.

Mr. Speaker, the relevant survey plan is attached, so that Honourable Members can inspect the survey plan, and the Resolution has been certified by the Honourable Attorney-General.

Sir, with these remarks, I beg to move that the Resolution do now pass.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: I beg to second that, Sir.

H/A44/11.00 a.m. Sequence 6

Friday, August 7, 2009

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, let me start by saying that obviously we on This Side would support this Resolution. It is in keeping with our concept of providing the best use of the land for the people of Barbados. There is obviously a significant benefit from bringing all of the members of the Diabetes Foundation and their resources, in what is becoming the second Centre of Excellence in Barbados, which is Warrens. I, along with Honourable Members on This Side will support this Resolution fully.

We have to recognise that diabetes is a major problem in this country. A few years ago, and I think even now, people considered it to be the leading cause of amputations in Barbados. As a result, Barbados unfortunately became known as the amputation capital of the Western Hemisphere. This really goes back to our heritage.

There has been a lot of research done about the origin of diabetes and its role in the West African population. In fact, if you were to sample the population in

the Western side of Africa, you would find that the prevalence and incidence of diabetes in that population is very similar to the prevalence and incidence of diabetes in Barbados, and really throughout the Caribbean, but particularly in Barbados. It goes really to our ancestry.

Sir, diabetes has many aspects to it. It is not only the intake, but also the genetic aspect. There is, in fact, correlation between the incidence and prevalence in Western Africa, and the incidence and prevalence in Barbados is used as a sample to portray that genetic prevalence, as the link between diabetes and our genetic ancestry. Before I go further, I would first say that there are many types of diabetes. Two main types would be the insulin independent diabetes, which is the most serious type of diabetes, and the non-insulin dependent diabetes.

Now, the insulin dependent diabetes really has no correlation to the food you eat directly. It is, in effect, associated with the functioning of a gland called the pancreas. That in itself is important, because many people would often say, I do not over-eat. I do not eat anything sweet, yet they tell me I have diabetes. A lot of it is education.

There are two ways your pancreas can be affected, either from a genetic point of view, which means it does not produce enough insulin, or from overuse, which means the non-insulin dependent type. That, in particular, is related to the diet.

Sir, this is important, and I must first make it clear that diabetes is very real in my family. I had an aunt and an uncle who died of diabetes, the more severe type, the insulin type, and it does run in my family. It is something that I and all of my other siblings have to be very particular about diabetes in our blood. We get tested regularly because of the unfortunate situation where my aunt and uncle, on my mother's side, both succumbed to insulin dependent diabetes.

It is a very real disease and the Barbados Diabetic Association does a tremendous job, a thankless job sometimes, being there to provide support and mentoring for people who have this disease, and to tell them it is not the end of the world, for there are drugs available, counselling available, and things you can do by altering your lifestyle. Sir, not only the diet, like the Honourable Member for St. Philip North is talking about, and he has altered his diet, there are other things they can do, to alter their lifestyle. It is not only diet associated, it is a whole lifestyle experience.

Sir, we have seen tremendous work by other Foundations, like the Heart and Stroke Foundation, who do a tremendous job, setting up a gym for their members. Counselling and testing are also available. I do not know if

the Barbados Diabetes Foundation has that facility, but I imagine with these better facilities, at the Warrens location, they will not only set up those kinds of activities, but more outreach programmes to educate our people on avoiding the pitfalls of non insulin diabetes, and to provide support mechanism for those who are unfortunate enough to have insulin dependent diabetes.

Sir, the two are extremely important, insulin dependent and non-insulin dependent. The non-insulin dependent is the one that costs this country millions of dollars. You will be aware that on the formulary all of the drugs for a chronic disease, are provided free of cost, so the non-insulin dependent disease and insulin dependent are provided free of cost. It is a tremendous cost to the country, so the more we can do to educate our people on how to avoid, or how to manage their diabetes, the better for us, not only as healthy people, but also in a way to assist the economy.

Sir, I would imagine that the building itself, the starting of its construction, will only benefit the country. I do not know what size building, but it is going to be at 7 000 to 10 000 square feet, so it would be a very reasonably sized building, which will add in its contribution to help kick-start this economy, the faster they can get it done, with the funding in place to get that building going, to provide the excellent service for which they are known, to this country.

Sir, this is a tremendous Resolution and I would only expect that the people of Barbados would reap strong dividends from a foundation, strengthened by a new facility from which to operate. Sir, the imagination runs wild with all the possibilities that would become available to have a wonderful facility from which to work.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip North is trying to encourage me to offer services. He reminds me of another aspect, which I did not want to mention, but it is a known fact that people suffering with diabetes have significant oral health problems, because their ability to heal and to deal with infection is significantly diminished, and as a result they often have to spend more time at the dentist for oral hygiene, and so forth. The Honourable Member is encouraging me to offer my services free, and it is something I will have to look into with my juniors in the office.

Certainly, I can only see positives coming from a move to give the Barbados Diabetes Foundation an opportunity to have access to land, because that is the first step. Once you have access to land, you can find a way to get the building. In essence, the access to land is almost the first down payment on the building. You have the lease in hand, a 50-year lease. The only part I did not like, and I have to be honest, I am being honest all through, at the end

of the 50 years, everything reverts to the Crown. I found that a little harsh.

Sir, 50 years these days is a reasonably long time, but it is not an exceptionally long time. A building can last 70, 80, or 90 years. I do not know if the Honourable Members would consider giving them an extra 25 years, or something like that, to give them at least 75 years which would be equal to the life of the building.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: I am sure the building will last longer than 50 years. To suggest that at the end of the 50 years you hand everything back to the Crown, the Crown owns everything, and you must look for something else. I found that a little harsh. Maybe 75 years, which would be the life expectancy of a building built today, I would imagine would be more considerable.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip North is heckling me again, suggesting that I build the building. If I build it, it would last 150 years, not just 50 years. My ability to build buildings is world renowned now.

Honourable Member for St. Philip North, please do not heckle.

H A44 11.10 a.m. Sequence 7

Friday, August 07, 2009

House A44, Sequence 08, 11.10 a.m.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: I am supporting your measure and I think it will redound to the benefit and the people of Barbados. I am sure and confident that the people at the Diabetic Foundation will manage that building with care and attention, because at the end of the day, they are the people who are going to work hard to fund it. They will raise money to be able to care for it and to be able to use it. Sir, those who have not even come yet, will come and thereafter benefit from that building. Therefore, it is a tremendous thing and I can only support this Resolution.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged.

The Honourable Member for St. James South.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise to give my full support, like the Honourable Member for Christ Church West who obviously felt compelled to give the Government full support in this measure as well.

This Bill before us is to lease 3 335.3 square metres of land to the Diabetes Foundation of Barbados, but in truth and in fact, it goes much deeper than that, in terms of the role that this Foundation and the facility to go upon the land, will play in helping the Government of Barbados and the Ministry of Health in particular, to battle the challenges we have with diabetes in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, to my mind, this is once again an initiative of the Government to tackle the scourge of chronic non communicable diseases in Barbados, especially diabetes, which is one of the leading causes of death in Barbados and great dislocation to individuals. It is also a deep reflection of the commitment that this Government places on building relationships with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in particular.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Health has embarked upon a programme to embrace the NGOs throughout Barbados in the health sector, and has gone as far as to agree to establish an NGO desk. Certainly, the Diabetes Foundation of Barbados and the Diabetes Association of Barbados are two NGOs that will be playing a critical role in helping the Government of Barbados to deliver upon the promises of health care reform and improvements in the health sector, going forward.

Mr. Speaker, at the onset, I wish to commend the members of the Diabetes Foundation for the sterling work they have been doing over the last few years to sensitise Barbadians to the challenges of diabetes, to work with the other stakeholders in respect of prevention, and certainly to work with the health care institutions, in respect of the curative and post-op work of diabetics in Barbados. Sir, it is also a reflection of the increasing role of philanthropy with the delivery of health care in Barbados.

Sir, once upon a time, we thought that donations to the health sector were something only prevalent in North America, and something that should be tabooed in Barbados. This Resolution before us, as the Honourable Member for St. Philip North quite rightly pointed out, is one of urgency because there is a Trust that has agreed - or we hope is about to agree - to provide a sizeable amount of money to the Diabetes Foundation of Barbados for them to construct this Diabetics Specialist Centre in Warrens.

The Government of Barbados, true to its word, continues to embrace philanthropy as part of the way in which we can expand upon the health sector in Barbados. I want to commend the principals and those in Medicor Trust, for coming to the assistance of the Diabetes Foundation and to provide what we consider to be a sizeable, and very important contribution, towards this Association on diabetes in Barbados. Sir, let me also say, this is a policy that is being aggressively pursued by the Ministry of Health.

Mr. Speaker, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is about to re-energise the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Trust. Sir, with that Trust being activated, we expect that there will be an increased emphasis on corporate donations, and donations from high net worth individuals to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, as we seek to identify other avenues of revenue and cooperation in expanding the range of facilities and raising the bar in terms of service levels at our main hospital.

Sir, one of the challenges we have had in the past in this society, is that we have not developed a culture that embraces corporate giving in Barbados. Too often, we all as Ministers, would hear individuals complaining about their wishing to make donations towards worthy causes in Barbados, and being frustrated in their efforts. We are of the view that this must come to an end.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with philanthropy, and certainly it is a plank that we will continue to embrace. Of course, when individuals or corporations give, there is nothing wrong in saying “thank you”, and keeping them abreast of how their contributions have been able to make a profound difference in the lives, particularly of average Barbadians. The Ministry of Health will certainly continue in that vein.

Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West was quite right when he spoke in respect of the challenges we are having in diabetes in Barbados. It was very touching to hear him reflect on his own personal experience. The reality is that approximately 17 per cent of persons over the age of 40 in Barbados are diabetic. This number increases once you go past the age of 65. Recent statistics that I have seen indicate that approximately 22 per cent of Barbadians over the age of 65 are diabetic.

The recent behaviour risk factor indicates that approximately 15.6 per cent of Barbadians over the age of 25 are diabetic. Therefore with these statistics alone, it is clear that each and every one of us must know someone, several individuals, loved ones or otherwise, who are, in fact, diabetic.

Sir, it is also scary that evidence in Barbados indicates that 50 per cent of persons who have had a major amputation, will unfortunately die within five years. Sir, that is quite alarming and the reality is that these mortality rates are among the highest in the world, so clearly, Barbados has a major challenge on its hands, in respect of diabetes and its impact upon the lives of Barbadians.

The one year incidence of lower limb amputations in Barbados is approximately 940 persons, out of a 100 000 population, and this represents both major and minor amputations. Statistically, according to worldwide figures, this is quite high, and one of the highest in the world.

Therefore, Barbadians certainly have the battle to deal with, and this Resolution before us today, will go a long way in terms of providing a modern facility, so that we are satisfied that the Diabetes Association, in collaboration with other stakeholders will be able to address the issue of diabetes in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, we are also challenged in respect of the average length of stay in the Hospital. Right now, the average length of stay, in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, for a person with diabetic complications, is almost 17 days and that is quite a long time. It certainly is costing the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the Ministry of Health quite a tidy sum of money to take care of diabetics in our tertiary care institution.

As a matter of fact, I say that chronic diseases account for approximately 60 per cent of all the admissions to the medical and surgical wards at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Really, diabetes is one of the principal causes of such.

Mr. Speaker, we in Barbados clearly have to face the reality that diabetes is a battle that we all have to work hand-in-hand in a very collective and focussed manner to address.

Mr. Speaker, the cost gets much more than that for the individual, in terms of the length of stay in the Hospital, I have said, but there is also the loss of productive time. Every diabetic who is unable to go to work, particularly those who are in the productive years of life, certainly their employer, or their institution, is somewhat void of that skill for an extended period of time, not to mention too, the dislocation to the family. Every person who dies of diabetes leaves behind loved ones who, perhaps, never were prepared adequately for the loss of that loved one.

House A44, Sequence 07, 11.20 a.m.

Friday, August 07, 2009

Hon. D. O’N. INNIS: There is also the post hospitalization cost. With the high incidence of amputations in Barbados, we need to do much more to help these individuals to get back on their feet after they have been released from hospital. To that extent, the Ministry of Health, as we speak, is addressing the issues of rehabilitation, offices and processes development within Barbados to ensure that those Barbadians who need artificial limbs, can be adequately satisfied and be able to continue their life of normalcy somewhat, rather than feel that they are stuck to a wheelchair and then someone has to stay at home with them all the time.

Mr. Speaker, there is also a tremendous cost to the Government in respect of dialysis treatment for those who

have to be dialyzed in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, in our case, as well as in the private institutions that we have to provide that assistance to.

Mr. Speaker, another major cost for us is the cost to the Barbados Drug Service to provide medication for those who suffer from diabetes, insulin dependent, or otherwise.

Mr. Speaker, this Resolution, and the development of this physical facility in Barbados, will help us to create an institution that will focus on diabetes and the treatment of it here in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to touch quickly on what the Barbados Diabetes Foundation will be doing at that facility there in Warrens. Education is indeed a very important aspect of the work of the Foundation and the work of the Ministry of Health as a partner.

Sir, as the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and the Honourable Member for Christ Church West alluded to earlier, we need to ensure that all Barbadians are quite sensitised and educated, in respect of the challenge of diabetes and how they can prevent the onset of diabetes through changes in their lifestyle.

Mr. Speaker, evidence indicates that as high as 70 per cent of the diabetes in Barbados is avoidable, meaning that most of it is lifestyle-related. There are many ways in which we can deal with diabetes from a preventative aspect, whether it is a change in diet, as the Honourable Member for St. Philip North pointed out, or the need for increased exercise, or the lessening of stress.

The Foundation that will be centred at Warrens, when constructed, will be focussing a lot on the preventative aspect of diabetes in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, also related to the issue of education will be the issue of self-management. If we could get more diabetic Barbadians to better manage themselves rather than having to be institutionalised, we will go a long way in terms of reducing the cost to the State of treating diabetics in Barbados, thus improving their lives.

Mr. Speaker, there will also be a heavy component related to research. I must commend Professor Hennis and those with the Barbados Registry for the work they have been doing in terms of research, particularly in chronic non-communicable diseases. I do not think enough research in medicine is being done in the Caribbean, but certainly what they have been doing is commendable and fully supported by the Government of Barbados through the Ministry of Health.

Mr. Speaker, it is expected that the collection of a wide array of information with respect to diabetes and diabetics of Barbados would be done at the Diabetic

Special Centre in Warrens, which would then be fed into us so as to help us to better plan for the management of diabetes in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, another area of particular interest with that facility when established, will be the fact that it should serve as a training facility for both local and regional medical personnel. Given the prevalence of diabetes in Barbados, we need to have a facility where those who have a vested interest in the disease and the treatment of it can conduct their research.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed commendable to know that we have a facility beyond the Queen Elizabeth Hospital that could provide that type of service as well. Mr. Speaker, coming with that will be increased collaborations with universities, both inside and outside of the Region.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly commend the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, the Minister of Housing and Lands, for being so quickly able to get this Resolution before Parliament. As we indicated earlier, it is needed so that we could press ahead with working with donors to get the funding in to get the building going.

The Barbados Diabetes Foundation has submitted a business plan to the Ministry of Health which we are currently reviewing, because it is recognised that we just cannot put up the building and then do not have it adequately staffed, or adequately equipped. Therefore, the Ministry of Health, notwithstanding the financial constraints of Government at this point in time, will do all it can to ensure that the facility is sustainable over the life of the project, whether it is 25 years, or 50 years, as the Honourable Member for Christ Church West has alluded to.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I give my full support to this Resolution before us today.

I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged. The Honourable Member for St. James North.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, over 30 years ago, a retired fire officer and resident of the parish of St. George, a Mr. Clarke, formed a group designed to offer support to persons suffering from diabetes and also to carry out widespread public education. Therefore, Sir, on an occasion such as this, I would like to commend the effort of Mr. Clarke, now deceased, and indeed of all those persons who have so unselfishly given their life's work toward the educational component of the treatment of diabetes and the treatment of diabetes itself.

Many years ago, Dr. Oscar Jordan constantly talked about diabetes mellitus. He too has been able to sensitize this country to the ravaging effects that untreated diabetes can cause. In recent times, we have had the likes of Dr. Carlisle Goddard, an abled physician, who I believe has some connection to the north of Barbados, and Professor Anson Hennis. These gentlemen, along with others in the medical profession, have very professionally, and with the highest degree of commitment, done work designed to make sure that we in Barbados become more aware of what diabetes can do.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things about diabetes is, that much as it is an illness in itself affecting the pancreas, it is also an opportunistic disease. For example, Sir, if someone who is very badly diabetic catches another infection, the diabetes becomes heightened, interacts with the new infection and makes the patient worse.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking a lot these days about the H1N1 Virus. Sir, if a person who is a diabetic contracts that infection, the person would probably end up with complications where the two illnesses working together, would make that patient sicker than he or she ordinarily would be, if the person did not have diabetes. Increasingly, I believe that Barbadians should be told that opportunistic diseases like diabetes are diseases that should be very carefully monitored and very carefully checked.

Sir, in this era, as the Honourable Member for Christ Church West has mentioned, considerable research has been done abroad, but as the Honourable Member for St. James South has said, we in Barbados still need to conduct investigations and do more research into the problem of diabetes here in the Caribbean.

For the last four, or five years, the British have been signalling that they are going to make substantial progress in respect of the treatment of insulin dependant diabetics, Diabetes 1. Sir, the British are confident that there would come a time where they would be able to cure type 1 diabetes.

House A44 Sequence 9 11.30 a.m.

Tuesday, August 07, 2009

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, Type 2 diabetes is the more prevalent, especially among people over 40 years old. Sir, the thing about Type 2 diabetes is that a person can be walking, singing, laughing, dancing and sleeping with Type 2 diabetes and not know that he or she has it at all.

Sir, what further complicates things is that there is also another relatively opportunistic disorder known as hypertension. Therefore, we in Barbados, as the

Honourable Minister of Health said, have to look very carefully at non-communicable diseases.

Mr. Speaker, diabetes and hypertension are non-communicable diseases. In many cases, the diabetic is also hypertensive and, therefore, the combined effect of the two of those things, with all due respect to the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, is that they destroy blood vessels and lead to all kinds of problems.

The diabetic who is not properly cared for is at risk of kidney damage, is at risk of liver damage, is at risk of the destruction of that person's nerve endings, is at risk of heart disease, and so we are dealing with a particular illness which has to attract the attention of all Barbadians.

Sir, until recently, we were hearing that there are 20 000 diabetics in Barbados. That is a gross under-estimate. Sir, what is very troubling, as we discuss this matter relating to diabetes, is that if we in here and the society generally would look at little children in Barbados between ages three and 10, we would have to come to the conclusion that in this era, we are seeing far more fat children, made so because of diet such as macaroni and cheese, than at any time in the history of Barbados. A lot of those small fat children are Type 1 diabetics, or potentially Type 1, which is going to make them insulin-dependent.

Mr. Speaker, when a person is insulin-dependent and has to inject himself, or herself every day, that process by itself is a little scary. The reason I say that is that the typical person does not like to be stuck, or pricked by a sharp-edged thing, however small it is. Therefore, the consequence is that it is possible that a lot of people, who should normally be taking insulin, go researching diabetes, come to incorrect conclusions and then reject sound medical advice.

Sir, I know of some diabetics who have an absolutely strong belief in so-called herbal medications, including local bush teas. We know of instances where, rather than observing the doctor's orders, significant numbers of Barbadians, through an adherence to our bush tea folklore, go on particular bushes and because some of the bushes give a bitter taste, they feel that the effect of the bitter taste on the sugar will so counteract matters within their metabolism, to relieve them of the problem of diabetes.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing about diabetes is that so complex it is, that we have to conclude that there are many different types of diabetes. One type, for example, arises when we look at the fact that many a diabetic is overweight. Therefore, we will come to the conclusion that being overweight is a factor in diabetes, but there are people in Barbados who are underweight, who are also diabetic, both Type 1 and Type 2.

Sir, in this culture, therefore, where we have the likes of Professor Inniss, Dr. Carlyle Goddard, Dr. Oscar Jordan and surgeons doing their utmost to help us control the problem, we need to encourage any other entity to do its utmost to help alleviate this problem.

The matter of the Diabetic Association of Barbados is one that we have to look at. The Diabetic Association of Barbados is very much self-supporting at the level of offering therapy, help and assistance to members and non-members as well, and their efforts have to be commended.

Sir, there are times where groups of laypersons who do things like group therapy, such that the support generated during group therapy is such that you lean on your neighbour for support.

Sir, I am saying that the Diabetic Association of Barbados has been doing its utmost against a background of scarce resources, to try to influence, not only members, but the wider society to treat the diabetics and to take diabetes extremely serious. Sir, it has to be taken seriously because in a situation where there is evolving evidence that the problem is going to multiply if not checked, we have to ensure as a country that we, especially those of us who wield influence and authority, are very much on board when it comes to dealing with a problem that is one of national concern. It is both a health issue from the point of view that it affects people's physiques, their physical composition, their anatomy, their metabolism, but it is also in a situation where our population is not increasing rapidly and where we might very well go into population decline within the next 20 years and have an ageing population.

Mr. Speaker, it is also a human resource problem. Sir, let me make the point as clearly as possible. It is a human resource problem, because if you take it that our population has stabilised at about 275 000 of the known population as our maximum population that is recorded.

There might very well be increments in the population that are unknown, or untested, but if our relatively stable population is ageing, then it raises issues as to what non-communicable diseases could affect persons in their old age, where these persons are still willing to make a contribution to society.

Mr. Speaker, what I am saying is that there could be people over age 60, who do not feel like retiring at 60 or 65, who would want to continue making a contribution and they themselves, considering their age, lifestyle, diets and such like, could themselves be victims of diabetes.

Sir, by the same token, where you have youngsters in the population who are going to grow up into responsible citizens in 10 or 15 years, and they are at risk, then if you take it that the risk factor affecting them

through diabetes is such that their lives are in peril, then a human resource problem evolves.

It means that unless we take aggressive and enlightened action to deal with the younger diabetics in Barbados, diabetes can actually kill off a lot of people in their prime. It can also prevent them from being able to work, from being able to support their families and from being able to contribute to national development.

Sir, we are dealing with a matter which has to be supported by all Honourable Members, but we are also dealing with a matter that has raised its head on the Floor of this Parliament at a very interesting time.

Sir, outside of diabetes, outside of hypertension, there are other illnesses, some communicable and some caused through incorrect lifestyles and through riskier behaviour, that can also impact on our human resources. Therefore, if you have, for example, a situation where hypertension by itself is affecting, let us say 30 000, where diabetes by itself is affecting, let us say between 45 000 and 50 000, a situation where diabetes and hypertension together are affecting 35 000, a situation where HIV/AIDS is relatively prevalent and is ripe and ready to crave serious national attention, if we look at other things, cancers, heart disease whether or not related to diabetes, we have to wake up to the reality that these various illnesses are threats to the health of our human resources initially, and ultimately since our human resources will not be able to contribute to building this great nation further, then we do have a problem with which we have to deal.

11.40 a.m.

Tuesday, August 07, 2009

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I am told that, at the moment, diabetes is incurable, but that it could be arrested, meaning that it cannot really go under the influence of any particular medication, but meaning that with the correct diet, exercise, care, rest and such like, it can very much be controlled and, Sir, there are other illnesses in this community like this. For example, not unrelated to diabetes is heavy drinking and a lot of very heavy drinkers end up being diabetics.

Sir, rum is particularly potent and the shift in attention now to vodka in Barbados, where a lot of Barbadians are drinking vodka, must also be looked at, because vodka, in my judgement, is as potent as rum. The similarity between vodka and white rum must be noted, certainly at the level of their colour and, I rather believe at the level of the effect on those that take it in excess for, Sir, the Book of Proverbs tells us that wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging and he who is deceived by it is not wise.

Mr. Speaker, only recently a medical person was telling me that they were treating a diabetic person. He was brought in for emergency care and his mantra throughout the treatment was: "When are you letting me out of here to go and drink a rum?". Sir, he is diabetic already, but so addicted is he to other behaviours, that his curiosity was not whether he was going to be well enough to be able day-by-day to lead a normal life, but his curiosity was about when he would get out to drink a rum.

Mr. Speaker, it reminds me of something I saw in the Law Courts once. This chap was charged for indecently exposing himself in the market and evidence was that he had a pint-and-a-half bottle of rum, was drinking it and it made him do what he did. Sir, on the day of the case, after the Court heard the case, when he was asked if he had anything to ask the Court, his sole question was what had been done with the rum which has been taken from him.

Asides.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Sir, we laugh at these things from time to time, but the truth about it is that diet and lifestyle can affect diabetes. Sir, I am going to repeat, that in a culture known for the quality of its rum and known for the quantity of the rum devoured, or consumed, there is definitely no doubt that the good Professor Dr. Henniss and the good physician Dr. Carlisle Goddard, be sensitised to the fact that a component in diabetes is heavy and excessive drinking.

Sir, I am a layman, I am not a scientist but, apparently, there are deleterious effects to the pancreas when one exposes the pancreas to copious quantities of alcohol and so, therefore, a word to the wise is enough. Let us in Barbados enjoy ourselves, let us work, let us play, but let us also bear in mind that there are habits that we have and behaviours that we practise which could have very serious effects on our health, and which could have very serious effects on this country.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot have a situation where persons who are known to be fit and proper candidates for prevention and not practise prevention. Sir, the old people in Barbados say that prevention is better than cure. I am sure that the Honourable Member for Christ Church West would tell you that a lot of illnesses are preventable and the old time adage "Prevention is better than cure," applies so much, so that a segment of Barbadian society is sensitive, notwithstanding all that I have said to the question of diabetes and hypertension, so much so, that increasingly more and more people are seen around the Gymnasium on mornings and evenings exercising, or sometimes exercising within the Gymnasium.

There are people who go around the Garrison every day, there are people, including politicians, who get up

early and exercise, and there are those who are doing their best to make sure that the exercise part of the attack on diabetes is practised.

Mr. Speaker, exercise is important and the most obvious reason for it is, that a diabetic exercising, or a non-diabetic, which is at risk exercising, will in the short-term increase circulation and, I am very well-advised by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, that the increase in circulation would help stave off the disease. The increase in exercise could very well bring you to a body weight where the body weight makes the pancreas less likely to be impacted severely on, if over-weight would have been a factor.

Mr. Speaker, there are those who do their utmost to test themselves. Sir, testing yourself by sticking yourself and putting it through a process to determine the level of blood, is not a very pleasant thing and we have to hope that technology improves.

There is a machine available in the United States of America and beyond, which does not involve pricking the diabetic to take blood that way. It involves a process where there is no sticking, or no pricking but, unfortunately, the medical evidence is that it works for Caucasian, but not for those of us who are of the Negroid race, so further research has to be done.

Asides.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Sir, it is a fact that there is this machine replacing the ordinary glucometer that sticks you and this machine could be put on you and could read your blood sugar, but it has not yet been developed well enough to cater to black people.

Sir, in the world of health and medicine, there are particular diseases, which seem to threaten black people more than Caucasians, and I rather apprehend that in a culture of 270 white people compared with a culture of 270 black people, the incidence of diabetes among the blacks could very well be higher than among the whites.

Mr. Speaker, I could also get a situation where there are other illnesses that could affect the blacks. I rather think that sickle cell anemia could be one of these things and we are having problems there among young people as well and, Sir, sickle cell anemia, like diabetes, is opportunistic.

Sir, without straying too far off the topic, one of the problems with treating sickle-cell anemia is that there is therapy for sickle-cell anemia. That therapy is highly addicted and there are people who should be taking this tablet, who find that they crave the tablet. If the Honourable Member for St. James South is prepared to rise on a point of order and explain what it is, I will sit down

and let him rise on a point of order to explain to me what is the name of that tablet that sickle-cell people have to use, which is highly addicted and which would then see the sickle-cell person becoming victim of two diseases, the sickle-cell anemia and then addiction by prescribed drugs.

Sir, this is another area which also has bearing on national health and bearing on diabetes, the question of particular forms of medicinal and chemical therapies, which are actually habit-forming and addicted and which could threaten our human resources.

Mr. Speaker, the effort of the Diabetic Association must be commended and the efforts of those Barbadians who practise safe diets must be commended. Sir, the fact is that many people in Barbados live long years, 70 years, 80 years and 90 years, on yams, eddoes and sweet potatoes as opposed to macaroni pie, macaroni, corned beef and such like.

Sir, I am sorry the Honourable Member for St. Philip West is not here, but Sir, it would seem to me, especially in the light of some medical evidence, that old fashioned stew food with yams, sweet potatoes, breadfruit and such like can prove a better diet for a Barbadian black than ultra modern things that we never used to know.

H/A44/11.50 a.m. Sequence 11

Friday, August 7, 2009

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: I first became familiar with macaroni boiled in soup, many years ago. In my youth growing up I never used to see anything called macaroni pie. Now, that has become, regrettably, the national dish. Some people claimed that the reason for it is, that we in such a stressful busy age, are too busy to spend time cooking, so we go for a fast food in our own house, namely, boil some macaroni, grater some cheese, blend the two, and you have a diet.

Unfortunately, those little fat boys and girls I see going to our primary schools are falling victim to a diet, which itself seems to be so well established and so habit forming, to tell their parents to withdraw those diets and put the children on yams, sweet potatoes, tannia eddoes and breadfruit, would be to insult the intelligence of the parents, in the parents' own mind.

Sir, cassava, apparently has excellent therapeutic value, and it is a fit and proper candidate for further research. I am going to support the Honourable Member for St. James South in his call for further research.

Sir, the University of the West Indies has performed brilliantly in terms of producing high-quality graduates, but the University of the West Indies has to get itself involved

in research in Barbados and the wider Caribbean in a situation where, as we go global, and as we liberalise, there could be opportunistic colleges and universities, abroad, that would want to come in here, charge us high consultancy fees, high fees for research, and come up with findings which ourselves could have produced if we had been given the opportunity, through the good offices of our great alma mater, the University of the West Indies.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have two minutes in which to wind up, please.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: We have come to the stage where we have to literally join hands in every effort to deal with diabetes and other non communicable diseases.

With those few words, I thank you, and I am most deeply obliged to you.

Thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Sir, I rise in support of this Resolution to approve the lease from the Crown to support the construction of a building by the Barbados Diabetes Foundation. I congratulate wholeheartedly the swift way in which this current Administration has dealt with this matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I can barely hear you. Could you raise your volume a bit, or is it because my good friend on my right was speaking? I can barely hear the Member.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Sir, as I said, I am congratulating this Administration for moving so swiftly, to ensure that this bold initiative is supported and facilitated by the Government. As I understand it, this matter has been delayed for over six to eight years, when the Maria Holder Foundation had made available millions of pounds sterling to the Barbados Diabetes Foundation towards the construction of this building, but the bureaucracy and inefficiency of the Barbados Labour Party Administration had this matter pending for over six years. Therefore, I congratulate this Democratic Labour Party Government for taking the bull by the horns, to ensure that these millions of pounds sterling were not lost to us.

As I understand it, the Maria Holder Foundation was rather concerned that the funds were approved for years and it was about to lapse. I really congratulate this Administration for efficiently managing the affairs of our country, to ensure that this very important initiative to deal with this chronic non-communicable disease, diabetes, that affects so many Barbadians, is dealt with so expeditiously.

It calls for firm leadership and this is what this Democratic Labour Party Administration is providing to the people of our country.

Sir, I would like to congratulate the Barbados Diabetes Foundation. I note that within their membership you have Caucasians, blacks and others, and I know that their work has been ongoing in terms of educating the public.

I remember, Mr. Grace, I believe that is his name, featured on television with Peter Edey's cooking show, demonstrated to the public the types of foods that one should consume that would not predispose one to developing diabetes. I know the Barbados Diabetes Foundation works closely with the Ministry of Health, and other health providers, to ensure that at the Health Fairs and other events, be it Crop Over events, or other events, Healthy Lifestyle Fairs, at Queens Park, and so on, that a booth is manned where people can get their blood sugar tested, leaflets and education are provided in terms of managing diabetes and lifestyle changes to reduce the likelihood of developing diabetes.

Sir, they must be congratulated and supported. I look forward to this Administration working even more closely with them, to deliver to the public care in relation to diabetes education, and so on.

Sir, this costs money. The Government will step in. Again, as the Honourable Member for St. James South, the Honourable Minister of Health, mentioned that philanthropy must be encouraged. I know, for example, St. Paul's Church, within the Constituency of the City of Bridgetown, through their Annual Fiesta, at least 10 per cent of the proceeds of this Fiesta Fair has been given to charities. Over the last three years, the Barbados Diabetes Foundation has been a recipient of this funding. I know this has gone a long way, and I encourage other benevolent agencies within our countries, to assist the Barbados Diabetes Foundation in their work. Sir, when this money was presented to the St. Paul's Church, a senior member of the Barbados Diabetes Foundation, a retired Senior Fire Officer was there advancing the work of the Barbados Diabetes Foundation.

As Honourable Members mentioned earlier, for example, the Honourable Member for St. James North talked about foodstuff. I agree that in recent years many Barbadians found macaroni very tasty. Macaroni Pie is now a national dish, and you have the derivatives, spaghetti, lasagna, and so on, a lot of these imported from Europe and so on, but these, as I understand it, these processed foods, high in refined sugar, create greater strain on the body and increase the likelihood of developing diabetes, whereas the natural glucose, fructose, and other sugars found in foodstuff, ground provision, such as yams,

eddoes, dasheen, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, honey, and so on, are less harmful to the body, as opposed to the refined sugar and must be considered.

Sir, we have to look at the whole worldwide economic business culture. Sir, as you may know, in the 1970s and 1980s, as people became more health-conscious, the issue of fat-free foods became prevalent. Researchers found out that food high in fat were dangerous to our health, so many food manufacturers would promote their foodstuff low in fat, so you will hear fat-free.

Sir, many of them substituted that fat with a high amount of sugar, sweet refined sugar, and many of these foods are marketed to children, so you had millions of dollars spent, and this continues around the world, in the media, television, Internet, Billboards, attractive jingles and ads appealing to the children's taste buds. These foods are high in refined sugar, so they are fat-free, but loaded with sugar, and many people consume them, especially children, and end up being obese and developing diabetes.

We must be careful as a nation to promote proper diet and to be aware of these sorts of tricks of the trade, as it were, that many retailers who are just concerned, in the final analysis with the profit motive, these regimes would engage in to market their products, and they are not worried about the health implications. The buying public must be aware of this.

H A44 12:00 noon Sequence 12

Friday, August 07, 2009

House A44, Sequence 13, 12.00 p.m.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Sir, as I said before, I am happy that members of the School Meals Department, within the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, have met with the food promotion officers, like Mrs. Marion Hart, the BAS and others, to get more local ground provisions being used, such as breadfruit, or sweet potato, rather than macaroni that would not be so healthy for these young people.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to this initiative bringing more income to the farmers in Barbados, as opposed to importing the processed foods from abroad, saving foreign exchange in the process. Therefore, this is an integrated approach to proper health management, but ensuring that we have local production being encouraged, and supported by the Government.

Mr. Speaker, regarding the issue of soft drinks, it is only in recent years, I realised that all soft drinks are not the same in terms of sugar content. I would not call any particular brand, but I have found that by reading the label,

in terms of the nutritional content of the foods we consume, I saw that ginger ale has the lowest sugar content of all the soft drinks that we have on the market. Sir, you may have another flavour of soft drink, but having almost 100 per cent more sugar than ginger ale, and we should be aware of this, because scientists have shown that the consumption of these soft drinks on a daily basis, with all of that refined sugar, again increases the likelihood of developing diabetes.

Mr. Speaker, I am not saying that we should not drink soft drinks. The whole issue is that everything should be taken in moderation. I like a little soft drink, because honestly, it tends to break the air. If I stay hungry for a long period, I develop a little air and get a headache, but I find that a little soft drink breaks the air. As the old people say, there are some people who do not take breakfast, but if I do not get a little hot tea, or a little carbonated beverage for breakfast, and I just eat bread, it would bag the air in your stomach. Therefore, I take a little soft drink from time to time, but in moderation.

Mr. Speaker, I am not trying to hurt the soft drink industry, but I am saying that we should be responsible and ensure that we take everything in moderation. Therefore a soft drink, once in a while, not to overdo it, is what we are saying.

Mr. Speaker, the diet is very important, so we should not play it down, because we are seeing more and more people being obese. All of us have to watch our weight, including your humble servant, because scientists argue that the weight for men, the fat around the stomach area is most dangerous because it can bring pressure on those vital organs in that area.

Mr. Speaker, one Honourable Member talked about alcohol consumption. Many people would say that they do not eat very much food, but they drink a lot of alcohol. In fact, I was introduced to a very exciting club over the Crop Over weekend, and I love it. Sir, you pay \$20 and you could get all the beer you want, until 3:00 o'clock in the morning. I had a couple, myself, just one or two because I never got drunk and I do not plan to either. I always say I want to remember all good experiences that I have, so I do not want to be so drunk that the next day I do not remember how good it was.

Mr. Speaker, I could understand that with this drinks free promotion, where people could consume drinks free up to whatever, they could engage in binge drinking, of course, get drunk and end up hurting themselves or others on the road, and this must not be encouraged.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of this specific issue of diabetes, the scientists have argued that excessive alcohol consumed can actually convert to sugar, thus we get the

traditional beer belly that some of us end up with by drinking too much. Again, we should not promote excess consumption of alcohol, because we end up with diabetes.

Mr. Speaker, these are serious issues that we have to look at, and this may be a cultural reaction, that we grow accustomed to certain behavioural patterns and we think that it is okay. We say, it is cool, it is part of our culture, but we realise that it is not healthy, and it could be deleterious to our health.

Mr. Speaker, the children are the future of our country and we must start them off on the right path. Therefore, any negative lifestyles that we have, we have to change. We must be agents for change, but positive change. The sedentary lifestyle that many of us live in modern times, is something that is of concern to me. Also the creature comforts, such as the computer, so it is a status symbol.

We all have the latest computer hardware in our offices, even if we do not know how to use them too well, but we have the computer there and those who use the computer - I am not frowning on computer technology, this is important - but from the youngest person to the oldest person, spends so many of our daylight hours in front of the computer terminal, surfing the net, playing the video games, so the children do not have as much time as we did as children, Mr. Speaker, to play marble cricket, beach cricket, rounders, hopscotch, hide-and-seek, and even skip, all these different games that the young people would have played in earlier times, which gave us exercise.

Mr. Speaker, I was a goalkeeper in my time at Lodge School, with you. I was a distance runner, running cross country and an all-rounder, that kept your humble servant, yourself Mr. Speaker, and others fit. Now, many of the younger people do not find time for this, so now boys do not want to get sweaty because the girls may not find them attractive. Sir, scientists would argue that those natural chemicals, produced by perspiration that makes a man a man, are sort of intrinsically attractive to the feminine in terms of instinct, so that boys should not feel that it is not a manly thing to work up a sweat, and should get engaged in the athletics. Girls as well, play your netball and the boys will still find you a lady. Sir, we must promote exercise.

Mr. Speaker, I remember going on a Safari Tour and where you go around in the nature trails, and we ended up by Malvern Great House in St. John, and the guide showed us a great plantation house there, and he told us to notice that the stables are at the front of the property. It is an old historic building.

What happened back in those days before the creation of the automobile, is that the more horses you had, the more affluent you were, so here it was that these

plantation owners wanted to show off to the world how many horses they had, so they had these smelly horses with all of their stool in the front of the property, whereas they should be in the back.

Mr. Speaker, the point I am making is that, nowadays, how many vehicles you have, is a status symbol. Therefore, so many people stop me when I walk from Reed Street to the Ministry to get to work, getting that good exercise, keeping down the tummy, and people are upset saying, you should be driving a posh car, just a few metres to get to work. Therefore, you want to go to the mini mart to get some bread, 300 metres down the road, you have to get into your car and show everybody that you are big-up. Mr. Speaker, I am saying to put down the car every once and a while and walk, run and even dance.

Mr. Speaker, I danced a lot over the Crop Over period, and got that good cardiovascular exercise. In the tele-classifieds, you see on Channel 8 after the regular programming is ended, some keep fit packages, where these people actually have programmes in which the participants engage in heavy cardiovascular work out, dancing, American Hip Hop. Sir, you would be surprised how many muscles you are actually exercising by dancing. Therefore, it is very therapeutic and relaxing. It does not become a chore and it is enjoyable and you are motivated to persist, while keeping down the weight. Therefore, dancing, Mr. Speaker, I make no objections to wukking up, not in a vulgar way, but it is part of our culture and we are dancing, relaxing and keeping fit.

Mr. Speaker, even within the Pentecostal Churches I notice the young people now are using the idiom of the Reggae and Hip Hop, where you see those young people dancing, but dancing in a way that is fulfilling to the Lord, again getting the exercise. Therefore, there is nothing shameful to dance and get some good exercise in the process.

House A44, Sequence 13, 12.10 p.m.

Friday, August 07, 2009

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: We are promoting healthy lifestyles to reduce the incidence of diabetes because it is a chronic non-communicable disease that transcends race. I have been to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and seen people of East Indian extraction, Caucasians and blacks with limbs off. It is a disease that affects all of us. It is a very serious disease that Barbadians are very prone to, so we must look very seriously at our lifestyle.

Mr. Speaker, we produce sugar. Barbadians like a lot of sugar. The sugar cakes, the fudge and the tamarind balls are loaded with sugar and they are tasty. Those are part of our culture, but it does not mean that we have to eat so

much sugar cakes that we fall sick from the excess sugar. We should eat a little as opposed to too much. In fact, the professionals say that you should eat less portions more often. I am speaking to myself, Mr. Speaker. We should eat small quantities more often with lots of leafy vegetables as opposed to the carbohydrates that would increase the blood sugar levels in our body.

Mr. Speaker, many people are too busy. They rush out to work, to school, or what have you without having any breakfast at all and they feel good, but then during the day they get the air, or what have you, and they then eat a very heavy meal. Mr. Speaker, when you stay hungry for a long time, your body gets that innate feeling that you are starving, so you want to consume more food than you should because you are not sure when the next meal is coming.

Mr. Speaker, the experts are urging us to make sure we find the time to have breakfast which should consist of whole grain. We eat a lot of white flour, but whole wheat flour is better. I tend to eat as much whole wheat products as possible. I understand that the multi grain products that are available by some bakeries are even better.

Mr. Speaker, these are issues that we have to take very seriously and not frown upon them. We need to educate the public because sugar is sweet, and many people would find it very difficult to deny themselves the pleasures because it gives a euphoric feeling. When you eat, you feel good. It is a pleasure that many people seek to derive. The taste buds are very powerful and, therefore, we must be very careful and reduce the number of occasions in which we take dessert. It is only recently that I have been really eating dessert. I have made a pledge that I will take dessert no more than once a month.

Mr. Speaker, many working-class people cannot afford dessert, so they remain slim. They go and play football. They are poor, but they are fit. However, as we become more affluent, we go to all the cocktail receptions where hors d'oeuvres and desserts are available. When we have lunch today, we will all have dessert, but I would not take any dessert today because it is too much sugar. We have to be disciplined in this regard, because all of this refined sugar is increasing our blood sugar and our likelihood of coming down with diabetes.

Asides.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: This is no joke, Mr. Speaker, and it must be a personal decision that we must buy into in order to improve our health, and to be role models for the children who would be emulating our every move.

Mr. Speaker, diabetes is a very serious disease. As other Honourable Members mentioned, diabetes affects many of our organs, the liver, the kidneys and the heart.

Mr. Speaker, the late Don Norville, the former Press Secretary to the late Right Excellent Errol Barrow and leading football referee and so on, God rest him in his grave, was one of the first heart bypass patients in Barbados. A few nights before he had the operation, he said that the guys were trying out and he is hoping for the best. As I understand it, the bypass surgery was successful, but he succumbed because the body was weakened by his diabetes, heart, and so on.

Mr. Speaker, diabetes is a very personal issue that many of us can identify with. Those people who have a family history of diabetes must be extremely vigilant. That does not mean that the rest of us can rest on our laurels because if we adopt this unhealthy lifestyle, any of us can succumb.

As other Honourable Members have mentioned, this disease can reduce the ability of the central nervous system to perform effectively, therefore, many people are unable to sense pain and this creates a tremendous problem because people can get, as we say in Barbados, a “nail juck” and it would take a few days before they realised they have been punctured, and by that time, the wound has become infected and this leads to amputations.

Mr. Speaker, we also must be very vigilant when it comes to foot care. We need to make sure that our shoes are not too tight, or too loosely fitting, which is just as bad. Mr. Speaker, there are not many podiatrists in Barbados, so we need to encourage more people to study these fields and come back to Barbados after they graduate to develop our country to ensure that health care in this particular area is properly serviced.

Mr. Speaker, these podiatrists can engage in simple issue like cutting off toe nails. The toe nails of the older folks get hard, and so if they go taking a normal scissor to cut them - they may be getting blind as a result of diabetes, cataract and glaucoma - they might cut too close to the flesh which could then rapidly become infected and could lead first to amputation of the toes, then the feet and then right up to the knee, or higher.

Mr. Speaker, we have to have a comprehensive health care, which augment the quality of our national health service, therefore I look forward to this building being constructed where many of these services in relation to diabetes can be located at one venue. Sir, I again congratulate the Government for taking this bold initiative to support this laudable cause.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. James North spoke about bush tea and so on. I am no bush doctor, but I would caution that the whole issue of supplementation is an issue that we have to look at seriously, because many people cannot afford the leafy vegetables in the quantities that I mentioned due to the cost, but might be able to afford a very good organic supplement.

All supplements are not the same. Some are cheap and filled with inferior padding which is brought on the world market, but there are some out there that pride themselves of a high quality in using organic ingredients, be it the acerola cherry, the parsley, the carrots, the lettuces and so on that are grown on organic farms without any pesticides and fertilisers.

These ingredients are kept freshly packaged in these supplements, and the quality of the product is well-known and beneficial to the health of the person, but these supplements are not the ideal thing. The best thing would be the actual naturally grown products, but the supplements can augment the deficiencies within the diet, and so, can help to improve the quality of life and mitigate against these chronic diseases.

Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, herbal medicine was part of the curriculum of the European medical schools and others for many years, and the United States of America and other places are now catching up. There are some doctors, I understand, who frown on supplementation, who said that supplements are a waste of time, but around the world it is globally accepted that supplements help.

Mr. Speaker, antioxidants, such as Vitamin C and Vitamin E, are powerful agents that fight the free radicals that build up in our bodies that can be deleterious to our health. Mr. Speaker, even exercise can create free radicals, so the antioxidants that we consume in terms of our natural source of Vitamin C can help to fight off the damaging effects of free radicals on our body, so I laud those who do research in these areas.

House A44 Sequence 14 12.20 p.m.

Tuesday, August 07, 2009

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have three minutes in which to wind up.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Speaker, I understand, for example, the supplement promium, it is argued that people who have a predisposition or family history of diabetes should be on promium supplements for the rest of their lives because promium helps in terms of reducing the ill effects of diabetes on the body. It also has an additional effect of suppressing the appetite.

Mr. Speaker, these are issues that many people may not be aware of and so, I encourage people to go on the Internet and to do the research, so that they can be well-informed about the benefits of supplements.

Mr. Speaker, I remember listening to a reality show with Invader No. 3 and Dr. Gaskin on our radio station in the last few years, where he is convinced about a trait G6-pd, some sort of trait that they have found in Africans in particular. They found that this can predispose people to diabetes. His research has found that with the advent of a heavy consumption of wheat in the last century, more and more people are suffering from diabetes and so they are discouraging the heavy usage of wheat and wheat-based products, for example, macaroni pie and white bread. Therefore, we have to do the research.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would just encourage that with the construction of the Headquarters of the Barbados Diabetes Foundation at Warrens, we must make sure that enough transportation is provided for these persons, as there are many working-class persons who need transportation to get to Warrens. Therefore, here is where benefactors would be necessary to ensure that the Diabetes Foundation can get additional buses and maybe, we may have to have the Transport Board increasing the bus service in that area. Warrens is a growing town and this would blend in well with the developments in that corridor.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you and encourage Barbadians to eat healthily, eat less, exercise more, so that we all can live a longer life, that we can become more productive citizens in this country and, therefore, reduce the national health bill, in terms of reduction in the complications arising from diabetes.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

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

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, this debate goes very far back and it is very far-reaching. It goes back to the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party as far back as the 1960s.

Sir, the gentleman that we all acknowledged as one of the greatest politicians who has ever walked this earth, had the foresight of putting in a Manifesto the importance of having a shoe factory in Barbados.

The inclusion of that in the Manifesto had created a lot of laughter and criticism. I believe that he has gone to the Great Beyond regretting that he has never been able to fulfil that obligation, because he could not find somebody who understood the importance of having a shoe factory in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, you might ask what does this have to do with this debate. Sir, if one looks at the type of shoes imported into Barbados, one would recognise that they were imported, but never for people like us. Those shoes were always tight, which created problems with blood circulation, et cetera.

I think the foresight of that person has recognised that persons who were affected with diseases such as diabetes, needed to have a shoe that was compatible with their condition. That gentleman understood quite well, because he always had a personal love for people. He recognised, as far back then, that it was very important to have a shoe factory in Barbados to cater to the people of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I always want to say - and this is reflective and can be found in the Records of this Parliament - that I also said that we have a way of criticising people very quickly, but we never look to see the positiveness, or negativeness out of that situation. Sir, in other words, we are very quick to criticise the young people of Barbados for wearing big shoes, big shirts, big pants, but we do not recognise that when the young people are wearing those types of clothes, they are not creating problems for themselves as it relates to blood circulation.

Sir, we admire people, especially most men, when they see a woman wearing tight pants, tight shirts and blouses, while not recognising that these women are creating health problems for themselves. We criticise the young people for the big clothes they are wearing. I am not saying that they might not be wearing them for the right reason, but the important thing is that they are doing something beneficial to themselves, though they might not recognise that fact. Mr. Speaker, I am saying we have to recognise that this organisation is offering something beneficial to our people, and I am happy for that..

Mr. Speaker, what I am also very proud about is to recognise the fact that this matter went before Cabinet on July 9 and by July 16, the Surveys Department was able to provide a plan for the construction of this facility at Warrens. Sir, this means that the Cabinet of Barbados has demonstrated the seriousness of this matter and has ensured that less than a week after making the decision, they were able to notify the Government Departments and that the Government Department acted post-haste.

Mr. Speaker, we are always talking about how long it takes various Government Departments to act, but the evidence is here, that at least there are some Government departments that understand the national good and will act post-haste and deliver.

Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the Minister for getting his Department to act so quickly on such a matter as

serious as this. Sir, not only did the Government Department act quickly, but also the Parliament of Barbados, because less than one month after, we are here debating this Resolution and ensuring that the Diabetes Association of Barbados cannot accuse Government, or the civil servants of Barbados of lapsing on this particular matter.

Mr. Speaker, I am not reflecting on your judgment, but I want to say that sometimes we come to this Parliament and pass Laws and that we sometimes have to be careful what we do. After criticising a Party for wanting to construct a shoe factory, one could not understand why another Party would change the Education Act, so that we could have something called co-education, and stop the young men in Barbados from being healthy.

Sir, there is no doubt when you were at school, it was compulsory for you to be out on the playing field, running around at least twice a week. You would have had no choice in the matter, because Physical Education (PE) was a subject but with coeducation, we have recognised that PE is no longer a subject but that anything relating to PE is now optional.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying I have always been against co-education. I have always said it is a waste of money and now not only is it a waste of money, it is clear that it has created unhealthiness in this country. Sir, for example, Coleridge and Parry was an all-boys school and with only one set of bathrooms. Sir, with co-education we had to use valuable resources to build additional bathrooms to accommodate girls. We had to build netball fields. Sir, the amazing thing is that all of those things could have been found at Alexandra School, which was all-girls school.

Sir, there was no need in Barbados for coeducation, that is why there are so many people now suffering from diabetes in Barbados, because they are not exercising the way they should. Sir, the young men do not want to sweat, nor to be smelling themselves and so, they stay in the classrooms so that they can ensure that the cologne they use, which is not good for them, is sprayed on regularly, in order to attract the young ladies.

Mr. Speaker, we have to recognised that fact.

12.30 p.m.

Tuesday, August 07, 2009

His Excellency D. St.E. ELLMAN: Sir, we are seeing some changes in this country where now, because of stress and the types of lifestyles that people have, people are now moving towards fast food outlets to ensure they get their meals and some people are even going to these fast food outlets for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Mr. Speaker, we need to understand that nothing is wrong with that. I am going to criticise those young business persons who recognise this need, and those who have recognised that this is now a big industry in this country, because previously, it was an industry for a “too-few”, but I recognise that as soon as the masses got involved, people felt that lunch and things like that was the worse thing that could be purchased but, Sir, I disagree, because it allows you to maximise your time.

Mr. Speaker, those persons who are providing the service should recognise that it should be an optional service. Sir, Bajans like a lot of fried foods, but this is not good for you, especially those who suffer from diabetes, et cetera. I am saying that nothing is wrong with foods that are boiled, steamed, or grilled because there should always be an alternative. Sir, when someone comes to purchase fried foods, I believe that it should be mandatory that you explain to them what they are asking for and also offer them the alternative.

Mr. Speaker, even eating habits, we are so busy now that sometimes we forget when we have to eat, which is a very serious matter. Sir, we are such copycats that we have now copied all the eating habits and the menus from overseas, and have now put down all the good qualities that were instilled in us by our foreparents, and now we believe that once we have seen something on television, that it is good without realising that the medication is being manufactured overseas, and that it is in the interest of them to provide the food so that when you have the medical problem, that they could have another company to ensure that they remain in business.

Mr. Speaker, when you offer someone a piece of breadfruit, a piece of cassava, or good sweet potato, they tell you they do not eat those things, and when you ask them what they want, they tell you they want macaroni pie. Sir, if I may say this, the worst thing in the world is macaroni pie. If you think about the combination, you have macaroni, which is not good and you have cheese which is even worse. I do not know why people cannot understand that things like green bananas, eddoes, cassava, bread fruit, sweet potato, yams, with flying fish on the side and broccoli are good. I would not have to convince the clerk of the House about these things because the Clerk of the House is not part of this debate and I cannot convince him because he knows already.

Mr. Speaker, we have to understand that we too are creating the problems. It is true that some of us might have been affected because some of us work so hard, that sometimes we do not remember that we have not eaten, and some of us create stress also for ourselves and that too could influence medical problems, et cetera.

Mr. Speaker, it is not what you suffer from, it is the appreciation of what you are suffering from and your ability to react to what you are suffering from and, ensure that you put corrective measures in place to enhance your life.

Mr. Speaker, as I have said, I am not going to speak too long on this, but I want to say that we too have to recognise that we must go back to renewable eating, because these days we like to talk a lot about renewable, and we believe that we are getting something that is new. Sir, you cannot renew something if it is new, so when I hear people say that they have something new and that we are going to renewable energy, when you look at it, we are only going back to what our foreparents did.

Sir, if we are going to do it for energy, we also have to do it for the real energy that we put inside ourselves and appreciate that what those old persons did, that there was natural commonsense to it and that, today, we are not expanding our lives, we are destroying our lives by copying the habits of others.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 1.40 p.m.

Hon. F. J. STUART: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 1.40 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

H/A44/12.36 p.m. Sequence 16

Friday, August 7, 2009

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

The Honourable Member for St. George North.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Sir, I want to say a few words on this important Resolution. It is important because, as all Honourable Members have said, the incidence of diabetes is very real in Barbados and we on Both Sides of the House have acknowledged the fact that we spend a considerable sum of money annually to protect our citizens. However, over the past 20 years Barbados, and Barbadians at large, suffered tremendously from this disease. Despite the

amount of money spent, and despite the amount of research every year, Barbadians seem not to see the picture and it continues over and over, with no end in sight.

I believe that the Barbados Diabetes Foundation and the Diabetes Clinic have done a lot of work in this field. I want to single out two important doctors who have worked tirelessly on behalf of this Foundation, and who have done yeoman service for the Foundation, creating an atmosphere, and also raising a lot of money and awareness in the fight against the disease. I want to make the point that Dr. Oscar Jordan and Dr. Liviston Forde, these two doctors have spent a number of years in this field, and have tried their best to alert and educate Barbadians, and indeed the Caribbean.

H A44 1.50 p.m. Sequence 17

Friday, August 07, 2009

House A44, Sequence 18, 1.50 p.m.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: They have fought tirelessly on behalf of the Foundation. They have done a lot of work, and I believe sometimes their talking and their education have gone a long way, but we still have to do more. I was involved as the Minister of Housing in the previous Government, in the establishment of the Foundation at Henry's Lane and also at the Enmore Centre. I know the amount of work that would have gone on in establishing the Foundation and in helping to make life better for those persons who have been diagnosed with diabetes.

We are aware, because we have heard from Members who have spoken today about the problems associated with the disease, how people's standard of life and living have deteriorated to such an extent and, sometimes, it is unbearable. I want to make the point too, what I heard Honourable Members say today about the incidence of diabetes. We have heard about the two types of diabetes.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the whole question of family history is important. If your family has a history of diabetes, the real chance of you becoming diabetic is there. Mr. Speaker, I know there are cases where persons have sweets as the Honourable Member for City has pointed out, yet they have no diabetes.

Mr. Speaker, in my Constituency, I have a gentleman who would be celebrating his 100th birthday, within the next couple of days. He has not only lived a long life but he has eaten well, including the sugar that the Honourable Member for City talked about, but he is not known to have any diabetes, or hypertension. He has no chronic disease at age 99 and soon he will be age 100.

Also, in the Constituency of St. George South, another gentleman, Mr. Sisnett will be celebrating his 108-year-old birthday. He has eaten well and he has no disease. Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear from the medical people, if hereditary plays more of a part than the lifestyle.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that hereditary is, or maybe the major factor. I recall going to a doctor some years ago, and the first question he asked me, what is your family history? Sir, your family history is important. My family suffers more from hypertension and high blood pressure. The doctor, who was old at the time, said to me that the chances of my becoming hypertension are real. My mother died of a stroke. He said that it is real, and you have to be very careful with your family history. I believe that more and more persons need to know the history of their family. Some diseases are not by chance.

Mr. Speaker, once you know your family history, you could adjust your lifestyle to help combat the incidence of these various diseases. Sir, successive Governments, since Independence, have spent considerable sums of money on the health service. Sometimes we wonder what is happening to the money that we spend in the Barbados Drug Service for these various diseases.

Sir, we are fortunate in Barbados to have a society where we spend a lot of money on health service. It is not so in other Caribbean territories. It is not so, even in some of the developed world. In the developed world, the United States of America, in particular, even though you may have a health service in place, and even though you may have a health service in Canada that is supposed to be one of the best in the world, yet, persons do not enjoy a free drug service as we do in Barbados. Barbados is the only country in the world where you get drugs for chronic diseases. We sometimes take these things for granted, but it is important that the public knows that these things cost money and we have to guard ourselves against these diseases.

I know that even in the United States of America today, they are trying to get a health service, something we have and had for a long time. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we have to be proud of what is happening in Barbados, especially what the Diabetes Association is doing in terms of research, education and helping to protect our citizens, but in the final analysis, I think everyone needs to be aware of their family history. Therefore it is not only about saying to people, as the Honourable Member for the City was trying to point out today, not to eat sweets or carbohydrates.

I recall, Mr. Speaker, living in North America a couple of years ago, and I could not help, but being astonished at the various companies when it came to certain promotions for the eating of eggs, hotdogs and all types of animal fat. When it pleases them, the promoters

would say not to eat this, or that, so that you have on one side, persons saying not to eat this, but eat that. Then, another decade would come and people would say that I think you could eat eggs now, or you can eat hotdogs, or you can eat animal fat, or certain vegetables and so on, and the list goes on and on, but nobody knows for certain, if these things would work. Sir, we hear people who are into exercise would say that you must walk six miles a day every day, like the Honourable Member for St. George South. I have walked behind her and admired how she walked.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Six miles a day. I could not catch her because she is always walking very briskly, but you have to admire the way she walks.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, recently I spoke to an elderly gentleman and he said to me that he used to walk every day with his wife. One day he said to his wife, you know I realise that every morning we leave home at 5:00 o'clock to walk and something you have not seen that I have seen. Those persons who are walking are either walking with tools in their hands, or something on their backs, but they are going to work, they are going somewhere. Where are we really going? We are not going anywhere and you know something, as from tomorrow, I am not walking anywhere because I am not going anywhere. I am finished walking. I retire.

House A44, Sequence 18, 2.00 p.m.

Friday, August 07, 2009

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Sir, he goes into his garden and works every day. He looks after his pigs every day, toils in the sun every day and he is still alive, but some of those persons who were walking 6, 10 and 12 miles per day have gone to the great beyond.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the doctors are not sure if it is exercising, or the food you intake. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that it has to do with your family history. Mr. Speaker, if your family has a history of hypertension and diabetes, chances of you becoming diabetic is real. You have no choice, or very little choice in the matter, so you have to then look at what you can do to combat this disease. Therefore, we have to do a lot in this country. We have to continue to educate the population, but I believe that the final analysis has to do with what we know about ourselves, and the consumption of all of this food.

Mr. Speaker, I heard one Honourable Member say that we must look at our intake. I think Barbadians eat too much food. One day on the Harbour Master - I spoke to Honourable Members about this - I saw a guy put more food on the plate than it could hold, a lot of rice, carbohydrates, macaroni pie and all types of meats.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: We know the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown could eat. We have to eat it on Both Sides. He walks. He does not do any gardening. He is not a farmer, but he walks from home to work sometimes, which is important.

Mr. Speaker, the Chinese have a proverb which says that those persons who get up in the morning out of their warm bed and walk 10 miles a day for 30 years may only live 10 per cent more than a person who does not, and may live in misery with all these types of diseases than a person who relaxes in his bed, does not walk and enjoy life by eating the various meats and things. Mr. Speaker, we have a variety of opinions of persons.

Mr. Speaker, by reading and listening to the various health personnel across the world, you get all types of insights. It depends on the individual. Some persons are into exercise, some are into diets and some are into hereditary medicine, so it depends on the individual. Mr. Speaker, I personally believe that we have to know ourselves and that we have to look at our family history and do these things.

Mr. Speaker, I want to single out, as I said before, two important persons who have spent a lot of time over the years helping to promote education of the disease in Barbados and for starting this Foundation, Dr. Jordan and Dr. Forde. They have done a lot of work in this Foundation. They have spent a lot of time in the Ministry of Housing and Lands, helping to get the land through, so that they could start this Centre, whether it is at Henry's Lane, Enmore, or this Warrens Clinic, and we want to wish them all the best.

Mr. Speaker, we know that sometimes persons who have to work hard are not recognised. They have to raise the funds themselves, and they have to come out and educate the people themselves and so on, and we need to recognise these people.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to find out from the Minister when he winds up, if he is also seeing another lease which has taken considerable time. I must say that this one did not take very long. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy acknowledged the fact that the Government has acted with haste to bring this one to the fore. I want to compliment the Minister too for continuing with the policy

of giving these organisations long-term leases for 25 years. I know that was the habit of the Ministry. There was a time when many organisations would get a 99-year lease. I have heard about these things although you cannot find in the Ministry of Housing and Lands many leases today.

Mr. Speaker, starting around the 1990s, the Property Management Division of the Ministry of Housing and Lands was advocating 25-year leases with an option to renew for a further 25 years, only paying peppercorn rent of \$100 per annum. This \$100 per annum is important because when you look at the history of these leases, they used to be much more.

Mr. Speaker, we started a policy of giving these types of leases to organisations like the Barbados Diabetes Foundation, the Heart and Stroke Foundation and all of the other associations that are really performing and doing good service in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, everybody does not suffer from diabetes. There is also the Barbados Cancer Society that has a lease from the Government as well at \$100 per annum.

Mr. Speaker, land was earmarked for the Soroptimist Village Jamestown West at Walkers, St. George. It was left out. It was an acre of land on which they wanted to build a village, and I want to find out from the Minister, if he cannot answer today, I hope that he could answer in the future, what is happening to that lease because it was there for over six years now.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: It is the land in St. George that was supposed to be given to the Soroptimist of Jamestown West.

Mr. Speaker, I made the point before that all of these things would help to promote capital infrastructure in your country. That is why I applaud the Minister for getting this lease out as soon as possible. I hope that the other agencies of Government could respond by getting the various planning permissions and so on, so that the work could start.

Sir, the officers within the Ministries must understand that when they delay projects of this nature, they help to prevent people from getting employment. Mr. Speaker, it is very important that these various leases come to Parliament where we could debate all of them in one day. There are still a lot of them in the Ministry of Housing and Lands. We know what we are talking about. A lot of leases are still there and people are asking for them. I could talk out of my head about certain leases that are still there that have not come in our time or in this time so far.

Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the Government for bringing this Resolution to Parliament because it is important. I hope that all of us here in Parliament would recognise that something would affect us and we would need to know what is affecting us.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes the doctors in Barbados do not sit down and tell you anything very fast. You have to wait until you get 30, 40, or 50 years old to know if you are suffering from diabetes, hypertension, or prostate problems. The saying that a person only suffers with prostate problems after they get to 40, is not true. The doctors need to tell people these things early. If this is your family history, not that you would automatically have it, chances of your having that problem is real.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I am obliged to you.

House A44 Sequence 19 2.10 p.m.

Tuesday, August 07, 2009

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

Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this Resolution before this Honourable House, as today Barbados takes another step in its fight against diabetes.

Sir, today we have heard a lot of theories, concerns and suggestions about diabetes and what we can do about diabetes. I want to agree with the Honourable Member for St. George North, who commended Doctors Forde and Jordan, for whom the fight against diabetes has not been a profession, but a personal cause. I have had the honour of being trained under these two fine physicians.

Mr. Speaker, the fight against diabetes is not just for doctors, or nurses. Indeed, it is for all of us. Sir, in a country where it is now estimated that about 17 per cent of the adult population is diabetic...Sir, every one of us knows somebody who is diabetic. In fact, we heard Honourable Members speaking of relatives who are diabetic, but diabetes affects all of us. It affects our lives, it affects many families.

We heard of the need to know your family history but I want to say here that family history is only one risk. I also want to say too that doctors do not wait until late to tell you that you have diabetes, but that in Barbados we tend to have a pattern of going to the doctor too late.

There are a lot of people who would not go to the doctor routinely in their 20s and 30s to be checked, but would wait until they are in their late 40s and 50s, and even

then, would have to be cajoled into getting the routine physical. Too often in Barbados we wait until we see signs and symptoms. In fact, we wait until our loved one, the people around us, start to notice signs and symptoms and then they have to prod people to go to see the doctor.

Mr. Speaker, as a physician, too often I have seen where, especially men, only come to the doctor when their wives bring them. Even then the men themselves would not explain to the doctor why they were there. I would ask the men why were they here and they would turn to their wives and ask her to tell the doctor. Sir, that is a problem we have in our society, especially the men. They wait until too late, so if I may just say, through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Honourable Member for St. George North that it is not only doctors do not tell you - and I take umbrage with that comment - but that too often people wait until too late to get tested. Sir, with diabetes being as prevalent as it is, with it affecting so many families, we need to know what is going on with our bodies.

We talked the same thing with HIV/AIDS. People need to know their status. With diabetes, with all of the chronic non-communicable diseases, with cancer, you need to know what is going on in your body and the only way you will know that is if you have routine medicals. I want to implore Barbadians to make sure that is a regular part of their yearly activity, unless directed otherwise by their physicians.

Mr. Speaker, family history is only one risk, but you need to know what are your other risk factors. It is not just one risk alone that is going to do the damage. You may have a strong family history, but then you add to that the other lifestyle factors, things that you need to change, things of which you are in control. You have no control over your family history, but you can be in control of the other risk factors.

Mr. Speaker, with diabetes affecting so many families, if any one person in a family is affected, this affects the entire family because that one person loses time away from work, that person loses money that could have been spent elsewhere because they would now be spending both time and money at the doctor. They would be spending money on medication and other facets of medical care, that you would have heard this morning that are a part of the comprehensive approach to the management of diabetes, for example, going to the podiatrist, the nutritionist, having tests done, et cetera. Therefore, it would mean that the income of that family is reduced even when one member of that family becomes affected.

As time goes on, we know that persons can deteriorate, and often they do because we do not take as good a care of ourselves as we can. In fact, in Barbados many persons tend to be in denial when we first mention

diabetes and because we have seen the end result of diabetes, when we tell people they are diabetic, immediately they become depressed and picture the worst happening to them. Sir, diabetes is something that you, as an individual, can take control of when you are told that you have it, or even that you have several risks for diabetes. That is something that you the individual can take control of.

Mr. Speaker, as time progresses, the management of diabetes can even take more time and money. Eventually, other members of the family have to take more time away from work, going to the doctor to accompany persons with diabetes.

You would have also heard about hospitalisation and hospital stay for a diabetic is longer than for other conditions, with the average stay being more than two weeks. If the patient is going to the hospital for wound care, or is admitted for wound care, we know that takes even longer, because wound care is protracted and is often complicated.

Mr. Speaker, persons who manifest diabetes while being pregnant often spend a lot of time in the hospital and again, there is a cost to this. As the complications develop, there is even more time and more money. We have heard about amputations and about the need for prosthesis. We heard about the need for wheelchairs and about the need for retrofitting the home, so that persons who are now disabled can moved around. There is the need for other aids and adjustments for these persons as they become less and less able, this is why we really have to put a lot of emphasis on the prevention of diabetes.

Sir, this Resolution today and the proposal for the construction of the Headquarters of the Diabetes Foundation, Diabetes Centre and Diabetes Clinic, speaks to prevention. We know that prevention may cost more in the long run, but at the end of the day, it is more beneficial. We know that healthy eating, for example, will cost more initially, but that at the end of the day, it is more beneficial. There is a saying that an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard theories as to what you should eat, when you should eat and why you should eat. Sir, I am not here to defend, nor to dispute any theories. I just want to say that we need to promote healthy lifestyles. I am also pleased to see that this Government has taken up the role of prevention.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, in the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals earlier this year, proposed the National Task Force, which will be headed by Mrs. Mara Thompson, to facilitate major national exercise initiatives to get Barbadians moving.

Sir, Barbadians have become very comfortable. Barbadians drive everywhere. This initiative is to get Barbadians to walk more. To my Honourable colleagues, I implore them to walk up the steps of Parliament and not to use the elevator. I implore them to do more exercise, to park further away when they go to the supermarket, to park at the farthest end of the car park and not to jostle to the nearest position to the door of the supermarket.

I am always encouraging persons who use the bus, they do not necessarily have to get off at the bus stop nearest to their home, they could get off at a bus stop further down, so that they could get few extra steps of exercise.

Mr. Speaker, as far as eating is concerned, I am not going to dispute what and why persons should eat, but people should eat in moderation and in controlled portions. The Honourable Member for St. George North spoke to how high people pile their plates, but moderation and portion control is the key.

The Ministry of Health is also a very important part of this, because the Government is committed to reorganising the National Sports Council to reach out more effectively to schools and communities, so that we get more people moving.

The National Sports Council has also, as its aim, to facilitate the development of more elite athletes, but it is also to get more Barbadians moving, to get more people active and in so doing, to decrease the rate of the chronic non-communicable diseases that are plaguing Barbados. It is not just diabetes. We know of hypertension, high cholesterol and others. Sir, sadly many of these diseases occur together and increase the risk for heart disease. Mr. Speaker, I want to speak to patients who are on medication, or who are given suggested changes to their lifestyle. I want to stress to them the importance of compliance. Sir, very often there are patients who may believe that they are doing themselves a favour when they can fix the results, for example, of a blood test.

2.20 p.m.

Tuesday, August 07, 2009

Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Sir, they know they are going to the doctor on Tuesday, so on Sunday they may not eat dessert, or as much macaroni pie and they may eat very sparingly on Monday, so that when they go for the blood test on Tuesday, it looks good. Sir, sadly there are persons who take medication only on Sunday, or Monday, because they know they are going to the doctor on Tuesday, so they get a good report when they go.

Mr. Speaker, to encourage all patients, that does not help you. You are not doing the doctor any favour, or you are not doing yourself any favour, because the regime that the doctor prescribes for you would not be adequate and though every three months that you go, you get a good reading, the damage that is being done within your system to your kidneys; to your heart, to your arteries, to your eyes, to your nerves, the blood test is not going to quantify that and, sadly you are not going to see that until you start to experience the effect of it.

Mr. Speaker, there are other tests like the HbA1c test, for example, that would give you a longer range and a truer picture but, again, that is only after the fact, so I want to encourage persons to follow the guidelines that have been given.

Sir, this is Barbados and, fortunately, we have the ability to go to more than one doctor. If you see a doctor and you are not convinced this is right for you, you have the option to go to another doctor because our system does not pin you down to only one doctor. You can go to a doctor, you can have another opinion and you can get advice. We have access to information and we have the Internet, so you can check it for yourselves.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things I want to encourage is that the care of diabetes and other chronic non-communicable diseases become more patient-centred and we need to encourage patients to take a more active role in the management of these diseases because this is your life. There is no longer a place for the management of diabetes, just to be dictated by the doctor, the nurse, or the podiatrist. Yes, there has to be a team approach but, at the centre of that team, the patient needs to be an integral part of the team and the patient needs to be given the tools, with which he, or she could be empowered to actually make the decisions, and to feel that they have some control in terms of what is happening in their management.

Sir, that is where prevention is going to work, when patients see that they have control and that they have that input into the final outcome. Sir, more and more people need to realise that, at the end of the day, it is up to them what they do and the final outcome.

Mr. Speaker, a diagnosis of Type II diabetes is not a death sentence. I have seen persons, who when they are told that they have diabetes start walking, whether they are walking and going somewhere, or whether they are walking and coming right back home, they start walking. They start getting fit and they start eating properly. Sir, I know patients who have been diagnosed more than 15 years ago and have not developed any complications thus far because they have taken care of themselves, but they put themselves in control of the situation and that is what we want to see.

Mr. Speaker, Barbadians are educated. We have the benefit of being educated and we are intelligent people and so, we need to use that to our advantage, take control of our situation and take control of our health.

Mr. Speaker, I want to laud the polyclinics, because while we are talking about the comprehensive approach to diabetes through this clinic, let us not believe that this is a novel idea because the polyclinics have for many years, been employing a comprehensive approach and a team approach. Sir, at the polyclinic you may often find the nutritionist, the podiatrist, the doctor and the nurse. You can get your wounds tended, you can come and have lectures and teaching on diabetes, you are taught how to do your testing and this has been going on at the polyclinics for some time.

Mr. Speaker, a facility like what we are talking about here today is welcomed, but I just want to encourage the Minister of Health to also seek to strengthen the polyclinics, because no one facility is going to be able to handle the load of diabetes that we have in this country. It is just a welcomed addition to the management of diabetes, but to continue to strengthen the polyclinics to be able to deliver the quality of service to the quantity of patients that they are seeing.

Mr. Speaker, one phenomenon I am seeing and that other doctors are seeing across the country, is that because the polyclinics are as burdened as they are, there are patients who believe that they should not add to that burden by asking more detailed questions and asking for more detailed interventions and this does not bode well for the country.

Sir, there are patients who would tell you that they go to the polyclinic every three months, as prescribed to get their medication, but when they need a full checkup, a thorough examination, discuss a concern, or have a problem in between that three months they would see another doctor, usually a private doctor. Sir, when they go to the private doctor, they often do not tell the private doctor that they go to the polyclinic and the private doctor might give medication because they are not aware of what is going on at the polyclinic, so the patient has two sets of medication.

Mr. Speaker, we have patients in this country now who has two sets of medication, which they keep separate. When they go the private doctor, they carry the medication that they got from the private doctor, and when they go to the polyclinic they carry the set of medication that they got from the polyclinic and so, never the twain shall meet, and they try to keep the two separate.

Mr. Speaker, often it is feared that if the doctor at the polyclinic knows they went privately, they would be chided

and, in fact, sometimes they are chided. If the nurse hears that they have been elsewhere they are chided but, again, this is where the need for the team approach comes in because the polyclinic cannot do it all. The patient may not be able to afford the private doctor and especially now with the economic situation being what it is.

Sir, we need to empower the patient so that if the patient needs to go to a private doctor today and go to the polyclinic next year, that he, or she is in control of that situation and that he or she is free to say that he, or she went to doctor A, or to doctor B yesterday. In fact, I think the time has come, in much the same way children carry a green card, which says what vaccines and what visits they have had and then we do away with it after they get into school, that in the same way patients should be allowed to see their files and patients should have documentation they can walk with, so that if they have to go to another doctor, or to the hospital in between visits, they would have documentation that says what the blood sugar was in August and they could carry that to any doctor or clinic, so that anybody could see the picture and get a true record, so that when you manage the patient, you are doing so holistically and not based on patches of information.

Mr. Speaker, it is also a problem because patients may go to a polyclinic and get medication from the polyclinic, but they may also go to a private doctor when they want a more detailed examination but, Sir, they need lab tests, particularly those over 65 years. They hose on pensions, when need lab tests, having gone to the private doctor, they need other medication, other examination, other interventions and diagnostic services, they then have to pay the full price for that even if they go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Sir, then they find themselves in a bit of a quandary because they are not sure what to do.

They went to the private doctor because they suspected there was a problem but now, the tests that are required, sometimes they have to pay hundreds of dollars to take. Sir, that is disadvantageous, not only to the doctor, but certainly to the patient as well, in terms of continuity of care.

Mr. Speaker, we talk about the high rate of amputations in Barbados and there was one concern that perhaps, doctors need to know the signs earlier and send patients to the hospital in a more timely manner but, Sir, I can tell you as well, that sometimes patients are so afraid of amputation, they are so afraid of the long hospital stay and they are afraid of being admitted to the hospital, that they go all around the world with a wound before they actually go to the hospital.

Sir, a doctor may see a patient and refers that patient to the hospital, but when you think that patient has gone to the hospital that afternoon, you hear that they have been to

another facility tomorrow because they did not want to go to the hospital, that they went somewhere else, or that they stayed at home.

H/A44/2.30 p.m. Sequence 21

Friday, August 7, 2009

Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: When they come back again in 2, or 4 days as a diabetic, time is crucial. When they return in that time, you look at the wound and in your heart you have this sinking feeling, that the time that they spent at home, visiting other doctors, or trying different remedies, bushes, noni, different bandages, and everything put on their wound, may not have made it better, but when you look at it you know it is now at a stage that, sadly, would require surgical intervention, sometimes even amputations.

Sir, physicians at the hospital, Polyclinics and those in the private practice, I want to urge them again, I talked about having some sort of system, a card or record book, that would cause everybody to operate as a team, the nurses, nutritionists, pharmacists and podiatrists, they all need to operate as a team in the management of diabetes.

I am hopeful that Government's involvement in this facility, would prove not only a welcomed addition to the management of diabetes, certainly I know it is going to provide training services for doctors. As doctors, you see so much diabetes, and you need to be on top of the latest trends in treatment, diagnoses, in terms of managing wounds and so on. This is also a welcomed facility for doctors to be at the cutting edge of diabetes management.

I am also hopeful when this Centre is completed, running efficiently and effectively providing the service we are talking about here today, we are visualising that it will deliver a certain service. When that efficiency is recognised, it will serve as a template and model for more comprehensive care at the Polyclinic levels.

I do not envisage that all diabetes care is suddenly going to move down to Warrens. That certainly is not practical. The Polyclinics will continue to be at the forefront of diabetes management, but the Polyclinics would now have a model. Indeed, I believe this facility is building on what the Polyclinics have been doing, but now the Polyclinics would now have a model with which they can improve their services. This diabetes management is very crucial at this time.

We heard about the different costs that are incurred in diabetes and in the management of diabetes. It does not make sense as a country, for us to be looking to develop our tourist industry, infrastructure, spending a lot of money on roads, buildings and hotels. I know we spend a lot of

money on health care, but at the end of the day, it really does not benefit any of us, if we have these wonderful facilities and development going on in Barbados, but our people are perishing to diabetes, hypertension and high cholesterol.

Fortunately, much of what we have said about the management and interventions for diabetes are also applicable for the other chronic non-communicable diseases. It is not that you have to comply with one set of Rules and regulations to manage your diabetes, and another set to manage your hypertension. Fortunately, it is the same set of Rules.

In fact, the things you are often encouraged to do in managing diabetes, research is showing those things are also beneficial in preventing certain cancers, low fat diet, high fibre diet and exercise, as well as things like Alzheimers, another problem that is rearing its head and becoming a significant concern to health care practitioners, and I am sure to the Ministry of Health.

Sir, the management of Alzheimer and the medication for Alzheimers are costly propositions, but I know that even though those medications are not available on the Formulary, the Ministry of Health is concerned and very aware of the impact it has on our people. I am sure they must from time to time, get requests to put some of the Alzheimers medications on the Formulary as well.

I know in Barbados we are blessed with our formulary system. As was mentioned before, very few countries have such a formulary system. I know that there would be criticisms, but without the Barbados Drug Formulary, there are many patients who would not be able to afford the quality medication they get under the Barbados Drug Formulary. Some of the medications are generics, but some generics are very good generics, not all are. Some are other branded pharmaceuticals. Patients have access to these and it has made a difference to the quality of health care and quality of life of all Barbadians.

I want to encourage the Minister of Health to continue, especially in these economic challenges that we face, to see how that system can always be preserved. I know it is not an easy job. That is why I want to encourage patients, on this whole ideal of stockpiling medication. There are patients who are on a lot of medication. I know doctors try, and many doctors do, to reduce the amount of medication, to simplify the regime that the patients are on.

Patients need to know, as I said before, the cost of the medications, value of the medications, and to know that when they take them up and stockpile them - I have done house calls at people's homes and when you start to look at the medications, sometimes they cover half of the kitchen table, the amount of medications that one person is using.

The stockpiling of medication does not benefit anybody. It is very costly and the doctor, of course, is thinking that the patient is taking the medication, and continues to prescribe medication, because he is thinking that it is working, and the patient, as I mentioned before, is just fudging the result before he comes in, so he is thinking that the medication is working and giving the patient more of the same, and they are just going home to stockpile. As I said, that is not benefitting anybody.

Sir, not to mention when patients are getting medication from different sources, and not taking it like they should, or just suddenly start to take it, they get side effects, and the doctor is at pains trying to find out what these side effects are about, because he does not know that you are on two or three different sets of medications, from two or three doctors, or you may be mixing it with other medications, or herbal remedies and so on.

Sir, let me implore Barbadians that it is important to have a doctor that you can trust, that you can tell them the truth, tell them what it is you are doing, and what it is you are not doing. Do not tell the doctor that you are taking the medication, and you are doing things when in your heart you know you are not doing them.

Sir, I have been in the supermarket and have heard patients in the line bragging about how they managed to trick the doctor today, and how they told the doctor this is what they are doing, but, "Do not mind him, I do not do that," and they know that is not what they are doing. I want to encourage them that if we are to see the back of diabetes, it is important that we look to prevent it.

We talked about risk factors. We talked about family history, but the other risk factor is, lifestyle. If it is important that we have those lifestyle interventions, Government is going to do its part as well to encourage these lifestyle interventions. It is important that we, as individuals, take responsibility for these lifestyle interventions so that we can prevent the onset, not only preventing the onset, but secondary prevention. If you are told that you have diabetes, you can prevent the complications of diabetes.

There are the complications that cause the dollar signs to rack up, that we as a Government are concerned about. There are the complications that cause your quality of life and your lifestyle to be impaired. Once you are told that you have it, or you are at risk, it is up to you to limit the onset of those complications of the diseases.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have three more minutes in which to wind up.

Dr. The Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: As I wind up, I just want to, again, support this Resolution. I want to

encourage Barbadians to keep fit, healthy, to eat in moderation. I know many Barbadians went to the gym just before Crop Over because they want to be fit enough to make that trek down to Spring Garden, but Crop Over is finished and the gyms are emptying.

I want to encourage Barbadians to continue to get out to the gyms. I know some of you, to use the argument that was used before, what is the point of being on a treadmill and not going anywhere, but whatever it is, just to get active, encourage Barbadians to be active, to get moving.

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House A44, Sequence 23, 2.40 p.m.

Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: If you do not want to walk, turn on the same music and just dance at home, or do something, but get moving, to get that activity for at least a half hour a day, if you can manage it, or work up to a half hour a day. Encourage Barbadians to eat healthily. Nobody is saying you cannot have macaroni pie, but in moderation, small quantities. Nobody is saying you must only have dessert once a month, or once a year, but small quantities. If you want to have it once a month that is fine, but in moderation. Really, moderation is the key.

I want to support the Ministry of Health, as they continue to support the Diabetes Foundation and other such organisations that are working towards the welfare and the health of our nation. As I said, the Ministry of Youth, Family and Sports, through the National Sports Council, is also committed to reorganising, so that there is more activity going on in schools and communities, so that pavilions could be opened after hours and that more facilities could be lighted so that people could have access to the outdoor facilities to be able to play games, or to walk about on the playing fields and so on after hours in safety, because when you get home at 6:00 o'clock it is dark, especially for half the year.

Sir, if we are able to have lighting at more facilities across the island to encourage communities to come out, they would get together and bond as a community, but it would also encourage them to have the necessary activity that has now become so optional in our lives, since we have gone motorised for everything that we do.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I support the Resolution and wish for all of us, a fit Barbados.

Thank you.

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

Mr. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much, and I promise not to delay the Chamber in this matter, but I want to also add my voice in support of this Resolution which has come to this House, 19 months into the life of this Government. Sir, I believe that alone, is a significant example of the deliberate determination by the Government to not only talk the talk but walk the walk, in relation to bringing these measures to Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, I saw this measure buried in the Annals of the 2003 Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party in which they promised a National Council for Physical Activity, as well as to support the establishment of a Diabetes Centre. Certainly, the statistics on the impact of diabetes on the Barbadian population, warrants the kind of immediacy that I have seen in bringing this Resolution to Parliament, and I really want to congratulate the Government and the Minister for moving very swiftly to ensure that this measure can be brought to Parliament.

Asides.

Mr. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to some of the contributions made, but I believe that perhaps one of the most important things that we could do as politicians, usually is by example. I think of diabetes as one of the chronic non-communicable diseases and related, essentially to non-physical activity and poor diet. I feel that as politicians, perhaps we are our worst enemies, because we often get caught up in so hectic a schedule of activity that we are usually very prone to these non-communicable diseases. I believe that it would be useful and good for us to set an example by participating in some physical activity, other than canvassing.

I feel that the demands on politicians, too, if we are to make a difference, that we have to temper those demands by also letting our constituents know that there is an element in which we have to get away from the public's eye from time to time, and get involved in these physical activities. We can localise them. We can have them in our communities, but I think it is important for us to lead in this area.

I believe too that we should not have had a refurbished Parliament without making provision for a gym. I believe that is something we could look at and have a gym right here at Parliament. We deliberate in these Chambers for long and hard hours, which often by the time we leave it is dark and, therefore, not enough time to get to a gym, or even to our own home gyms. Therefore, it would be useful for Parliamentarians to have a gym right here in Parliament.

I thought very carefully about this opportunity that we have before us and having the opportunity to shape a building to be used by the Barbados Diabetes Foundation, in relation to delivering a new type of programme in primary care treatment of diabetes. Often, we bring Resolutions of this kind where Government has set out in the lease, or the Resolution, the terms under which our lands will be leased, not only to non-governmental agencies, but other agencies. I feel that, perhaps, the time is right for us to insert more conditions into the conditions of the leases that we do.

Mr. Speaker, we are now in an era of being very environmentally friendly and energy-conscious. I feel that the conditions of our leases that we bring to Parliament should reflect those realities. I think going forward, we certainly should include conditionalities in relation to ensuring that buildings are energy efficient, and that environmentally friendly materials are used in buildings that we are giving permission to be constructed on properties leased by the Governor-General. Therefore, that is something I hope the Diabetes Foundation will take up, particularly when we are dealing with buildings that are going to be used for health related functions.

Mr. Speaker, it is troubling that we have an estimated 70 per cent to 80 per cent of diabetes, where we can say that between 70 per cent and 80 per cent of our diabetes are preventable, therefore, the focus correctly is on prevention. I believe that one of the points that need to be made in this debate is stressing the need for a comprehensive diabetes programme, is that I would like to see a programme in which a number of key Ministries of Government are involved, in relation to tackling this problem of diabetes.

I want to mention them, because I believe that these Ministries need to collate a structured national response to support the agency, such as the Barbados Diabetes Foundation. I speak of the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Trade and Commerce, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports, and also the Ministry of Social Care and Constituency Empowerment. I think that these key Ministries are particularly poised in position to evolve structured, correlated programmes to address the kinds of problems that we have, in relation to diabetes.

Certainly, the statistics which we heard from the Minister of Health where Barbadians are particularly vulnerable to the risk of Type II diabetes, and 70 per cent of the adult population being exposed and vulnerable, is not something to scoff at.

My hope is that this initiative in relation to the construction of a facility to provide primary care in the area of diabetes prevention, will also have an economic saving

cost, because of the kind of impact that the statistics are already showing, that our adult population is faced with.

There is also another point, Mr. Speaker, which I think we need to consider, something that has troubled me for a very long time and it has to do with the whole question of the types of foods, particularly tin foods that are imported into Barbados. While I am not suggesting that there is not a linkage, I feel that we are not as detailed and comprehensive in our analysis of these items entering Barbados.

House A44, Sequence 23, 2.50 p.m.

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Mr. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am calling for some attention to be paid to the types of tin foods that are imported into Barbados and their potential negative impact on the health of this nation, particularly in relation to the types of preservatives that are found in some of these items. Mr. Speaker, because of our peculiar vulnerability to diseases such as diabetes, I feel that it is more our concern to take stock of this particular matter.

Mr. Speaker, we also have the problem of the shelf life of these items in our supermarkets. I do not believe that we are paying attention to expiry dates in the way that we should, and a number of items are remaining on our supermarket shelves past the expiry date. Mr. Speaker, even though the expiry date may not have expired yet, by the time the item is purchased, to the point of getting it to the table, the expiry date may have gone. I am concerned about this and so, I am asking that in our review of illnesses such as diabetes, that we pay attention to the extent to which these items that are left on our supermarkets shelves for so long may be impacting negatively on our health.

Mr. Speaker, any strategy to tackle diabetes in Barbados must not ignore the impact of poverty. That is why I mentioned the Ministry of Social Care, because many of our people are caught in a situation where, because of poverty, or the extent to which their wages cannot stretch in purchasing healthy food items, they end up eating foods that are not good for their bodies.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that in the last Budget, the Prime Minister announced some initiatives aimed at tackling this particular problem.

Mr. Speaker, certainly in evolving a holistic and comprehensive national response, we have to factor in the extent to which a policy knitted together by the Ministries that I mentioned, pay attention to those vulnerable groups who without some kind of State intervention and support,

would not be able to reach that threshold of healthy eating that we would wish them to have.

Mr. Speaker, the last point I wish to make, I did say that I would not be very long, has to do with the operations of fast food outlets. Those have become such a part of our psyche, that I believe that attention needs to be placed more on how they function.

Mr. Speaker, I am yet to be convinced that we have in place sufficient surveillance in relation to fast food operations to ensure that what they produce and what they sell to the public is sufficiently healthy. This is no longer a matter that can be left solely to the choices of our citizens. I believe that structured policies and proper systems should be in place to ensure that we know what is going on and, that what is coming out of these fast food outlets is good enough for human consumption.

Mr. Speaker, one puzzling issue for me is who polices how often cooking oil is re-used in our fast food outlets? I am not convinced, nor do I wish to accept, Mr. Speaker, the answers we have been getting from the fast food operators that they only re-use cooking oil X amount of times, without hearing from the Ministry of Health and the other agencies that should be involved, that there is some kind of surveillance mechanism to guarantee that the cooking oil used within our fast food outlets is not re-used beyond a point where it threatens the health of our nation.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to call particularly for the evolution of a programme, in relation to tackling our chronic illnesses, which includes bringing on board a structured policy designed to safeguard and to set standards to ensure that our fast food outlets are providing healthy foods to Barbadians.

Mr. Speaker, I would wish that we adopt a national response - and certainly we should lead by example - which touches very closely on the policy that we would have going forward in terms of how our new buildings should be built.

In this Resolution, we are giving special permission to the Barbados Diabetes Foundation to erect a building on Government lands where, at the end of that lease, the building reverts to the Government. I believe it is an opportune occasion to introduce conditions that will secure the preservation of our buildings, particularly in relation to ensuring healthy usage.

Mr. Speaker, the other point I would like to make has to do with the whole question of rehabilitation for those persons who lose limbs as a result of their diabetic conditions. Mr. Speaker, there are also hundreds of persons in Barbados who lose limbs every year as a result of vehicular accidents, strokes and repetitive stress injuries in

the workplace. I believe that we have to meet this reality by a rehabilitation centre to cater to persons who lose their limbs. Many of them, Mr. Speaker, who have to have prostheses fitted, or have to use wheelchairs become less ambulant because of the lack of a structured approach to rehabilitation.

Mr. Speaker, I think that this is the opportunity, now that we are focussing on this Centre for the preventative treatment of diabetes, to link to that, the development of a rehabilitation centre to assist those persons who are not only diabetic, but those who lose their limbs, either through vehicular accidents, or other incidences.

Mr. Speaker, with those few remarks, I support this Resolution and urge that the country provides more support and assistance to the Barbados Diabetes Foundation.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged. The Honourable Member for St. Michael Central.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this Resolution relating to the leasing of 3 335.3 square metres of land to the Barbados Diabetes Foundation. Sir, in supporting the Resolution, I want to emphasise a few issues which we should take into consideration.

Sir, diabetes, as we have heard, is a disease that certainly must concern us. Sir, it is obvious that if we as Barbadians, adjust our lifestyle in terms of the foods we consume, many of us would be able to avoid the disease.

Sir, one of the things I would like to make a call for is for Government to support healthy lifestyle initiatives in respect of trying to support those organisations that actually support healthy lifestyles. Sir, this can be done very simply by identifying those organisations within the community that actually help citizens to engage in healthy lifestyles.

Sir, in many ways, many organisations call upon the funds of the State for different projects.

House A44 Sequence 24 3.00 p.m.

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Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Speaker, what we might do in the future might be to examine some of the projects that are being asked to be supported by the State, to see whether or not there is that healthy lifestyle component. Sir, sometimes we have to protect people from themselves.

Sir, when you look at the case and you look at the dietary habits of those persons who suffer from such diseases, there has to be some measure of concern with

respect to the kind of foods that we are actually consuming. I also want to say that it means cooperation between the different agencies of Government.

Mr. Speaker, while the Ministry of Health is the target Ministry, in terms of trying to deal with cases of diabetes, we recognised too that, for instance, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry of Trade and Commerce have also to play a role. Sir, one of the things we need to look at is the quality of foods that we are allowing to be imported into this island for Barbadians to consume.

Sir, I know in this era when people are constantly looking at the question of the cost of cheap foods, one of the things that we must recognise is that we pay for what we get. Therefore, if we want cheap foods, at the end of the day, we also get food that is below a certain quality.

One of the things we noticed in the more developed countries is that more and more consumers are demanding certain things from producers of foods, people are demanding foods of a certain quality. Sir, for instance, there are stipulations where, first of all, it is mandated that producers of foods must indicate the dates of production of these foods, so that consumers can feel comfortable that the food is not food that was produced, for example, six years ago.

Mr. Speaker, we also have certain guarantees that are being asked on food, in terms of packaging. Sometimes we have foods coming into this country and we do not look at the packaging to see what are the ingredients, or where they are coming from, and so very often we have labelling standards in this country that do not inform consumers adequately as to the origin, or contents of the food. Sometimes we have certain substances in foods that citizens are not aware of.

I think we need to look at the labelling standards we have in this country in relation to food, to see whether or not it can be upgraded. Sir, in many cases, when we look at our dietary habits and at the foods that we consume, we may be trying to adhere to getting foods cheap, but not recognising that in terms of doing that, the foods that we are consuming, in some ways, are contributing to the kind of diseases that we are seeing coming out at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things I also want to advocate is that we need to go to the policy where support needs to be given to those persons who want to plant more local foods. Sir, one of the things we need to recognise, and in the more developed countries, it is becoming more and more evident, is that consumers are recognising that in order for them to get certain guarantees in terms of the foods that they produce, that they must try to get closer to the producers of those foods.

Sir, for instance, we have a situation in the United States of America where a group of consumers get together and buy, or contract with farms to produce foods for them. As a result of that, they get assurances on the quality of foods produced and consumed. As a result, what we see in those communities are more healthy communities.

Mr. Speaker, the other point I want to make is that we could actually increase employment within the agriculture sector as a result of that support given to allow persons to plant more local foods. One of the things we do not recognise is that the more food we import, the more we provide employment for other persons who live in other countries while, at the same time, persons living here, who need to be employed, do not get that level of employment.

Therefore, as a result, one of the things we need to do is to ensure that we support these kinds of initiative within communities that help Barbadians to become more involved in the production of their own food. As a result, we can help to reduce cases of diabetes, which seem to be rising even more so than it used to be in the past. I think if we could change the dietary habits of persons towards foods that are more healthy and wholesome, I think at the same time, we should be able to ensure that we reduce the incidents of diabetes.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I support this Resolution and hope that the Diabetes Foundation will also support those efforts in terms of trying to ensure that Barbadians consume more wholesome foods.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. James Central.

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a small contribution to this debate, and to support the Resolution to the acquisition of the property at Warrens for the construction of the Barbados Diabetes Foundation.

Mr. Speaker, I recall some months ago, shortly after we won the Election, being paid a visit by Mr. Ken Greaves, who I believe is the President of the Diabetic Association. Sir, it was more or less a courtesy call. He discussed issues similar to what the Honourable Member just raised, in terms of the question of labelling of products being imported to Barbados. You would recall, at that time, that we were also facing certain challenges in terms of the increasing cost of food, as a result of the shortages of wheat and grain.

Mr. Speaker, I make that comment because I noticed in this Resolution, where we are going to engage the Diabetes Foundation, an organisation with similar objectives in terms of the addressing the issues that we

have with diabetes in this country. Sir, one of the issues raised by Mr. Greaves at that time was the question of facilities for the Diabetes Association, and like so many other associations that we have in Barbados, there are challenges in terms of physical space for the secretariat and also financial support for those organisations.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to suggest that, certainly, as the Diabetes Foundation proceeds with the development of this facility at Warrens, that there could be a coming together of the two associations, since they are pretty much working toward the same objective. I hope there could be a coming together of those two organisations that we could solve problems that Mr. Greaves and his organisation have been experiencing.

Mr. Speaker, within the Objectives of the facility to be constructed at Warrens, I note that heavy emphasis has been placed on the question of research as it relates to diabetes. I think that in Barbados this has been one of the shortcomings, not only on this particular subject matter, but that if we look at our business community in terms of data collection and data-minding processes, there seems to be an absence of statistical information in respect of the activities of the business communities, for example, in the International Business Sector, in terms of the recording of a lot of the information that is relevant for decision-making within that sector.

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Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Sir, again there is an absence of statistical data that could certainly inform decisions going forward. Mr. Speaker, I notice as well within this subject matter that we are dealing with, the fact that a number of the statistics offered here have either been based on statistics that have been gathered from external sources, that they are estimates or mere gut feeling as they relate to Barbados. Sir, we are still pretty much still guessing with the statistics, and I hope that we could see a significant effort made on this occasion, to increase the amount of the research knowledge that we have on this.

Mr. Speaker, the learned Member for Christ Church West in his presentation made reference to Barbados being considered to be the world headquarters for amputations. Sir, again, this is a comment that has been floated around. There is no justification for it and it is just a gut feeling, but how many of those amputations are related to the incidence of diabetes?

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I am sorry to interrupt the Honourable Member, but it was not only my interpretation. In fact, the Minister when he spoke made it very clear in his presentation that

Barbados was one of the leading places in the world that has more amputations per capita than anywhere else in the world, so it is not that there is not any justification for it. We are not going to say that Barbados has problems with amputations unless we have empirical knowledge of such. In fact, the Minister himself said so, and for the Honourable Member to suggest that there is no reason for saying so is unfair, and I would ask that he changes that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. Speaker, let me continue. The point I am making is the availability of data to support the comments that have been made by the Honourable Member and by other members of the society because there is nothing new about the comment. Sir, the comment has been made in many different forums, but the question I am putting forward here is: How many of those amputations is the result of accidents? How many of those amputations actually relate to complications as a result of diabetes and so on? Sir, that information is not available and that is the substantive point that I am making.

Mr. Speaker, I would also want, as we are on the whole question of research as it relates to diabetes, to make the observation that I think that we need to get our educational institutions on board. I think this is an area that the present tertiary institutions have let down Barbados, in terms of being able to provide and actually do substantive work, as it relates to research and development, and the whole question of research and development on local herbs grown in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, one Honourable Member made the comment about what some persons use, who are suffering from some of the non-communicable diseases. We all came along and knew that our grand parents used aloes, wonder world bush and things like this as a cure-all, and I think it is about time that the millions of dollars that are spent in the University facilities, that some of this funding should be diverted from expanding the footprint of the University in terms of its physical space, into expanding the footprint of the University as it relates to research and development and the contribution that it could make to the economic development of Barbados on the other subject matters.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. George South made comment on the increasing incidences of Alzheimers disease. One of the other issues is the whole question of asthma and the high incidences of asthma among young persons in Barbados, which is another area that we need additional research to identify what the root causes are because, again, we have been told in other forums that the incidence of asthma in Barbados at the top of the list worldwide. Sir, I do not want to say that Barbados is leading in the world but, certainly, there is a

substantial incidence of asthma in Barbados and it is an area that, again, we need to look at.

Sir, the whole question of smoking, which is related to the non-communicable diseases, in terms of the incidences on heart disease and so on, I know that there has been much discussion in terms of whether we should ban smoking within the public places in Barbados and, Sir, this is something that certainly needs to engage public discussion.

Mr. Speaker, there is the whole question of burning within our various communities. I have had a number of complaints from residents within the Constituency of St. James Central in terms of the toxins and the inconvenience caused by indiscriminate burning of stuff in various parts of the community. I understand there has been no effective legislation that could be used to prevent that. Sir, certainly that creates another problem for asthmatics. Sir, these are, but a few areas that we could also look seriously at, as we consider the whole question of non-communicable diseases.

Mr. Speaker, I laud the comments made by the Prime Minister in his Budget presentation this year, in terms of trying to sensitise Barbadians to the need to keep moving in terms of that focus, which has been entrusted on his dear wife, and our First Lady in Barbados, Mrs. Mara Thompson. Again, I think it demonstrates to the general public of Barbados that this Government cares and that this Government would move forward in terms of tackling the problems we have before this country.

Mr. Speaker, one Honourable Member spoke about the whole question of the hereditary nature of diabetes and this is one of the challenges that we face, as a small island State, that most of us would seek our lifelong partners and spouses from within that community. Therefore, this tends to compound the problem because, one would find that in most families, that you would have incidences of diabetes, both on the paternal side as well as on the maternal side.

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Hon. E .G. HUTSON: It certainly will increase the chances that young people in Barbados may find themselves being diabetic as they age.

Sir, the question of education of our population, as it relates to diabetes, I think it is an area that certainly a lot more can be done. It is critical. I believe that members, particularly with our older persons who are diagnosed as having diabetes, can do simple things like testing their blood sugar, like we heard referred to by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West. I will keep making a little

reference to him every now and then so that he would pay attention to what I am saying.

Sir, that educational component within the families is important. I had the unfortunate experience, last year, within my own family circle, so to speak, where my mother-in-Law entered a diabetic coma. That is a situation, and I know the learned Honourable Member would correct me if I stray, where the blood sugar goes down in the vicinity of two points, in that area, once your blood sugar level drops.

Sir, in her particular situation, there was no member in the household that was able to test the blood sugar, or even aware of the fact that when the blood sugar reaches such a low level, that would be the consequence. As I understand it, at any time you are subjected to your blood sugar level going very low, there is a need for you, throughout the day, to constantly, may be three or four times a day, but certainly before one goes to sleep, to check your blood sugar. You may need to give the senior person, or the patient a small snack before they go to bed, to keep their blood sugar level up, or if the patient's blood sugar actually falls into that 2 per cent level, to get some sort of sweet drink, or something for them to take to return the blood sugar to a proper level very quickly.

Sir, there are incidences of one's blood sugar going in the opposite direction, in that case the action required would be different. If it was going low, your action will be in the reverse rather than...

Asides.

Hon. E .G. HUTSON: I rather not get involved in the technical expression, that is for yourself and the Honourable Member for St. George South.

The point is, I believe it is critical that members of the immediate family should have some working knowledge of how diabetes functions, the implications, and the actions one needs to take in the event a member of the household suffers with diabetes.

Sir, with those few words I want to, again, say that I am very supportive of this Resolution, and would want the wider Barbadian population to take some time out to make themselves aware of the little things they can do within the family environment, to put themselves in a situation where they may be able to save the life of one of their loved ones, similar to the practice of First Aid if somebody was drowning, or something like that.

Sir, with those couple words, I thank you very much for this opportunity.

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

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Sir, I just want to make a brief intervention in this debate, pertaining to the Resolution, of the land to the Barbados Diabetes Foundation. Like my colleague, the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown, I too had some concerns about the sedentary lifestyle of the young children in Barbados, regarding their inactivity and they being tied almost to the television sets and Nintendo games, and things like that.

On investigating, I found that Barbadian children on the whole are interested in games of that sort, but they are also involved very much in some athletics, or some activity that would take them out of the home. I have two sons, two are at that kind of age, and the third one is, of course, younger. Though they are attracted to the technology, they too are involved in athletic activity, along with their other friends.

Sir, on doing some investigation, I realise that almost 200 000 children in the developing world have Type 1 diabetes. Looking further at the statistics thrown up, there is a marked variation in the number of children who develop Type 1 diabetes around the world. For instance, in England and Wales, 17 children for every 10 000 develop diabetes each year. In Scotland, the figure is five to every 100 000, in Finland it is 43 000, in Japan it is three in every 100 000, but in Barbados it is only two per 1 000. This clearly bears out the fact that though the children in Barbados appear to be leading sedentary lifestyles, nevertheless, they are involved in some athletic activity that takes them out of the household and, of course, puts them on the field where they are participating in activity of that sort, therefore, reducing the case of diabetes here in Barbados among our youngsters.

Sir, however, within the last 30 years, there has been a three-fold increase in the number of cases in places outside of Barbados. For instance, in Europe and America, Type 2 is being seen increasingly in young people, and this is probably in part caused by the increasing trend towards obesity in our societies. Obesity does not explain the increase in the number of Type 1 diabetes which makes up the majority of the cases.

Sir, what really causes diabetes? It would appear that the jury is still out on it. It is probably involved in a combination of genes, or environmental triggers. The majority of children who develop Type 1 diabetes do not simply have a history of diabetes. I am not a medical person. I hope it can be explained by the medical authorities. Nevertheless, I would implore parents of children who have diabetes that they should really ... I know it causes a considerable strain on them.

I know of a few parents who have children with diabetes, and some of them have to be injected with insulin on a daily basis. It is a trying experience for those parents. I am sure there are facilities in Barbados that would provide the counselling, and assist them to get through this very trying period, especially when they have to administer insulin to the young children.

H A44 3.30 p.m. Sequence 27

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House A44, Sequence 28, 3.30 p.m.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Mr. Speaker, diet is also very important, as most of the contributions from our Honourable Members have suggested. It is important, of course, to give a child a healthy balanced diet. It is also suggested that a high fibre diet, of course, supplemented by some carbohydrates. Assistance from a dietician could be extremely important in this regard, so you can probably appeal to any of the qualified dietitians that are available here in Barbados.

Sir, a healthy diet is one of the contributing factors that could alleviate the onset of diabetes on our children.

Mr. Speaker, how much should children eat, depend very much on their age and depends very much on their weight. We have some overweight children, yes, but I believe that most of our children who participate in active energetic activities in their school, as well as after school activities, that could reduce the causes of diabetes.

Sir, physical activity is one area where we can insist that our children participate in, not only games at school, but in extracurricular activities. We should get them involved in areas where they can use some of their physical activities to lower their blood sugar levels. If your child takes in insulin, he or she may need to reduce the doses as time goes by. This is because of the combination of too much insulin and exercise also can lower the blood sugar levels in some of these children who are afflicted by diabetes.

Mr. Speaker, although there is some concern in that regard about the young children in Barbados who are sometimes obese, and the statistics may point to the fact that we have a high incidence in Barbados, of course, we can be comfortable in the fact that the overall figures do not point to that. The empirical evidence is quite clear that Barbados is listed among the lowest, really, in the world when it comes to the children who are actually afflicted by this disease. We are only two in 100 000.

Sir, I want to congratulate the Barbados Diabetes Association. They have been making a sterling

contribution. They are quite stellar in their contribution to alleviating the incidence of diabetes, not only in children, but in the adults, in general, in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also laud the Ministry for providing this land for the Barbados Diabetes Association to establish a headquarters at Warrens. Sir, like the Honourable Member for the City, I hope that we can also supply some form of transportation that would take them to that location. It is off the beaten track when it comes to the transportation provided by the Barbados Transport Board. I am sure that people with amputations, or people who are in ambulant, they will provide a service that will ferry them back and forth from that particular location.

Overall, I think it is a move in the right direction to provide the Barbados Diabetes Association with their Headquarters, a Diabetes Centre and the Diabetes Clinic. I think we are moving in the right direction in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Asides.

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

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to close this debate. First I want to express my thanks to all Honourable Members who contributed to this debate, Honourable Members of the Opposition and, of course, Honourable Members from This Side. Indeed the debate was of a high standard from Both Sides.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the general principle running through, or the common tread basically is that we have to look at our own eating habits, and obviously, in terms of modification of lifestyles. We were also encouraged by Honourable Members that we have to engage in some more physical activities, and we have to ensure that we exercise regularly. We should go to the gym, and jog and walk. Of course, I know that Honourable Members on This Side engage in a lot of jogging, walking and physical activity and, of course, that is the way forward.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to share some background information on the Diabetes Foundation. Sir, the need for the control of this disease, came from information, goes as far back as 1989, when a Resolution was passed and adopted at the 42nd World Health Assembly calling on all Member States to assess the national importance of diabetes and to implement population-based programmes for its prevention and control, and as such, the Government of the day then commissioned Dr. Oscar Jordan to look at these various programmes. He was also a consultant on a project, basically to provide for the monitoring and surveillance, of this disease in Barbados. Sir, I understand

that a two-volume document was produced and it outlined a broad strategy for the country, wide management of the diabetes, as well as specific protocols for the management of individual patients.

Mr. Speaker, I know that we had a query in relation to the statistics, but my available statistics show that by the age of 40, 40 per cent of Barbadians have hypertension, and 18 per cent have diabetes, or that two in every five persons have hypertension, and one in every six has diabetes. In fact, if I may also look at the overall information available to me - because I am not the substantive Minister in relation to health - as far back as between 1985 and 1995, there were 1 000 below-knee and approximately 600 above-knee amputations done at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, due to diabetes. Of course, there will obviously be new numbers or new stats, to show the status of it at this particular time.

Sir, I know that we have available background information, which obviously necessitates the need for a Diabetes Foundation and, of course, for a Centre to be established, and that is why the Ministry of Housing and Lands moved in haste to have this lease prepared and also to have the approval of Parliament, so that this Foundation can move forward with its objectives. Mr. Speaker, from my understanding, the objectives of the Foundation are to:

1. create a specialist diabetes centre where education, training of health professionals, treatment and research can be honed and combined, for the benefit of all Barbadians;
2. create a diabetes register;

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Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: 3. create a surveillance and management system which would expedite the early diagnosis of cases and improve management of people with diabetes; and

4. reduce the incidence of long-term complications such as amputations, strokes, heart attacks, blindness and kidney failure.

Mr. Speaker, we as a Government - of course the Opposition joined hands with us today on this journey - support the non-governmental organisations that provide additional health care for all Barbadians.

With those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. F. J. STUART: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ORDER NO. 3 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE LEASE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE CROWN LANDS (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CAP. 225 TO THE NATIONAL INSURANCE BOARD OF A PARCEL OF LAND, THE PROPERTY OF THE CROWN, SITUATE AT PRINCE ROAD, PINE PLANTATION ROAD IN THE PARISH OF SAINT MICHAEL IN THIS ISLAND FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONSTRUCTING THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL (CXC)

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Resolution before this Honourable House seeks permission to grant the lease of a parcel of Crown land measuring 2.28 acres situated at the Pine, St. Michael to the National Insurance Board to facilitate the construction of a new headquarters building for the Caribbean Examinations Council.

Mr. Speaker, the Cabinet at its meeting held on May 7, 2009 agreed, among other things, to lease the said land at Prince Road, Pine Plantation Road, St. Michael for a period of 99 years to the National Insurance Board to facilitate the construction of the Caribbean Examinations Council Headquarters. The relevant survey plan is attached for inspection by all Honourable Members. Indeed, I am seeking this authority, as laid out in Section 5, subsection 1(c) of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, which stipulates that the Minister may, with the approval of Parliament, sell, lease, exchange, grant, assign, or surrender any such lands vested in the Crown.

Mr. Speaker, the reason for this Resolution is because the employees at CXC have been working under some very bad conditions. From as early as 1999, they had problems with termites infestation, water and damp intrusion, and overflowing septic wells.

Mr. Speaker, the Printing Department had to be evacuated because of the apparent growth on the walls, poor air quality, dangerous conditions of the stairs at Block A, rotten window sills, consequent flooding of offices in the blocks and generally the poor state of the building.

Mr. Speaker, the employees also complained about failure to remove debris left after the redevelopment in the area and the general absence of ongoing cleaning and clearing of areas around the building. Mr. Speaker, we have a history of complaints by the workers in the building and so we move now with haste to have this matter brought to a close so, that the workers at CXC can have a building where they can work in healthy and safe conditions.

With those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. F. J. STUART: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, having to speak for the second time today after my good friend from St. Philip North, it makes me think that I am shadowing Housing rather than Health, but I will still have a few words to say.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister went through a litany of problems that the Caribbean Examinations Council has with the buildings at Block A and Block B. Mr. Speaker, I know these buildings very well. As you would appreciate, I grew up in that area just a short way away from Paddock Road at Deighton Road. The Minister would know the area very well also because he went to school in the vicinity.

Mr. Speaker, there was a time when Block B was, in fact, used as a school. It was a centre for exchange purposes. Mr. Speaker, these are old buildings. These are museum buildings. They come back almost from the museum era. I think one of them was part of the old Garrison Hospital and the other was part of where some of the men were barracked at times. These are old buildings that have outlived their usefulness, there is no question about that.

Obviously, the Caribbean Examinations Council would have needed to have found better housing. Any organisation, as important to the Caribbean, as the Caribbean Examinations Council is, could not be limited to such old residences which were obviously temporary. I believe they were looking for a new residence for maybe the better part of ten years, but they could not be satisfied with the locations that were offered at the time.

Mr. Speaker, as much as I was not privy to all the information - I met my good friend, Guy Hewitt who went to school with me. I did not ask permission to call his name, but I am not speaking in a pejorative manner. Mr. Speaker, we could never get the Caribbean Examinations Council to be satisfied with the locations that were offered - if it were not that the locations were too far away from one location, it was that they were too close to the Highway and the Caribbean Examinations Council could never be satisfied.

Sir, I am happy that after going through the whole series of locations, they have now settled for the location they are getting. Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt it will be a good location for them. I also have no doubt that they would make good use of the facility.

Mr. Speaker, I have one query. We had a Resolution a few minutes ago in which the Diabetes Foundation got a 25-year lease for a further 25 years and comparatively this Resolution is a 99-year lease. Mr. Speaker, I am not saying that the Caribbean Examinations Council does not do good work, but if we were to reflect on the Diabetes Foundation that is doing excellent work for the people of Barbados, as opposed to the wider Caribbean, as does the Caribbean Examinations Council, I would imagine that they should be able to benefit from at least a 75 or 99-year lease as well.

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Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, it is something I mentioned previously and something which I think we should consider. Sir, when people go out there and work hard to raise the funds, it is not like the Caribbean Examinations Council is actually having to put up the money. The National Insurance Scheme is going to fund it and I imagine they are going to pay rent to the National Insurance Scheme, that it will be a rent income earner for the National Insurance Scheme as an investment.

Mr. Speaker, where on one side you have an investment, which is a business undertaking and on the other side, there are some persons doing something out of a love and out of a commitment to providing a community service for the country, then they should not be jeopardised and given a lesser lease than a business organisation and a business entity.

Sir, I think that after having done these two Resolutions, one after the other, it is something that we should look at. Sir, maybe the Ministry needs to rethink. Mr. Speaker, somebody doing something for a national good, rather than a business opportunity to make some money, has to be given a better opportunity and this is something that we should look at.

Mr. Speaker, the Caribbean Examinations Council does a tremendous job. It is not everybody who in their old age. Sir, most of the younger people would be those who would have benefitted from the Caribbean Examinations Council, other people would have been under the Cambridge Examinations Council. I am seeing Honourable Members on This Side who would know more about the Cambridge Examinations Council rather than the Caribbean Examinations Council.

Sir, over the years, the Caribbean Examinations Council has moved from simply doing what was an "O" Level Examinations to a CAPE Examinations, which is like an "A" Level Examinations, and they continue to hold their own. These Examinations are recognised, not only in the Region, but internationally. This shows to all and sundry

that we in Barbados not only can produce people of quality, but that we can regulate and examine ourselves.

Mr. Speaker, there are jurisdictions the world over that have to rely on other countries to set their Examinations, but we have matured and evolved as a society to the point that through our own Caribbean Examinations Council, we are able to examine ourselves. The Caribbean Examinations Council has also been able to stand up to scrutiny throughout the world.

Sir, this is an important point we have to make. We have to be proud of our Caribbean Examinations Council because it is a coming together of the Caribbean people working together to further ourselves. It is not about whosoever could come, wait for a call, it has nothing to do with that. It is about people coming together and working together as one. Sir, that is what we need to do more of, not send back people just because we feel like sending them back. We need to work together, move together and take this Caribbean community together.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I thank you.

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I think we are making an extremely important step in this Honourable House this afternoon, and I want to compliment the Honourable Minister and all the officials in the Ministry of Housing and Lands, in seeking to facilitate this lease of land at the Pine for the Caribbean Examinations Council's Headquarters.

Mr. Speaker, this is a project 10 years in the making, therefore, this project would have passed through the hands, eyes, ears and minds of three Ministers, one Parliamentary Secretary and one Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, and the various additions to the first part of that name. I do not think there can be any excuse on the part of those involved relative to this matter.

Mr. Speaker, when the Government of Barbados signed the Headquarters Agreement for the establishment of the Caribbean Examinations Council way back, it committed itself to providing adequate facilities for the operations of this Regional body. Yes, I agree with the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, as well as with the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, that this is one of the more important Regional institutions, or bodies, be it an Examinations body that is only 30 years old. I think this Honourable House should offer them congratulations for having traveled that journey since 1979, when the first set of Examinations were written in this Region under the aegis of the Caribbean Examinations Council.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that as Government, there is a responsibility when we invite regional or international bodies into our land space, that we have to provide for them the best facilities we possibly can. Yes, I agree that the buildings at the Garrison are relatively old. This does not say that they should have been expedited urgently in seeking to satisfy the legitimate demands of the Caribbean Examinations Council in having the best facilities in which to work, or with which to work.

This is an extremely large Caribbean body, when one looks at the number of students involved in the writing of Examinations, the number of markers, the number of assistant examiners, the number of examiners, those who set the Examinations, the Registrar, the Pro-Registrar, it is quite a large Caribbean institution and one that has been very successful. It is good that it is sited in Barbados, because we have set the kind of tone in Barbados for other Regional entities who might want to establish themselves here in Barbados, that is why this Resolution is extremely important.

Mr. Speaker, even though I do not necessarily want to spank, I would still have to spank because I believe that 10 years is a long time.

Sir, when this matter came up, the Minister of Housing and Lands, the Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture and all of those Ministers of the Barbados Labour Party Government, could have bent their backs a little bit more to satisfy the legitimate demands of the Caribbean Examinations Council.

Mr. Speaker, presently the Caribbean Examinations Council is spread across seven centres. Our information will suggest that since 2002, the Caribbean Examinations Council, the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the Environment and the Ministry of Education, have been reviewing a number of sites with a view to providing permanent new accommodation for the Council. The Council, I believe, demanded several thousand square feet to adequately carry out their work.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, when the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East was Minister of Education, I know that she has always tended to be very exuberant in trying to get certain things done, but in this instance, her exuberance did not amount to much in this particular instance. In addition, other factors which had to be taken into consideration in selecting an appropriate site is the proximity to the airport because of the frequency of movement of officials of the Caribbean Examinations Council, either from Barbados, or out of the western zone, for example, Jamaica, to ensure that all

things were right on the ground for the taking of the Examinations, either in January or May/June of the year.

Sir, in an attempt to find suitable accommodation and to obtain funding for this project, the National Insurance Scheme was brought into the mix of things. It also involved persons such as the Anglican Church. We know that the Anglican church of Barbados does possess some land.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West says it is a lot of land, but he is familiar with a lot of real estate in Barbados because he, I am sure, rivals the Anglican Church in the possession of land in this country, as well as the Central Bank of Barbados.

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Hon. R. D. JONES: This venture would have seen the consortium constructing the building, outfitting the accommodation and offering the Ministry of Housing such terms to guarantee a return of 10 per cent on its investment, because you are getting the monies of people who invest in the National Insurance via their pension. It is a business activity. The Anglican Church's input would have been its lands at Bishop Court's Hill, which they had offered to sell to the Government.

As a consequence, the Cabinet, at that time, reviewed the Paper and I believe that the Planning and Priorities Committee, since December 5, 2002, we are talking about six-and-a-half years. It should have gone to the Planning and Priorities Committee, led by the National Insurance Board, should have been given other options, including the utilisation of lands owned by the Government as well. That is all part of the process in this matter.

Sir, the Anglican Church subsequently indicated that the site at Bishop Court's Hill was no longer available, and offered instead land at Henry Lane, and Collymore Rock. This information is all there. None of the parties concerned were keen on the latter site, and instead, it was suggested that a site located at the corner of Dalkeith and Beckles Road should be used. We all know where that is, at the corner of Dalkeith Road. The site is owned by SAGICOR, an insurance company in Barbados, who is proposing to purchase the adjoining parcel of land from the Caribbean News Agency, located there.

Sir, with this acquisition, we will have about three acres of land. As we have been told, the land at the Pine is 2.2 acres to be used for the construction. In the interim,

several sites were looked at, Graeme Hall, on lands of the Ministry of Agriculture, at Top Rock, Rendezvous, land owned by Land Development and Building Limited, which is a private entity. Government lands are the Old Marine House, Marine Gardens; at the Pine, lands vested in the Ministry of Public Works. This is the land which is now before this Honourable House for lease.

I am saying that there were some searches and some activity, but we cannot offer an excuse where the comfort, productivity, and most of all, the health of workers might be under threat. Therefore, where persons exist in a space for a long period of time, either in Government buildings, or any other facility operated for workers, we have to act with some alacrity to ensure that the legitimate infrastructural demands of workers are in fact, satisfied.

The construction of the CXC Headquarters, I believe, over 60 000, or more square feet, at a facility, when one sees the artistic drawings of the facility, it is, in fact, quite a beautiful structure, architectural. This should improve the overall productivity of the workers.

Sir, the absence of efficient facilities within the current situation, impacts on CXC's ability to effectively utilise an integrated business planning model to more meet the demands of all those parties, or persons involved in the CXC exercise. You are well aware of the presence of the new Registrar. We should all compliment all of those from the beginning who worked with this infant organisation to now reach the stage where we have in Barbados a St. Lucian, by the name of Dr. Didicus Jules, an outstanding Caribbean administrator and educator, to further propel the work started by so many Barbadians, but many of them coming from within the Caribbean space, here in Barbados and Jamaica, impacting on Caribbean students.

This new facility, which we hope will commence around the end of the first quarter, March 2010, should hopefully be completed within 18 months, once everything goes all right and would add a lot to the operational efficiency of the Caribbean Examinations Council.

Sir, you will find that the difficulty in spreading the technology across several of the seven distinct sites in Barbados, creates some level of operational inefficiencies. One has to get rid of those operational inefficiencies in order to make the institution more viable and better.

Sir, we spent over \$1 million in the last three years trying to shift from location to location, through retrofitting, and things such as that, money which could have been better spent in other areas, the development of the CXC brand, not only in the Caribbean, but across the global space.

I am sure that Honourable Members and educators, and those on the Floor of the Honourable House, would recognise that the sale of education is big business. The sale of exams is big business, and such an important institution, one fully recognised across the world, as the Caribbean Examinations Council, must become involved in that whole work of selling Caribbean products, educational services, the knowledge of the mind of Caribbean people across the world.

In fact, the Caribbean Examinations Council was in the forefront of the School-based Assessment Process. You are now seeing other examining bodies beginning to follow this particular model, a model engineered a long time ago by the Caribbean Examinations Council.

I am extremely happy that the National Insurance, the Ministry of Housing and Lands, the Ministry of Education and Human Development and the Caribbean Examinations Council have all come together to push this project forward with such rapidity. When that facility is finished they would be able to move, and locate their papers, reading material, and whatever, in an extremely secure environment.

Sir, the Caribbean Examinations Council really looks forward and anticipates a building, that contains all of the necessary conveniences and facilities of a modern office complex, combined with the critical elements for a secure working environment. You will have all of those security systems in place for an institution which produces Examinations, so that you will not want to have threats to the integrity, breaches, or lapse in the security, and persons having access to scripts before they are due to be taken by those persons, Sir, more important, the status and the feel of morale of the workers at the Caribbean Examinations Council.

Sir, a bit of history for those who watch the Caribbean Examinations Council from a distance, you will remember that the first set of Examinations were taken in 1979. I believe the Honourable Member for Christ Church West would have been a young innocent youngster then. A few years after that, he took the CXCs. I am told that he was reasonably successful, even though other Honourable Members on This Side, who took it at that time, were a little more successful than he was. We are all brothers in arms and brothers in the pioneering efforts of the Caribbean Examinations Council. Sir, five subjects were offered at CXC, 30 000 candidates, 58 708 entries were received in 1979. We have moved forward, 29 years, to the next set of statistics where 33 subjects were being offered at CXC.

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Hon. R. D. JONES: Sir, there are some 143 017 candidates writing the Examinations, right across the Caribbean, including some of the Dutch territories of the Caribbean, which is good.

Mr. Speaker, then there was introduction of the CAPE exercise with 24 subjects at this current time and 22 664 students up to 2008, taking the exams. Sir, in other words, an almost replacement by the Caribbean Examinations Council of those being offered by the previous colonial powers. Of course, we have not said to students that they cannot take GCE, or whatever else exists, once it is compatible with what is being offered, but a lot of this is due to the hard work of persons within the CXC dispensation and the Ministries of Education across the Region. Sir, it is continued by those students, who are prepared by the tens of thousands of teachers within the Caribbean space, to ensure that they are satisfied with the quality of the Examinations.

Sir, in 2008, CXC offered 102 Examinationss across CAPE, CSET and Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competencies (CCSLC), in Barbados, we refer to it as the Barbados Certificate of Secondary Education (BCSE).

Mr. Speaker, these Examinations comprise of a total of 178 written papers. Sir, it is really quite large and it generated 662 000 subject entries and approximately 1 300 000 spaces. Sir, it is a mammoth undertaking because Barbados is a focal point for many of the persons who correct the scripts at three locations within Barbados.

Sir, Barbados, I believe some 1 244 persons, local and other persons from across the Region, table leaders, people who correct the papers, people who supervise and people who have oversight of the papers, gather here in Barbados to correct both the CSEC, CAPE and at other locations in the Caribbean Region.

Mr. Speaker, when you start to imagine this, you can see that this is done on a massive scale and relatively successful. Sir, there have been minor breaches before and they will always be one, or two minor breaches but, Sir, CXC has been highly guarded and highly protected of the scripts and of the movement of scripts across the entire Region.

Sir, these islands are not contiguous, so you have to put them on boats and planes and they have to pass through several hands and things like that. Therefore, the minor skirmishes, with breaches is truly testimony to the kind of safeguards and the kind of systems that the Caribbean Examinations Council has put in place.

Mr. Speaker, essentially, what this new building would do is remove what you call the crisis of

accommodation that the CXC is faced with over many years. We are saying, therefore, to all those persons involved with CXC, that it is about to happen. Sir, just give us two years before you might be able to move into a new building and conduct the work of this very important Regional body.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to give this Resolution the full support as brought by the Ministry of Housing and Lands. I am sure that Honourable Members of the House and other places, would be able to see the design when it is all shown in other places but, you would find that the facilities are going to be extremely outstanding and would lead to greater productivity.

You would have conference rooms, staff canteens, a major marketing halls; meeting rooms, open door facilities, an amphitheatre and all of these modern facilities. Sir, you would find, across Barbados, maybe in the next 15 years or 20 years, maybe long after we have passed our sojourned years on this space, that more modern facilities of this type, of this structure, and of this quality will be going up across Barbados to replace many of those facilities that are a part of antiquity, but still important to the built heritage, or culture of Barbados. We would be mixing very much the modern infrastructure of Barbados, like those at the Garrison, where I believe those buildings should be safeguarded.

Sir, a lot of them are built from clay stone but, unfortunately, many of them were plastered over and, therefore, that helped to create many of the deficiencies and defects with those structures. Sir, I hope all of that facade on those buildings would be removed and you could see what was done to those buildings so many years ago, where persons occupy them.

Mr. Speaker, CXC, obviously, is moving towards even better times. Sir, CXC is reaching out to its colleagues in Africa, so not only did workers come from West Africa, but we are now going back across the Atlantic to carry the pool of resources to West Africans, South Africans, through collaboration and through delivery of the Caribbean Examinations's products to those areas.

Mr. Speaker, in an instance where education is a tradeable commodity, where countries like Britain, Australia, the United States of America and Canada make billions of dollars in the intellectual financial - complex essentially that is what it is, an intellectual financial - complex, and you have the emergence of major online, very well accredited institutions, and institutions in distance education, where persons no longer have to leave their physical space, where you do not have to look for additional space for food and accommodation, but can do from certificates, diplomas, first degrees, second degrees,

Ph.D's and whatever else at the doctoral level that you want to have.

Mr. Speaker, you also have the production of text, both in its digital form and in its printed form for sale across the space. It is estimated that within this complex that you have 100 million learners worldwide and, Sir, that is tremendous. These are persons that are being treated in this way and most recently, generated \$2.6 billion in gross profit across the world. Sir, therefore, in this Region, we have an opportunity to tap into that marketplace as well.

Mr. Speaker, when one looks at the United Kingdom, the total value of education and training exports to the economy of the United Kingdom is nearly £28 billion. Sir, it is a phenomenal amount of money and it is what we talk about as we sell tourism in Barbados but, albeit, at a smaller level.

Sir, education services and the total direct value of education and savings; exports to the United Kingdom are over \$12.5 billion and, Sir, from international students it is 5.6 billion pounds sterling, nearly BDS\$18 billion, which is a phenomenal amount of money and Barbados, nor the Caribbean, have not even yet began to scratch that space.

Mr. Speaker, we have some offshore medical facilities within the Caribbean and they are growing. We do not have any in Barbados, but we have in Dominica, Grenada and I believe we have them in St. Lucia, within the English-speaking Caribbean and the numbers are, in fact, growing....

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have four minutes in which to conclude.

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Hon. R. D. JONES: Thank you, Sir.

When one looked at the number of students that would have been trained, let us say in a place like Grenada, for the US market, between 1984 and 2004, you had 4 000 persons being trained. People are pumping money into the Grenadian economy.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: I am talking about medical students alone, or offshore education.

Dominica just about 3 000, the Netherland Antilles 2 500, the Dominican Republic 1 300, St. Lucia 700 at

different times, Israel and Mexico. The market for medical schools alone is estimated to be increasing by \$US1.9 billion per year.

There are opportunities, therefore, for Barbados as it continues to develop its medical faculty at the University of the West Indies. I am told that this year, for 100 spaces, we had more than 600 applicants but local, Regional and worldwide, and this is taking place within a very short space of time of one year.

Sir, we have to clarify the role of the State in education within the Region and let us tell the world what Caribbean education is about, quality, diversity and humanity being a part of that process of educating. We are not just dealing with blank States relative to cognitive acquisition of knowledge, but also to spiritual enlightenment, to cultural diversity of people of all races living in the same space, sitting at the same table doing the same Examinations and all contributing to the development of the space in which all Caribbean people are living. In truth and in fact, this becomes a viable export.

Mr. Speaker, across the Caribbean, we have many Caribbean persons going into the United States of America to study. In 2000 and 2001, there were 647 Barbadians studying in the United States of America, as opposed to 3 316 at the various campuses, the bulk of them being here in Barbados. Sir, most Barbadians remain at home, the numbers were relatively small.

Mr. Speaker, Jamaica had 4 225 in the United States of America, as opposed to 8 571 in the campuses across the Region, almost 50 per cent. There is an obvious cost on those invitations. Trinidad and Tobago 2 901 as opposed to 6 207, so there is a lot of room for the education products of the Caribbean being put on sale for others as well.

It is a good product provided by good teachers and good leaders in education within the Region. Barbados has some role to play, along with CXC and the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, to reach into the Caribbean Diaspora, to reach into Africa, both West Africa and South Africa, to sell its various products. There is also room for technology to play a major part in the sale of that exercise.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend this Resolution to all and again, to say to the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), through its Registrar, that we are working assiduously on this project and look forward that within two years' time, we will be able to cut the ribbon for their brand-new Headquarters.

Thank you.

Asides.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I shall not delay the House very long.

I wanted to speak in this debate because it is true that the first application for a new Headquarters for the Caribbean Examinations Council came on or about the year 2000, when I was Minister of Education. It was clear that they had a strong case.

I think the Honourable Member for Christ Church West first put into the debate, the reasons for the many years of delay, and I am grateful to the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central for confirming those reasons and, in fact, for jogging my memory, in relation to the sites that were the subject of months of negotiations per site.

Mr. Speaker, yes, there were discussions with the National Insurance Scheme then, there were discussions with the Anglican Church then, there were discussions with SAGICOR over the land at Dalkeith. I believe there were a few more. Yes, there was a proposal for Warrens, then there was the proposal that we are currently dealing with, which was then not acceptable, but now acceptable, so that the circumstances of this process have been torturous.

Mr. Speaker, I shall not be diverted by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central's fascination with scolding and spanking.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, if he does not want to scold the public servants, he is scolding the teachers. If he does not want to scold the teachers, he is scolding the Principals. I shall not let his fascination with spanking divert us from the worthiness of this Resolution today.

Mr. Speaker, certainly, the Opposition will support the Resolution, but I think that the CXC had a valid case in the initial instances of wanting a property closer to the airport, and I think that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, who is the Minister, confirmed that because of the level of traffic of persons coming in and out. The truth is, while we are supporting it, I am conscious and a little nervous that this site will make an area that is already overburdened by traffic, worse, and that is specifically the Collymore Rock, Pine area.

I trust and hope that the Ministry of Public Works will recognise that there are two areas in Barbados, which are now suffering from significant traffic concerns that have started to take the pressure off central Bridgetown, but

which themselves now, are significantly overburdened by traffic. I speak, of course, of not only Collymore Rock, but of Warrens. In respect of Collymore Rock, it is even worse than Warrens.

In respect of Warrens, even the plans that have been announced to ease the traffic between the roundabout and PriceMart will not alleviate the problems because you have to still come up Spooners Hill and Green Hill, or come down Jackson, or come across the Highway. There are only four ways by which you could get there.

Indeed, those who have to travel that route, I have no doubt that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central must have concerns on behalf of its constituents. It is a matter, therefore, that if you are going to put a major Headquarters in this location, there must be concomitant changes in relation to the traffic procedures, as well as perhaps even road widening in order to facilitate the increased traffic.

Sir, the CXC is a big organisation. I believe that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, the Honourable Minister has indicated that we will also see a consolidation of offices in that location, so it is more than you would have seen in any one of the locations, in and of itself.

Sir, therefore, this Resolution must precipitate further planning on the part of Government to ensure that we do not have a situation, where an overburdened Collymore Rock becomes even worse than it is. I speak as a representative of a Constituency in St. Michael, which faces a similar problem on the western corridor of St. Michael, in relation to Warrens. I will speak to Warrens in another debate.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Police Station is actually further up in the Pine, and the police station is to support the residential area, as opposed to the broader areas.

In relation to CXC itself, Mr. Speaker, I only want to say that I was one of those fortunate students to start as a student of the Caribbean Examinations Council. I believe that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central says that he cannot share that pleasure with me being a couple years older than I. He is a GCE Student. I really do believe that the Caribbean Examinations Council is one of the success stories of the post Independence Regional Integration Movement. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that it shows what can be done.

House A44, Sequence 33, 4.30 p.m.

Friday, August 07, 2009

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I have a perspective though, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to see, ultimately, the mandate of the Caribbean Examinations Council even wider beyond that of Examinations at the secondary level. I believe that the time has come for greater collaboration, and coordination, in respect of testing and evaluation generally, throughout the primary and secondary school system and curriculum development planning, because when you consider it, every single country whose students go into the CXC exams, have to face the same kind of regulatory controls within the Ministry of Education. It means that there is duplication across countries in preparing their students.

Mr. Speaker, every one of us has to have a testing and evaluation unit. Every one of us has to have a curriculum development unit. The truth is, that if through a separate arm of the Caribbean Examinations Council, some of this technical educational work can be done, such that it frees up the individual Governments of the expenditure of doing it, from Guyana to Barbados, to Trinidad and Tobago, to Jamaica, to St. Kitts, to St. Lucia to St. Vincent, to Grenada to Antigua, we would be able to have that work then feed into the national educational system.

Mr. Speaker, I use as my starting point the fact that all of us go to the same output at secondary and now post secondary level, through the Caribbean Examinations Council. Mr. Speaker, it is an area that is ripe for rationalisation. I believe that we have a mature organisation that can take on this additional responsibility. At a time when almost every single Government in the eastern Caribbean including ours - I will speak to that, not today, but on a separate day - is facing straitened economic and financial circumstances, it makes sense to be able to rationalize our expenditure and to be able to pool our resources, through Regional entities to do that which we are doing separately and distinctly.

Mr. Speaker, I throw that out for what it is worth to the Minister of Education. Both the Chief Education Officer and the Permanent Secretary are members of the Council that governs the Caribbean Examinations Council.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we should pursue, as a matter of urgency, a Regional testing and evaluation unit between the Caribbean Examinations Council and the University of the West Indies that would relieve the burden on individual countries to be able to spend that money across each country.

Sir, sometimes we doubt ourselves. I remember that as Minister of Education, when we were introducing the CAPE Examinations, which is the "A" level equivalent,

people doubted whether it could be successful and whether it was not too much work for our students, as if our students could not rise to the occasion.

Mr. Speaker, what was significant for me is that CAPE addresses the issue of creating rounded Caribbean citizens, not people who are just specialists in sciences, languages or the humanities, because you are required to have a background in history and general knowledge that is rooted in the Caribbean civilisation. I am happy to see today that it has not affected the number of persons gaining Barbados scholarships or the performance of our students in accessing tertiary education.

Mr. Speaker, I do believe that it is a significant statement of confidence in ourselves. I trust and hope that we would continue to recognise that Regional institution, appropriately established and funded can, in fact, provide great value to our national jurisdictions such that our people would benefit.

I hope that we recognise that while we have gone the route of CXC General Proficiency and CAPE that there may still be a case - indeed it was one of the things that I was agitating for before we left Government - for the introduction of the international baccalaureate at existing Sixth Form schools, rather than creating a separate school to facilitate the students of expatriates in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I say so deliberately because I am one of those who believe that this country has benefitted from having a strong public educational system. It has been the platform upon which the children of persons who could not otherwise afford it, have been able to succeed in life, and it has been the basis upon which our social and economic development for the most part over the last century, has been achieved.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I fear that any attempt to create separate schools for the children of expatriates, or what they call international schools may well, in a very small society of 166 square miles and 250 000 people, create separate societies in a way that would not inure to the social stability of this country.

Mr. Speaker, that was my position during the seven years I was Minister of Education and it is still my position today. It is not that I believe that those persons should be disadvantaged because their parents are living in Barbados. It is for that reason that I say to the Minister of Education, as I said to our own Cabinet before we left Government, that I believe that we should broaden the offerings to offer the international baccalaureate and to make sure that we have the appropriate resources to offer it.

Mr. Speaker, we do not want to create a situation where persons of a money background have access to a

separate international school and persons who are bright, who by their own ability, have done well in the public school system, are separated. This country has been able to maintain its social stability by reason of people of different backgrounds going to school together, playing cricket together, playing netball together, playing football together and working together. That is a critical component to what is the country's most valuable asset, its commitment to stability and the Rule of Law.

Mr. Speaker, This Side will strongly support the Minister of Education. I know that Government does not have the money now to do anything, but the planning process would take, at least, 18 months to two years, if the truth be told, therefore, we would support any effort on the part of the Minister of Education to create a committee of educators, both practising educators, or former educators, to facilitate the introduction of the international baccalaureate into the Sixth Form schools in Barbados without prejudice, of course, to the excellent work that the Caribbean Examinations Council has done through CAPE and its general proficiency exams.

Mr. Speaker, one of the targets that we set ourselves as a Government when we won the Government in 1994, was the ability to increase the rate and the number of persons leaving the secondary school system with certificates in this country. Prior to that, it was just about 40 per cent of persons who left school with four certificates or more. Indeed, it is a matter of which all Barbadians should be proud that within 15 years, we were able to move that from 40 per cent to 66, or 67 per cent, which is more than a 50 per cent increase.

Sir, the reason for it is that it is only if people have access to education and the ability to move beyond that level, to increase the number of persons going into what I call "post-secondary education," not even genuine tertiary. In other words, it could be technical, academic, or applied, but whatever it is, it ought to be something. Mr. Speaker, you need to have the basics in order to guarantee that those persons could continue to learn and re-learn throughout their careers, simply because technology is moving at too fast a pace and there is nothing called a guaranteed job in today's world.

House A44 Sequence 34 4.40 p.m.

Tuesday, August 07, 2009

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, therefore, if you have a sound Foundation, it means that you can learn anything, at any time. Sir, the fact that as a country we could have moved those numbers from 40 per cent, 4 out of every 10 children leaving with four, or more certificates, to almost 7 out of every 10 children, is an achievement of which this country should be justifiably proud, because

there are few other countries in the developing world that have been able to achieve that in a shorter period of time.

Mr. Speaker, I say to this Government that they will never find any division between the Government and the Opposition on anything that is designed to improve the level of performance, or the numbers attained in education in this country because I am satisfied it is the answer to keeping crime down, it is the answer to economic empowerment, it is the answer to social stability, it is, indeed, the Barbadian way. Sir, to that extent, there can be no divide in this Honourable House, certainly from the Opposition, as it relates to the use of education as the major means of social and economic empowerment in this country.

Mr. Speaker, to that extent, therefore, we must support anything that seeks to strengthen our educational system as the Carribean Examinations Council has done, but we go further. We say to the Government that it must not be distracted by the fact that the University College of Barbados would have started under a previous Government.

Sir, let me say this. I was deliberate in the choice of the Deputy Chairman of the Committee to establish the University College of Barbados. Sir, I felt then, as I feel now, that there should be no political division in the educational policy in this country. This country has come too far without that level of political division.

We can quarrel about how money is spent, we can quarrel about if it is spent properly, but when it comes to the policy framework, one of the things that has secured our stability, has been the continuity in educational policies across Governments of different political persuasions.

Mr. Speaker, when I had the opportunity to establish that Committee, I chose a former Member of Parliament of the Democratic Labour Party, a very distinguished gentleman who also represents the Labour Movement. Sir, I refer to Mr. Robert Morris. I felt that he would add significant value to the plans for the establishment of a University College of Barbados.

Sir, the truth is he did, along with many others, and while I would have liked to have seen the work completed quicker, I was cognisant that the country itself would have gone through economic difficulties in 2001 to 2003, that would have led to an adjustment of spending, not just for the University College of Barbados but with EduTech as well. Sir, I believe that the University College of Barbados Bill should be in the Attorney-General's Chamber ready to bring to Parliament. It should have been ready over a year ago.

Sir, in those circumstances, I felt that once the country returns to a strong path by 2003, that under normal circumstances, we would have seen the Bill passed and the institutions start to integrate from last September to the beginning of this academic year.

Mr. Speaker, I am not standing on political ceremony on this ground. I say to the Government, this is too important and that all of us in here have spent between 10 years and 25 years, but that there are other people out there, once you increase the number of persons leaving school with four or more certificates, as we have done, too many people are not getting access to post-secondary education in this country, even with the doubling of the intake of the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and the increasing numbers through distant education at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, even with the virtual doubling at the Barbados Community College, and I believe the University of the West Indies has been increased by almost three-fold in the last 15 years.

Mr. Speaker, even with those expansions, there are still not enough places for Barbadians who legitimately want to move from secondary education to post-secondary. Sir, to expand the numbers any further at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, the Barbados Community College and Erdiston Teachers Training College - and I noticed that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central is carrying out another policy that I wholly endorse and started on - that is, that every teacher must be trained.

When you are going to do these things, then the Government simply would not have the fiscal resources to undertake it as three separate institutions, without the rationalisation taking place in terms of Administration, student intake, et cetera. Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central knows of all the back office functions well.

Mr. Speaker, I say this, the tutors at those institutions have held fast and have been very cooperative with the last Government and with this Government in relation to their terms and conditions, in the hope that once the University College of Barbados is established, they would be appropriately regraded and compensated in the context of a genuine tertiary institution.

Mr. Speaker, for those who may have forgotten, it was not intended that the University College of Barbados would replace the University of the West Indies, but that while the University of the West Indies focusses on academic programmes, the University College of Barbados would focus on what we called Applied Arts and Applied Science training, which would be people in the middle levels across the board such as pharmaceuticals, technical drawing, Bachelors in Finance, et cetera, which were not

offered by the Cave Hill Campus at the time. That Applied Arts and Applied Sciences programme was critical as we saw it to the building out of the skills-base, to manage a Barbados economy of the future.

Mr. Speaker, I noticed the Government has something called a Higher Education Unit. If the Minister of Education and Human Resource Development wants to call it something else besides the University College of Barbados, the Minister could feel free to do so, the important thing in this instance is not the name. What matters is that you bring the three post secondary institutions that we managed at the State level in this country together under one umbrella, that we rationalise the services that are necessary to manage them, such that we can appropriately expand their numbers as soon as possible, so that Barbadians can have the legitimate expectation, that once they finished their CXC's, they can, as of right, get into any post-secondary education institution in this country. This is what has brought most of us here today and this is what will secure the future of many generations of Barbadians.

Mr. Speaker, I appeal to the Honourable Minister of Education and Human Resource Development that he will find support on This Side, once that legislation and framework is put back in place. We know that the Honourable Member has problems in achieving it this year. We know that there are constraints of Government, which I will speak to in another debate.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: No, I am not talking about the spanking. I am talking about the cutting of the fiscal deficit which is being recommended by certain institutions, in order for the Government to find themselves safely at the end of this financial year.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would not get into that this afternoon.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has five minutes in which to wind up.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am saying realistically that we know those new programmes cannot start in the immediate future, but that the planning must be completed further. Sir, what is at stake is too valuable to both the social and economic future of this country, and I trust and hope that anything that we could do to assist in that respect, that the Minister of Education and Human Resource Development is aware that we will fully cooperate and participate on those matters pertaining to the

educational policy framework of this country because we see it as being critical to Barbados' stability.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I would like strongly to support this Resolution to approve the vesting of land to construct the Headquarters of the Caribbean Examinationss Council and would ask that the Honourable Member consider two suggestions which are:

a) in relation to the Carribean Examinationss Council being able to go in to assist Regional countries in testing and evaluation of curriculum development; and

2. the international baccalaureate be considered, so as not to cause a split in our public education school system.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

4.50 p.m.

Tuesday, August 07, 2009

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

His Excellency Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I too rise to speak on this issue and to say that at least I was happy to listen to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. Sir, at least, the charge was not made that the money was left and we are not using it. It is clear that the Honourable Member has recognised that we now have to look for the money to finance the project, if we do construct a building.

Mr. Speaker, the present Minister of Education would do good to listen to the last female Minister of Education for the Barbados Labour Party in that time because, when that Honourable Member was Minister of Education, the Honourable Member did a wonderful job in helping the Minister of Finance solve the unemployment problem of the country.

Sir, when one listens to that Minister, one sees clearly the pattern in how not to increase unemployment in a country because what you do, is just expand the intake at the various learning institutions by ensuring that instead of the persons coming to the labour market, they go to the educational institutions and keep them off the labour market.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the plan was also to bring that new institution to keep the unemployment statistics looking good. Sir, there is always a master plan and I have always congratulated that Minister for her ability for keeping people away from the job market and keeping them in learning institutions. Sir, there is a

problem because they have to come to the job market some day.

I am not surprised that the unemployment statistics of Barbados have increased because they are now on the job market, because you cannot recycle them in the educational institutions for all times, because there comes a time when they have to come to the job market and that is why you have the unemployment figures looking the way they have. Sir, it is not that anything has changed. The only thing is that we are not recycling students, like how the Barbados Labour Party was able to recycle students.

Mr. Speaker, I am also very happy to hear the Honourable Member speaking about traffic confusion in Barbados because it reminded me very much of what I would have said when the ICC World Cup 2007, was located at Kensington and did not make provisions, in rural Barbados, to take away the traffic. Sir, the Honourable Member could have said that when you locate the buildings in that location because of the density of the buildings and businesses in that area, there would not be any true expansion. How much does that sound like what I would have said about building the new stadium at Kensington Oval instead of putting it in rural Barbados, where you could have developed some new businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I totally agree with what was said by the Honourable Member. The only thing is that it is a few years too late. Sir, had that advice been taken then, we would have been able to create some new businesses in rural Barbados. Sir, it is no doubt that we have to be very careful how we plan in this country, and we have to consider all these things. Sir, I know that the Minister of Public Works would do his best to divert some of this traffic.

Mr. Speaker, we also have to understand that having institutions like these in Barbados would be very important to the development of Barbados, but we also have to utilise them to the best of our ability. Sir, one of the things we have to do is stop limiting the things that people can study in this country. We have to stop seeing education as only for Barbados and realise that education, if used in the right way, could be an export industry. Sir, that is why I do not support institutions in Barbados telling people what to study because it might not be relevant for Barbados, but we may be able to use the abilities gained to send students overseas to earn some valuable foreign exchange for Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I have always made the point that foreign exchange brought in by returning nationals, or by people, is foreign exchange that we do not have to repay. Sir, too often in this country, we are bogged down in revenue, but we do not, and will not appreciate the value of foreign exchange to a country like Barbados. Sir, I am

saying that the greatest contribution we could get is foreign exchange brought in by our people, which is not a cost to the country, but is foreign exchange that would benefit the country.

Mr. Speaker, if there is a scarcity elsewhere in the world, and we have students with the ability to study what they want to study and could work elsewhere, that there should be no stumbling blocks.

Sir, I do not want to anticipate what we would discuss next, but we have to be careful how we manage the Student Revolving Loan and how we want them to limit people to what they want to borrow from that loan because, Sir, it is not now about Barbados, or the Caribbean, but it is about the world.

Mr. Speaker, if we are truly going to be competitive, we have to ensure that our people and our students are capable of studying anything and competing with anybody, anywhere in the world.

Sir, the days of limiting people must stop and we must open up the scope and give people the chance to get international in their competition and recognise that it is the world we are targetting and not just Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy this evening that we are at this stage. I do not want to delay the House, but I hope that those who have ears will hear and I hope this Government would not delay the process of employment by keeping them in school longer than they should, but to get them on the job market, so that we would not find ourselves in a situation where we are delaying people in our educational system that we have to get people from outside to pad the census statistics and then when crunch time comes, we have to make the relevant decisions that are pertinent to the development of the country and then you have people behaving as if we are not responsible.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to tell those who are responsible for CXC that we, as part of the Caribbean, have always been there. We have always done the best of what was asked of us and what I have observed, Mr. Speaker, is that even though Barbados has always done its part within the Region, whether it be the Barbados Labour Party, or the Democratic Labour Party, we are always blamed unfairly. Sir, for example, we have to take on LIAT as if it is only us benefitting from what is going on within the Caribbean.

Mr. Speaker, the RSS. Sir, we pay our dues, but yet still when you hear people, you get the impression that we are not responsible people within Barbados, whether Barbados the Labour Party or the Democratic Labour Party, but yet still we are asked every year to carry larger dues than what is required of us. We step up to the plate, but then more is asked of us.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East would tell you that it is a fact that every year we come to this Parliament for large Supplementaries for the University of the West Indies and, Sir, I have always made the point that if we were to do careful calculation, that we would recognise that a lot of the money we pay to that institution is really some of the money that should be paid by other Governments.

H/A44/5.00 p.m. Sequence 36

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His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, every year we pay it, because we are committed to the institution. Yet, you hear some Prime Ministers, some people who have lived off the largess of what we have thrown into the pot, come into this country and elsewhere in the Caribbean, talking about ethnic cleansing. We in Barbados know nothing about that and we do not practise anything like that.

Sir, some people get mixed up because we have countries to the South of us, who might have a reason for ethnic cleansing, but they blame Barbados for everything, even though we do not practise those things. It is a good thing we have CXC's, and institutions like the Caribbean Examinationss Council.

Sir, I want to tell those who have lived well and who we have pampered, that they need to understand we are not waiting on them to teach us how to treat people, because they know the meaning of ethnic cleansing. Some of them live off the hog and that is why we have to come here today to find a place for the Caribbean Examinationss Council. We have spent so much money on them, and for them to enjoy lofty lifestyles, they believe that whenever you make a move, or it appears that there is a move against people that look like them, they feel that they have to defend, but when the reverse is happening to another group, not one word from them.

Sir, I remember well that one of the writers in the newspaper, and I have it in my website up to today, made a speech about me, even though the man did not know anything about me. I do not know any "Singhs", neither do I sing. The person had the ability to write an article about me, even though I was never declared persona non grata in any country. The person saw me two years ago and asked me if I am not speaking to him. I asked the person quite innocently, "Who are you?" I did not know the man.

Sir, I hope the Caribbean Examinationss Council would help me to know people like those who feel that they are Lords on everything that is written in Barbados, and cannot see the sense elsewhere.

Sir, enjoy your evening, and enjoy your weekend.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Sir, I rise to support this Resolution before this Honourable Chamber, and to say Praise the Lord that the people of Barbados voted the Barbados Labour Party out of office, for as a result of that brilliant decision, this Resolution is before this Honourable Chamber.

Sir, for nearly 10 years this Caribbean Examinationss Council project remained hidden in the incompetence of the Barbados Labour Party regime, to the extent that staff of the Caribbean Examinations Council Headquarters, at the Garrison, was on the verge of industrial action.

There were rumours amidst the Caribbean Examinations Council Administration, they were so frustrated with the Barbados Labour Party Government, that they were seriously moving the Caribbean Examinations Council Headquarters from Barbados to another territory. We lost the WICB Headquarters, and we do not want to lose the Caribbean Examinationss Council where several Barbadians are employed, from the maid up to Assistant Registrars and Specialists in Testing and Measurements. As I said, Praise the Lord that the people changed the Barbados Labour Party Government.

Sir, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, even at the eleventh hour, is still making excuses why we should not go ahead with this project. Clearly, to the public they are demonstrating that they were prepared to keep this whole issue pending ad infinitum. A Government must be robust and must govern in the interest of the people, so we have to bite the bullet and make decisions in the interest of national development.

The Caribbean Examinations Council is a major example of the success of the Regional integration. We have the University of the West Indies, the West Indies Cricket Team and the Caribbean Examinations Council, three of the top manifestations of the benefits of the Regional integration process.

Sir, the forefathers of the Regional Integration Movement, the late Right Errol Walton Barrow, Forbes Burnham of Guyana, Michael Manley of Jamaica, and Eric Williams of Trinidad, they came together to form CARIFTA, then CARICOM. In those early days they made a bold decision to set up the Caribbean Examinations Council. Sir, what happened, we as colonies and members of the Commonwealth were caught into this dependency of relying on the British, primary, GCE "O" level and GCE "A" level, and Oxford and Cambridge to conduct

examinations, so scrips had to leave Barbados and other territories in the Region, to be sent all the way to Europe to be marked.

In terms of the type of questions asked, we in the Caribbean were at a disadvantage, because many of these questions may have a European bias.

If a question is talking about European rugby, a Caribbean person, the working class masses may not know much about that. Now that we have a Regional Examinations, these questions relate to Caribbean scenarios, so the comprehension of the students was not compromised.

Moreover, we know that for years the European Examinations bodies were threatening to cut us off, so we had to really work quickly to ensure that we were not left wanting, in terms of not having Examinations, at the Ordinary or Advance levels. The Caribbean Examinations Council's project is vital for the intellectuals. Therefore, the development generally of the Caribbean society, it is an integral part of this process and must not be taken for granted. Therefore, I laud pioneers like Professor Roy Orger from the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, who was Chairman of the Caribbean Examinationss Council for many years. We would know of him in the well-known book "Made in the West Indies" text.

I sat with him as President of the Guild of Undergraduates at the University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus, and at many University meetings, at the various Campuses. He is a very humble man, long grey beard, very humble and very dedicated to the Caribbean Examinationss Council process. Also, people like Mr. Beckles, a Barbadian Registrar for many years, and others. So the work continues.

I congratulate this Democratic Labour Party Government for giving full support to ensure that the Caribbean Examinations Council's project is able to flourish.

As the Honourable Minister of Education, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, mentioned, he gave the statistics to demonstrate that CXC's started in 1979.

I remember the year before I took my "O" levels, I was at Lodge School, in 1980. The Principal at the time still insisted that we took the GCE "O" level, Oxford and Cambridge, so I did not actually take CXC, but the year before that, 1979, the first CXC Examinations were held back then from those humble beginnings with a few thousand scripts. We now have several thousand scripts. Therefore, the infrastructure needed to support this process

to ensure that the standards are high and the integrity is maintained, must be in place. That is the importance of having a centralised campus, or building complex where this work can be coordinated.

Sir, I was fortunate to be a CXC Assistant Examiner in Mathematics, General Proficiency, for over 10 years, starting around 1995, 11 successive years. I know the hard work which is done by these Markers and Assistant Markers. This is an innovation. I am talking about GCE “O” level and “A” level. As I understand it, in those Examinations bodies, the Markers actually take home the scripts, so a Marker could be home drinking coffee, falls asleep, and a script of a student is lost.

H A44 5.10 p.m. Sequence 37

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House A44, Sequence 38, 5.10 p.m.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, CXC is so advanced that we spend the money, but we bring the teachers from all around the Region, at the location to mark these scripts in a very structured way, so that we can learn from each other and no individual script is marked by a single teacher.

I can talk about Mathematics, where no more than two questions are marked by a teacher, and you are divided into tables, with a table leader, leading a team of six to eight assistant markers. There is a lot of quality control, so that the assistant marker does the first marking and then the table leader checks and then there is an assistant chief of the Centre that does a further check.

Again, there is a lot of quality control to ensure that there is accuracy and, as I said, this is not found to that extent, in the old Cambridge and so on. Therefore, we are really world leaders in this regard, and I congratulate CXC for taking the financial risk, because it costs money, but ensuring therefore, that the quality of the Examinations process and the marking is top class, so we are world leaders in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, I remember as early as 1995, markers coming in from Saba, one of the Dutch Antilles, so CXC is indeed very regional. I take the opportunity to encourage CXC to support those markers because many of them have to give up their vacation, be it Summer, or January vacation, to mark the scripts. They are not paid a big salary, only a small honorarium.

There was a time when you would get a travel allowance for the local markers, so if you lived far away

from the marking centre, you would get a little more travel. They have standardised that now, so that there is a general stipend for the travel which is fairly minimal.

There used to be an out-of-pocket allowance, but I think this was discontinued, so we find that for some local Barbadian markers, it is very important that they are not overworked. Sometimes because of budgetary constraints, the quota of scripts that one is required to mark is fairly significant, and so, I do not believe it is advisable to compromise speed for accuracy. Therefore, if you have a huge quota of scripts to mark, if you do not meet that quota, you are not brought back the next year as a marker, you are under too much pressure, and this is as a result of budgetary constraints where there is a limit to how many markers, or assistant markers, the Caribbean Examinations Council can employ.

I am saying we have to look at that carefully, so that we do not compromise accuracy for speed, because it is important that we mark the students script accurately. I am saying it is a major problem. I am saying this is something we have to monitor and the Caribbean Governments must, therefore, ensure that enough funding is provided to CXC, so that the markers are not put under this pressure and are, therefore, discouraged from marking.

Mr. Speaker, I would encourage more Barbadian markers to be given the opportunity, as our Caribbean Brothers and sisters are given, to mark at other centres. The opportunity to travel and see other islands would definitely be an incentive. Many of the Barbadian markers of the core subjects like Mathematics and English Language, often have to remain in Barbados and there are other marking centres in Jamaica, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, and we in Barbados get markers coming from those territories here. It has some cost implications, but I believe it is worth it, in terms of also creating more interest in marking.

Mr. Speaker, as a long-standing marker, I can tell you that this marking experience is very useful for the quality of teaching, which is provided by the teachers in the Region, because what happens is that by seeing these as we call it “live scripts,” we are able to pinpoint specifically the trends in terms of weaknesses and strengths of the students, and the presentation of their work.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, we can then utilise that knowledge when we return to the classroom to make the necessary interventions to improve the performance of our students. Indeed, I know annually the markers at the end of the marking exercise, would do a report which is sent to the school and I encourage schools to take these reports seriously and access the performances and the weaknesses of the students in that given year, so that when they go into the classroom, they can address these in a timely manner. Therefore, as I said, if we have the environment, it is

conducive to encouraging more Barbadians and Caribbean teachers to volunteer as markers and assistant markers, more of our teachers would be able to benefit from this experience.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East referred, in terms of the international baccalaureate. I know of one Barbadian private school, which offers this and I am working specifically with private schools in Special Education and so I have been able to get some information about this international baccalaureate. It involves some continuous assessment and it has merit.

What I should say though, Mr. Speaker, I noticed that this same school has been applying for work permits and I saw the ads in the Barbadian 'suitably qualified' have been found in a number of subject areas. I invite them to liaise with the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development because we have a data base of several hundred young Barbadian men and women well qualified, who are applying to teach, and it is an access in terms of those places available in the Government schools, so I am sure that if they liaise fully, we can give them several names. I am sure they would not need to apply for these work permits as often as they are doing.

Sir, even if there is a case to justify one, or two people, who are expatriates coming in to teach, I am sure that according to our Immigration Rules, when work permits are provided, an opportunity must be provided by the employer to have Barbadians work along, so that there is knowledge transfer, and that more Barbadians would be able to be employed at that school to teach the same international baccalaureate.

Mr. Speaker, let me also talk about the conditions at the Garrison because I, like the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, grew up in that area. Actually, I grew up a stone's throw away at Dalkeith Road, so I am very familiar with that historic area. I remember my grandfather pointing out the north gate. There was actually a wall which delineated the Garrison Historic area.

Sir, those buildings that house the CXC and the Museum were all part of the Garrison complex during the period of slavery, when the islands were prime real estate for the European Colonial powers, because the sweet sugar was catching a premium price in Europe, so many of the islands in the Caribbean traded, in terms of who occupied them.

Mr. Speaker, St. Lucia was occupied by the French, I think seven times in their history, and the British seven times. Barbados was the only Caribbean territory that never changed hands.

Sir, what gave rise to this was the fact that the regional British Regiment that defended the colonies in the Region was based at the Garrison area. In fact, St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, of which I am a member, was built by the work of a lot of the Irish soldiers stationed there, where you can see within the Cathedral, the various emblems and the Coat-of-Arms and the flags of the various regiments stationed there.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very historic area. I am sure that the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central, the Minister of Culture and Community Development can elucidate in terms of the importance of preserving these buildings for our national heritage.

Barbados is making an international bid currently to be recognised as a World Heritage Centre, where we are looking at Bridgetown and this same Garrison Historic Area, to demonstrate that we qualify to be a world heritage area. Sir, this would be of tremendous importance to us in terms of gaining heavy inflows of tourists, in terms of the heritage tourism products.

House A44, Sequence 38, 5.20 p.m.

Friday, August 07, 2009

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: We know that there are architects and developers out there who would love to get hold of this prime commercial land to just knock down those buildings, but I am sure that this Administration would be vigilant to ensure that the history of these buildings is preserved notwithstanding the current environmental challenges in terms of the dampness of the buildings and the asbestos roofs.

Mr. Speaker, I marked papers for a January Examinations session, which were done at the CXC Headquarters, and I was shocked because there was a lot of debris from the renovations lying around in a very unacceptable manner. There was also the issue of damp buildings. These are the conditions the workers had to endure. Mr. Speaker, all of this was under the Barbados Labour Party Government.

As the Honourable Member for St. Philip North mentioned in his introduction of this Resolution, the Barbados Labour Party did not have the necessary oversight, so we will have to do the necessary remedial work.

Mr. Speaker, there are experts out there who can preserve buildings. When you look at a similar building opposite Coconut Court Hotel in Hastings, next to TGI Fridays, that has been remodelled. You would see how wonderfully that building was renovated, so this building can be renovated to be a national treasure.

Mr. Speaker, some Honourable Members talked about the School Based Assessment. As a teacher for many years, I taught at a number of our secondary schools throughout the island, both private and public, and I know that over the years some students, parents and teachers, have made the point that when students are taking several subjects, many of which require School Based Assessments, be it geography, the sciences, or social studies, the students are under tremendous pressure to complete those SBAs on time, and the whole of the Easter vacation has to be spent getting this work done.

Mr. Speaker, the examiners must be cognisant and do the necessary research to see what are the limitations of the students in terms of the amount of time available and what is required. Mr. Speaker, we must be realistic, because we do not want people to end up with mental illnesses because they were being asked to do more than was humanely possible.

Obviously, we must maintain the high standards of the Examinations, so we should not compromise this. It is an ongoing evolutionary process and adjustments are made over time. I was a Mathematics teacher so, I will talk about mathematics.

If you look at the CXC General Proficiency Mathematics Examinations papers from around the 1970s and the early 1980s, you would see heavy topics such as reasoning, and logic, and truth tables. These have been removed subsequently, because it was found that these topics were really above the ability of the students at that time because this topic is normally offered at "A" level.

Mr. Speaker, there is a topic called simultaneous equations, one linear and one quadratic, which is currently on the CXC General Proficiency syllabus in Mathematics, but this was not offered, at least when I did it in the 1980s, at the GCE Cambridge "O" level, but was found at the Additional Mathematics level which is part of the "A" level syllabus.

Mr. Speaker, the standard of the CXC Examinations is very high and must be commended. Sir, we must ensure that there is enough teaching to ensure that the students are able to pass this Examinationss because the current pass rate for the CXC General Mathematics Examinationss is usually less than 50 per cent, therefore, we as educators have to look at how we could improve the quality of teaching and the other support programmes to ensure that the performance in this very important subject is improved.

Mr. Speaker, this brings me to the issue of textbooks. As a teacher, I personally could not find a single Mathematics textbook in the Region that covered the entire syllabus. In every instance, there always used to be a few

topics that were either not done well, or not done at all in the textbooks.

Mr. Speaker, I know that in recent years the Caribbean Examinations Council, with some international funding, has been able to get some text manuals produced centrally. I also know that many of the publishers have actually had to aggressively approach teachers in the Region to author text- books, but then there is a challenge where some authors were reluctant, or unable over the years, to improve on the text in terms of updating the books in terms of new editions.

Mr. Speaker, I know that in information technology, one publisher has had to scrap the original text because the author bluntly refused to publish a new edition. Subsequently, a Barbadian author stepped up to the plate and now his textbook is being offered all around the Region, and even in Africa. Mr. Speaker, I congratulate him and the other Barbadians who have risen to the occasion to do the necessary research in terms of writing and publishing these books.

Sir, I encourage the University of the West Indies, and the other educational institutions, to get involved directly in research so that the necessary text is provided, both at the CXC and the CAPE levels.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I will just draw attention to the issue of articulation and accreditation, and note that many Barbadians now go to the Barbados Community College and get an Associate Degree in two years with a good grade point average, and are able to go on to the University of the West Indies and get their Bachelor Degree in another two years, saving them a whole year in terms of studies and saving the taxpayers a whole year in terms of tuition cost.

Mr. Speaker, to do "A" levels would take two years and after the "A" levels, you would spend three years at University, so that is five years whereas when you would spend two years at the Associate Degree level at the Barbados Community College and you would spend two years at Cave Hill, or wherever, which would give you that one year savings. Mr. Speaker, this means that many students are tending to the Associate Degree as opposed to remaining in the Sixth Form schools.

Mr. Speaker, the Caribbean Examinations Council, through its Associate Degree Programme, would have to rise to the occasion and ensure that this programme is offered in more subjects, so that this issue of the attractiveness of the Associate Degree Programme is addressed so that we do not end up with a CAPE Examination which is not as popular and, therefore, not gaining the number of students actually taking the Examinations.

Mr. Speaker, I am very excited. As other Honourable Members have mentioned, the scope of CXC is tremendous. Currently, the Caribbean Examinationss Council helps with the Common Entrance Examinationss. As the Honourable Minister of Education mentioned, with the advent of distance education and so on, CXC could play a tremendous role in terms of providing the necessary assessment and the creation of Examinationss both at the professional level in terms of short courses for professionals, as well as Bachelors and post graduate qualifications.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 5.45 p.m. today.

Hon. F. J. STUART: I beg to second that.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 5.45 p.m. today was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

House A44 Sequence 39 5.30 p.m.

Tuesday, August 07, 2009

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This House is resumed.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I join this debate on this Resolution for the leasing of some 2.2 acres of land at the Pine, to the National Insurance Board, to facilitate the construction of the new Headquarters for the Carribean Examinationss Council.

Mr. Speaker, I repeated the title deliberately because among the sideswipes which would have been made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East in her now imitable style, was one that would try to indicate to this Honourable Chamber, and to wider Barbadians who are listening, that the building of this facility for the Carribean Examinationss Council is not happening now and that we are talking about planning. Sir, the exact words of the Honourable Member were: "we don't have money to build."

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. Mr. Speaker, I never indicated that the Government does not have the money to build the

Carribean Examinationss Council's Headquarters. I referred to the international baccalaureate in saying that I would not expect that Government could introduce that with any haste because they would not have the money to do it.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is correct, the statement was made with respect to that and not to the Carribean Examinationss Council's Headquarters.

Honourable Member, please withdraw the comment and let us move on.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, the challenging financial times in Barbados, and it is accepted, are largely internationally-driven, but the challenging financial situations with which we are dealing are also, to a large measure, impacted by the attitude to spending by the Barbados Labour Party, during their 14-year term as Government of this country. Sir, the Record must be there.

Mr. Speaker, while we chronicle the achievements of the Carribean Examinationss Council, and they are well chronicled, even before we started here today, what we have not properly chronicled enough is the amount of crying at the footsteps of the leadership of the Barbados Labour Party for improvement in facilities for this organisation. Sir, though I accept the support of the Honourable Members on the Other Side, I accept it with caution because during the Honourable Member's presentation, the Honourable Member constantly referred to the fact that she will speak to that later.

Sir, there were a lot of innuendos, a lot of suspicion, a lot of shots across the political bow. Sir, the Honourable Member comes here, she has obviously swallowed a bag of catch phrases which she then regurgitates for her own satisfaction, and for her continued attempt to garner favour with the people of Barbados.

Sir, the people of Barbados have already spoken and the only people speaking now, are the Honourable Members on That Side. The Honourable Member's comrades on That Side, though the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East has already spoken loudly, it is only a matter of time before the Honourable Members who are not here and who are significantly not present again, will speak to her.

Mr. Speaker, the facts are that the Carribean Examinationss Council has been crying at the footsteps of the Barbados Labour Party for as much as 10 years. They have been crying out for a resolution to what is a totally unacceptable situation.

Sir, truth be told, it has become characteristic in the Barbados public service to encounter situations like this

which has been left by the Barbados Labour Party, who constantly boasts about their stewardship and about the fact that there was plenty of money to go around in their day. Sir, the question begs itself again, why were the workplaces of the people of Barbados not paid some attention besides, of course, the palatial creation at Warrens, which we are still paying for?

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member occupied an office that was eloquent by exception, the furnishing...

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. The Honourable Member is clearly fuzzy in his memory. The Honourable Member is obviously recalling that his first act as a Minister was to order a 50-inch television for his office at the Ministry of Public Works and Transport at the Pine.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, that is not a point of order, let us move on.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I will continue to ignore the digressions.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, please.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, the facts are there for themselves and I invite the Honourable Member, when she is in the mood, she could visit the office. I could take her and show her what is there. I will show her what is still missing from when I took over, and I will even show her where I put the couch that was in the office.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order. I will have to ask the Honourable Member if he has taken home the couch that I left there. Sir, I left a couch at the Ministry of Public Works and Transport.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, this is not time for questioning. Please continue.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, the point must be made and it is a very serious thing. Sir, we as a Government are inheriting the social backlash of this act of disregard by the Barbados Labour Party and it ripples through the Barbados Civil Service today. We do not have to chronicle it, the Attorney-General's Office is but one example, the GEED is another, our Police Stations is another, the Welfare Offices is another, the Courts of Barbados is another, the Polyclinics of Barbados is another.

Sir, one Sunday ago, the Randall Philips Polyclinic celebrated 25 years as a named polyclinic and the conditions under which we inherited that polyclinic as a Government were absolutely unsuitable for the provision of any kind of health care.

6.00 p.m.

Tuesday, August 07, 2009

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, the Barbados Labour Party must hang their heads in shame and not come in here and try to beat their chests and say that they are one side today on this issue, that it is not a problem and that they fully endorse the leasing of this property and, Sir, there they go. I am not having any part of that, Sir, because, as I have said, behind all of that is an ambition to continue to destroy the work of the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, when we brought into this Chamber the opportunity for children to travel free on school buses, the Honourable Members on the Other Side opposed it, and when we introduced camps for school children in Barbados, the Honourable Members on the Other Side also opposed it.

Mr. Speaker, they are conveniently selecting their support regime, so they select to support the building of the CXC building at the Pine. Sir, then, of course, the Honourable Member speaks to the fact that we have to reorganise traffic. Sir, they built the building at Warrens and they did not reorganise any traffic. Sir, they did not think about the traffic at Warrens and we are now dealing with the traffic at Warrens and, Sir, we have a plan, which I will speak to for a bit, in terms of dealing with the traffic at Wildey. Sir, I believe I have mentioned it here before, that it is the simple introduction of a roundabout at the Prince Road area.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have said before, and I think most Members understand, that a lot of the problems with the movement of traffic, especially on our busy secondary roads, like Collymore Rock, is the fact that traffic is given the right to turn across each other so very often, and we believe the introduction of a roundabout at Prince Road, I hope would be part of this immediate solution.

Sir, now that we are going into the construction of the CXC building, we will introduce a roundabout at Prince Road, which would help to move the traffic smoothly around that area.

Mr. Speaker, the point is that you must have a plan. Sir, the officers of the Ministry of Transport and Works are acutely aware and, if they are not acutely aware, they must now be clear in their minds that this project has to get moving urgently, because it is part of the overall plan to ensure that there is construction activity and that there is continued sustainability for jobs in this country. Sir, it is part of our plan to help to battle this real situation that we are in, in terms of finding employment for young working Barbadians.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, we have got to move the Prince Road depot which is located on the southern extremities of the plan for this construction. We have got to move the Buildings Department, the Surveying Department and, in the case of the Ministry of the Environment, Water Resources and Drainage, we have to move the Drainage Unit, which is already located there. I am sure that the Minister has his plan in terms of making sure that these offices, the officers and the equipment are appropriately held.

Mr. Speaker, in our case, we are already working on a plan to bring the depot to the headquarters of the Ministry of Public Works at the Pine. Sir, once we can get the appropriate approval of the Town & Country Planning Office, that project would also start but, certainly, things like mapping out the land, surveying the land, preparing for any acquisitions or leases that may be required because, obviously, these lands are held, I believe in this case, by the Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (BADMC), so we will have to make sure that the appropriate Resolutions are brought, and the land is brought under the control of the Ministry of Transport and Works for redeployment.

Mr. Speaker, at that time, it would also be necessary to look at the location of other depots around the St. Michael area. We have already had to move the Farm Depot to Richmond, but we are in the early stages of thinking that we could locate those two depots, or at least the Farm Depot at the central Pine headquarters also. These activities, therefore, Sir, must take place at the same time as we are planning to start the construction of the CXC building.

Sir, I need to repeat that the financing for the CXC building is in place, and that it will be financed by the National Insurance Scheme.

Aside.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, it is nothing new, but it is in place. It was not in place under the time of the Barbados Labour Party, but it is now in place and, Sir, construction activity is imminent. Sir, Honourable Members on the Other Side have to ask their own consciences, not me, why the CXC should have been begging at their doors for eight years, but now they can say it is nothing new. Sir, it is new, because for once, the Caribbean Examinations Council could say that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Mr. Speaker, it is more important than only to Barbados. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East spoke to it, but the Honourable Member only speak to it now, and how important it is for Regional institutions to be properly accommodated but we, on This Side, know how important it is. Sir, we know how urgent it is and that

is why we have worked swiftly to put this arrangement in place.

Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of this debate, I have a document which I am prepared to make a document of the House, if so required. It is entitled "The New CXC Headquarters Building" and, Sir, it is not just a new building, but a different way of working. It is true that I cannot say to you how the photographs look but they describe a situation, which I do not think we should advertise because it does not lend any value to the work which we are mandating the CXC to do, which they have done so well, and the work which the Regional bodies would expect this institution to carry out.

Mr. Speaker, I really look forward to the solution that this would bring to Barbados and to such an urgent and important Regional institution. Sir, these records have been chronicled and the facts are here about the way CXC has grown from 1979, offering five subjects for 30 000 students in 58 subject areas to 2008, offering 33 subjects to 123 000 students and 24 subjects in CAPE to 22 000 students.

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, I wish the Honourable Member for St. Thomas would stop mumbling and leave her presentation for when you give her leave. Sir, the proud record, which we speak to today, would not be comfortably housed in a building, which befits the kind of work that is being done, and which reflects the kind of pride that we as West Indians, and more directly as Barbadians, that we place in our institutions, as we seek to service the needs of the public.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, Honourable Members have got to understand the commitment of this Democratic Labour Party Government to making sure that the education needs of this country are properly and adequately satisfied.

H/A44/6.10 p.m. Sequence 42

Friday, August 7, 2009

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: We have put the construction of this facility on the front burner of our agenda, like our capital works programme, like we have put the two buildings at Warrens for the ultimate housing of our Civil Service on the front burner of our agenda, like we have put the new facilities for the Honourable Attorney-General's Chamber, bringing them together for the first time in as many as probably 15 years. In as many as 15 years, yes, you can look up. It is a fact. We are putting these things on the front burner of our agenda, because we cannot get our officers to produce in the kind of environments that we continue to encounter in our offices.

We are only asking the Public Service to work with you, to cooperate with us as we seek to bring about solutions in a structured way and a way that is allowed, given the financial constraints of any Government. I believe, confident, because these workers are so acutely aware of the improvements that are coming, they will cooperate with us as we go forward to make things better for them. This is a significant part of satisfying this aspect of the work.

Sir, it is not good enough to say that the Garrison buildings are old buildings. They were old buildings when they put the people in them. They were not old yesterday. They were old when you put the CXC in there. That is the point I want to make to the Honourable Member. Sir, as they say, pardon the terminology, there is nothing new in that. The buildings at the Garrison have always been old.

They said that they could not reach an agreement to where they could go. How can we reach an agreement in 18 months and you could not reach an agreement in 10 years? What kind of double standards are we applying to solutions in this country? What kind of double standards are they expecting the people of Barbados to swallow? There are no excuses. There are absolutely no excuses for the lack of attention to important matters.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. There was an agreement to go to the Prince Road Depot before we left office. Furthermore, the Honourable Member is only explaining why it has taken 18 months to bring this Resolution to vest the Prince Road Depot in the National Insurance Scheme to get the building started. All of those arrangements were settled with the Caribbean Examinationss Council and the National Insurance Scheme before we left office.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, 18 months and 10 years, the Honourable Member needs to correct herself. It is 18 months and 10 years to reach this stage. That is the point we have to make.

Sir, the Honourable Members on That Side have pleaded guilty. They have pleaded guilty to the charge of neglecting the affairs of workers in this country. The evidence is so blaring, the evidence is so irrefutable as we move across the structures of the Civil Service. It is alarming. I cannot believe that these are the kind of conditions that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East allowed to develop, rotten windows, broken tiles, exposed electrical wires, fans thrown in corners. I do not mean two fans. I mean 22 fans thrown in corners of buildings, termite infestation, books secured by masking

tape and boxes in corridors. It is unacceptable. I want to repeat that this is only one example.

I touched on the question of the Honourable Attorney-General's Chambers, and I put that as a separate discussion. It has even challenged their ability to produce. Then the Polyclinics, where we take our children, from the smallest to the eldest, from the womb, as they say, to the tomb. That is the kind of record the Honourable Member, on That Side, has left for this country. That is the legacy they have to live with, the legacy of disregard.

Sir, an example, here in this document, the Caribbean Examinations Council Headquarters, not just a new building, but a different way of working. No wonder they must support it, because they understand now that there are other things to just spending money and living on the hog, as they say, because that is where they were, but it was unsustainable and we have demonstrated, and the people of Barbados have demonstrated they understand fully that it was unsustainable.

They have put a Government in place whom they expect results from, and they can be assured that this Democratic Labour Party Administration will speak to the issues in education, will speak to the issues today of the Caribbean Examinationss Council, and the needs of the Caribbean Examinationss Council. We are committed to an education policy that works. It is part of our founding fathers' philosophy. It is written into the thinking of every member of this organisation, counter-writing to the kind thinking to That Side. They may only now, in this generation, have been brought around to the thinking that all Barbadians are entitled to free secondary education. I am not even convinced that all of them are.

They fought vehemently Independence, they fought school meals, they fought free education, they fought free school bus service, and they fought camps for school children. They fought Constituency Councils and free units for housing for people. We can chronicle them, but it is written in the philosophy of the Democratic Labour Party, the records of the Right Excellent Errol Barrow, our National Hero, and his comrades of the day, who saw to it that we could be in here today, that any Barbadian, once they work hard enough and are prepared to take advantage of the opportunities given to them in education, that they could strive to be anybody in this country. They can strive for anything in this country, if they follow a philosophy alien to the core of a lot of Honourable Members on That Side.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have five minutes in which to conclude.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: We are committed.

Sir, as I end, I want to urge our Barbadian children - when I meet with them - I am confident that they are working, in large measure, taking advantage of these education opportunities.

I want to see created in the education system more opportunities for those who may not have had the chance to take full advantage during their time at primary, secondary and tertiary because of distractions, and because of conditions which may not have been necessarily the best, or the most suitable for taking advantage of these opportunities.

I want to see the creation in our education system of more opportunities for our people to train and retrain. I am talking about our children of 20 years old, because truthfully, they are still children. We want to talk about our adults of 30 years old who may need to be retrained, because they cannot, with the present training they have, find appropriate employment with the changing needs in terms of our working opportunities.

They need to be retrained in the use of the computer, in the use of different skills, in the whole idea of service organisations and customer care, so our education has to be modelled, shaped a little bit, and massaged to meet these needs as we extrapolate to try to bring some of these, who have not taken - we sometimes refer to them as failures. I do not like to say that word.

H A44 6.20 p.m. Sequence 43

Friday, August 07, 2009

House A44, Sequence 44, 6.20 p.m.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I believe there are persons who may not have taken full opportunity at the time but, in large measure, are ready now and we have to create those opportunities. It is one of the things which I am going to be emphasising in Christ Church South where the need arises, and I am already searching for partnerships to try to establish a training facility for people of the type whom I have referred to, people who have missed the boat in the first occasion, but express a willingness to take part in a new education opportunity, a training programme, tailored to their special need.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with our Constituency Councils, and I look forward to working with our private sector organisations in Christ Church South, to bring this to a reality. In truth and in fact, it is tailor-made for a Constituency like that, which has a high tourism participation, an area of activity, which is so fundamental and important to our economy. We recognise it, Sir, and I want to just end exactly where I started, by saying that I support this Resolution unreservedly.

I do not support it with any forked tongue. I support it, Sir, because I recognise how important it is. It is not out of political ambition, or an attempt to try to cast aspersions on the work of any Government, or public official. I support it, Sir, because it is needed. It brings Barbados, or it maintains Barbados in the eyes of the world as a standard bearer. It allows the workers at this facility to operate in an environment like standard bearers.

I am sure that when this facility is done and handed over to them, it will be well used and they will continue to grow in all the areas in which they have achieved so much, and in new areas which will be defined for them as we continue our programme.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George North.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I did not want to speak in this debate because it is Friday afternoon, but I recognise the last Honourable Member who just sat down was in a happy mood after enjoying a happy hour and, therefore, I have to correct the records.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The Honourable Member was in a happy mood, on a Friday afternoon, and most Barbadians know what most men would do on Friday afternoons. I, therefore, want to correct a number of statements that were made which he was aware of and which, I am sure all other Members of the Cabinet would be aware of, because if I am aware of it, I am sure the Honourable Member is aware of it.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that we on This Side are saying, unreservedly that we agree with this Resolution for the establishment of the new Headquarters for the CXC. We do so because it took us a long time to get to this point. The Government must not allow the Barbadian public to believe that they came to office, conceptualised this programme and within 18 months, they have arrived at where they are today. It is false.

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Housing in the late 1990s, as the Minister of Public Works in the early 2000s, I am saying that this Resolution had its genesis long before my time, because CXC under the Headquarters Agreement, came to Barbados and they were placed at the Garrison. Sir, since in the 1970s, when Louis Tull was the Minister of Education, CXC came to Barbados.

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that it is not true when the Honourable Member for the City said that CXC wanted to pull out of Barbados. Sir, CXC never contemplated at any

time at being relocated from Barbados. Barbados is still the primary destination for most of the Regional bodies. Most of the Regional bodies would want to remain in Barbados.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I alluded to rumours, Mr. Speaker, I did not say anything was official, but rumours, and that is a fact.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, a Cabinet Minister is talking about rumours in a Parliament? Sir, in the Parliament of Barbados, a Minister cannot get up and say that he heard rumours and bring this to a sensible House.

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that it is not true that these Regional bodies, whether, it is CXC, First Caribbean Bank, or others, want to move from Barbados. We know that CXC had challenges. We agreed. I am sure that the Minister of Education read out some of the challenges that they had, but he pointed out that it was not the fault of the Government of the day. It was not the fault of the lending agencies and the Honourable Member needs to read his Cabinet Papers.

I am saying to Honourable Members that they need to look at the history of this thing. Sir, since in the 1990s the National Insurance Board, and Barbados National Bank, wanted to fund a new headquarters for CXC but for some reason, and the Minister pointed out that they were changing their minds. At one time they wanted to go by the Harbour Road, another time they wanted to go by Warrens and then, finally, it was agreed at the Planning and Priorities Committee Meeting in 2007, that they will go to Wildey, all the arrangements and the Honourable Member for Christ Church South has said just now, making people believe that this is his idea, and this is the whole thing about this Government.

The Government comes here and makes us believe that they have started the ABC Highway. They said they conceptualised the plastic driver's licence. They centralised the Road Traffic Regulations that were suppose to come here 18 months ago. I asked the Honourable Member, when are you going to bring the Road Traffic Regulations to empower the police to carry out the Act that was passed in 2007?

They would come here the next two years and say it is their idea, when I was the one who went through the Act here, but the Regulations have not come here yet. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South has not seen it fit to bring the Regulations, but he has to bring it, Sir.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. I am sure that not too long ago, the Honourable

Member spent about two hours in here saying that it was not his idea to build the ABC Highway. He had nothing to do with it, so I do not understand.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I did not say that. Mr. Speaker, we debated last week and I made a point in here. I do not want to go through it because it is irrelevant to this debate.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say here that many initiatives that were started under the Barbados Labour Party and this Democratic Labour Party Government have to continue, and this is one of the arrangements. I can talk because I know the area.

We had an agreement that the Police Station was to be put at the Wildey junction in the Pine, funded by the Barbados National Bank. The Prince Road depot was not to be relocated at the Pine. The Prince Road Depot was to be relocated at another location in the Pine. In fact, it was former Prime Minister Arthur, who insisted that Wildey be used as a venue for Government buildings. He insisted. I pass there every day.

House A44, Sequence 44, 6.30 p.m.

Friday, August 07, 2009

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the National Insurance Board agreed at a Planning and Priorities Committee meeting that for the amount of land you have, they would not buy land for the Caribbean Examinations Council and would allow it to go to the Pine. The Minister of Education talked about that today.

Mr. Speaker, we had a Planning and Priorities Committee, which the Government does not now subscribe to. That Planning and Priorities Committee comprised civil servants, people from the lending agencies, Members of Cabinet, professionals and consultants who came together and made decisions based on the various proposals. At that meeting, it was agreed that the Caribbean Examinations Council would be funded by the National Insurance Board. It has nothing to do with this Government, so they should not fool the people that it is their idea which they are carrying out. I am glad that they are carrying it out because we supported it.

Mr. Speaker, this Parliament is the highest Court in the land, and Barbadians are more educated today than they ever were before. This Government must not come and fool us because we can read. It is all on the Internet. People know of this. The consultants know that funding was in place. The civil servants know that the Depot was supposed to be moved. We started all these things, and the Government must carry them through, whether or not, you have a problem at the Caribbean Examinations Council.

The Caribbean Examinations Council always had a problem and the staff was under severe challenges with their accommodation. Mr. Speaker, you must remember that a number of things take time. It takes time for planning. The Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown is of the view, because he spoke about it today, that it took too long. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members in here must read. The Federation that came in 1958 came out of the Moynes Commission that was in the 1940s. The Federation did not come out of the blue. These things take time.

Mr. Speaker, Caribbean exams came in the 1970s but they were first discussed in the 1960s by the University Council. I heard the Honourable Member on the radio talking about the examiners examining. Mr. Speaker, he was an Assistant Examiner at CXC, and I was a Table Leader and an Examiner for the Caribbean Examinations Council for 10 years, so I am aware of these things.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House as he seeks to indicate that in 2007, everything was done, all the plans were made.

I want to read a short excerpt from a Memorandum from the Director of the National Insurance Board to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Lands speaking to the state of play. The Director said: "However, as you are aware, matters relating to land are still unresolved. These matters include the areas of land to be utilised in the project, the legal work relating to the vesting or the signing of the land, the finalisation of the financial model to be used and the scope of the project." If that is a completion, Sir, well...

Mr. SPEAKER: Very well.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I said that at a meeting of the Planning and Priorities Committee, it was agreed that the Caribbean Examinations Council would go at that junction, but of course the legal and financial work must continue. Does this Government not want to do any work? This Government has to go to work and do work.

The Government has to go to work and do some hard work like the Minister of Housing and Lands. The Minister of Housing and Lands does not complain. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South must go and do some hard serious work. It is not happy hour every day. Mr. Speaker, these things take time. The Government of Barbados is a continuing exercise and, therefore, the Government must take the blame if this thing has taken 18 months to come here.

Mr. Speaker, it is like with the roundabouts. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South talked about

the roundabouts. The Cabinet of Barbados signed off on 10 roundabouts some time in 2007. The Wilkey Roundabout and the junction at the Pine/Collymore Rock Road was discussed and a roundabout was to be put there as well.

Mr. Speaker, the Collymore Rock Road is one of the busiest roads in Barbados and we recognise that something had to be done. Mr. Speaker, if you are going to put Government buildings at that junction, you have to provide a proper management study for the traffic in the area, and we made that point. It was something that was done a long time ago, but these things take time and money.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South must tell the public that this funding is not coming from central Government, that it is coming through a Memorandum of Understanding between the National Insurance Board and Government, so the funding is already there. This funding was agreed to long ago.

A new depot station was to be built, funded by the Barbados National Bank and the Caribbean Examinations Council Board. Mr. Speaker, the entire complex was to be funded through private money which would be paid in monthly installments by Government in the final arrangement, but the land will be vested in the National Insurance Board.

This Resolution is vesting the land in the National Insurance Board, which will have the lease of the land for whatever the period of time is. The National Insurance Board will own the building for 99 years, that is all. The public must be made aware that the National Insurance Board, because it has the funding, has to invest its funds.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of the day took the initiative that the National Insurance Board should not invest all of its monies abroad and should put some of it in worthwhile projects in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, the National Insurance Board took the initiative, not only to help fund the Warrens building, but to help fund a number of capital programmes across Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, when this Government came to office, the very first thing they said they were going to do was to review all of the projects that were started by the Barbados Labour Party. Mr. Speaker, they cannot deny that. This is one of the projects that they reviewed and they recognised that it is a good project. The capital works projects at the Police Headquarters and the Judiciary were carried through by the Barbados Labour Party. The Government has taken 18 months to bring it to resolution.

Mr. Speaker, we are hoping that it would start in this financial year. I hope that the Depot the Minister talked about can be relocated. I hope that all of these projects at

Wilkey will get going so that they could help generate the employment that the Minister spoke about.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister knows that I have said over and over again, that the Government must keep construction buoyant in order to provide employment for hundreds of people in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I am not happy when I hear that the Barbados Labour Party has kept this thing so long. These things have taken long for a number of reasons which we have explained. There are a number of projects that will take long because of the planning and the nature of things in our country. Mr. Speaker, that does not mean that the Government of the day must take the blame for everything that it has done, because the nature of development is that the planning process takes about two to three years. The surveying work, the legal work and all of these things take time if projects are to be planned properly.

House A44 Sequence 45 6.40 p.m.

Tuesday, August 07, 2009

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I heard the Honourable Member talking about the Arch Cot Terrace/Brittons Cross Road area study today. Sir, that study took two years before the Report could come to Parliament. We know it took some time, because this Report took over 18-months.

Mr. Speaker, I am of the view that Government must carry this programme through. I believe that with further planning, the entire Wilkey area could be another Warrens, or could be similar. Sir, traffic management would have to be looked at in a meaningful way, just like what we had done at Warrens.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Minister saying that there were no plans for Warrens, but I had met with most of the business houses and brought a comprehensive plan to the Planning and Priorities Committee, where I am now seeing that plan being implemented at Chefette, Warrens.

Mr. Speaker, the only thing I did not do for Warrens is that section of traffic management that I am now seeing, that new design at Simpson Motors called a lollipop.

Sir, we had meetings with all of the business houses. A Post Office and a day-care centre were to be built on additional land. The additional land was supposed to have been sold by the Minister of Housing and Lands to raise funds to do other things. Sir, all of these things were done and I am glad that, at least, the Minister of Housing and Lands has agreed to run with these programmes and bring them here.

Mr. Speaker, even though the Minister of Housing and Lands has brought them here in Resolution form, the Honourable Member still has to go beyond that and make this an actual programme. The Honourable Member still has to do a programme for the Town Planning Department. A number of planning permissions would still have to be done, including the legal work. Therefore, it is not like that work would start tomorrow, but would take some time but I would hope that they could break ground in this financial year.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this Resolution. Sir, despite all of what we have heard, I would want to commend the Honourable Member for the urgency attached to this Resolution and for the alacrity with which this Resolution has been brought to this Honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, the Carribean Examinations Council has served this Region well. My year was the first year that they did the Carribean Examinations Council subjects in Biology, Chemistry and Physics in 1985. My son was then one of those who has done the CAPE Examinations, so we have seen that the Carribean Examinations Council has served successive generations within the Region. We know they do a rigorous Examinations process, as well as periodic assessments.

Mr. Speaker, as we talked about the Resolution, and as we talked about building the Headquarters, let me urge that proper maintenance of this facility would be done. We know we have seen new buildings that look real fantastic coming up and then after a brief period, we begin to hear about sick building syndrome, about people complaining about buildings that are just a few years old. We know that is because of a result of lack of maintenance. Sir, we want to ensure that we do not keep putting buildings up, only to have to be finding newer and newer buildings every few years.

Mr. Speaker, I rise because I am concerned about those students. We at first heard a figure of about 33 per cent. We have now heard there are about 67 per cent of students who leave school with four or more CXC's. Those students would therefore be considered to be employable.

Sir, I am concerned about the remaining 33 per cents of students who are leaving school with insufficient CXC's. Some leave with one or two basic qualifications, while some leave sadly with no certificates at all. This really does not translate into much in the workplace. Sir, I am wondering about the value of the basic certification, which does not seem to translate into anything, especially when competing with students who have the general certification.

Mr. Speaker, that 33 per cent represent what we would call marginalised students, and often it is only when they leave school without qualifications, or when they fall out before reaching fourth, or fifth forms, that efforts are then sought to be able to provide vocational training, or some remedial training. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that those students need to be identified earlier in the system and remedial action taken, so that even if they are not leaving with CXC's, they would be leaving school with some qualification that could put them in the workplace.

Sir, it goes beyond that. Those students have been shown that when put in remedial programmes, for example, the Barbados Youth Service, where there are smaller class sizes, personal attention and other motivational factors for them, they have shown now to be able to come out with qualifications.

Mr. Speaker, we know that students will blossom at different stages. We have seen that at the 11-plus. We see that students who, perhaps, come out, did moderately well at high school, will then go on to University. Mr. Speaker, I am not just talking about blossoming. As I said, my concern is those students who are falling out, who are coming out of schools without any qualifications, but then we see there are means by which we can get these students to be able to do something in terms of their academic qualifications.

Mr. Speaker, we noticed that these are the same students who often have difficult home circumstances, some of them come from abject poverty, some do not have parental support, the conditions under which some of them live, or are expected to study, may be in overcrowded homes, some do not have the proper nutrition that would sustain the focus at school and the attention to school work. Therefore, these students not only need to be identified, but there needs to be more stepping up of the programme of intervening, counselling, identifying what are their concerns and assisting them.

Mr. Speaker, we know there are cases where this is done, but I think that because we can see a figure of 33 per cent of students coming out of school without sufficient qualifications, we do need to do more intensive intervention when we see children who are not doing well. We know that among these 33 per cent of students you would find a high level of crime, high level of deviant behaviour, teenage pregnancy, drug use and abuse. It is among this 33 per cent of students who would become a challenge for society and a challenge for the juvenile justice system.

These are the students who then become a challenge to our programmes within the Ministry of Youth Affairs. They also become a challenge for the various youth

agencies and non-governmental organisations that we have seen coming up.

Sir, quite frankly, the major programme within the Ministry of Youth Affairs is for those young people who have not yet found their way.

Mr. Speaker, it is not that we do not want to assist these young people. We know interventions can be sought earlier. Mr. Speaker, what concerns me too is that in these students, there is a link between poor academic performance and lack of self-confidence. Sir, we have free education and so, everybody now has access and is expected to take advantage of that access to free education, but we have attached academic qualifications and success in school, one sense of self worth and self confidence.

While we know that education is important for personal and national development, I do not want, as we go forward with developing our curriculum, that our curriculum be such that students who are not academically-inclined, be made to feel worthless. This is a notion that we see enforced at the 11-plus with those students who do not do as well, those students who do not go to the top schools, those students whose grades are not as good as the others. We saw that they have already begun to have a poor sense of self-worth instilled in them, and that is often reinforced through the schools.

6.50 p.m.

Tuesday, August 07, 2009

Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Mr. Speaker, while we want to encourage academic excellence, we also need to ensure that our students know that is not where their worth lies and we need to develop programmes that focus not only on academia, but that focus on other skills as well. Sir, we should seek to identify skills and talents so that those students know that their worth is not in what they can produce on paper.

Mr. Speaker, we see where there are students who are not doing well in school, but because they have some gift in sports, their self worth comes out because they are recognised for that, and we need to make sure that this is also an integral part of the programme.

Sir, it was mentioned earlier today, that in our schools, as more and more focus is put on the academic as students get older, that in First Form there is dedicated physical education time but, as students get further up, and as they near exam time, or maybe even in the third term, once they get near exams, that is foregone for studying and for revision. Sir, as they get to Fourth Form and Fifth Form, that is very optional and sometimes in Fifth Form, Sixth Form and Upper Sixth, it is not there at all, because

we have looked at the importance of the academic, attempted to achieve a balance and teach our children a balance and, Sir, it goes back to the issue we spoke about of non-communicable diseases.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the pursuit of these ideals is so much more important than the other things they want to do in communities, sports, our health and well-being and in taking care of themselves. Sir, academics are placed high and correctly so but, again, too high to the exclusion of other things which makes a rounded person.

Mr. Speaker, while we are supporting CXC in continuing to support its service and its programme, I want to give kudos to CXC for what they have done in the Caribbean and for how they have assisted in the development of the people of the Caribbean. Sir, I want to urge the Ministry of Education, the teachers and those persons involved in the curriculum and the development, to be mindful, not only of students who are seeking academic excellence, or who are managing to attain academic excellence, but to be mindful that there are students who need special assistance and other programmes and who need to have things working a little different for them. Sir, if we do that, we might even see that we could increase the figure.

Mr. Speaker, it is good that we heard from the Opposition that the percentage of students coming out with qualifications rose from 40 per cent to 67 per cent but let us not pat ourselves on the back. Let us not be satisfied with that 67 per cent because it means that 33 per cent of our students are still crying out for help. Sir, there are 33 per cent of students slipping through the cracks and 33 per cent, who by extension, we are telling them that it does not matter whether they qualify, or not because we are satisfied that two-thirds of our students are not performing well.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot tell that to those students because, at the end of the day, the Ministry of Youth, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, and the Police, are challenged with that 33 per cent, to find programmes for these young people to keep them out of crime, deviant behaviour, pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. Sir, I know it is among all classes and all sectors, but that is where we find the figures to be more concentrated.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I congratulate CXC for the work they have done and the Ministry of Housing and the Minister of Public Works for doing what was necessary to bring this Resolution to the House today, which receives my full support.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: I thank you. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East.

His HONOUR K. St. C. BEST: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this Resolution before the House today. Sir, I want to say that it is like a crying shame that the Examinations body, that everyone in Barbados depends on, finds itself doing their business in such dilapidated conditions. Sir, one must ask the question: How high is the level of productivity? Sir, surely this is a reflection of what happened throughout, not only at the CXC Headquarters but throughout a number of Government offices in Barbados.

Sir, I think this new building should have a serious maintenance programme and that the air quality should be tested every six months, so that the employees would not be complaining as the people from the Welfare Department are complaining for the lack of proper working conditions.

Sir, lack of proper working conditions did not start 18 months ago because successive Governments, as from today, should take the lead to ensure that, since people are your resources, you should protect your people, so that when they leave their homes and come to their workplaces, that they must come to conditions that are favourable. Sir, those conditions could only be favourable, if you have proper working conditions.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that we need, as a Government, to seriously look at the maintenance programme. Sir, we continue year after year to spend millions of dollars in building new buildings but, at the end of the day, the employees, for some reason or another, go on strike for something.

Mr. Speaker, if we have the testing of air quality and buildings are properly inspected and maintained, the level of productivity will greatly increase and the amount of money spent in constructing new buildings, or Government renting buildings across the length and breadth of Barbados, would be greatly reduced and the expenditure in respect of Government offices would be greatly reduced.

Mr. Speaker, this new building should be the model or the starting point where we say that enough is enough of bad working conditions, and that now we should go forward to ensure that the workers of Barbados, not only in the public sector, but we must also call on the private sector to look after the working conditions of employees every day to ensure that what is happening in Barbados, as far as productivity is concerned, and also in every aspect, is of a very high standard.

Mr. Speaker, it makes no sense spending all this money, acquiring this land and building all these lovely buildings but then, thereafter, there is not a maintenance programme. Sir, we should have a specialised maintenance unit and cut out a lot of the red tape, where you have a maintenance officer in one area, another officer in another

area, and then you have to go through various channels sometimes just to get a broken window repaired. These should become things of the past and, Sir, I am asking the necessary Ministers responsible, to ensure that these things become things of the past.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I support this Resolution.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged.

Honourable Member for St. Philip North.

H/A44/7.00 p.m. Sequence 47

Friday, August 7, 2009

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Sir, I rise to close this debate and I have been asked by Honourable Members of this House to be very short.

First, I want to express my gratitude to all Honourable Members who contributed to this debate, both Members from the Government's Side and Members from the Opposition, who tried to defend, but I believe that at the end of the day, when you review the case presented by the Opposition, the ruling will go in favour of the Government. It was a full and frank confession by the Opposition that they neglected and failed to carry out their duties.

Sir, in the circumstances, I beg that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. F. J. STUART: I beg to second that.

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

ORDER NO. 6 – THE STUDENT REVOLVING LOAN FUND (AMENDMENT) – BILL, 2009

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Sir, the matter before us is an amendment to the Student Revolving Loan Fund, Cap.54A to make provision for the recovery of debts owed to the Fund, garnishment and related matters. Of course, Honourable Members will realise that the issue of the establishment of a Fund, to facilitate those persons who wanted to study in the Region and outside of the Region, was in the 1970s, where the Government recognised the need for a substantial increase in the number of skilled manpower, to carry out its development plans.

One factor contributing to this condition was the inability of low income earners to provide, or maintain

financial support for members of their households to pursue studies in educational institutions providing vocational, technical, or University education, in other words, education that we consider tertiary level institutions. Therefore, the Student Revolving Loan Fund, arising out of the Higher Education Loan Fund, was established by an Act of Parliament in 1977.

In other words, you had the Higher Education Loan Fund, which was administered by the Tertiary Section of the Ministry of Education at that time, with the work and functions being subsumed under the Student Revolving Loan Fund.

Sir, the Fund is managed by a Management Committee which consists of the Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Education as its Chairman, and his Deputy, The Chief Education Officer. It comprises other individuals nominated by the Director of the Ministry of Finance and Planning, individuals nominated by the Pro Vice Chancellor of the Cave Hill Campus and the Barbados Institute of Management and Productivity. All of these were members appointed by the Minister of Education.

Sir, major work was done on the functions and viability of the Fund, starting in 2001. In truth and in fact, BIMAP did a study of the Fund around 2003. I am concerned, and this is appearing many times, that work was commenced on many things, but somehow was left to falter for some period of time. This is one of those things which was, in fact, left to falter for some period of time. There is a need for funding for persons who want to do courses beyond what is being offered by the University of the West Indies system. The Student Revolving Loan Fund was established specifically to meet some of these purposes. Therefore, I find it extremely challenging why these things were left to flounder for such long periods of time. It obviously says something was wrong, not the ability of the idea, but to execute and carry it to a final conclusion did not always seem to be there.

In May 2008, the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance came to this Honourable House and spoke to some issues relative to the Student Revolving Loan Fund, including the raising of funds up to \$100 000 to be secured by real property, and other important issues and considerations relative to that Fund.

I recognise that within the work, there was a notion of expanding the scope of the Fund to deal with new modalities of learning, something which I support 150 per cent. I recognise that open and flexible learning is even beyond the frontiers now. It is really progressing at a very rapid rate, and if we have a Fund, that Fund has to embrace those new learning modalities and these new learning methodologies. Therefore, you will find both within the

Act and the Regulations to the Act, many of these changes have been encompassed. I will speak to those shortly.

The amended Student Revolving Loan Fund Regulations to the Act, and in response to the ever increasing demands by people for more funds and more opportunities to study, you find that using open and flexible learning, your cost is reduced, not the cost of the programme, but because you might not have to relocate, the cost of accommodation, meals and transport are eliminated from the overall cost. Therefore, the changes we are bringing to the Honourable House today, based on those positions are such. I will speak to those changes.

Sir, the Bill to amend the Student Revolving Loan Fund Act, Cap. 54A makes provision at Section 7.(1) for the rate of interest to be fixed at 1.5 per cent above the prevailing savings rate. Future stakeholders can readily compute the interest rate to be charged on the funds loaned. This is a marked change from the existing Regulations which determined that the interest rate should not be exceeded by 12 per cent per annum. That was in the existing Regulations.

Sir, loans have been granted sometimes between, 5, 6, 7 and 8 per cent, so it is 1.5 per cent above the prevailing savings rate.

Sir, for argument sake, if the savings rate is 3 per cent, the loan would be granted at 4.5 per cent, if it is 5 per cent, the loan would be 6.5 per cent.

Section 16.(1) of the Bill provides for the recovery of debts owed to the Fund, and there are several proceedings in the High Court, or the Magistrate's Court at District "A". This Regulation allows the Fund to obtain simple judgments against defaulters in a more responsive and timely manner.

In the past, we used the services of Lawyers to recover the funds from defaulters. You know that you would have had several difficulties recovering funds from those who defaulted.

H A44 7.10 p.m. Sequence 48

Friday, August 07, 2009

House A44, Sequence 49, 7.10 p.m.

Hon. R. D. JONES: I am also asking because the Fund is essentially to revolve, in order that other persons would benefit from the funds, but there are several persons who sit in high Chambers, in high offices and in all kinds of places, persons you will not even begin to think about, who will not repay the Fund. It is a simple thing for those who come from the village, not like the Honourable

Member for St. Joseph, even though he came from Parish Land, St. George.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: We know that if you borrow, you should pay back. If you buy pork, you should pay for it and in a situation like this those persons, if they are Lawyers, if those Lawyers come from St. Philip, if those Lawyers come from St. Michael, if they are medical practitioners, wherever they are, if they are engineers, they should repay the Fund.

The Fund over several Ministers, several Management Commissions has made provisions for the annulment of some interest rates, for varying of some rates, giving people an opportunity to repay, but some persons who should know better, who flash their faces across Barbados, have not repaid one cent to the Student Revolving Loan Fund.

I want to make it absolutely clear because I have checked it. There is no Honourable Member on This Side who owes the Student Revolving Loan Fund. In preparing for this, I ensured that the Honourable Members on This Side are clean.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Section 16A. (1) to (8) of the Bill gives the Fund the authority of garnishment, subject to the protection of the Wages Act. The Authority allows the Fund to demand payment of a debt from the money payable by a third party to a defaulter. The amendments under the Act are enforceable on all loans granted by the Committee prior to the date of the amended Act.

The Regulations extend the scope, the Fund's scope of lending to part time and distance learning, as defined in the Regulations. Remember I spoke earlier and said that now with the new learning modalities, we need to embrace open and flexible learning. There are many Barbadians who are now drifting and moving beyond those who would have used strict distance methods before, where scripts were sent - where you had someone - you had to go, and the Ministry of Education did coordinate a lot of these previous distance learning situations, so you again protect the integrity of the Examinations. Now the on-line learning opens a new dimension. The same rigidity, focus and academic challenge of programmes are captured within this process.

Section 4 of the Regulations stipulates the basis for the financial assessment of the borrower's loan, while also allowing the Committee to adjust the maximum loan limit, granted on an individual basis.

Section 5.(1) ties bonded service, irrespective of location to a period of not less than one year, or equal to the period of study, whichever is greater. Previously, the length of bonded service was tied to the location of the study.

In Section 3.(4), the Regulations now give the Fund the authority to take real security for loans over \$50 000. However, Section 5.(4) identifies the existing loan maximum of \$50 000 as the limit, or cap for loans, not supported by real security and improve the borrower's chances of obtaining security for a guarantor by changing the number of sureties to a minimum of two, instead of, at present, to two sureties only.

Section 3.(b) raises the age limit for borrowing without ministerial approval from 35 years to 50 years.

Section 5.(5) adds the requirement that applicants over 50 years, repay their loans by their specified age of retirement.

I remember years ago, I was over 35, the Representative for St. Michael North East then was the Minister of Education and, yes, the Minister made sure that my leave was okayed for Masters study, but I did not apply to the Student Revolving Loan Fund for any loans to go and study, at the time. There was a bank that was quite generous in providing those resources for me to go and study.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Of course, quite an excellent one too, the University of London, my good friend. That is why your brother and I were very good friends and not you.

Therefore, it gives the Management Committee of the Fund the ability, previously, if you are over 35, the Minister would sign off on that. We need to remove some of these log jams and allow the Committee to do its work. It raises the maximum now to 50 years.

I have not had many challenges as they come to you of okaying loans for persons. At 50 years now, you are still young, in relation to the world of work, and the world of study, so there is nothing wrong in persons who want to improve their capacity in the workplace, who want to improve their self-esteem, their self-actualisation for studying, 50 years, or whatever and since you are now retiring at 65½ and 66, you would have, based on the cost of the course, an opportunity to repay the loan.

Section 56.(1) determines the pay-back period for borrowers under the 50 years, at a minimum of 12 years, to a maximum of 30 years for loans for vocational education to post graduate studies, across a very wide spectrum. The

higher and longer payback is necessary, since loans for these qualifications are usually relatively large.

Loans under Section 56.(2) for technical and vocational adult education are generally smaller, hence lower pay-back period of a minimum of four years to a maximum of 12 years. Even recently with the Medical Transcription process, where persons have come for relatively small loans, something like that would apply, because of the need to have some medical transcriptionists present within this society.

Section 57 establishes trade mitigating conditions for determining the monthly loan installment, payable by a borrower, while Section 8, disallows the charging of a penalty for early payback of a loan. Therefore, it gives you that opportunity for early payback. You do not know how your fortunes would flip, and if you want to pay back before the time, there would not be a penalty.

Section 5.(9) ties the delivery of study to the grace period. Consequently, the grace period for full-time studies, has moved from a fixed period of one year, to a maximum of two years, while Section 5, extends a six-month grace period for part-time and distance learning studies. That is a method of study that mainly attracts employed people. All it is simply saying, you are employed, you want to start paying back as soon as you complete your period of study, so within six months of that, you can start.

In truth and in fact, if you want to start before, there is no penalty because you are earning an income. You have not moved from your space, you are not on study leave, you did not have to resign or anything, you are just using the structures which now exist for educational purposes.

Section 5.(11) imposes a moratorium of interest for the duration of the course of study and stipulates conformity to the contractual period with interest accruing thereafter. It effectively removes the requirement for student borrowers to be charged simple interest during the study and grace period.

Section 5. (12) gives the Committee's the authority to grant reasonable relief to borrowers unable to pay their stipulated loan installments.

Section 6, reinforces the Committee's authority and the Ministry of Education's approval to cancel the loan for students who are not performing at their studies, or who breach material aspects of their contract, or contravene the Regulations.

Sir, in the Regulations, the Loan Application Form produced, was restructured.

House A44, Sequence 48, 7.20 p.m.

Friday, August 07, 2009

Hon. R. D. JONES: The Loan Application Form produced, that is in the Regulations, was restructured to allow the Fund to capture information pertinent to its expanded scope of lending.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Cabinet of Barbados, at its meeting of May 19, 2008, approved increased loan maximums to 100 per cent to \$60 000 for loans of study for one year or less, a 50 per cent increase to \$75 000 for loans of study for more than one year and the grant of a second loan and consolidation thereafter, to a maximum of \$125 000. Of course, the Minister of Finance, in his budgetary proposals of July 2008, increased the maximum for four-year study programmes by another 50 per cent to \$150 000.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is not a problematic matter. Both parties in power recognised the need to have more resources available to studying people of Barbados. This Government has taken the process and has brought it thus far to this conclusion. One cannot deem it, nevertheless, to be a project that is concluded because in discussions, as we move around, people make comments to you on various processes. There are persons who are turned down, but we believe that if you are turned down, that there should be a review by an independent small body to look at the reasons, and maybe to recommend that you be granted the loan.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: I am just saying that as you move around, you need that sort of solution in the process. I am just mentioning that, so that when we return, maybe in the Regulations, or something, we will deal with one or two of those issues. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a project which has unfolded over previous Ministers into this Minister and the Minister of State in the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development at this stage.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am therefore proud to move that the Student Revolving Loan Fund (Amendment) Bill, be read a second time.

Hon. F. J. STUART: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not intend to be long, but let me say that we welcome the fact that the Government is completing this work which was started on the reform of the Student Revolving Loan Fund so as to make it more relevant to the times.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that the hour is late and the House is proposing to rise and that Honourable Members would normally be at dinner at this point, but I want to point to Clause 4 in the Bill. I have discussed it with the Honourable Attorney-General.

I believe that there needs to be an amendment, even if it is on the Floor of this House, in order to perfect Clause 4 to be consistent with the Constitution, so as not to cause the Government to be liable in respect of a breach of due process. These are amendments really to recover money.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: This is the Act I am speaking about because the Regulations are not before the House. The Regulations deal with the facilitation of the loans. The amendments in the Act speak to the Government's ability to recover the loans where persons remain indebted.

These amendments provide for at Clause 3, that a Certificate may be issued by the Committee and that Certificate, once issued, must be delivered to the person who owes the money" and that if it is not delivered to that person within 14 days, then the Certificate has no weight, but if it is delivered and then lodged in either the High Court or the Magistrates's Court, the Certificate, after seven days, has the same value as a judgment delivered in the Court. Sir this provides an opportunity for the person who is indebted to be heard because they can apply to the Court to deal with it, although I feel that the seven days is a short period of time.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I am not quarrelling with the seven days so much. I think it should be more. The point is that it provides an opportunity for the person who is indebted to be heard, because they can apply to the Court to deal with it, even though the Act does not set out the manner in which you can so apply, but Lawyers are there and the Lawyers would show you how to do it. It just means that you would pay a lawyer some money to learn how to do it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what concerns me is Clause 4 which purports to amend Section 16.A of the substantive Act. This give the Committee the power to garnish. If the person who owes the Student Revolving Loan Fund money is about to be paid money from someone, or some entity, this Clause purports to give them the right to go and collect that money and have it applied to the Student Revolving Loan Fund, rather than passing through the hands of the person who owes the money.

My difficulty, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that what is here at Clause 4, subsection 16A, simply says that where:

a) a person is indebted to the Fund and the repayment of the loan is not made in accordance with the Regulations and the terms and conditions of the Loan; and

b) the Committee knows or suspects that the person is entitled to, or is due to receive a payment from another person in this Section referred to as the “third party”.

the Committee may deliver to the third party a demand for payment.”

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the sum that the Committee is claiming is wrong, what happens to the rights of the person who is supposed to owe the money? If the sum is not owing at all, what happens to the rights of the person owing that money?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our simple point is that Clause 4, as currently drafted, is in breach of Sections 11 and 18 of the Constitution, which are the protection of the Law clauses which, according to the Caribbean Court of Justice’s decision in *Boyce and Joseph*, is binding on this House as it is on this country, to provide for due process.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: We have to respect the Law. This House cannot disregard the Law.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the one thing that Clause 4 does not do is to provide for due process. I believe that it can be corrected, and it must be corrected before we let it pass this Chamber. I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when we come to Committee that we could find words so as to correct it, and I would move the amendment to ensure that it is in compliance with the Constitution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you cannot respect it in Clause 3 where you are clearly giving the person who owes the money - and then in Clause 4, there is no reference in Section 16.A to say that it is to be read subject to Section 16, or to say that the Committee must present the Certificate.

It simply says that the Committee is entitled to deliver a demand for payment. Mr. Deputy Speaker, a demand for payment is not a Certificate. The person drafting both clauses would have had available to them that language and therefore intended to say something different in Section 16.A.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, some may argue that it is open to both interpretations, but the one thing I know is that legislation should not leave this Chamber that is doubtful

when we can correct it. This Chamber must ensure that there is certainty of intent, and if we can correct it - I am sure that we do not want to subject citizens of Barbados to claims of payments and to garnishment in circumstances where they have not been afforded the opportunity to confirm that the money stated to be owing is owing. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe, therefore, that this could be corrected.

House A44 Sequence 50 7.30 p.m.

Tuesday, August 07, 2009

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we support the extension to distant education. I think the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central has acknowledged that the reform methods were started in 2001, that BIMAP did the study and that this has now come.

We also support the fact that the numbers which were in the Regulations are insufficient to provide appropriate access to persons who need to borrow money to study. You cannot borrow \$50 000 to cover a three-year degree anymore, so that these have to be relieved. Sir, we started that process and I am glad to see that it has been brought to a closure.

Sir, that is why we are at this late hour, on the eve of the summer recess, facilitating this debate, because we are cognisant that there are people who will want to go away to study in September, and for whom this amendment will make a meaningful difference, rather than standing on ceremony and waiting for it to happen in October.

Sir, that is why we are also prepared to move the amendment on the Floor, rather than to require the Attorney-General to take back the Bill to the Chief Parliamentary Counsel, because persons need to get their business in order, in order to go off to University. We feel that the good work in the Regulations should not be compromised by what can be resolved by three or four words in the substantive Bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would only say before taking my seat that I find it strange. I believe the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central has obviously forgotten that he has a duty to be full and frank with this Honourable Chamber, that when he sought to say that there is no Honourable Member on That Side who owes, he should not seek to bring a matter into issue that might bring disrepute to one of his Honourable Members on That Side.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I am not going to get into it because that is the Honourable Member’s personal

business, but in so casting that aspersion, he may not seek to suggest that there may be Honourable Members in this Honourable Chamber who owe. I am not aware of any such Member who is present.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would want him to give this Honourable House the assurance that the Honourable Minister would not have waived the principal, or interest for any Member of this Parliament for debts due and owing to the Student Revolving Loan Fund, while coming and putting a steeper framework of penalties for ordinary Barbadians. I just want the Honourable Minister to give that assurance, knowing full well that he has an obligation to be full and frank in his disclosures to this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is all I would say on that matter. I thank you.

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in bringing this amendment, the Student Revolving Loan Fund Act 2009, to a close, I want to state up front that the Minister in all Ministries, has some particular power, but it is not a power that I use injudiciously whatsoever. Of course, knowing all these individuals and where they have studied, I am sure that none of them in this Honourable House would be the ones who would have been the subject of my comments, relative to persons owing any money to the Student Revolving Loan Fund.

There might have been persons who might have traversed this place before, who might be guilty of such, but none of the Honourable Members of this Honourable House, as far as my knowledge provides, is guilty of such breaches relative to that Fund. Sir, I want to make it absolutely clear that such circumstances do not exist in this instance and that this Minister does not use his pen willy-nilly. Sir, I want to say that this comes from a deep philosophical background from my coming from the country.

I firmly believe, and I have stated it before, that if you borrow, you must pay back. If you buy pork, you must pay for it. That is a simple fundamental belief. I am not saying that if there are circumstances that are so extenuating, where people are unable to meet some of the needs which they thought they could have met when they first applied for the loan, that we do not embrace those extenuating circumstances.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am appreciative of the support which has come from the Other Side to the general

tenure and contents of the Student Revolving Loan Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2009. Therefore, with those few words, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to second that, Sir.

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

On the motion of Hon. R. D. JONES, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, the House resolved itself into Committee on the Bill. Mr. S. A. LASHLEY, Chairman of Committees, in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 - 3, inclusive, were called and passed.

Clause 4 was called.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, as indicated, I propose an amendment in Clause 4, in what is referred to as Section 16A(1), the last part of the sentence beginning "the Committee may deliver to the third party a demand for payment." I propose that we insert the words "along with the Certificate obtained pursuant to Section 16."

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, I beg to second that, Sir.

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

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

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, I have heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East on this question. These are all matters of statutory interpretations. I do not agree that we need the words as was said by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. Section 16 makes clear the basis on which the Committee can recover payment from the person who borrows from the Fund, and that is on the basis of the Certificate.

I cannot conceive of a situation in which the Committee would go to a third party to say to the third party, "Look, you owe Tom Brown money. Tom Brown owes the Fund and has refused to pay it," without being able to say to the third party, "We can prove that Tom Brown owes the Fund "X" amount of dollars." Sir, we have to produce a Certificate, so I cannot see why we need these words as was suggested by the Honourable Member for St.

Michael North East but if the Honourable Member believes that this is going to lead to some catastrophic results if these words are not inserted, I certainly would not want to delay this Honourable House over four words.

Mr. Chairman, I have no problem if the Honourable Member wants those four words inserted. They do not really add anything, in my respectful view, to the substance of the legislation, but if that is what the Honourable Member wants, I have no objection to it.

7.40 p.m.

Tuesday, August 07, 2009

Hon. F. J. STUART: . . .

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member could you please read the amendment?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Certainly, Mr. Chairman. Sir, in the last section of Section 16A.1, where it reads “the Committee delivers to the third party a demand for payment, that we insert the words “along with the Certificate obtained pursuant to Section 16.”. Sir, I repeat that I am moving it because Section 16A only speaks about indebtedness and only presenting what is the level of indebtedness. We believe that for the avoidance of doubt and such that this House be not in breach of any of the Constitution, that they be moved.

Sir, I am obliged to you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: It would have to say “the Certificate as obtained, pursuant to Section 16.2 because that is where the Certificate is...

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: We can put Section 16, Subsection 2 for the absolute avoidance of doubt. Sir, I am obliged to you.

The question that Clause 4, as amended, stand part, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Clause 5 was called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. R. D. JONES, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, Mr. Chairman reported to His Honour, the SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill in Committee, with amendment, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. R. D. JONES, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Student Loan Revolving (Amendment) Act, 2009.

ORDER NO. 4 – ORDER OF NATIONAL HEROES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2009

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this amendment is to make it possible for the National Heroes of Barbados to be permitted to import a motor vehicle once every three years, free from any payments or taxes.

Sir, as the House well knows, Barbados has one National Hero, who is still alive and entitled to benefit from this provision and what the amendment is intending to do is to permit the National Hero to import a car every three years without having to pay duties and taxes.

Mr. Speaker, there are other amendments to the legislation at Clause 3. The Principal Act is amended by deleting Section 10 and substituting the following Section:

“A person upon whom the honour of National Hero is conferred shall be (a) referred to as the Right Excellent (b) entitled to where as a declaration the prescribed insignia of the Order of National Hero and (c) entitled to the benefits set out in the Second Schedule.”

Sir, the Second Schedule is the right to import the motor vehicle one every three years.

Sir, the existing legislation had only once Schedule, but the Act is now being amended to insert a Second, so there is now a First Schedule and a Second Schedule to the legislation. Mr. Speaker, it is a very straightforward piece of legislation and it is a very innoxious Bill. Therefore, without any ado, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

On the separate motions of Hon. F. J. STUART, seconded by Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, the House resolved itself into Committee, on the Bill, Mr. S. A. LASHLEY in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

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

Clause 1 - 4, inclusive, were called and passed.

The Schedule became the Schedule to the Bill.

On the motion of Hon. F. J. STUART, seconded by Hon. R. D. JONES, Mr. Chairman reported to His Honour,

the SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill in Committee without amendment and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. F. J. STUART, seconded by Hon. R. D. JONES, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Order of National Heroes (Amendment) Act, 2009.

Sequence 52

Friday, August 7, 2009

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, this brings us to the end of Government's Business. Therefore, I beg to move that this Honourable House be now adjourned until Tuesday, October 13, 2009, at 10.00 a.m.

Sir, since I am on my feet, I want to, on behalf of the Government's Side, the Honourable Prime Minister and my colleagues on This Side, wish all Honourable Members a pleasant break from the Chamber. I know that Honourable Members still have their varied occupations, their varied pursuits in lands close to our shores and lands further afield.

I am only hoping that persons in the exercise of what they consider their duties do not cause disturbance in any lands which might be close to our shores. To my colleagues who have to continue their ministerial responsibilities and other responsibilities, I would wish them health and strength, commitment and great faith, that they will continue to do the people's business with the kind of aplomb and certainty, they have been doing thus far.

I want to wish the Clerk, Deputy Clerks, Senior and other Reporters, and all of the various staff, Marshal and Deputy Marshal the best for this break. We are thankful for their service. They continue to operate at the highest level of excellence and proficiency, making it possible for us to transact the people's business in the manner in which it is transacted.

I would also like to thank all those members of the island's constabulary, the Royal Barbados Police Force, who, with their usual dedication and commitment and high level of seriousness, ensure our safety and security at these premises and further afield. I too would want to wish them on behalf of This Side, and, of course, the entire House, a good break from the challenging duties of providing security for the 30 of us in this Honourable House.

Also, to you, Mr. Speaker, I want to wish you the best as we travel across the length and breadth of Barbados, and even as we travel further afield.

I thank you, Sir.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I wish to associate myself with the words expressed by the Honourable Leader of the House. It is true that we have not met every week, but I believe that the lateness of the time in the summer would suggest that those in particular, who are members of staff of this Chamber deserve the break for the summer recess.

We would like to thank those who have facilitated us, both in this Chamber and the Other Chamber, not just the Clerks at the Table, the reporting staff, the police, who keep us secure, the media, who cover us, and, indeed, the caterers, who keep us supplied with nourishment.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South is reminding me that sometimes his taste does not take to the food every week, but I know that he knows the caterer well, so I would not expect him to say so publicly.

Sir, we want to wish everyone a pleasant summer recess. I think that we are accustomed now to working the Friday after Crop Over, which some people find strange in the rest of the Region. Most Parliaments, I think, have gone on their summer recess already. I believe the rest will be well deserved.

We have challenging times ahead of us for the rest of the year. Therefore, it is going to be critical that we come back with a steadfastness of purpose, and with energy to address the needs of Barbadians who will be feeling the adjustment in every possible way, as the year goes on. So much would be expected in this Honourable Chamber of both the Government and the Opposition. We, therefore, look forward to playing our part to make sure that we can ease the lot of Barbadians in these very difficult and challenging times.

I can only wish you too, Mr. Speaker, all the very best during the summer recess. I know that sometimes you are diverted by CPA business, but apart from that, I hope that you will have an opportunity to rest too as well during the summer recess.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let me endorse the comments made by the Leader of the House and the Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition. I too would like to add to that. I thank you for your cooperation in

which has been, generally speaking, a smooth Session, I believe, to date. Thank you.

Of course, I remind you that your duty as Representatives of the people still continue, in spite of the recess, and I wish that you will use it wisely returning on October 13, refreshed and reinvigorated, to continue what can sometimes be a daunting task, but a task which we are all sworn to do to the best of our abilities.

The question that the House be adjourned until Tuesday, October 13, 2009 at 10.00 a.m, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

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Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60; Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 54, 55, 57; Mr. G. A. Clarke, 55, 58, 59, 60, 61; Hon. P. M. T. Todd, 59; Dr. the Hon. E. R. Byer-Suckoo, 61, 62; His Honour K. St. C. Best, 63; Hon. M. A. Lashley, 64; Hon. F. J. Stuart, 64.

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SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

BEST, His HONOUR K. St. C. (St. Michael East)
BLACKETT, Hon. S. D. (St. Michael Central)
BOYCE, Hon. J. D. E. (Christ Church South)
BYER-SUCKOO, Dr. the Hon. E. R. (St. George South)
CLARKE, Mr. G. A. (St. George North)
DUGUID, Dr. W. F. (Christ Church West)
EASTMOND, Mr. R. C. (St. James North)
ELLMAN, His Excellency D. St.E.
ESTWICK, Dr. the Hon. D. C. (St. Philip West)
HUTSON, Hon. E. G. (St. James Central)
INNISS, Hon. D. O'N. (St. James South)
JONES, Hon. R. D. (Christ Church East Central)
KELLMAN, His Excellency D. St.E. (St. Lucy)
LASHLEY, Hon. M. A. (St. Philip North)
LASHLEY, Mr. S. A. (Christ Church West Central)
MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East)
PAUL, Mr. J. D. (St. Michael West Central)
STUART, Hon. F. J. (St. Michael South)
TODD, Hon. P. M. T. (City of Bridgetown)

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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. Opening. The convening sentence in the source begins mid-sentence: ‘met at 10.10 a.m. on Friday, August 7, 2009.’ Printed as in the source.

Q3. Government Notices and First Reading. Notice is given of ‘The Constitution (Amendment) (No.2) Bill, 2009’, but the Bill read a first time is listed as ‘The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2009’. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Headings, Orders Nos. 2 and 3. The Act is cited as ‘CROWN LANDS VESTING AND DISPOSING ACT, CAP. 225’ in the heading of Order No. 2 and as ‘CROWN LANDS (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CAP. 225’ in that of Order No. 3. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Order No. 6, third reading. The Bill is headed ‘THE STUDENT REVOLVING LOAN FUND (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2009’ but is recorded as passed and cited as the ‘Student Loan Revolving (Amendment) Act, 2009’. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Committee, Order No. 6, Clause 4. The source records Miss M. A. Mottley’s amendment as seconded by Hon. F. J. Stuart and the question resolved before the Attorney-General’s remarks on it and before the Chairman asked for the amendment to be read; after the take-slip at about 7.40 p.m. a speech heading for Hon. F. J. Stuart carries only ‘. . .’. Printed as in the source. Please confirm.

Q7. Speaker label, Member for St. Lucy. The Member for St. Lucy is labelled ‘His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN’, once ‘His Excellency D. St.E. ELLMAN’ and once ‘His Excellency Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN’. Printed as in the source.

Q8. Take-slips. Twenty-one take-slips are dated ‘Tuesday, August 07, 2009’ although the Sitting was on Friday; the sequence numbers also run out of order in places (‘Sequence 08, 11.10 a.m.’ followed by ‘Sequence 07, 11.20 a.m.’; ‘Sequence 49, 7.10 p.m.’ followed by ‘Sequence 48, 7.20 p.m.’). Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met on Friday, 7th August, 2009 at 10.10 a.m., with His Honour M. A. Carrington, Speaker, in the Chair, and the Minutes of Tuesday, 28th July, 2009 were confirmed. The Attorney-General, Hon. F. J. Stuart, laid the Annual Report of the Enterprise Growth Fund Limited for 2008 and the Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Sir Garfield Sobers) Order, 2009, and Hon. E. G. Hutson laid the Financial Statements of the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. Hon. R. D. Jones gave notice of two Bills and moved the first reading of five, among them the Order of National Heroes (Amendment) Bill, 2009 and the Student Revolving Loan Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2009.

In a Ministerial statement Mr. Stuart reported the recommendations of the consultants who studied the Arch Cot Terrace, Brittons Cross Road area after part of the Chalon Apartment Building collapsed into a cave on 26th August, 2007. Option A, backfilling the cave, was estimated at BDS\$21 million and would have taken two years; Cabinet on 7th July, 2009 accepted Option B, involving the acquisition and demolition of the properties on Lots 16, 17 and 25, the acquisition of Lots 23 and 24, fencing and a new access road. The study had cost BDS\$619 643.32 against an estimate of BDS\$650 000.

Under Order No. 2, Hon. M. A. Lashley, Minister of Housing and Lands, moved the Resolution to lease 3 335.3 square metres of Crown land at Lot B, Warrens to the Barbados Diabetes Foundation for its headquarters, a diabetes centre and a clinic, for 25 years with an option to renew for 25 more at \$100 a year. Dr. W. F. Duguid supported it for the Opposition but thought a 50-year limit harsh and suggested 75 years. Hon. D. O’N. Inniss, Mr. R. C. Eastmond, Hon. P. M. T. Todd, Mr. D. St.E. Kellman, Mr. G. A. Clarke, Dr. the Hon. E. R. Byer-Suckoo, Mr. S. A. Lashley, Mr. J. D. Paul, Hon. E. G. Hutson and Hon. S. D. Blackett spoke on diabetes, amputations, diet and exercise. The Resolution passed without division.

Order No. 3 was the Resolution to lease 2.28 acres of Crown land at Prince Road, Pine Plantation Road, St. Michael to the National Insurance Board for 99 years for a new headquarters for the Caribbean Examinations Council, whose staff, Mr. Lashley said, had worked since 1999 amid termites, damp and flooding. Hon. R. D. Jones described the earlier search for sites. Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, for the Opposition, said the first application had come about 2000 when she was Minister of Education, supported the Resolution and urged planning for traffic at Collymore

Rock and Warrens. Hon. J. D. E. Boyce contrasted the Government's 18 months with ten years of delay, drawing points of order from Miss Mottley; Mr. Clarke said the site had been agreed at a Planning and Priorities Committee meeting. The Resolution passed after further speeches from both sides.

Under Order No. 6, Mr. Jones moved the second reading of the Student Revolving Loan Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2009, which gives the Fund power of garnishment under a new section 16A, subject to the Wages Act. Miss Mottley welcomed the reform but sought an amendment to Clause 4 for due process and an assurance that no

Member's debt to the Fund had been waived. In Committee, with Mr. S. A. Lashley in the Chair, Clause 4 was amended to require the certificate obtained under section 16 to accompany a demand to a third party, and the Bill passed. The Order of National Heroes (Amendment) Bill, 2009, moved by Mr. Stuart to let a National Hero import a motor vehicle free of duties and taxes once every three years, passed all stages without debate.

On the motion for the adjournment Mr. Jones and Miss Mottley wished Members a pleasant summer recess, and the House was adjourned until Tuesday, 13th October, 2009 at 10.00 a.m.