
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2008 – 2013

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

Pursuant to the Adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.10 a.m. on Tuesday, June 9, 2009.

PRESENT

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

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

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B (Hons.) Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Labour, Civil Service and Energy)

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

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

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

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN

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

Hon. R. D. JONES, J.P., M. A. (Hons.) B. A. (Ed.) (Minister of Education and Human Resource Development) (Leader of the House)

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK, M.B.B.S., B.Sc. (Minister of Economic Affairs and Empowerment, Innovation, Trade, Industry and Commerce)

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, 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, Ed.D., M.Ed., B.A., Dip. Theology (Minister of The Environment, Water Resources and Drainage)

Mr. A. D. BRATHWAITE, LL.B. (Hons.)

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, M.Sc., B.A. (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 in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Minutes of May 15, 2009.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Sir, I beg to move that the Minutes of the Honourable House of Assembly for its Meeting of Tuesday, June 9, 2009, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

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

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

PAPERS

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay on behalf of the Minister of Finance the following documents:

1. Excise Tax (Rate of Tax) Order, 2009.
2. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Remit) (Preconco Limited) Order, 2009.
3. Annual Report of the Barbados International Business Promotion Corporation - Invest Barbados for the year 2008.
4. Annual Report of the Central Bank of Barbados for the year 2008.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. R. D. JONES: Sir, I beg on behalf of the Honourable Prime Minister to move the First Reading of the Financial Institutions (Amendment) Bill, 2009.

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

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

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 the day's Sitting.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 3

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE GUARANTEE BY THE MINISTER OF FINANCE OF A LOAN OF \$50 MILLION AND INTEREST THEREON TO BE BORROWED BY THE BARBADOS PORT INC. FROM BNB FINANCE & TRUST CORPORATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF FINANCING A PORTION OF THE COMPANY'S EXISTING DEBT AND ITS ONGOING CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAMME.

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

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. Speaker, to move the passing of this Resolution for guarantee of \$50 million to the Barbados Port Inc. from the BNB Finance and Trust Corporation.

Sir, over the years, the Barbados Port Authority, as part of its developmental programme, covering the period 2002 - 2007, had embarked on a programme to redevelop the infrastructure at the Barbados Port facilities. The

expenditure financed by several loans was incurred in repaving the container part to the tune of \$9.5 million - A contract for the repaving of access roads and the replacement of utilities and the rehabilitation of the Bulk Handling Berth, Shallow Draught, Container Berth, the reconstruction of the Cross Berth along with the construction of 50 per cent of a new Berth No. 5. Sir, expenditure was also incurred in respect of the modification of the Gate House at the North Entrance, and the extension of the Mechanical Workshop.

Sir, the Workshop and Gate House, some \$5.9 million was expended on that work.

H A38 10.20 a.m. Sequence 2

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House A38, Sequence 03, 10.20 a.m.

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: The revampment and the roads were some \$12.9 million. The work on the marine infrastructure was some \$57.8 million. There were associated legal costs and design costs which amounted to approximately \$3 million on these various capital works programmes, and this expenditure amounted to \$100.7 million.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, that programme was financed by individual borrowings from various institutions as well as for the infrastructure utilised in some of the internal financing of some of the working capital of the Port to fund these Capital Works Programmes.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to indicate the various loans which were secured for the purpose of this work. As I said, this work has been done over a period from 2002 coming up to 2007. There was a loan from Damen in 2002, at some 8 per cent for \$11.2 million. There were two loans from RBTT of \$10 million and \$34 million, one at 7.5 per cent and one at 6.75 per cent, loans from

Butterfield Bank of \$12.5 million, at a rate of 5.375 per cent. In 2005 another loan from Butterfield of \$12.5 million at 6.25 per cent. In 2007, a further loan from Butterfield of US\$10 million at 8.25 per cent and that loan is payable over a period of 15 years, from 2007 to 2021.

Mr. Speaker, there are also further loans from the National Insurance of some \$10 million. Further, loans from RBTT of \$5 million incurred in 2007, and that is a very short-term loan of approximately three years at 8.5 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, a loan from BNB in 2005 of \$14.5 million and that is for a period 2005 through 2012, at a rate of 10 per cent. The overdraft facilities at the BNB amount

to \$10 million, and as you would appreciate, this is an ongoing financial arrangement. Mr. Speaker, the balance on these loans, excluding the overdraft at the end of May 2008, were some \$707 million.

Therefore, as I said, there is an assortment of interest-bearing loans and this financing of \$50 million, at an interest rate of 7 per cent for a period of 10 years, is intended to take out the loans which are taking interest rates of 8 per cent and 10 per cent. Mr. Speaker, that effectively refinances partially, the long term debt of the Port.

There are loans, as I said, of 5 per cent and 6 per cent, which carry interest rates that are less than 7 per cent that, obviously, have not been refinanced.

Mr. Speaker, the impact of this refinancing exercise means that there are fewer interest payments, that will be payable by the Port from 2008 and going forward, which automatically impact on the bottom line before tax profits. The refinancing over a period of 10 years as well, Mr. Speaker, means that a lot of the loans which will mature in 2010 and 2012, would now be extended and payable over a 10-year period.

The effect of these loans will also generate, as I said, a reduction in the overall interest and increased profitability, but will also act to reduce the monthly debt servicing of the Port, since the loans are now extended over a longer repayment term of 10 years. Mr. Speaker, these will have a substantial impact on the cash flow and profitability of the Port. Mr. Speaker, the Port had to seek these loans because of the restructuring and the ongoing maintenance exercise of the Port.

Mr. Speaker, of the \$50 million, we have decided that we would allocate some \$35 million to retiring the resorted loans. Sir, \$10 million will also go into the repaying of the pension liability which, at the end of 2007, according to the Financial Statements, were some BDS\$27 million for the unfunded portion of the pension liability, and we will speak to that as we proceed in this presentation. An additional \$5 million would be put into the working capital of the Barbados Port. That accounts to how the \$50 million has been utilised in this exercise going forward.

Mr. Speaker, the overall debt servicing of the Port has been a challenge over the years. Some 10 per cent of the gross revenue of the Port, is represented by the interest that the Port has been paying on these assorted loans over the years. In 2006, the figure was some BDS\$6 million and the revenue at that time was approximately \$66 million. Sir, as I said in 2007, the figure was some \$7 million.

10.30 a.m.

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Hon. E. G. HUTSON: I am not sure what the figures were for 2008, because there should have been some sort of reduction, given the restructuring here. I do not have the 2008 figures with me. Those figures are currently being audited, but as I said, they will impact substantially on the bottom line of the Port.

Mr. Speaker, in speaking to this Head this morning, I would also want to make a few comments in respect of the Port and the financing of the Port. I indicated during the course of the Budget presentation, that the various tariffs charged by the Port had not been increased since the late 1980s. That effectively means that the total revenue from the Port has over time been comparatively flat. Any increases in revenue, would be largely due to the changes in the volume of cargo and so on, coming into Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, 2008 has seen some reduction in cargo as compared with previous years. Mr. Speaker, I will share with you some of the total tonnage for the last five years.

In 2002, the amount was some 948 944 tonnes, in 2003, it was 1 300 517 tonnes, in 2004, it was 1 189 459 tonnes, in 2005, it was 1 196 353, in 2006, it was 1 308 052 tonnes, in 2007, it was 1 314 817 tonnes, and in 2008, that figure had declined because of the slow-down in economic activity in Barbados, and that figure is now 1 210 762.

Mr. Speaker, with that reduction in the tonnage, no doubt the principal source of revenue for the Port during the course of 2008 would have decreased. Cargo handling revenue, Mr. Speaker, was in the vicinity of just over \$50 million for 2006 and some \$52 million in 2007.

Mr. Speaker, these are some of the challenges that we will face going forward. As the economic situation slows, we are experiencing some reduction in cargo. We are expecting that there would be some 17 per cent drop in the tonnage handled in 2009. In 2008, the reduction in tonnage over 2007 was some 7.9 per cent and obviously this further reduction will impact substantially on the revenues.

Mr. Speaker, as we consider this Resolution and the situation at the Port, I would also want to make reference to some productivity issues as far as the Port is concerned. One of the challenges that we have at the Port is controlling the payroll cost, which amounts to \$35.7 million. As I said, the overall revenue for 2007 was some \$71 million, so the payroll cost represents 50 per cent of the overall revenue.

Mr. Speaker, any organisation would be challenged in terms of going forward, if its payroll continues to be as

high as 50 per cent of its gross revenue. That is a major challenge and it is an area that we certainly have to address. Unfortunately, over the years, the issues of productivity and payroll costs at the Port had not been effectively controlled. Over the last 14 years, the situation has continued to escalate.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that some restructuring of the Port had been done in early 1992. When last the Democratic Labour Party was in power, a rationalization exercise had been done as far as the Port was concerned, with the intention to address some of these problems in terms of the payroll cost.

Sadly to say, Mr. Speaker, over the last 14 years that situation has been allowed to continue to deteriorate and the gains that we would have made as an organisation in the early 1990s, or as a result of that restructuring has, with time been eroded and has been lost, so our payroll cost is now reaching excessive proportions.

Mr. Speaker, that is one of the challenges we have going forward, which we have to address with the various stakeholders, the management and the union, so that we can find methodologies that would allow us to control that payroll cost and, at the same time, address the whole question of productivity within the Port, such as the number of containers that are handled during the course of the working day.

House A38 Sequence 4

10.40 a.m.

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Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, there is a three-shift system operating at the Port at the moment, where one shift will come on at 7.00 a.m. until 4.00 p.m. There would then be another shift in the afternoon, then a night shift. Sir, my understanding is that the remuneration to those workers on the second and third shifts are based on the over-time rate, so workers on shifts two and three effectively will be paid at either 1½ time or at the over-time rate.

Mr. Speaker, within the policy position at the Port, the policy which has been in effect from the 1980s, has been to give priority to the berthing of vessels. That means that cargo vessels are worked on after the cruise ships leave. Sir, effectively this means that during the winter period where cargo ships cannot berth, those workers working on cargo shifts, effectively the night shifts so to speak, are having to work at time-and-one half.

Mr. Speaker, that is a major issue. We recognised the fact that we need to maintain our employment numbers, to

be consistent with the policy and position of this Government, but the issue needs to be addressed, in terms of how we would tackle that issue of productivity, in terms of increasing the number of containers that are serviced by the individual shifts. We need to address how we could assess that over-time issue.

Sir, the issue of overtime has significant implications to the take home pay of workers and it cannot be taken lightly, it is important. We need to make sure that we seek solutions that would get us around those particular issues. Mr. Speaker, I am hoping that when the time comes that we would have the full support of the unions in Barbados, in relation to labour negotiations, in terms of looking for solutions to go forward on this question of productivity.

Mr. Speaker, another area at which we need to be looking is the removal of the restricted closed days. As I said, we spoke of the three-shifts system and we are going to be looking at proposals in respect of flexible start times, which will address some of the issues attached to the three-shifts system.

There is also discussions in respect to the removal of the restriction on the transferability of labour and increasing the quota system, for unpacking and packing of containers.

Mr. Speaker, these are some of the issues that we will seek to address during the course of our negotiations with the unions.

Mr. Speaker, I alluded earlier to the question of tariffs, to the fact that these tariffs have not been increased over time. Sir, one of the issues which we have with the Port generally, is the perception by Barbados that when we use the expression "The Bridgetown Port", that expression includes a number of organisations that are situated inside that geographic area. There is the Customs and Excise Department and the Bridgetown Cruise Terminal which, as we know, is owned by a separate corporation.

Sir, generally, once an issue happens in the geographical area covered by the Bridgetown Port, we automatically blame the Bridgetown Port as a whole for that issue. Sir, for example, if there is an issue with the Customs and Excise Department, as far as the clearing of vehicles or goods is concerned, if there is an issue in relation to the Customs Department, which is outside the control of the Bridgetown Port, the Bridgetown Port gets the blame, because everybody sees it as just the Bridgetown Port.

Sir, we get that bad image when the problems may be more directly attributed to the Customs and Excise Department, instead of the Port itself. In some cases, the problem is often with business persons themselves, in

terms of inaccurate documentation or insufficient documentation.

Mr. Speaker, those are some of the issues that happen that we all know very well and I do not need to go through them line by line. The point is that the reputation of the Port is at stake.

Mr. Speaker, it is also important to note that when people are costing their goods, a lot of the associated charges, Customs charges, brokerage charges and the other incidentals, we all tend to look at those charges as a total figure and say that in total, that is the Port charges. Therefore, the Bridgetown Port becomes branded as being an expensive Port.

Mr. Speaker, what is also significant in that, is for people to understand, when they are comparing the Bridgetown Port with ports in St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, that the Bridgetown Port is not subsidised by the Government of Barbados. The Trinidad and Tobago Port is subsidised. Sir, the same thing exists in St. Lucia and St. Vincent. Therefore, the rates that they charge, in terms of cargo handling, et cetera, will be subsidised. Sir, our Bridgetown Port has to meet all its financial commitments out of the revenue that is generated there.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to this new financing, the funds to finance that particular debt over the next 10 years has to come out of the operating revenues of the Port. Therefore, to the extent that the Port is unable to maintain a profitability to service these debts, it would have to try to refinance and re-borrow because there are no funds coming from the Government of Barbados into the Bridgetown Port as a subsidy.

10.50 a.m.

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Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Sir, we have to understand that when we look at the Port and, therefore, given the restrictions, the challenge is to manage the operation. Sir, the fact that the tariffs have not moved for nearly 20 years, means that one has to be creative in terms of the other sources of revenue, if you are going to keep the Port Authority as a viable institution and to keep it profitable.

Mr. Speaker, in spite of the issue of productivity, I believe that the Port, as an institution, still has to be commended when one compares it with the other institutions of Government - the different statutory boards like the Barbados Water Authority, the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission, where we see organisations that are subsidised by Government, have been allowed to find themselves in a

situation where, financially, they are bankrupt and they are not viable.

Sir, that is a situation that has been allowed under the previous Administration, certainly over the last 14 years to develop in this country. We have taken institutions of Government which, prior to 1993, were in reasonable financial condition and allowed them to deteriorate and we now find ourselves in 2009, where we have to do substantial restructuring of several of the institutions of Government.

Mr. Speaker, from that perspective, the Port and the management of the Port must be congratulated on the fact that they have been able to keep this institution, despite the challenges and the lack of support by the previous Administration, in terms of overall guidance. Sir, they have to be congratulated for the fact that this institution is still solvent.

Mr. Speaker, nonetheless, there are financial challenges, which we have to address to ensure that this institution continues to remain profitable and that, certainly, we could increase the profitability of the Port.

Mr. Speaker, the other challenge for us is to also understand that the Barbados Port Authority has responsibility for lighthouses, that it has responsibility for the various piers, including the beautiful walk-way we have along the Careenage, that there is a maintenance cost to it and that maintenance cost is borne by the Port. Sir, the maintenance cost of the Trevor's Way Facility is also borne by the Port.

Sir, these are what you could call social goods, because persons in Barbados and Barbados as a whole, benefit from the appearance of Trevor's Way, the appearance of the Port, the appearance of the Careenage and so on. Sir, the same thing applies to the facility at Speightstown and around the coast in general.

Mr. Speaker, these things have a cost and, in all fairness, in any environment or institution in this country, those costs would be borne by central Government, but in our case, at this particular point in time, that cost also has to be absorbed by the Barbados Port Authority, and Sir, as I have said before, we still have to try to maintain the profitability of the Port as an institution.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that people understand this when we look at the Port and the various issues associated with the costing and so on, of the Barbados Port Authority. Sir, I want to make that abundantly clear, as we go forward.

Mr. Speaker, there is still substantial additional development that needs to be done at the Port, because one

has to maintain one's facility. If you do not maintain the facility, if you adopt the approach that the previous Government has adopted, where it allowed the infrastructure of the Government and the buildings of the Government to fall into a state of disrepair; if we do nothing about it, if we do not have that ongoing maintenance programme, everything will collapse and one day, we will wake up and find that we have to start on a major recapitalisation of the institution. Sir, it is important that we address these particular issues going forward.

Mr. Speaker, we need to be looking at the continued maintenance of the pier. Sir, people say that a lot of money is spent on the Port, but they do not see any changes. Sir, a lot of the capital works at the Port, if you are working on the piers, a lot of that is going to be not visible and it is going to be expensive.

Sir, in some cases, you have to work under the sea. The dredging exercise that was done is substantial expenditure of funds, but when you look at the Port, you are not going to see it because you are working under the ocean. Sir, I think these are things we have to bear in mind as we address the issues.

Mr. Speaker, a moment ago, I spoke about the pier and I want to take this opportunity to say that, certainly, in terms of the way we look at the Port going forward, that we need to separate the cargo activities from the cruise activity. I think that has been recognised by all the experts and by most persons in Barbados. I want to say this morning that this Democratic Labour Party Government is committed to the whole development and separation of the cargo facilities and the cruise facility. Sir, to that end, we will proceed to construct a new cruise terminal.

Mr. Speaker, the continued development of Barbados hinges largely on the development of our tourism product and the maintenance of that tourism product. Sir, cruise tourism is a substantial part of the tourism product in Barbados. Sir, of the total number of visitors to Barbados, over 50 per cent of those are represented by cruise passengers, so it is a section of our tourist product that we cannot ignore.

H/A38/11.00 a.m. Sequence 6

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Hon. E. G. HUTSON: It has to be looked at and reviewed in that particular context, because we need to support and expand, as far as possible, the facilities at the Port as it relates to cruise tourism.

Sir, this Government is committed to the development of a Cruise Terminal, which will involve the construction of an additional pier, located to the South of

the existing Harbour facilities. That pier has been in the planning for a number of years, but lacked the direction to actually take it forward. This Democratic Labour Party Government will do that. We will ensure that the pier organised.

Sir, why is the pier important? The pier is important because it will accommodate larger cruise vessels. Currently, our facilities can accommodate about three of what we call the mega cruise ships. This additional pier we expect will facilitate two more of the mega vessels, allowing Barbados to facilitate five vessels at any one time.

Also, since it is not expected that we will have five mega vessels in the Port on a daily basis, the pier will become the first stop, so to speak, for vessels, so two mega vessels in port will use this new facility, which frees up the berth on the inside of the Deep Water Harbour for cargo and the like. Sir, that is our direction for the Port. As we work and develop the Port Master Plan, which we hope to have completed sometime during the course of next year or so, that will form the central point of that particular development.

Mr. Speaker, there are also opportunities in respect of this facility. When we build this facility there are opportunities. I am told by the technical persons, a limited amount of dredging will be required in the area which is currently called the "Esso Jetty", and the general area where we want to use that berth. As I said, there is a limited amount of dredging that will probably be required to facilitate those vessels.

It also creates an opportunity for us to do a certain amount of reclamation of lands in the area of Trevor's Way, which will bring to this project a much needed real estate component. The whole development of that is exciting, because it creates an opportunity for us to bring a whole new direction to our cruise tourism experience. That real estate potential, once it is reclaimed and extended in the area of Trevor's Way, can be used for a number of different things. As I said, not only an extended cruise facility, but it could be used for hotels, businesses, infrastructure that support the craft industry.

Sir, it is the position of this Government that the manufacturers, craft and artists in this country should share in the economic fortunes of this country going forward. That is important. I want to say, that again is consistent with the philosophy of the Party and it is consistent with what we have articulated within our Manifesto, that we need to develop and promote the arts and craft of this country.

Sir, when you look at the whole question of a pier to the South of the Deep Water Harbour, if you picture it from the position of the passenger on the vessel, he is now

within a five-minute walk of Bridgetown. Once he is there, he can see Bridgetown. It encourages him to leave the boat and go into Bridgetown and increase the spend of our cruise passengers in Bridgetown.

Sir, one of the current challenges we have at the Port, when you berth a vessel inside of the Deep Water Harbour, Bridgetown is in the distance, but you are not sure if it is a two-minute walk, a 15-minute walk, or whatever is the situation. We have a challenge that the taxi providers are not keen on these short trips. They are not particularly interested in moving passengers from the Port to Bridgetown.

Sir, once you can get the vessels around the South, and people can see this, people will be able to access Bridgetown a lot more readily, which helps the development of our retail operators within the area of Broad Street. Also, it allows people to come and look at this facility we have here in terms of this historic building. It also will expand the duty-free opportunities that we have.

A larger cruise terminal will create opportunities for us to disperse a greater number of persons that are benefitting right now by the cruise facility and a wider base of stakeholders will be part and parcel of that development, so that no longer will Barbados be our business in the Port, or at the Airport, which we will speak about on another occasion. No longer will business be restricted just to the big enterprises in Barbados, but small and medium-sized businesses will be able to benefit from that.

Sir, you notice that this approach is consistent with our position in the Budget presentation, in terms of ensuring that our VAT on craft sold at the airport and seaport will be removed, another initiative to encourage the development of our small businesses, and those businesses operating within the duty-free environment in Barbados. Sir, that is one of the directions we are going.

Sir, there is a facility as well for vendors. I am of the view that during the tourist season, vendors are allowed outside the area of the BIDC. I do not see any reason why the local craft persons could not. Most of us, here would have visited BMEX over the last weekend and would have seen the excellent work of craft persons in this country.

H A38 11.10 a.m. Sequence 7

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House A38, Sequence 08, 11.10 a.m.

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. Speaker, we as a Government need to encourage them and to make sure that the sales opportunities are there for those persons to be able to access the cruise tourists, as well as all the tourists

coming to Barbados and those leaving at the Airport. We have to make sure that those facilities are there and we are also doing one or two initiatives at the Airport, that will see small trade and craft people being able to display and sell their work, at the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Asides.

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. Speaker, as I am about to close on the cruise tourism aspect, there is also the initiative that we are looking at, in respect of trying to have some of the cruise passengers tendered into the Speightstown area. This is an opportunity that has been lost by the previous Barbados Labour Party Government over the past 15 years.

Sir, for years there have been talks about a facility in the north, be it at Speightstown, Six Men's or wherever. The area is not the critical thing, but the idea is to be able to decentralise the cruise experience, as well as the opportunities for local businesses in Barbados.

Asides.

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Sir, if you look at the initiative that the previous Government has undertaken at Speightstown, they have a jetty that even the fisherfolk cannot effectively use, a jetty that is positioned wrong. I will go on record as saying this, that despite all the talk by the previous Administration about the utilisation of Speightstown, no technical studies have been done as far as Speightstown is concerned, in terms of whether you could accommodate the large vessels and so on. There are substantial issues that we have in terms of the north/south movement of the sand and the wave action in that area.

Mr. Speaker, even the area where the jetty was constructed defies what the old-timers in this country would say, in terms of its location. Sir, it is now located approximately 100 yards to the north of the previous Speightstown jetty, which would have been constructed by our grandfathers and great-grandfathers over the years, hundreds of years ago. Sir, those old people, as you know, would have experience as to your coastal conditions, the north/south movement of the sand and the other marine issues that would arise, which we are making into big issues today. Those old people knew where to put these things. In the old days that jetty existed just to the south of Clement Armstrong's place - Fisherman's Pub.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes decisions as to whether we do something in this spot or that spot and often we get a political component in there, that we do not want to allow somebody to get ahead, so we do not put it in this particular spot, but we put it in another spot so that we can favour somebody else or whatever. Mr. Speaker, that is an unfortunate thing that has happened, in terms of the style

and design of that particular jetty. Sir, we have missed that opportunity, and we now have to look to see how we can utilise the existing infrastructure there at Speightstown.

Mr. Speaker, cruise passengers are looking for different experiences, and when they come to Barbados, the word is that they utilise the tours as opposed to some of the other islands. Sir, as we know, it is said that the activity directors on some of the cruise ships will say to the passengers that when they get to Barbados, do tours, when they get to this other point, do rum shopping and different things like that. Therefore, there are a substantial number of cruise passengers that will not take the experience of looking at all our activities on shore.

Mr. Speaker, the cruise ships in Barbados leave by 6.00 p.m. or 7.00 p.m., very early in the afternoon, and that is presenting a challenge to get two tours during the course of the day. Therefore, you have a morning tour, and people rushing back to get lunch on the cruise ships, because they have already paid for that lunch. Then, the afternoon tour has to rush back because the passengers have to check in by 4.00 p.m. or 5.00 p.m. and the experience there in Barbados then is restricted from being the whole 12 hours, to just some five to six hours. Mr. Speaker, that in itself, presents another challenge.

Mr. Speaker, I am advised and told that one of the reasons the cruise ships need to move as early as that, is to allow their own casinos and duty-free shops and so on to start to operate, because cruise ships are profit centres in themselves. They also need to be able to make money and they are trying to maximise the amount of money that they are making.

Mr. Speaker, our Laws do not entertain the casino gambling and so on, within our geographic space but it is an issue that we need to be able to address. How are we going to get the cruise ships to stay later and allow more land tours, or for persons to do that land tour in the afternoon to get back by 5.00 p.m. or 6.00 p.m. and still have the time to browse through Pelican, or to come into the retail outlets in Bridgetown?

Asides.

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. Speaker, we have to find a way and, therefore, we will have to review that whole question of whether we are going to permit those cruise ships to open up their facilities, while they are in the Port. Obviously, that has no implication as far as our Barbadian population is concerned, since we have no access to the physical boat. Therefore, it does not impact or corrupt the morals or our social infrastructure, but it certainly will provide an opportunity for cruise passengers to enjoy the Barbados experience for an additional two to three hours and that is important.

Asides.

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: The Minister of Tourism has, on numerous occasions in this House, spoken to the fact that we need to increase the spend of our cruise passengers, which is said to be in the vicinity of US\$111. This was a study done a couple of years ago, but I am told by a number of the people involved in the tourism sector, that the reality is that the spend is a lot less than the US\$111. Therefore, it is a challenge that we will address. Mr. Speaker, getting visitors to stay longer is one of those solutions to that particular challenge.

House A38, Sequence 08, 11.20 a.m.

Tuesday, June 09, 2009

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. Speaker, the question of our taxi drivers at the Port has been an area of concern for us. Mr. Speaker, there is a protocol in place for the taxis, how they can access the passengers in an orderly way. There are two cooperative organisations, the Independent Taxi Co-op, I hope I have that name right, and the Port Taxi Co-op, that are working inside the Port.

Mr. Speaker, these two organisations are independent of the Port. We, as officers of the Port, cannot get involved with the actual infrastructure of those organisations. Those two organisations have to put their management systems and so on in place so that they could effectively function as good corporate citizens, so to speak, of Barbados. That is an internal matter for them to organise.

However, Mr. Speaker, discipline and order within the Port becomes a Port issue. I have advised the management of the Port that we will have a no-tolerance position in respect of the disorderly behaviour and so on within the Port by the taxi operators. If persons misbehave, we will take the appropriate action, and it may be that persons might find themselves on the outside looking in for a long, long time.

Mr. Speaker, there must be discipline. You cannot have a facility in Barbados where tourism is our number one industry and where we are trying to project a new image and have a situation where fellows are fighting over a fare, or where people are taking people on a tour at one price and when they are way out in the country, then tell them that the price is really in US dollars and so on. Those sort of things cannot operate.

Mr. Speaker, there is a Code of Conduct that has been signed on to by the Port Management, by each of the organisations operating inside of the Port and by the workers' representatives within the Port, and we need to make sure that it is adequately policed and enforced.

Mr. Speaker, once the Port stays under my area of responsibility, I will be ensuring that that Code of Conduct is adhered to and we would adopt that no-tolerance position.

Mr. Speaker, I do not have a copy of the Code of Conduct here with me, but within the Code there is provision for a review at the end of the season, so that if persons are disgruntled about some particular aspect of it or how it is working, they can discuss it with their representatives, which would be the management of the two cooperative organisations, the union and the Port. That discussion will happen very shortly, because we have just come out of the end of the cruise season which was the end of May.

Mr. Speaker, I have asked my officers to make sure that we have that review meeting done, before the end of July, so that if there are any tweaking or adjustments that are necessary to the Code of Conduct, they can be done. Mr. Speaker, once people sign on to that Code of Conduct, they have to live by it. Mr. Speaker, that is the message that I want to send in respect of that. Too many of our tourists are complaining about that service.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things we have to understand as a people, and as small business persons, is that this type of indiscipline speaks to the level of service that we are offering to our clientele. If you are going to provide that level of service, it creates an opportunity for the big players to benefit. Our small business people have to understand that. Mr. Speaker, if they are orderly and they are not out there fighting over fares and so on, and they have that good reputation of providing a quality service, it means that persons coming off the vessels, particularly the executive type passengers on board some of the more luxurious cruises.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of these big vessels take passengers, some of whom would be from the low income levels, in order to fill the vessels. However, the smaller cruise ships tend to carry a higher income passenger who would want to do a tour and would want to be driven by an executive vehicle with proper service.

Mr. Speaker, the ship owners and the ship agents have their own reputation to maintain, and if the level of behaviour that we have, by the taxi drivers and so on within the Port is not on par, they are not going to recommend taxi A or B to those owners, but the needs of that particular tourist still have to be satisfied. My advice and suggestion as a businessman to those small taxi drivers and so on, is that they must look at the quality of service which would open up opportunities for them with the cruise ships directly. That approach would also be consistent with the overall and overarching philosophy of this Party, where we are trying to get small business people to share in the

economic pie, rather than just everything being restricted to the large players.

Mr. Speaker, our taxi drivers, by means of the quality of their service, have to be able to challenge the bigger transport providers in this country. Mr. Speaker, they would be their own worst enemy if they continue with that sort of behaviour.

Mr. Speaker, you would have noticed that the Port now has a weekly newsletter within the daily Press. Mr. Speaker, the image of the Port, as I have said earlier in this presentation, needs to be addressed and we are trying to make sure that we could get that message out as to what is happening in the Port. Provision is made for our young people, because they need to be aware and kept aware of the different opportunities that exist inside of this country.

Mr. Speaker, every week people in my Constituency come and ask for a Government job, and they are not thinking outside the box as people like to say. Many of them are not aware of the job opportunities that exist and the training that needs to happen.

House A38 Sequence 9

11.30 a.m.

Tuesday, June 09, 2009

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. Speaker, one of the initiatives that my Ministry will be pursuing in relation to the Bridgetown Port, in terms of civil aviation, is that we need to make sure that our young people are aware of the job opportunities within civil aviation and within the maritime sector.

Sir, one of the contributions of the Bridgetown Port to that exercise is to facilitate tours by our school children and others, to look at the facilities at the Port, at how things are done inside the Port. This would give them a different perspective of the Port. As I said, there are numerous opportunities available within the maritime sector and we will be pursuing that avenue where we can reach out to schools, to the young people and to the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic in terms of accreditation.

Sir, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic needs to be accredited and I am going to be speaking to my colleague, the Minister of Education and Human Resource Development very shortly about the fact that the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic needs to be accredited with the IMO certification, so that our young people could look seriously at the opportunities that are available within the maritime sector. Therefore, having received training at the Pommarine, not only would a lot of these persons be able to get jobs on cruise ships as maids, waiters or bar persons,

there would also be engineering opportunities within the cruise ship and the regular cargo ship sector.

Mr. Speaker, there is also a significant marine industry in Barbados, with all the private yachts and so on. There is the need to have persons who are appropriately qualified to access those job opportunities. Sir, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic has such an existing programme, but one of the challenges, as I understand it, is that the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic needs to be IMO-certified. Sir, I encourage them to pursue that.

Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, one of the challenges of being IMO-certified is to have a fire simulator, as that is one of the basic programme requirements that needs to be run in order to become IMO-certified. Sir, having a fire on board a vessel is different than having a Barbados Fire Service on land. Therefore, it is mandatory that people, particularly people who are going to be working in the engine rooms and kitchens, have an appreciation of how to deal with a fire on board such close confines on these ships.

Sir, that is an area I am hoping I could have the support of my colleague, the Minister of Education and Human Resource Development, in terms of assisting us with the training and exposure of Barbadians to the different jobs that exist within the maritime structure.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to spend the whole morning on my feet with this subject. I think I have spoken at length on a number of issues and I am sure my colleagues on This Side would want to put in their own two cents, five cents or dollar worth, so to speak, in support of this Resolution. There will be other opportunities for us to discuss issues, particularly in the cruise industry, because I have not yet spoken to this Honourable House in respect to issues such as the contract with Carnival Lines and how this Government would go forward.

Sir, that is an area in which there was poor performance by the Barbados Labour Party in terms of negotiating a contract that offered, except for a question of numbers, no additional benefits to the country Barbados. Sir, that contract offered no tie-in of the cruise ships to partner with them, in terms of developing the infrastructure at the Bridgetown Port, including the said cruise pier and terminal.

Sir, there was no provision within that contract for our young people to get work in the cruise ship sector. Sir, none of that was discussed nor incorporated into the contract negotiated by the Barbados Labour Party. Sir, that was a contract that purely addressed a numbers problem as a result of 20...

Sir, this contract is projected for three years. It has locked us into a contract that, apart from numbers, has

nothing else to it, like a lot of the spin-offs that can be negotiated, or a lot of the benefits that could accrue to this country. These are things that other countries within the Region have negotiated.

Sir, when it comes to cruise tourism and infrastructural development for that cruise tourism, we now find ourselves almost light years behind other countries within the Caribbean. For instance, in the Cayman Islands and across other Caribbean countries, we find ourselves now playing catch up because of the fact that the Barbados Labour Party had locked itself into a contract that, outside the numbers, had no real quantitative benefit to this country.

Mr. Speaker, as that contract comes to an end towards the end of this year, we are now in the process of re-evaluating it to see how we could negotiate further. We are finding ourselves, in these difficult economic times, having to negotiate a contract of that nature because of the fact that the previous Government has locked us into a contract for three months.

Mr. Speaker, with those words, I would want to ask Honourable Members on This Side to support the Resolution for the guarantee of \$50 million by the Government of Barbados, from the Barbados National Bank Finance and Trust Corporation, for the purpose of refinancing of the Barbados Port Inc.

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

I thank you.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Honourable House be now suspended for 10 minutes, to resume at 11.50 a.m.

Hon. R. D. JONES: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let me say that this will be a prompt 10 minutes, so we will resume at 11.50 a.m. promptly.

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 11.50 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative, without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

11.40 a.m.

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This Honourable House is resumed. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This Resolution brought today really is the typical sort of housekeeping Resolution, that has really characterised the matters brought to Parliament by the Democratic Labour Party, over the last 12 - 15 months and really ought not to detain the House, for any undue period of time, and therefore, I will be somewhat brief.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to begin my presentation by clearly and unequivocally complimenting the Board of Management of the Barbados Port Authority for very competent management there for several years. Sir, the stability that the management of the Barbados Port Authority has brought to that institution, has been responsible for that entity being not only awarded many Caribbean Port of the Year Awards, but also generating huge profits over the last number of years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the last Administration, I would be the first to concede did inject large sums of money into the renovation, upgrading and refurbishment of the Barbados Port Authority and, it was money well spent. Sir, there is nothing at all that we would want to apologise for on This Side because it was money well spent. It saw some physical work that the Minister outlined.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it also saw the acquisition of very modern equipment, tugs, new modern gangry cranes and the like, which are utilised in relation to dredging. Sir, one component that the Honourable Member did not mention in his presentation is the fact that it was also used to bring about an entire institutional strengthening and reorganisation of the Barbados Port Authority.

Sir, that is really one of the things that would have enabled the Barbados Port Authority, particularly in more recent times, to be able to cope with the challenges and the competition it would have faced by other ports and to maintain its level of competence and its level of success.

Mr. Speaker, our Port is actually, in many ways, the envy of many, if not of all of the other ports in the Region. Certainly, it cannot be described as just an obsolete cargo port, as the Minister of Tourism described it, shortly after he became Minister of Tourism some time last year. It is not an obsolete cargo port, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it has been wrongly blamed for a number of years. Sir, persons, ordinary customers, using the Barbados Port Authority, seeking to get things out of the Port have complained about the length of time it would have taken to get things out of the Port, but Sir, that is really not a function of the Barbados Port Authority per se, but a function of the Customs Department.

Sir, I would like to think that in 2009, a modern and forward-looking Administration would recognise the need to change the system that now exists at the Port in relation to the Customs Department for clearing goods. Certainly, having to go to three, four, or five booths to clear a single carton, box or barrel is simply not acceptable in 2009. Sir, I would call on the Government to recognise this and to move to modernise this system of clearing goods through the Customs Department at the Barbados Port Authority.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I spoke of the stability of the Barbados Port Authority and I wish I could say that we are seeing that same sort of stability that exists at the Barbados Port Authority at other statutory boards, especially at our airport, where we seem to be totally lacking in stability.

Sir, prior to the last Elections, great strides and measures were put in place to ensure we had proper management and a proper Board in place at the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. and Sir, stability reigned. Now, post-Elections, January 2008, we have found that the Board was changed and, in fact, subsequent to that Board being changed, the Chairman of that Board resigned, in relatively short time. Sir, he was a very competent individual, if I may say so myself, but he resigned from the Board.

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He is suggesting there is instability in the management at the Airport in terms of the Board. I just want to say that there is a Chairman at the Airport, that the appointments have until the Annual General Meeting arrives and that should be coming up in another few weeks. Sir, I do not accept that there is any instability with the Board or with management at the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the Honourable Minister does not know what is happening at one of his own Boards, that is not my fault. Sir, I am repeating that subsequent to Elections, January 2008, the new Government put a new Board in charge at the Grantley Adams International Airport and that from the new Board they put in place, the Chairman resigned and that it is an undeniable fact. Sir, the Chairman resigned and I do not even know if a new substantive Chairman has been re-appointed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying that in stark contrast to the Barbados Port Authority. We have a situation where at the other port, our airport, there is instability at the level of the Board. Sir, this is not even to mention that in stark contrast to the Barbados Port Authority, we have other Boards like the Sanitation Services Authority, the Urban Development Commission, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the Rural Development Commission and the National Cultural Foundation, where instability seems to be reigning.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North, can you please indicate the relevance?

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, I am saying that the Barbados Port Authority Board ought to be the Board against which other entities should benchmark themselves. Sir, we are seeing a sharp distinction in characteristics between the Barbados Port Authority and certain other Boards in this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there have been so much instability at those Boards that it boggles the mind Sir, how so much instability, in the space of 15 months, could prevail at these institutions. Sir, not so at the Barbados Port Authority, which has stood out as a beacon over the years and which must be congratulated for a job well done.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I heard the Minister speak at some length on the issue of cruise tourism. I would want to say to the Minister, first of all, that he ought to ensure that the Barbados Port Authority is allowed to play a leading role in attracting cruise visitors to Barbados.

H/A38/12:00 noon Sequence 12

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, there has been some dispute about this over the years and, of course, one tends to ask about the Barbados Tourism Authority, is this the marketing agency responsible for attracting visitors to this island?

Sir, I have always held the view, and in my time, certainly the Barbados Port Authority played the leading role in seeking to attract cruise passengers to Barbados. Sir, there is a far better chemistry between the Barbados Port Authority, cruise lines, et cetera, and other players in the industry, than between the Barbados Tourism Authority or any other entity and tourists outside of Barbados.

Sir, I want to urge the Minister to ensure that the Barbados Port Authority, particularly given its level of confidence, stability, sure-footedness and success over the

years, that it be allowed to play the leading role in the area of attracting tourists to our country.

Sir, I have also heard mentioned by the Minister, of the plan to construct a new pier, but he said a cruise terminal. I do not know if he meant a new physical building, what we call a cruise terminal, or if he meant a new cruise pier. He did mention this new pier. I would want to urge this Government to tread very carefully and slowly in relation to spending any money at all, on expanded cruise facilities at this time.

Sir, for the first quarter of this year - information is very tight to get. Sir, directives have gone out now and it is very hard to get information, even as a taxpayer of this country, to get information from a Government-funded institution, but we have to try to do the best that we can. Certainly, for the first quarter of this year, we saw a 5.4 per cent, or 7 per cent increase in cruise arrivals coming to Barbados. That really was a consolation prize, nothing to tap your chest about, because for the first quarter of the last two years we had double digit increases. This year we now have a single digit increase. We are not, therefore, doing as well in our cruise tourism arrivals as we should be doing. I want the Government to proceed cautiously.

Also, cruise tourism is a very dynamic and at the same time, very fickle industry. I have said before, and I stand by this, a 20 per cent or even a 15 per cent improvement in performance in relation to long-stay tourism, would generate more revenue for this country than our cruise sector. That is a fact. I am not saying that we should not have and do not need a cruise sector. I am asking the Government to proceed very cautiously.

Sir, the dynamics of cruise tourism can sometimes be very scary. There was a situation, if not last year, I think it was year before, where there was just the threat of some sea swells, that would have approached the Region, and a number of cruise ships diverted from Barbados to other destinations, just because of the threat of three or four sea swells, that were going to impact on Barbados' shores, and you lose business overnight because of that single dynamic.

Sir, cruise lines are also now buying islands. They are buying their own islands or parts of islands. When you take a cruise to Haiti, for example, and you get off in Labadee, that is owned by a cruise line that is taking you there. Cruise lines are buying islands all over the place and they are marketing their own islands. These are the dynamics that you are up against. Sir, you now have ships that are generating additional activities on board, to discourage people from getting off. All of these are dynamics that we have to deal with.

I am asking the Government, particularly given the fact that it does not seem to be devising any initiatives, to

take the sector really forward and face the challenges head-on, to be very cautious about rushing off to inject or spend additional sums of money on the cruise sector at this time.

I heard the Minister speak about, very critically, the agreement we had with Carnival Cruise Lines, and he knocked it. I do not know the full details, but it certainly brought some numbers and additional revenue to the country. Sir, they have been in Government for 15 months and the Carnival Cruise Line, is not a mega cruise line that comes to Barbados. We have Royal Caribbean, Princess, and a whole set of big lines. If we were going to build on that agreement and, of course, it would have improved over time, we were certainly going to be pursuing aggressively other cruise lines to get similar types of agreements.

What has the Government done? Obviously it could not get out of the agreement that I guess expired or concluded this year, but certainly there were other cruise lines the Government ought to have been going after, to get the agreements they said they would be doing from the time this one expired, better. Certainly, to sit back for 15 months and make no attempt at all to get other types of agreements that will benefit us, is again, an area of inaction that boggles the mind.

Sir, I have not heard the Minister speak about home-porting. Again, home-porting was something we attacked vigorously and we were very successful in having a number of ships home-porting out of Barbados. What are the additional cruise lines over the last 15 months that have commenced home-porting in Barbados?

Sir, we hear a lot of knocking of the last Administration. We want to know what are the new initiatives that this Government would have taken over the last 15 months to ensure that they could have built on the success that we left. That is what we want to hear.

Sir, I have heard mention being made of the construction of port facilities in the North. That was said last year, I believe in the Prime Minister's Budget. It was said earlier this year by the Minister of Tourism, and by the current Minister of International Transport before today, and again today. Sir, comments were made again about the jetty in St. Peter. A jetty was not built to accommodate cruise ships. A jetty is a jetty. So you cannot criticise a jetty and say it cannot accommodate cruise ships, and you should know better. When you built it, it was not built with cruise ships in mind.

Sir, I know the Government is famous for pie-in-the-sky promises, and promises that are honoured more in the breach than in performance. This same time last year Barbados was on course to have six brand-named hotels, not one has come to fruition. We were assured that we were going to be having one per year.

Sir, the mention of the building of these new port facilities in the North, I sincerely hope that is just a pie-in-the-sky as these other promises, because, really at this time, it is truly a hair-brain to talk about going to build an additional cruise pier or a cruise facility in the North. It is truly a hair-brain idea.

Sir, the reasons given that tourists would have more access to facilities in the northern part of Barbados and the north-eastern part of Barbados, and that more economic activity would be generated in the North and so on, those sorts of arguments show, I would say, a fundamental misunderstanding of how the cruise sector really functions, a fundamental misunderstanding.

Sir, on cruise ships you have officers called Cruise Directors and they have their entire complement of staff, videos you watch in your cabins, and you also have your Information Desk. What a cruise passenger does on arrival at a destination is largely determined long before a cruise passenger gets off the ship.

H A38 12.10 p.m. Sequence 7

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House A38, Sequence 14, 12.10 p.m.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, long before the ship arrives in Barbados they would have already pre booked and pre-paid for what they intend to do in Barbados. Therefore, if a cruise passenger decides that when he gets to Barbados he is going to Harrison's Cave, whether the cruise ship comes in at the Bridgetown Port or comes out at a new Port in St. Peter, that cruise passenger is going to get off and go to Harrison's Cave.

If a passenger decides that Bridgetown is a place of attraction for him and the stores that are in Broad Street attract him, Sir, if he comes in at the present Bridgetown Port, or if he comes in at a Port in St. Peter, he is going to find his way into Bridgetown to shop and go wherever he wants to go. Therefore, the same money would be just distributed in the country.

Sir, building a new port will certainly not generate any additional cruise visitors, and it certainly will not generate any additional economic revenue for the country.

Sir, the truth is that Barbados does not need to be building new ports. Barbados needs to be building civilised and other relationships with our regional neighbours and, if we are to maximise the returns that we are to get from cruise tourism, Barbados needs to build proper relationships of mutual trust with its regional neighbours.

Sir, one thing that we have fooled ourselves about is that a destination can go it alone, in terms of cruise tourism. You cannot go it alone. No cruise ship will come into the Caribbean and stop at Barbados alone. They are going to stop at other countries. They are going to make a number of stops. Really and truly, Sir, Barbados has to spend some time rebuilding its name and the trust, that our regional neighbours have in us. We have to spend some time rebuilding that because it is lost. Sir, Barbados' word is no longer good. We are not trusted outside of Barbados.

I will say this. Sir, I remember going on my first cruise conference in 1995 when I had responsibility for the sector. Sir, when being transported to the hotel, I said to a staff member from the Ministry, that the first thing we have to do is to call a meeting of the various Ministers responsible for cruise tourism before we meet with the FCCA, so that we have a unified position. I was overheard saying that and I was literally almost torn to threads on the bus that I was on. Heads turned toward me and said that is a Bajan accent, but Barbados talking about a unified position? Barbados, you all have no moral or other authority to be talking about unity at this time.

I was totally lost and when I got to find out, it was a reference to the fact that prior to that, under the previous Democratic Labour Party Administration, a position had been taken that there would have been a common Head Tax across the Region, US\$10 per Head, and that all of the countries had signed on to it, but at the last minute, the eleventh hour, when everybody thought everything was done and agreed to, signed, sealed and settled, Sir, Barbados reneged on the agreement, Sir, and cat-prattled the whole thing.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, Barbados' name went into the mud. Sir, I was vilified on that bus because I suggested that all the Ministers should get together and try to reach a united position before we met with the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association, the FCCA. Sir, everybody asked how is Barbados going to be taking this position, when it destroyed the attempt at regional unity, in that regard.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Minister spoke about the high expenditure levels at the Port. Sir, do you know what an additional US\$4 per person would have translated in revenue over the years? At least about US\$2 million per year in addition, we would probably have been getting, if Barbados then had not double-crossed its regional counterparts.

Sir, I am making the point that Barbados really does not need now at this time, to be coming talking about building additional piers in the north or wherever.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, I am saying Barbados at this time, should utilise its energy better, in not building those physical facilities, but rebuilding its name in the Region, and rebuilding civilised links and relations with its fellow CARICOM neighbours so that we can, in fact, take the sector forward.

Sir, as I said, these routine housekeeping matters, which are devoid of any policy content because we are not getting any policy positions coming into Parliament from the Government, just these routine niggling amendments here and amendments there, tidy up here, tidy up there, but no policy position reflecting any serious work being done by the Government and we continue to sink further and further into the dust.

Sir, while on This Side we do not oppose the consolidating of the loan in the way in which the Minister outlined, we certainly want to see this new Administration recognise that the time has come now when it is governing this country. They are governing this country now, and they need to let us hear, in clear terms, what it is that they are going to be doing to take the country forward.

Cruise tourism has some potential. It is an important sub-sector of the tourist industry, Sir, but it has to be properly thought out how we go. We have not heard anything yet. We heard about a Port Master Plan. This Master Plan will have to have, as one of its components, the carrying capacity of the Barbados Port Authority, in terms of the numbers of passengers it can handle, particularly, since it also has a cargo component as well.

Sir, would the building of a new additional pier be or not be pushing the numbers over the limit, Sir, that will emerge, when we have this Barbados Port Authority Master Plan? How is this Port Authority Master Plan fitting into the context of the Tourism Master Plan that we heard the Minister speak about?

These are the sort of details we want to hear a Minister get up and shed light on when he speaks and not just make glib references to a number of issues, and seeks to denigrate the performance of a previous Government whose record is there for all to see.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, those are the things that we like to see. As I said, I do not intend to detain the House long on a house-keeping matter.

Sir, with those remarks, I am obliged to you.

Asides.

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

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I too rise to speak in this debate. It is rather regrettable that in 1995, a Minister of Government could have seen a problem, as it relates to the marketing of Tourism in this country and in 2009, we are still hearing the Minister speaking about the same issue.

Sir, what is also very interesting about this debate, is that we have recognised listening to the Minister, and I do not know why he did not make it a document of the House because when one looks at the number of loans that have been advanced by a group called the CLICO Group to the previous Government, one would recognise that they could nearly own the Port of Barbados. Sir, I could understand why they were trying to privatise the Port, because they understood their commitment to CLICO and were using the base by allowing CLICO to finance every loan.

Sir, it is rather interesting that these loans only stopped at the same time that CLICO had a particular financial problem, when one looks at the problem incurred and then they shifted from CLICO to Butterfield Bank. It is rather interesting. I think the public of Barbados needs to know these things, that CLICO through RBTT, when they owned RBTT at the time, financed a majority of the loans belonging to the Port Authority. Sir, you can tell when it got into trouble, because you saw where they shifted the borrowing from CLICO to the Butterfield Bank.

Asides.

House A38, Sequence 14, 12.20 p.m.

Tuesday, June 09, 2009

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, do not let anybody believe that is something that occurred since the Democratic Labour Party came to Government.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, I keep making the point in this House that you cannot fool anybody with statistics, because a year after, they will prevail.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I would say to the Minister of International Transport is that if there is one thing that can be taken from the Barbados Labour Party, it is the point made that when you speak about cruise ships, it cannot only be a tourism thing, it has to be also a Port thing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I agree with that because there has to be a direct relationship between the Port Authority and the Barbados Tourism Authority. We cannot have the two divided as they were. We have to understand that there must be a common relationship.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I speak about a divide, I am not saying that the Minister for International Transport should be the same Minister with responsibility for the Barbados Port Authority, because I personally believe that it is always good to separate the two so that you could maximise your efforts.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we need to do, is to get away from the straight line approach to tourism and go to the triangular approach. This foolishness where you believe that you can just move people from the airport to the seaport must stop. Barbados is much bigger than that. We are not a holding bag for anybody. We must find a way to get those persons who are coming here and using our facilities to enjoy and to see what we have to offer in Barbados. It is a cheap source of tourism.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the only way we could do anything comfortably with them is by allowing them to go into rural Barbados and sightsee before they get to the seaport or the airport or wherever they are going.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to understand that whenever we are spending the taxpayers' money in capital expenditure in this country, we must provide an opportunity for matching investment. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it does not make sense spending money in an area that you cannot get matching returns. Any money that is going to be spent on tourism now, must be spent in an area so that you can get matching investment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if Cricket World Cup 2007 has taught us anything, it is that we spent a lot of money at Kensington Oval, but got no matching return in investments for it. I am saying that the error from Cricket World Cup 2007, should be fresh in the minds of everybody and it should be an example how to waste money and how not to get investments.

Sir, if we are going to be spending money now, the first thing we have to think about is what happened with the Cricket World Cup 2007 and use that as our example of what not to do.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I heard people talking about the Port being next to Bridgetown as if that is a positive. The mere fact that the Port is next to Bridgetown is the reason why you have to have a cruise terminal in the North, because if Bridgetown is the attraction, then they need to spend some money to get to it. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is logic to it.

Sir, you also have to recognise that the majority of the tourists who come to the Bridgetown Port and do not get off, maybe they do not want any association with Bridgetown. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you take it to rural Barbados, there is an opportunity that those persons who would normally stay on the ship might decide to go into rural Barbados and exploit the beauty of rural Barbados. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we want to be serious, we have to look at the opportunity cost of everything we are doing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we are going to be dealing with tourism, we have to do exactly what we said we were going to do when we were in Opposition, that is, we have to recognise that we are not only looking to expand the Port, but to get new investors.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, everybody knows that if you build a Port anywhere else in Barbados, that it will attract new investment. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is exactly what you want in a small country like Barbados. We are not here to be a showpiece like how the Barbados Labour Party did with their projects. When you spend capital expenditure as a Government, you spend capital expenditure because you expect people to match your capital expenditure. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we are going to be spending capital expenditure, we have to spend it in areas that would attract other people to come and match what we are doing or even do better than what we have done.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are fortunate. I understand exactly the heart of the Minister. I understand exactly what he is saying, but Bridgetown has outlived its usefulness in terms of investments. Why do you think that people are spending so much money in Warrens? Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to be realistic. We cannot see these things in front of our eyes and ignore them. We cannot be spending money because we want to spend money and to hold on to Bridgetown. I can understand why the former Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown spent so much money...

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: No, do not get the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown involved in this. The other one was involved already. What the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown wants for Bridgetown is nice housing and good social facilities for his people. What the Honourable Member has to understand is that once other developments come to the rest of Barbados, it would filter back to Bridgetown, so the Honourable Member needs not worry about these things.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are in a fortunate position today, because we are discussing a very important issue. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this issue cannot be just about a Port. This issue is about the development and expansion of

Barbados. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we want to see Barbados progress to be a developed country, we cannot continue to live in Bridgetown, we have to move out of Bridgetown and create some other towns for Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the Nigerians understood the importance of moving from Lagos to Abuja, then we in Barbados must understand the importance of moving from Bridgetown to the north of the island. It does not have to be in St. Lucy. The important thing is for the move to occur and for it to go to an area where you can get matching investments. We can ask the new Canadian to bring in some of the money from Canada and help us to develop the north of Barbados.

I am asking the Honourable Member for Christ Church West to use his new Canadian influence to come and help me finance the projects to the north of Barbados. We understand the clout the Honourable Member has, that is why we are taking a total approach to the development of Barbados and are asking the new founder of the new found frontier, to bring some of the investment back to Barbados.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, we are proud of him. Sir, I believe that if this is the best way he can serve Barbados, we should encourage him to go and not to stay, because it is for the development of Barbados. If it means that we can get the five-star hotels and the investments, I welcome you, Sir. At least you have earned your stripes and it is not too late, that you have recognised that you have gone to the wrong house and it is time to come back home.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is no doubt that the Barbados Port Authority also has some responsibility that really belong to the country of Barbados. I agree with the Minister that things like lighthouses, piers and so on must be seen as a social cost, not necessarily to the Barbados Port Authority, but to the people of Barbados and that somewhere should be found for them to be compensated.

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12.30 p.m.

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His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, at the same time, the Barbados Port Authority must understand that if they are to maximise their returns, they cannot remain within the area of Bridgetown. They have to branch out.

They must also understand that they have to stop seeing the sole purpose for piers and jetties as things that

people walk on or boats tied up to. They must now raise these things to another level. They must recognise that these things can be used for other purposes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Barbados Port Authority also needs to recognise that they need not only look at ships coming into a country, but they have to look at how they could utilise the jetties and piers to move people within Barbados coastal waters. Sir, in the same way this can be done in Trinidad, where there is traffic travelling the coastal waters from Trinidad to Tobago and within Trinidad itself, we have to recognise that we have to put piers and jetties in strategic locations, so that we could maximise the returns.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to caution this Government not to make the same error that we are now trying to correct. Sir, to put a cruise terminal in Speightstown would be madness. Speightstown already has a traffic problem and to put that additional traffic in Speightstown, you are only creating further congestion, where you are forcing people to run away from Speightstown, instead of encouraging them to come to Speightstown.

Sir, what I would say is that Government needs to put that terminal close enough to Speightstown, so that when people come to the island, they would have a choice of going into Speightstown or elsewhere, but to bring all that traffic into Speightstown at the same time, it is going to create a bottleneck. Sir, this would not better the conditions in Speightstown, but would only create more problems. What needs to be done is that instead of putting it into the heart of Speightstown, you put it close enough to Speightstown, so that the people could get into Speightstown.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, straight off the hand, Speightstown has to be out of the picture, what needs to be done is to put it in a strategic location where people could easily get into St. Joseph, St. Lucy, St. Peter, St. James or into any of the other parishes across the island, but if it is put in Speightstown, it is going to kill off Speightstown instead of helping it.

Sir, I hope this point is taken and I hope that those who have the decision to make would understand that the same error made by the Barbados Labour Party cannot be made by the Democratic Labour Party, but that vision must be seen and that infrastructure must increase and not decrease.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, people have to understand this is not now the time about pampering to politics. This is about Barbados. We have to look and see what is in the best interest for Barbados. Therefore, whether Government wants to put it in Boscobel, in Foster Funland or wherever,

do not put it in the heart of Speightstown because you would be creating the same problems for St. Lucy.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we also have to understand that home-porting is good but we have to find ways for hoteliers to recognise but that they have a new source of clientele and that they have to put packages in place in order to hold this new type clientele.

Sir, I hope that I would never see it happen again in this country where hoteliers tell people who come off cruise ships that they cannot use the facilities at their hotels. Sir, I would hope that these hoteliers would recognise that they need better to manage their facilities and that they have to encourage persons who come in on cruise ships to come on to their facilities, and that they must offer them service.

Sir, the only way a hotelier should not allow this to happen would be if he is worried about his facility. If that hotelier has good hotel facilities, he should not have to worry because he stands the opportunity of getting a new kind of clientele. He would be getting the kind of people who he did not have to spend money to get them to come to his hotel. Sir, this is now the opportunity for him and his staff to convert those people as his clientele. Mr. Deputy Speaker, one has to recognise that it is not easy to get persons to come to the premises of these hoteliers, but that when they receive that kind of clientele, they have to deal with them, they have to convert those persons as theirs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, through homeporting and through intransit passengers, we in Barbados have been fortunate to have those persons coming on to our premises, but we seem not to understand how to convert them into becoming ours. Sir, that is a particular clientele that we need to deal with, and we can have various types of them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we also have to recognise that ships are changing. We also need to understand that we need to export. Sir, if we do not need to export, then we need not worry too much about cargo ships. Sir, our Port cannot be used only for importing, as there is a foreign exchange cost to that importation.

Therefore, we must ensure that in the same way we want to create facilities for ships to come in to sell us goods, alternatively we must create those facilities that there are goods going out, otherwise the Minister of Finance would have problems with foreign exchange.

Sir, it is all right to say that you are having too many cruise ships and that you have to accommodate cargo ships, but while there is a cost attached to those cargo ships, there

is a foreign exchange component attached to the tourist ships, resulting in a foreign exchange gain, whereas the other one is a foreign exchange loss.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, community tourism must not be ignored. Community tourism is that sector which would stop people in Barbados from being so selfish. Sir, all-inclusive tourism was introduced into Barbados, but for the wrong reasons and we are now paying dearly for it in these times.

Sir, the reason our hotel sector is not doing as well as it should be, is due to the fact that we have allowed so many hotels in Barbados to go all-inclusive.

Mr. Speaker, had we not foolishly gone and adopted the all-inclusive concept, we would have feared a lot better this year in our tourism sector, because persons coming to Barbados would have known that they had hotels in which they could have on arrival to Barbados, but they could have then gone throughout Barbados and found other choices.

Sir, because of the fact that we have allowed so many hotels to go all-inclusive, where there are packages, we have not allowed tourists coming to Barbados to maximise their spending power or to share the benefit of that spending power across Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the taxpayers of Barbados are to give concessions to hoteliers, these hoteliers then cannot go all-inclusive. If hoteliers cannot allow poor people to share in the benefits of tourism, then they cannot expect poor people's money to prop up their hotels. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am also saying that if you were to read local magazines or magazines from across the world, you would see that tourists are saying that the best assets of Barbados and what they like about Barbados is its people, then you cannot allow hoteliers to take the tourists away from the people.

Sir, I would want to say that this Government must ensure that it does everything possible to promote community tourism, because we need to get the tourists back to the people of Barbados, because of the fact that people is our greatest asset and that is what will keep people coming back to Barbados. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we must appreciate the fact that we need to look after that point. We also need to ensure that Barbadians appreciate tourists again and that the hostility which we saw previously is ruled out. Mr. Speaker, we talk about crime but we do not realise that sometimes we create policies that will encourage crime.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we cannot have a tourism industry only for the high-flyers. Sir, I want to make the point that this tourism industry that we are speaking of was once run by a taxi and a hire car service, but that we have

allowed some glorified fellows to come and to use their capital where they now own a number of big buses in a way that is causing the ordinary taxi men to starve. Sir, there are more taxis being operated by the glorified fellows, in circumstances where the ordinary taxi men are only getting the crumbs instead of the whole loaf.

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His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, people speak about behaviour, but we are not learning in the tourism sector because the same thing we are now seeing with the taxi men, we saw on the West Coast with the jet ski owners. Sir, the problem will only be solved when the hoteliers buy out all the taxis, like what they did with the hobie cats, the jet skis and so on.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, previously in this country, you saw every day in the Press, in the 1970s, 1980s and late 1990s, that the hotels were telling you that jet skis were the worst thing for the industry, but Sir, check and see who owns the jet skis now. They are not bad anymore. The behaviour is the same out there but there is no negative Press.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of a sudden, a couple of people at the Port have to scramble every day for the few jobs left and there are more taxis than tourist because, by the time the big buses move them, our people have to scramble. Sir, we do not look to see what is creating the problem, but we look to see the after-effects.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, all we are doing now in the Port is scattering some scratch grain among men and women like how we use to do it among the fowls. Sir, because the scratch grain is limited, and it goes into the air, everybody would fly at it and, Sir, you could only expect confusion.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you, Sir.

SUSPENSION

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 1.30 p.m.

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

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

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RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

The Honourable Member for St. James North.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this Resolution. Things evolved in such a way that the terms of service of those under the Port Authority in respect of normal human resource concerns, as well as pensions, differ substantially from those who worked with Port Contractors, so we had a dichotomy.

In time, Port Contractors expired and as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North said, the Barbados Labour Party did set about systematically, not only to bring order to an anomaly, but also to rationalise the operations of the Port, so we did something called the corporatisation of the Port, making it a body corporate as opposed to being a branch of a slow-moving bureaucracy, our aim being to ensure a strong measure of autonomy at the Port, our objective there to ensure that the solvency, to which the Honourable Minister referred, would have been a thing in an essay.

I speak in this debate, not as an expert on matters to do with public transport, whether on the ground, air or on the sea, but I am prepared to learn even though as I speak. I think, in light of all that has been said, in here, including the contribution from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy and, of course, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, we have to look carefully at this entity and its critical role in the development of Barbados. I want to commend particular units within the Port as they have functioned over the years, not now, not between 1994 and 2008, but over the years.

Let me first begin by singling out Port Health. There is a department of the Ministry of Health, in the Port, and that department has functioned excellently, and frankly has been becoming stronger and stronger. I trust and hope that the efforts of people like Stephen Chase, alias "Shark", would be followed, and the efforts of other officers, in Port Health, would so ensure that the type of health surveillance necessary for the assurance that our health and our health standards would not be compromised, would be something that we would be proud of.

Then there has been the quarantine at the Port efficiently run. I remember an officer called Mr. Hunte, attached to the Ministry of Agriculture, but working in Quarantine.

One of the marvels of the Plant Quarantine Department, years ago, was that between 1995 and 2003,

Barbados through its efforts at the Plant Quarantine Department, kept out the Mealy Bug. That has to be mentioned. The Mealy Bug wrecked havoc in Grenada and affected some of our neighbours, but people under Mr. Hunte and people in the Plant Quarantine Department were able to keep the Mealy Bug out.

The Mealy Bug is not known to be a huge pest in terms of its size, but in terms of its range. It is a difficult and terrible pest to get rid of. I believe that part of the whole question of our excellent Quarantine was, I believe there some experimentation with the biological control of pests, under people like Mr. Hunte and officers of the Ministry of Agriculture. I can speak about the Ministry of Agriculture, especially between 1994 and 1999.

Sir, one of my concerns is, a concerned approach from a different angle by the Honourable Member for St. James Central. One of my concerns is the position of the taximen at the Port. The Minister was clear what his position and interpretation of the conduct down there was and said, that unless behaviour improves some would be out for a long time.

Sir, what has been coming to us in the Barbados Labour Party is a contrary story. There are those persons in the Port who complain that the large tour operators get the work and the small man, like the Honourable Members for St. Lucy, St. Thomas, St. George North and myself, under the Interpretation Act, the male includes the female, except when contrary intention is expressed.

The small man has been complaining of inequity at the Port, in terms of the rides and the fares offered to the small taxi owners. The big people with the buses and the coaches have been said to be the ones who, more or less monopolise work. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East can be considered as a small person in light of his involvement with public transport. I do not feel he has any interest in the Port. I have never heard that the Honourable Member has a taxi at the Port and certainly not a coach. Sir, if indeed what we are hearing is true, then the cake has to be cut up and shared more equitably than is happening. I do not like the idea of hearing small people cry out when they feel disenfranchised by more powerful, richer and more opulent entities.

I am pleading with the Government to meet the small taxi operators and hear their concerns. Sometimes, frankly, I cannot say, when I pass that road, that some of the taxi men are working in the Port, because I see a lot of the small fellows more outside of the Port hoping for a fare than inside. Therefore, it is an argument by which the inland transport of persons coming off cruises within Barbados has to be looked at and has to be rationalised.

I have also encountered situations where there have been complaints that between 11.30 a.m. and 1.00 p.m., operations at the Bridgetown Port grind to a halt. Can it be that in this modern era the Port actually closes for lunch-time? Can it be that? In any case, I am told that at that time of day, between 11.30 a.m. and 1.00 p.m., there is enormous congestion, vehicular and otherwise, and that clients who go to the Port for services are frustrated by long waits.

Sir, I want to look at that area and suggest another thing. I want to say that there is no doubt that there can be greater synergies between the Port and the Customs. It has to be. The typical Barbadian, when going into the Port, does not easily differentiate between the Port Inc. and the Customs people.

Very often in interacting with both agencies there is a level of frustration met by clients, Barbadians in particular, and small and medium-sized businessmen find that the type of relations that should subsist between the Port itself and Customs are not operating at a level that permit efficiency, speed and friendly customer service.

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House A38, Sequence 19, 2.00 p.m.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Therefore, there must be a better, clearly, more efficient synergy between the modus operandi, the operations of The Port Inc. and the Customs Department.

I also want, Sir, to touch briefly on the morale that is seen among normal workers in the Port complex. It seems to me that the first cousin of the Port, Customs, more has a problem with staff morale, than the Port itself. There have been too many complaints that many customs officers do not treat the public with respect, and that some customs officers are what we call in Barbadian parlance, 'hoggish' and sometimes they shout at people, and point their finger at people saying: "You got to wait. It aint you time yet." I have heard a lot of that as complaints against the Customs.

In relation to the Port though, there definitely is an Industrial Relations Department, which seems to be better positioned to render customer service, than the Customs Department. This whole question of customer service, is one that has to be viewed, not only by the Government as a whole and by Parliament, but customer service has to be viewed closely by the Right Honourable Prime Minister, who is the Minister of Labour, and the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, who is the Human Resource person, and by other persons like the Minister of Tourism, the Minister of Culture, Minister of International

Transport and Minister of Health, this whole question of customer service.

The Public Service is often wrongfully criticised as slow, inefficient, wasteful, and as a practitioner of poor customer relations. My respectful submission is that in the whole of Barbados there is a crying need, a veritable, acrimonious, cacophony, a cry that goes up to the sky for better and more improved customer service in Barbados.

In that regard, Sir, the Barbados Institute of Management and Productivity is willing to continue offering services in customer service orientation, especially as Government, following the Barbados Labour Party's lead, moves toward national vocational qualifications locally, and Caribbean vocational qualifications at the level of CARICOM.

I want also, Sir, to encourage the Government to make sure that Port security occupies a top tier in the ladder. Port security in this era is something that has to be heightened and strengthened, for many reasons. We are, not only an open economy, we are very much an open society. We are surrounded by water. We know that there are persons who have landed in Barbados at places other than recognised ports.

We know too, that in this era there are those who do not necessarily follow the Law. Therefore, we have to make sure that the type of security systems that would enure to ensuring that the Port and then ultimately, Barbados, is a safe place, that those systems are improved and made to work properly.

Earlier, I mentioned Port Contractors, which brings me to the question of the pension liability of the new entity, the Port, Inc. I am going to go very slowly here. Sir, for a long time, not only at the Bridgetown Port, but for a long time, a number of Governments, quasi Government and statutory boards have defaulted, in respect of the management of funding of pension schemes. I am saying to you, Mr. Speaker, that one of the problems, one of the anachronisms that have flowed from the 1950s, right down through the 1960s, and 1970s in respect of pensions at the Port, is that there are many Port employees who do not know to whom to turn, when they retire.

The National Insurance Scheme cannot be the one agency responsible for making sure that these pensions are paid. Elsewhere in Barbados, there are several statutory boards that have not been paying on behalf of employees.

Recently, Mr. Dennis Clarke, made a proclamation that some of his constituents are paid to be disenfranchised in respect of pensions. The entity to which he referred is not a singular or one-off entity. We have to look into the Port Inc. and make sure that the vestiges of the dichotomy

between the Port Contractors and the Port Authority are removed, and that equity and justice prevail down that side.

The Honourable Member for St. James Central did mention the question of outdated Port charges. He did mention the question that the Port is solvent, and would so have been solvent for years before January of 2008. He suggested that the Barbados Labour Party may have been delinquent in its management of the affairs of the Port, which allegation is hereby strenuously denied, and answered.

In all that I have to say in this debate, I want also to urge Parliament, consistent with the concerns expressed by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North the Minister, and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, to look at home-porting, which is an area close to the heart of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy and, indeed, close to the heart of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North and how we manage our home-porting. I want to also ensure that in this business called, the “re-export business”, a business that touches and concerns the Bridgetown Port, that Barbados maximises returns on the re-export business.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North was correct when he said that the Bridgetown Port is the envy of many other Ports in the Caribbean. The Honourable Member for St. James Central, in some respect, my successor, some of what used to be St. James North is now his. Morgan, Sea View, and Paynes Bay. If he mentions my name in those places, he cannot be disadvantaged by so doing.

Asides.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: The Honourable Member was referring, in large measure, to improvements and he did mention a cruise terminal, and steps to be taken to improve matters. The Harbour Master has a role in all of this. If you represent St. James Central, St. James South, and St. James North, you are bound to come across a core of indigenous businessmen, who ply their business in the sea. Some of them are jet ski operators and some of them tell you that relations between them as jet ski and other operators, and the Harbour Master, are not the best.

Sir, I hold no brief either for the Harbour Master or the jet ski operators, save that as small businessmen, the jet ski operators should not be disadvantaged, but at the same time, they have to demonstrate a very responsible way in which they operate those things in the sea. The policy how many people can be licenced for jet skis, has to be looked at, and the policy in relation to small crafts, has to be looked at as well.

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Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: The policy of the extent to which we have obligations to the cruise industry, must be looked at and the extent to which the cruise industry has obligations to us, must also be carefully examined. Mr. Speaker, when we move forward, we have to so position the Barbados Port that its central role in international transport is neither undermined nor compromised.

Sir, I conclude on the matter of wastage which I believe would engage the attention of many a Barbadian and the concern of many a politician, whether on the left hand or on the right hand of the Speaker. I am not alleging wastage at this stage, but considering the establishment of the Bridgetown Harbour between 1959 and 1962, and all that you would have heard on the streets, we as responsible Barbadians, elevated to the highest non-forensic court in this land - some of us who had no realistic chance of getting here when we were age six months or 12 months, but who through a number of miraculous things, have been able to get here, including certain policies that have enfranchised us - have to be concerned that any tendency to wastage, whether wastage of money, wastage of investment, wastage of equipment or wastage of human resources, at the Bridgetown Port, and at Customs, is kept to a minimum.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy would have spoken in this House on relations between the airport and the seaport, in the context of travellers coming to Barbados, either by plane to join a ship or by a ship to join a plane. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy has agitated about this particular matter from the start of his political career, a career, I believe, is approaching 15 years and a career that has been characterised, not just by efforts to stay in touch with the small man, but by a tendency to speak on every topic under the sun. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy has no regrets and I cannot condemn him. If that is his way of representing St. Lucy, then so let it be.

Sir, in the context of operations at the airport and the seaport, and the nexus established when people arrive at the Grantley Adams International Airport and have to get to the Bridgetown Port or arrive at the Bridgetown Port and have to get to the Grantley Adams International Airport, we have to make sure that systems are put in place and that some of the taxi men that feel disenfranchised and that are criticising the system, gets an opportunity to be able to partake in the goods that flow.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has five more minutes.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: I will not take all, Sir. I have never been greedy.

Sir, we have developed an excellent name when it comes to the cruise business. This is a name that we developed when the late Harold Bernard St. John, as he then was, was Minister responsible for things like international transport and tourism. He worked with a gentleman called Mr. Sisnett, formerly a member of this Honourable House.

Asides.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: I think Mr. Sisnett answers to the nomenclature "Sweet Boy". Some of us as males sometimes have to say certain things for emphasis or to make a point where doubts might persist. Some people called themselves sweet boy and there are many girls who called themselves sweet girls. Those are the ones that I would be personally interested in.

Asides.

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Sir, we have to capture all of our potential market share in the cruise business. One of the things about the cruise business and about tourism, is that the competition against Barbados in tourism will intensify in the next 15 to 20 years, as more Caribbean countries diversify their economies, so we have to be ready for competition.

In this business called cruise business, you do get criticisms that cruise passengers sometimes spend at most two days in Barbados, but in a situation where long-stay people spend more than two and three weeks, we have to make sure that we get the long-stay and the medium-stay.

Mr. Speaker, the incremental increases brought by cruise tourism are to be welcomed. If you had 200 000 coming for more than three days and you can get 300 000 to come for a few hours and spend, then the incremental - Economists have a way of describing it. I believe they might call it marginal revenue. If the marginal revenue exceeds the marginal cost, you are home and dry. We have to ensure that every additional tourist dollar is spent and well-spent.

The Bridgetown Port remains one of the fundamentally important institutions in this country. Its operations were heightened prior to the coming to office of the current Government. I want to commend the likes of Mr. Larry Tatem and Mr. Walters who is very much the institutional memory down there, and all who have worked tirelessly for the Barbados Port Authority. I also want to commend all those involved in health and safety at the Port, and in security.

The industrial relations system at the Barbados Port Authority has, generally speaking, worked very well. Our Port is in a position by which its reputation for being the

envy of Caribbean ports is such that no one could either look askance to this matter or deny its truthfulness.

I thank you.

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

Mr. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I join this debate in support of this Resolution for the guarantee of a loan of \$50 million to be utilised by the Barbados Port Authority Inc. More importantly, Mr. Speaker, I join this debate at a time that I believe there is now an excellent opportunity for us to focus on one of the more important engines of growth in the Barbados economy.

The Barbados Port is a major port of entry into Barbados and accounts for 90 per cent of the goods used, in the manufacturing and retail sectors of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, while I would like to join in commending the workers and the management at the Bridgetown Port for the work they have done, I certainly believe, particularly at this time when we are facing new economic challenges, that the focus on the Barbados Port Authority and the expectations that the economy of Barbados has in relation to the Barbados Port Authority.

There are some issues that I believe cannot be left totally to the Board of the Barbados Port Authority Inc. These issues, Mr. Speaker, in my view, are much larger than the Barbados Port Authority itself, and requires a collective approach in relation to attempting to solving them.

Mr. Speaker, without any great preamble, I want to delve into a number of issues that I believe, continue to be of concern in relation to the Barbados Port Authority and now need to be taken from the shelf of concern and put on the table of an action plan in order to resolve them in the interest of the economy.

House A38 Sequence 20

2.20 p.m.

Tuesday, June 09, 2009

Mr. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I recall the Minister making mention of a number of issues which continue to plague the operations of the Port. We have heard of the high payroll cost which continues to impact on the financial position of the Port, we have heard of issues in relation to the handling of containers, and of the large amounts of over-time that continue to be a problem for the Port.

Sir, I believe these issues have gone on for too long. Sir, notwithstanding the intention to meet with the workers' representatives, I believe that in these times of new economic challenges, we cannot put these matters on the waiting list for much longer. I believe these issues, as complex as they may be, now need to be part of a renewed action plan by this Government, in order to bring them to a resolution.

Mr. Speaker, this also applies to the question of re-examining Port charges and reducing delays at the Port. These are issues, if we do not resolve in the short term - I believe these are issues we have inherited, but notwithstanding that, I believe that the revision of the Master Plan, as I heard it being described, of the Barbados Port Inc., needs to be approached in a more strategic way. I hope that in the not too distant future we can have presented, in these Honourable Chambers, a strategic focus and direction for the Port.

Sir, without linking the Port and how the Port functions to many of the strategies enunciated in the last Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, I believe that we would be caught napping. We need to link the operations of the Bridgetown Port, for example, to the concept of Team Barbados.

Sir, if we are to focus and to zoom in on efficiency in the way we ought to, we have to ensure very quickly that we evolve a plan, to ensure that the Bridgetown Port comes on board in relation to Team Barbados and in relation to efficiency issues.

Mr. Speaker, we need a strategic approach over the next five years, one that would remove some of the bug-bearers facing the Bridgetown Port. Sir, the Port, in terms of its financial position, still continues to be in the green or blue, but we should not wait for new challenges to impact on the Bridgetown Port's financial position, before we could put the Port on a streamline position to ensuring that it continues to be efficient. Sir, if it means that we have to break down old barriers, if it means that we have to break new habits in the interest of efficiency, it is my humble suggestion that is precisely what we should do.

Sir, we need flexibility in relation to the shifting of workers from one activity to another and I believe we ought to be able to achieve that flexibility. I believe that all interest groups, whether unions or management involved in this exercise, need to step up to the plate and forge a new beginning.

Mr. Speaker, I did say that these issues are much larger than the players who are involved, whether unions or management, but it is my belief that if we are to get to that point in a rapid manner, perhaps we need to consider the establishment of a task force, which has as its mandate, a

time line to get to the bottom and to solving some of these issues that the Bridgetown Port now faces. Mr. Speaker, I feel we need to get into that zone that tells us, that we are moving from one point to the other.

Sir, in relation to the competitiveness of the Port, I believe it is time that we solve the approach to benchmarking and that we look to achieve new global standards at the Bridgetown Port, based on comparing the Port to other comparable Ports across that globe. Sir, that benchmarking needs to be achieved and finalised very quickly. Sir, if we are going to move towards greater efficiency without proper bench-marking, then we would not be achieving the targets which we have set.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that history would prove that it is in time of economic decline, that countries ought to place emphasis on their infrastructural development and growth. Sir, therefore, the challenge I would throw out in relation to the Barbados Port Inc. is, that we use this period of economic decline to review the operations of the Port, to attach time-lines to that review, and to streamline and involve a new action plan that will redound to the benefit of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, the Bridgetown Port impacts on tourism in a profound way. I believe that not only do we talk of it, we have to find new streams of revenue for the Port.. We have to evolve an action plan to achieve those new streams of revenue. Sir, that is why I disagree profoundly with one of the speakers on the Other Side in relation to whether or not we should have a new cruise terminal. Sir, it is almost speaking in a circle, particularly when we are looking at diversifying our tourism product and ensuring, that we remove some of the cluster from the Bridgetown Port, that we then reject the need to have a second pier.

Mr. Speaker, it makes sense to move towards separating the cargo aspect from the cruise aspect at the Bridgetown Port. Sir, that alone will improve operations and generate jobs in Barbados, both in the short and medium- term. We have seen the impact of the global recession. Transshipment is in decline at the Port, the number of containers being handled are in decline and that is why, I believe, we have to grow new revenue streams.

Mr. Speaker, the Bridgetown Port has an excellent system of incineration. I believe that in relation to the marketing thrust of the Port, that marketing thrust needs to be accelerated, to ensure that particular activity, that incineration service offered at the Port, particularly as it relates to the safe destruction of confidential documents, could be marketed and packaged in such a way, that it could help the Port to increase its revenue base.

Mr. Speaker, I believe one of the reasons the Bridgetown Port was incorporated, like any other company, was to ensure that as an entity, it could function within the realm of a corporation. It also has shareholding interest. Sir, I believe now is the time to look at expanding that shareholding interest and ensuring that shareholding can, perhaps, be offered to the wider Barbadian public, to widen the capital base of the Bridgetown Port Inc. and to provide the Port the opportunity of achieving a greater capitalisation at less cost, and even not going the route of more guarantees by Government.

Sir, increasing the shareholding will also improve the ability of the Port to leverage, on the collective ability of all Barbadians, who would now have a vested interest in the expansion and improvement of the Port.

2.30 p.m.

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

Mr. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, the issue also of the duty-free facilities at the Port and the need to expand them. Sir, I believe that is a point that should be taken on board in relation to generating additional revenue. Sir, we have to now think outside of the box and find new, innovative ways to grow revenue in relation to the Port. Sir, I think that the expansion of the duty-free facilities would be one of those initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly think that the work of a specially, put together task force and given time-line to bring some of these plans to the table within a particular time, would be very important if we are to achieve results at the Bridgetown Port.

Mr. Speaker, I want very briefly to touch on the whole question, of getting cruise liners to stay longer in Barbados. We need to explore and to examine why it is that cruise liners are not staying longer in the Port. Sir, I feel that we have to find new ways, even outside their activities. I understand that one of the things they do is casino gambling and so on, but they have to be other ways to attract cruise liners to remain in Barbados and to enjoy Barbados for longer and to spend more money as well.

Sir, we boast of a tourism product that is varied and a culture that is expressive, and I believe that with the right approaches and the right mind-set, that we could have cruise liners docking longer at the Port and create more opportunities, not only to persons who would provide services in the Bridgetown Port, but to all persons as well, including the taxi operators, some of whom are from my Constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to join the call that there be a better deal for the taxi operators and that they be

integrated into the mainstream of the operations of the Bridgetown Port.

Mr. Speaker, finally, I want to touch on another point. It was mentioned that the Bridgetown Port continues to have responsibility for lighthouses across Barbados. Sir, this observation is, essentially, relevant and germane to our heritage tourism product in Barbados, and is a point of concern for me in, at least, one case. The case of the East Point Lighthouse. Sir, I remember a visitor showing me a photograph of the East Point Lighthouse, which they have used across England. Sir, they had taken it back to England, showing a painting of the East Point Lighthouse. It was very beautiful and it portrayed something barbadiana. Sir, if you were to take a photograph now of the East Point Lighthouse, you would see that in the foreground, a communication tower is now part of the foreground of the East Point Lighthouse.

Mr. Speaker, it boggles my mind why permission would have been granted to erect a communications tower right in front of a national treasure such as the East Point Lighthouse.

Sir, I would want to appeal to the relevant Minister and the relevant authority, to ensure that communications tower is removed from that location. I think it is a disgrace and an embarrassment to have it in the foreground of what I call one of the historic landmarks of Barbados. Sir, I believe that is not the way to go.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that lighthouses, particularly given the length of time they have existed across Barbados, have now become national treasures to be preserved, and I would like to call on the relevant authorities to ensure that tower at East Point is removed and that no further communication tower spoils the landscape of our illustrious lighthouses.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I would like again to signal my support for this guarantee, but I believe that new and creative ways now have to be found to give the Bridgetown Port, as a key engine of the economic thrust of Barbados, a new lifeline and to integrate it into the national economic goals of Barbados, because of the important position that it holds.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly would like to re-emphasise the need to expand the shareholding base of the Barbados Port Inc. to ensure that more players, particularly Barbadians, could share in the capitalisation of the Barbados Port and help to remove some of the debt problems that again have been created for us by the Barbados Labour Party Administration. Certainly, this is one of the cases of debt that has accumulated in a manner, that in my mind, has not been responsible enough and that

has created a lacuna in relation to how the Bridgetown Port moves forward in future.

Mr. Speaker, with those few remarks, I signal my support for this Resolution.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am obliged.

The Honourable Member for the City.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this Resolution before this Honourable Chamber, and to say at the beginning that I listened attentively to the contributions made by Honourable Members on the Other Side and, Mr. Speaker, to tell you the truth, I am a little confused because we had the leading spokesman for the Opposition on tourism matters, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, leading the debate for That Side, and Mr. Speaker, I am trained in mathematics, and Sir, I am trained to think logically, but I found it very difficult to follow the argument of the logic of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North.

Mr. Speaker, on the one hand, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North promotes the thrust towards treating Barbados as a home-porting domicile to increase cruise ship arrivals yet, on the other hand, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North is discouraging this Administration from building a new berthing facility at the Bridgetown Port to increase the capacity to have cruise ships dock here at the Bridgetown Port.

Mr. Speaker, it seems rather illogical, because if one is seeking to increase the number of cruise ship arrivals in our country, and you get a bottleneck, in terms of limited capacity, in terms of berthing space, clearly, it does not take a rocket scientist to know that one would have to seriously look at expanding the pier facilities available at the Port, otherwise, the growth would be capped at a certain capacity limit.

Sir, where is the forward-thinking extrapolation from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North? He is not looking into the future in terms of providing for growth in the cruise ship sector. Sir, clearly, it is illogical and contradictory.

Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the Honourable Member for St. Michael North is really indicating to Barbados that the Barbados Labour Party was not really serious and is not really serious about expanding, in a meaningful way, cruise ship arrivals in our country.

Sir, there are some people who see, unfortunately, the growth of the cruise ship sector in competition with the long-stay, land-based tourism industry.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that there can be a symbiotic relationship. In fact, the argument of the Honourable Member for St. James North was totally different from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, because the Honourable Member for St. James North was speaking along the lines I am speaking. He is promoting the growth of the tourism product in total, including the cruise ship sector. I believe that Honourable Members on the Other Side need to consult before they contradict themselves publicly and embarrass their Party.

H/A38/12.43 p.m. Sequence 22

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Sir, as I was saying, we must be mature in this matter for there can be a symbiotic relationship in the growth of the cruise ship sector and the land-base long-stay visitors.

Sir, research has shown that at least 20 per cent of all cruise ship passengers return to Barbados on subsequent occasions, or may have even visited Barbados before. We know that the repeat tourism business is important. People come to Barbados and fall in love with this island paradise. Time and time again, the Honourable Prime Minister hosted a number of these persons who have visited Barbados for over 20 years, year after year. They spread the word and their friends and relatives come to Barbados.

Sir, rather than simply reading about Barbados and its Ads on television, when tourists on a cruise ship actually spend a few hours in Barbados, to see how beautiful this destination is, then there is a greater likelihood of them returning to Barbados in future visits, by way of cruise ships or staying at hotels on the island and telling their friends and relatives about it, so, as I said, it is a win/win situation.

I really invite the Honourable Member for St. Michael North to seriously look at the flaws of his argument and to really get on board with the modern thinking, as I seek to propel this very vital industry in this new millennium.

Sir, I say this, knowing well that I was fortunate to visit, many years ago in the early 1990s, St. Thomas U S Virgin Islands. They have natural harbours with mega cruise ships. Several can be berthed at the same time. They have a thriving city centre where cruise ship passengers flock by foot or by special tourist-friendly transportation to sightsee, to go to the city centre and to spend foreign currency in that destination.

I look forward to the new expansion of the berthing facilities at the Bridgetown Port, because this would help to

ensure that Bridgetown remains a vibrant capital of our nation, to which this Administration is committed.

Therefore, we can again have cruise ship passengers going to other destinations along the coast, be it Speightstown, near to Speightstown or wherever. Certainly, the major harbour in Barbados has the necessary amenities, be it security, duty-free shopping and close proximity to the City centre.

The reality is, these cruise ship passengers are only on the island for sometimes less than a day, so time is of the essence.

It is very convenient for them to go into the shopping centre of Bridgetown, even walk there, be it Pelican and other places, get involved in the cuisine, entertainment and shopping, returning to the Port since it is in close proximity to the shopping centre. This argument would demonstrate that there is serious justification for expanding the berthing facilities for cruise ships and cargo ships at Bridgetown.

Sir, I fully support the initiatives enunciated by the Honourable Member for St. James Central to increase the berthing facilities at the Bridgetown Port to the South of the current Pier.

Sir, just to make the point, as I understand it, it is a previous Democratic Labour Party Administration that actually propelled that aspect of duty-free shopping, building the cruise terminal with lots of retail outlets for shopping. As the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central just mentioned, I support that drive to ensure that the ownership, in such retail duty-free outlets, be broadened.

In fact, a previous Democratic Labour Party Administration initiated this. Contrary to the opposing criticisms, in that initial arrangement, many Barbadians, retired civil servants, were able to invest their gratuities and emoluments into that terminal, so that they would benefit from the profits garnered by that operation. I look forward to this Administration expanding that duty-free retail sector there.

Sir, in the summer, I have friends who work there in some of those retail outlets and at this time, they are only working three days a week, if they are lucky. With an expansion of the berthing facilities at the Port and the infrastructure in general, and I look forward to cruise arrivals spreading throughout the summer, we can have year round employment for these persons employed in the retail sector there.

Mr. Speaker, this is very feasible, because according to the Cruise Line Industry Association, there are over 13.2 million persons who would have cruised around the world

in 2008, 10 million of these were from North America alone. There is a projected 2.2 per cent increase in world cruise travel in 2009. There is projected growth in this sector, so it is very realistic to expect that there will be expansion in the cruise ship arrivals in Barbados.

Sir, 10 years ago, according to the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association, the market share of the global market in terms of cruise ship arrivals in the Caribbean Region was 10 per cent higher than the 43 per cent which we currently enjoy. We can regain that market share especially with this initiative, which this Administration is promoting. You would have heard the Honourable Minister of Tourism mention this previously that this administration is committed to expanding the home porting facilities at Barbados.

Sir, what has happened is, Puerto Rico, which was very strong in home porting, there has been a reduction there and as a result, concomitantly, there has been a reduction in the cruise ship arrivals in the Southern Caribbean, given that many cruises are on a seven-day span, so that Puerto Rico would have been closer to us than North American destinations.

Also, since the 9/11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre, by Al Qaeda operatives, in North America at least 30 new ports have been constructed on the North American coast, thereby creating competition, and as global warming and ice capping in the Arctic is disintegrating, more sea lanes are being created. Alaska is getting business in terms of cruise ships and also South America.

In fact, I was on the Carnival Splendour, the fifth largest cruise ship in the world. It docked in Barbados a few months ago, and they were on their way to South and Central America. I am saying that they came here and with the increased berthing facilities, I am sure we can negotiate with Carnival, to have Carnival Splendour and other such mega ships stop in Barbados, as part of a Southern Caribbean tour.

Sir, we must be aggressive in terms of our promotion, and we must create infrastructure that would make it feasible for these mega ships to do business in this Region.

We get the impression that the Barbados Labour Party Administration, when they were in office, did not really meet aggressively with some of these key cruise line operators. When we meet with them they are telling us that they really did not get that sort of high-level interaction, in terms of Ministers and Prime Ministers going into the market place and being competitive. Other destinations are doing that and Barbados was left behind. Sir, this Administration is committed to aggressively, in a robust

way, going out in the marketplace to get that back to the Caribbean, because we have to diversify the tourist project, if we are to survive in the very highly competitive realities in the world.

H A38 2.50 p.m. Sequence 23

Tuesday June 09, 2009

House A38, Sequence 24, 2.50 p.m.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Speaker, as the Honourable Member for the City, I am very excited about the prospects for expansion for the City Centre, and indeed, neighbouring Constituencies in urban Barbados, when we extend the Bridgetown Port, and improve the tourist arrivals via cruise ships.

Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Labour Party really made a mess of the Pelican Crafts Village. I acted as the Minister of Trade, Industry and Commerce on a few occasions and I saw the files. The Barbados Labour Party failed miserably, in terms of the Pelican Crafts Village, where restaurants had to close.

The operators were making losses because they did not market Pelican Village in an aggressive way, so that tourists actually walked on the other side of the road and did not even know what was being offered at Pelican, but with this proposed expansion of the Bridgetown Port, you heard the Honourable Member for St. James Central talking about reclaiming land in that area, building hotels and improving the infrastructure, clearly increasing the feasibility of these tourists, actually disembarking the cruise ships and going into Pelican and other areas.

Mr. Speaker, on a number of occasions, I have been in Pelican where the Royal Barbados Police Band performed in the Band Stand there and tourists flocked, just out of curiosity came over and looked into the shops to see what was going on.

Sir, you saw this Honourable Member at the launch of the Craft Guild of Barbados at Pelican just a few days ago, supporting those craft persons involved in the production of textiles, condiments, art work, and jewelry from local materials. This is this Administration that is serious about promoting craft.

Mr. Speaker, you heard me, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy and others, and the Independent Member for St. Michael South East talking about community tourism. I was fortunate to be there at that launch at Parkinson Field pasture where you had the local craft personnel, the local performers, be it Pinelands in little people fun and frolic and others, and the tourists came up there from the cruise

ships, Sir, and I am looking forward to this being brought to Bridgetown.

The Ministry of Tourism has already made arrangements that we will have special events focussing on increasing the spend of tourists, be they cruise ships or land-based tourists at events, with a lot of cultural and artistic offering at Jubilee Gardens and Heroes Square. These have already been identified by the Ministry of Tourism and I fully support this. I am encouraging the persons involved in art and craft to seize this opportunity to market their products.

Mr. Speaker, this Administration is committed therefore, to propelling the small business community tourism sector. We have venues, such as Queen's Park - and tomorrow, I will be over at Queen's Park with the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, where we will be promoting the improvement at Queen's Park, given that it will be celebrating its 100th Anniversary - Emmerton Pasture, Westbury Pasture, or Passage Road, these are areas that we can really have as venues for community tourism.

Mr. Speaker, you and I know that up until recent times, there was a Baxter's Road Mall at Crop Over time, when the whole road was blocked off to vehicular traffic and the shop owners and residents, were able to fry their fish and have stalls in the middle of the road and lots of entertainment. You know Baxter's Road was the road that never sleeps and under the Barbados Labour Party's watch, Baxter's Road degenerated, where the tourists went to Oistins, people forgot about Baxters Road, and the business people in the City suffered, but this new Member of Parliament for the City and this administration is committed to reviving Baxter's Road.

I am saying that when we now have the arrangement, such that the cruise ships will be stationed at the Port for a longer period in the evening, and maybe, overnighting, then, it becomes feasible for us to have Baxter's Road Malls and so on, where we could block off the streets and cruise ship passengers could come over and have their fried fish, pudding and souse and the Bajan Banks Beer.

Mr. Speaker, there was a lot of talk about having a Baxter's Road Mall for Cricket World Cup 2007. Just a lot of hot air, because nothing happened under the Barbados Labour Party Government and so, the people of the City got the short end of the stick. I am committed, Mr. Speaker, I have already been speaking to people who were involved in the previous Baxters Road Mall and they are very excited. I have spoken to the Minister of Culture and we look forward, in short order, to having Baxters Road back on the calender of entertainment events in our country, so this is very feasible.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken to tour operators and they argue that it is very feasible, because they have an itinerary, so as they take their cruise ship passengers to different tourist attractions around the island, once we can have a well organised community tourism venue, they would put that as part of their itinerary.

For example, when they are on their way to Harrison's Cave or wherever, they could stop at a community tourism venue and spend some of that foreign exchange among the poor, the small and micro enterprises, so that they too, can get a little piece of the tourists' dollar, and not just the all-inclusive resorts.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on but I think I have made my point there, except to say that I said I visited the Carnival Splendour, the fifth largest cruise ship in the world.

I agree with the Honourable Member for St. James Central when he mentioned that the Barbados Labour Party did not aggressively negotiate with the cruise ship operators, so that more Barbadians could get jobs in that sector. Sir, it is not just bartenders and people involved in housekeeping, but when I toured that site, we saw there was an opportunity for musicians to get work, people involved in aesthetics. We saw cruise members from the United Kingdom of all races, involved in the spas and the pedicures and so on, very sophisticated engineering and aspects of employment, but many West Indians.

One area that we have to look at, Mr. Speaker, is in the method of remuneration, because when I spoke to some of the crew members, one challenge was that the flat salary was very low and they made their money really from tips, so that they would look forward to a little higher flat salary, so that if the cruise ship is not full, they would still be able to survive on the flat salary with a few tips.

Mr. Speaker, we can assist people in accessing these jobs, because many people would wish to work on the cruise ships, but they do not know how to go about applying. Sometimes you have to go online, meet with a recruitment agency and the Honourable Member for St. James Central has already assured us that he will do all in his power to facilitate this process, be it through the Labour Department or the Employment Bureau where these persons can access these jobs which pay in foreign currency.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central will agree with me that procurement, in terms of local companies supplying these cruise ships. Currently, Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, there is a little provision in terms of ice cream, beer, juices and toilet paper.

I know a few entertainers have been able to get some work there, but I am saying that the local rum, fruits, vegetables and chicken, all of these could be supplied to these cruise ships, if we negotiate these, upfront, with the cruise ship operators and they know that we are serious, so that we get more benefits being derived to the Barbadian economy by this cruise ship business.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has five more minutes.

House A38, Sequence 24, 3.00 p.m.

Tuesday, June 09, 2009

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, let me go on to the issue of the taxi operators. I know many of these taxi operators on a first name basis, because I give them some business very often and they are my friends. I am not so sure whether they are friends of those in the Barbados Labour Party, because I was reminded a while ago that under the Barbados Labour Party Government former Ministers of Tourism excluded the taxi men from any serious meetings with the stakeholders. As I said, I rely heavily on these taxi operators. They are my personal friends and I assure them that we would do nothing to disenfranchise them.

Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, this Administration has already engaged in improving the relationship with the taxi operators down at the Port. For example, we have facilitated the procurement of uniforms for taxi operators through their particular organisation so that they wear blue shirts and white shirts with the official logo of their respective organisation.

We are committed to complete the construction of a taxi terminal within the Barbados Port Authority for use as a base for dispatching in terms of taxi operations by the summer of 2009.

We are also committed to constructing a recreational building on the outside of the Port because we know that many of the small taxi operators actually have to come down the night before a cruise ship arrives and sleep in the taxis, to ensure that they have a space in the line.

I have been told by some of the small operators that there is a challenge, that some of them may have to stop at a particular point such that the tourists would have to walk a fair distance to get to them, whereas some big operators would be able to drive closer to the disembarking passengers.

I know that the Barbados Port Authority is committed to encouraging and facilitating a situation in

which the small taxi operators, through their respective associations, can negotiate directly with the cruise ship agencies just as the big tour operators do, so that they can actually have advanced bookings, so that the larger tour operators would not get all of the business.

There can be a win-win situation, but I agree that the Port is an area of national security and we do not encourage people with a political agenda, going down there creating all of the confusion that can compromise national security. We cannot have bedlam and mayhem down there, where people are fighting for passengers and that sort of thing. It makes the country look bad and then they are not going to come back. They would think we are uncivilized, so it does not help us. Therefore, I urge those persons within the taxi sector down there not to be misled by people with political agendas and compromise the national security.

Mr. Speaker, while there is a little incident down there, people could use that confusion to smuggle drugs, arms and so on, so it is a serious issue of national security, and I know that this Administration would not tolerate that foolishness.

Mr. Speaker, along with the infrastructural improvements in that area, I would encourage all concerned to incorporate the improvements in terms of drainage in that part of the island, because most of Bridgetown is very close to sea level.

I could tell you, Mr. Speaker, there is a big drain running across Murphy's Pasture down through Oneale's Land and Chapman Lane right to the south of the Drive-Through entrance to Chefette, Harbour Road, into the pumping station at Pelican. Under the Barbados Labour Party Government, that was so poorly maintained that the pumps were malfunctioning and breaking down and this Administration has had to step in to improve that situation.

Mr. Speaker, last year, because of indiscriminate dumping, we had so much garbage, styrofoam plates and cups, flowing into the water. I remember visiting that drain just to the south of Chefette, Harbour Road, and seeing this garbage blocking the flow of water resulting in all of Chapman's Lane and Murphy's Pasture being inundated with water, and then that garbage goes into the pump house and causes it to malfunction, which could seriously threaten life and limb.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, your time has expired.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would just urge Barbadians not to litter, because you are talking about the safety of Barbadians and visitors alike.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much for the chance to make a simple contribution on the observations of the other Honourable Members' presentations. Before I get into the meat of my presentation, I want to start basically on what is obviously a very interesting thing in politics.

The Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown clearly started off his presentation by suggesting that the two Barbados Labour Party Members who spoke before should consult with one another and get their stories straight.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member then went on to say very clearly that two new piers at the Harbour would enhance and maintain and keep Bridgetown as a vibrant city after hearing just a few minutes before from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that the Bridgetown area has outlived its usefulness. How could it be that one Honourable Member decides to admonish one side for both keeping to the same script and in the same breath, contradicts what one of his colleagues had to say about the Barbados Port Authority and Bridgetown on the whole. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown that he needs not admonish us in the Barbados Labour Party, that we know full well what we are doing. We managed this country well for 14 years. The people of Barbados know that and they will continue to respect and rely on the Barbados Labour Party for all the good work it has done and will continue to do in this country.

Mr. Speaker, apart from everything else that was said, the substance of this debate is that this is for refinancing loans and also to pay off part of an indebtedness in respect to pensions. I wholeheartedly support both of those aspects to this Resolution.

The first aspect to refinance high interest rates loans to better interest rates is an obvious thing. Anybody who would go against that would absolutely have no idea about financial management, so that is perfectly correct. To refinance 8 per cent loans to 6 per cent loans and refinancing only the ones above the interest rates that you are getting is perfectly correct, especially in these times when you have an opportunity to get a lower interest rate, so I would support that all the time.

Mr. Speaker, the more critical part is for paying off the liability of the pensions, which is something that has plagued the Barbados Port Authority for years under the Democratic Labour Party and under the Barbados Labour Party. It started under the Democratic Labour Party. We

had economic difficulties and rather than pay the pensions, the money was used to pay the current workers' salaries, and we understand that. I understand that it went as high as \$40 million.

Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Labour Party was able to reduce it. I understand that it is now \$27 million as the Minister said, and that is good. I am happy to see it reduced further by another \$10 million, because at the end of the day, when somebody has put in years of fantastic and yeoman service to this country, they must know that their pension is secured. They must know that when they go to pay their bills that the money would be there from the pension fund and they must know that when they go to get the little money to support their children after they retired, or to help their grandchildren, that the pension money is there.

Mr. Speaker, when I was Chairman of the National Petroleum Corporation, they had a similar problem. They were indebted to the pension fund in the tune of about \$4 million when I got there and we decided to budget the pension. We brought in the actuaries and got the pension on stream, so that bit by bit and month by month, we were on stream to reducing that indebtedness.

Mr. Speaker, that is what needs to be done at the Port. I do not know if that system is in place. The Minister needs to tell us, because there is no point paying off part of the liability now and then in a few year's time, that liability is incurred again, because there is no plan in place to reduce the current debt as well as to pay on a monthly basis, so that no future debt is incurred. That is what the Minister needs to tell us. He did not mention anything about that in his presentation. I listened very carefully to him.

House A38 Sequence 25

3.10 p.m.

Tuesday, June 09, 2009

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, if we are going to retire part of that debt, the \$10 million, what happens to the rest and what happens to the future debt? Does this Government have a plan in place? The Minister needs to bring in the actuaries. We brought in the actuaries, Eckla and Associates, who were able to structure a plan for us to reduce the debt of the pension and to make sure that we did not incur any further debt.

Sir, what we need at the Port as well, we need to take the time and effort, because there is no point in voting to secure a loan for \$50 million today and then we do not pay off what is left, then further debt would be incurred over time. Sir, that is important.

Mr. Speaker, if those two aspects are essentially what this Bill is about, I would support it wholeheartedly, because at the end of the day, we are here to protect our people, to protect Barbadians, to protect their livelihood and to protect their incomes.

Mr. Speaker, this brings me to an important point. Sir, out of everything the Minister had to say, the most salient point to me was that the tonnage of cargo passing through the Port has been reduced by 25 per cent over the last two years, and that is important. Sir, why is that important? Sir, the Minister did not develop the point, but the vast majority of our Custom and VAT income comes through the Port. Therefore, if cargo handling has declined by 25 per cent over the last two years, that only means that the income to the Port has decreased. It would also mean that the income to the country would be significantly reduced.

Mr. Speaker, for anybody to think that it is shallow thinking when income is reduced, when you have bills to pay, when you have increases in cost, really does not understand anything about economics whatsoever. Sir, it means that our VAT revenue would be down, our Customs income would be down, not to mention the fact that the Port revenue would be down. Sir, these things bear attention. What are we going to do to enhance that income? What are we doing to build capacity to stop the slide of the reduction of income from cargo which passes through the Port?

Mr. Speaker, the management and staff at the Port do a fantastic job, both night and day. There is always somebody there to receive either cruise or cargo ships arriving in the Port. Sir, the Port never sleeps.

My relationship with the Port goes back to when I was a boy. My father would send me to the Port with the driver to collect the onions or potatoes. Sir, that was before we had containerised shipment. You would get there as early as possible, because if you were not careful and you got there too late, you would have to spend the whole day waiting before you could get out one or two shipments.

Mr. Speaker, containerised cargo has changed all of that. It now gives people the opportunity to have their shipments brought directly to their businesses and offloaded at their businesses, almost at the times they want it done. It also enhances and revolutionises the cargo business significantly. In fact, I would go as far as to say it has helped us to build a better Barbados.

Sir, I would want to say that we need to embrace this container business, but that we should go further. Sir, transshipment is a growing industry in the world.

Sir, not so long ago, I was in Port-of-Spain and the Port in Port-of-Spain actively markets their trans-shipment business to the point, where they are now the leading trans-shipment port in the Caribbean. They go out and speak to all of the cargo cruise lines and they market their trans-shipment businesses, all those businesses from South America and North America.

Mr. Speaker, for people who do not understand what is trans-shipment, trans-shipment is when a container comes here by one ship, it is not offloaded here, and another ship takes it up and takes it to its destination. That container is simply held here until the other ship gets here.

Sir, that business has proven to be one of the major income earners for the Trinidad and Tobago Port, and I am sorry to hear now that the little trans-shipment business that we get is in decline. We need to get out there and market it. We need to get out there and find out why the sheds are so empty.

Sir, if you were to ask any of the Customs Officers who work at the Port, they would tell you that Shed No. 2 is empty and that Shed No. 3 is only part full. Sir, this country is facing serious problems and so, I am not convinced that the current Administration is doing what is necessary to face the problems.

Mr. Speaker, more than a year ago, I told the Honourable Member for St. John that we have a problem in this country and that we needed to face it and fix it. The Honourable Member's response was that I was watching too much television, that there was no crisis in Barbados. Sir, that was reported in the Press. Mr. Speaker, now all of a sudden the Honourable Member for St. John knows there is a crisis.

Sir, if one were to ask the Custom Officers, they would tell you that there are no barrels in Shed No. 2, while Shed No. 3 is only half-full. Sir, workers are saying they could have been working half-days because there is no business coming through the Port.

Sir, if there is no business coming through the Port, it means that there is less business in supermarkets and hardware stores because these businesses would not be able to order anything.

Mr. Speaker, when you go into a hardware store, you could see that only two or three people are there shopping, in a situation where the owners are very happy to see you because of the fact that you are coming to buy something.

Mr. Speaker, we have a significant problem in the economy in this country and we need to face it and fix it. I am not convinced, neither are the people of Barbados convinced, that Administration is doing what is necessary

to face the problems in this country. Sir, until this Administration gets up and does the work, we are going to continue seeing a slip and a slide and that is exactly what we are facing.

Mr. Speaker, for us to hear about building a new pier in the north or adding to the facilities at the Port, this is all well and good if you are going to bring capacity. Sir, we have to do projects that build capacity in this country. We have to do projects that build opportunities to get foreign exchange. We have to build opportunities for our people to get employment, to attract business and to attract investment. Sir, the Port must be a vehicle for that.

Mr. Speaker, what the Honourable Members on This Side are saying, is that we are not against the construction of another pier, but not at this time, because the decline in the cruise ship industry is going to decline further, just like how the cargo business is declining. Sir, there is no need to build it yet. Government should wait until they get back up to high capacity and high utilisation.

Sir, we are not against building a new pier. We are saying that Government should use the opportunity now to build other facilities. We are saying that Government should build that new pier, but not just yet. Sir, that is all the Honourable Member for St. Michael North was saying. She was not saying anything different.

Mr. Speaker, the important point is that we need to do things that benefit our people, that is why we are here. We are here to do things to help and enhance the economy and the country.

Sir, we support the Resolution on the basis that the thinking is correct and that what it intends to achieve is also correct. Sir, I will support it because I can see the benefits that would accrue to the people of this country and to the workers of the Bridgetown Port.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

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

His Honour K. St.C. BEST: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the guarantee of this loan to the Barbados Port Inc. I think, as outlined by the Minister, that the purpose of this \$50 million is to do some housekeeping, to make life better for the people in Barbados, in that it will reduce the payments of excessive interest to a lower rate, and out of this, problems created within the pension scheme would be solved.

3.20 p.m.

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

His Honour K. St. C. BEST: Sir, despite all this money being spent, there are still some growing concerns to me, and I believe to the management of the Port and to Barbadians as a whole.

Sir, in this day and age, I do not believe that buildings in Barbados should have asbestos roofs on them, and Sir, the problem is that buildings in the Port still carry asbestos roofs.

Mr. Speaker, it is all right for the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, who has taken up residence elsewhere, to get in here and say that we should put the development of the pier on hold, but Sir, I sat here on many occasions and heard the voices of the Opposition saying that now is the time this Government should get into capital projects so that when the economy gets back together, things would be better off for Barbadians.

Mr. Speaker, I believe he spent too much time out of Barbados, so since he returned, the position of his colleagues has actually changed. Sir, I am supporting this loan and I am hoping we could see the benefit, and that there be prudent management to ensure that all this money is properly accounted for. Sir, there is no sense handing lots of money to an organisation, but when you look at the tangible returns, you cannot see them.

Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the employees of the Barbados Port Authority do a fantastic job with the off-loading and handling of barrels. Sir, would you believe that the Barbados Port Authority does not receive one cent for the offloading and handling of these barrels? In actual fact, the Barbados Port Authority does it as a free service.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that, if at least a minimum fee of \$10 goes towards the Barbados Port Authority for the handling of those barrels, it would provide the opportunity where you do not have to borrow any money, but with that money, the rules of the Barbados Port Authority could be changed. Sir, there would be an out-cry, that with the economic recession, you are asking persons to pay \$10, but the Customs Department would also have another \$10 fee, and there would be no question in respect of the fee because every day you go to the Barbados Port, you can see workers with the forklifts moving these barrels, but not one cent of the labour goes to the Barbados Port Authority. Mr. Speaker, I am saying that with an initiative like that, it would reduce the operational cost at the Barbados Port Authority.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to go further. I would like to see a shift system at the Barbados Port Authority. There is a shift system in the Royal Barbados Police Force and you have overtime. Sir, you have a shift that is 7.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m., a shift from 3.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. and a shift

from 10.00 p.m. to 7.00 a.m. Sir, it means that employees would know they are on a particular shift and this whole question of overtime, which creates a burden on the finances of the Barbados Port Authority, would gradually come to an end, because an individual would know that he is on shift A, that he works three days or four days from 7.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. and then, thereafter, he goes to another shift. Sir, I am sure that the productivity at the Barbados Port Authority would rise.

Mr. Speaker, we must create the atmosphere and environment for an individual by providing a proper working conditions, by removing the asbestos fumes and seeing how best we could control the pigeons in the Barbados Port because, as easy as it seems, the dung from the pigeons could create problems. Sir, when the dung decomposes, the chemicals that emanate from it, is almost a health hazard to the workers. Mr. Speaker, anyone who visits the Port often would see the faeces of the birds and we need to provide proper working conditions for workers.

Mr. Speaker, I am calling on the Minister to go there, speak to all the players and ensure that section of his Ministry be the shining light and the beacon of Barbados.

Sir, I heard the Honourable Member for St. James North speak to the question of the ability of the health workers to prevent a catastrophe in Barbados, who perform a valuable service at the Bridgetown Port. We have the people from the Ministry of Agriculture doing likewise and we also have the people from the Bridgetown Port providing a valuable service. Sir, we must look at ways and means of improving the relationship between those workers and the Government as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, the whole question about the taxi operators. Sir, one or two individuals should not be allowed to tarnish the reputation of any vibrant organisation. Sir, with this whole question of indiscipline, we must stop the talking and act. We are aware of the problems and the problems can be solved because, any time you identify a problem, there must be a solution to that problem.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to see that there is a place like a recreational area where taxi operators could park and wait until a number is called. Sir, I am calling on the taxi operators, on both organisations, to form a strong organisation and lobby overseas for some of the business, and Sir, they have to stop crying and using that phrase about the poor black man's syndrome. They have to get up, fight and unify themselves and just like the other players, who they say get all the business, they could have tour coaches and all those things within their organisation, if they get up and fight. Sir, they could have their members give a small donation, which would allow them to travel overseas and negotiate, or they could pay someone a small fee to negotiate on their behalf and, sooner or later, they

would see the returns or, as the old people say, they would see the “fruits of their labour”. Mr. Speaker, they have to stop sitting down and crying about the poor black man’s syndrome. They have to get up and fight for themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I was also happy to hear there would be an increase in the duty-free area. Sir, that is important because it gives Barbadians, from all walks of life, a share in the wealth of Barbados. Sir, you have the craft people and all sorts of small business persons going there and offering their goods. Sir, the Port as a whole, could now expand the share capital to allow average Barbadians to have a share in the management of the Port.

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His Honour K. St.C. BEST: Sir, I also want to see the marketing section of the Port pay a more active role, not only at career showcases, but by going into the schools and letting the young minds understand the various jobs that become available at the Port, so that they do not see the Port only as a place that receives barrels at Christmas, but a place that provides for the development of Barbados. I want to see that happen.

We have formed a bond. I know that the Caribbean Maritime Institution has a relationship with the Barbados Port Authority. I want to see a stronger bond within a porting system and not just a place where a barrel or vehicle is received.

In respect of the cruise ships, I think that as time evolves and as Barbados was, many times voted the Best Port, cruise tourism would find its niche within the whole and the organisation of it. Barbados needs to fight hard for its share of the market. It may be difficult, but we cannot lie down and play dead in these trying economic times and say, there is an economic crisis. We must fight now for our share in the market throughout the world. It means that we would probably at some time, and I hope in the very near future, have another Port where the smaller cruise ships can go.

Sir, the problem arises at the Port where the cargo vessels have to give way to the cruise ships. We need to find a way to solve that problem. I think the Minister indicated that we would have to expand the area, and instead of ships by-passing Barbados and going on to Trinidad with cargo, our capacity here would ensure that those ships would not have to compete with the cruise ships, but even if there was a location other than in Bridgetown, our capacity would allow us to transport those containers to a point. The Port cannot maintain and handle all of the containers. I think there is room for another business on the outside, but we need to have more. As a

result, more employment would be provided for various people in Barbados.

Sir, I wholeheartedly support this Resolution and hope that all that has been said here today, in respect of carrying the International Transport sector and the Barbados Port Authority, that we put all hands on deck no matter our political persuasion. We need to stop, think, look, listen and decide where we want to take Barbados from today. We can only do that by putting our heads and hands together for the benefit of Barbados.

Sir, I thank you very much.

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, the admission by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, on the Barbados Labour Party, was in his initial position a housekeeping resolution. Of course, it soon evolved from being a housekeeping resolution, for him to try to throw all the financial burdens of the Port, at the feet of the Democratic Labour Party Government, which came to office in January, 2008.

I want, in setting the framework for my presentation, first of all to congratulate the Honourable Minister of International Business and International Transport for his presentation this morning, which I felt was in all respects thorough, and spoke to the situation as it stands in Barbados today.

Having had the honour to serve this country as Minister of International Transport for about seven months on assumption of office, I understood clearly the kind of challenge which he was dealing with. The truth is, all the accumulation of debt at the Port would have occurred under the Barbados Labour Party Administration, and nobody is quarreling about that.

What a contradiction to try to pretend that some other fantastic development could have occurred January 2008, and today, given the reality of the financial situation which the Barbados Labour Party left, they should have been fully aware of the debt which the Port was carrying.

They should have been fully aware of the level of interest payments, that would have been required to service \$117 million debt as alluded to this morning by the Honourable Minister, but they want to pretend that this never existed, and that somehow, the Democratic Labour Party is today stalling the process in coming to this Chamber, first of all to regularise a financial situation. That is all we are going to create.

We are not going to create any fantastic opportunity for any large-scale borrowings, but to give the Port some elbow room so that it can commence its programme of re-development, preparing for the future, exactly what the Honourable Member for Christ Church West pretends he does not understand.

Sir, he speaks to the fact that we should go about building capacity at the Port and accepts that as a position we must take, but when he speaks to the creation of a new Port in the North of Barbados, he criticises it and says: "Hold on, it is not time to do that yet". What is correct? What are we left to believe, except we are hearing utterances from the Honourable Member which are utterances for utterances sake, and solely that. There is no intention whatsoever to be consistent. There is no intention to speak to the reality of the economic situation in the world. He wants to know why there are fewer containers at the Port today, than there were 12 months ago.

Sir, where does the Honourable Member live? Mr. Speaker, I must ask the question: Where does the Honourable Member for Christ Church West reside? All over the world, in Miami, I have heard Honourable Members speak to the fact, that when you go to the check-out counters in Miami now, you have a selection of five or six at Best Buys or Home Depot, any one of them, you can almost run a rat through the place.

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I am not a frequent visitor to these places, but I know what is going on. I watch the international news. I listen to the international commentary and I understand that the role of the Democratic Labour Party Government is to hold on, to build capacity wherever you can, to encourage sustainable employment and to prepare this country for when the world's economies lift again.

H A38 3.40 p.m. Sequence 28

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House A38, Sequence 29, 3.40 p.m.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, I must take a break to say that my reason of the situation is that there is a tendency for improvement, even as we debate this topic this evening. Thank God for that improvement, Sir, not like the Honourable Members on That Side. Then, we will be sure as we plan our programmes that the capacity we need to build at the Port for cruise tourism can, in fact, realise the benefit for which it is designed.

What were we left with at the Port? The Honourable Member for St. Michael East spoke just a while ago about

the conditions of the buildings of the Port, in respect to the situation with the roofing. This is a fact known to the Barbados Labour Party for the 14 years of their Administration, the 14 years of plenty in this country when they came in here Sir, and boasted about the amount of money they could spend.

They had mouth pieces who walked this country and said that we created the money and we could spend it as we like and, if required, I could bring the proof to that, Sir, if they repeat it in here for our benefit, but I heard those kinds of mouthings. They created it so they are going to spend it as they like and that is what is happening.

The truth is the spending in the Port could have been better managed to redound to the present benefit of Barbados. That is what the Minister spoke to this morning. We could already have had in place, an adequate cruise berth, even if it were merged, effected with the cargo handling section of the Port today. Instead of that, the Managers of the Port are required to come up with all kinds of creative methods to merge the two products together to the benefit of this economy, the visitors on the cruise liners and the essential need to off-load our cargo containers in a timely manner. This is one of the major operational challenges today at the Port.

Sir, visit the Port, if you need to understand the kinds of half measures which the Barbados Labour Party served out down there. Visit and see for yourself, the way in which the visitor encounters the taxi operators. Again, it requires herculean management, and operational management to make the situation appear acceptable, but they on That Side would like to come this afternoon in this Honourable Chamber and preach to the Democratic Labour Party about what and what to do and not to do.

It does not go like that and when they are upset, they can remain in that mode. We have a focus which is spoken to, in the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party and which is continually being built upon by the Cabinet, the Ministers and the entire membership of this Party, as we sit in caucuses from day to day, to work out the best solutions for the people of Barbados.

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, we have decided on, first of all, the improvement of the Port facilities to handle cruise tourism better, the better integration of the whole approach of the Port from Bridgetown, which was a total waste of time and money, as far as that development was concerned. I want to go on record as saying it.

The entire arrangement between Pelican and the Port bears no relationship to welcoming visitors to this island.

Sir, we are on record as saying that too, that we are going to develop a Port in the North, so the Honourable Member for Christ Church West can put that, as they say in Barbadian parlance, in his craw and hold it, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, those Members in here who have any association whatsoever with the north of this country, would recognise the immediate benefits of a visitor to Barbados who could encounter the greatness of Speightstown.

The Honourable Member for St. James North is looking at me very pointedly because he understands what I am talking about. There are not many cities in Barbados with the kind of latent potential of Speightstown waiting to be tapped and waiting to be unleashed on the touristic opportunity. I look forward to that day in the sun, in Barbados, when that Port is finally opened.

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: There are other issues at the Port, in terms of management of the labour resources. I know, certainly from my stewardship that again, the Board of the Port and the Managers, are constantly reviewing the arrangements with the Barbados Workers' Union, to try to come up with better solutions, and effective solutions, which redound to the benefit of everybody, which redounds to efficiencies, in the way we handle our cargo and our visitors, and which redound to the benefit of those who work and look forward to their sustenance from the labour they provide and this is important.

I was particularly tickled, Sir, by the recognition by the Minister that there is need for immediate expansion of the Cruise Terminal facilities and, indeed, as he spoke, it dawned on me that we could probably find a solution to one of the problems which showed itself recently, in terms of an exhibition centre for Barbados, and the utilisation of the land space at the Port, especially in terms of the two large facilities, which once were used similarly for sugar, but this is an idea which I am sure will be looked at.

I believe that we have an opportunity for creating that, because during my visit to BMEX this year, I shared the view put forward that, obviously, the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre has now become already too small for that exhibition. We were standing on each other and turning into each other's faces at the Exhibition. Therefore, we on This Side recognise that urgently.

I believe there is an opportunity for answering two calls at the same time, by way of creating and looking for probably the location of a massive exhibition centre within the confines of the lands of the Port, as it exists at the Harbour area.

Of course, in terms of the Cruise Terminal, the Democratic Labour Party Members were the creators of the arrangement, which brought about the Cruise Terminal in the first place, the amalgamation of the investment of the powers of big business in Barbados, along with the Government of Barbados and then independent shareholders, to bring about the Cruise Terminal as we know it today. Again, any opportunity to expand that arrangement must be taken.

Once again, small Barbadians must be encouraged to put their savings into this project, as happened in the early 1990s, when the first arrangement was put in place. Barbadian civil servants took their gratuities and invested in the Cruise Terminal of Barbados. We are saying that again, this opportunity can occur, where, as we seek to expand and build capacity now - the Honourable Member for Christ Church West - so that we can take full advantage of it when the fortunes and the opportunities become available in the very near future again. Therefore, we on This Side are very clear where we have to go in terms of cruise tourism.

The Honourable Minister is correct when he says also, that a number of our neighbours have been allowed, under the Barbados Labour Party's watch, to get ahead of us in this regard, in terms of our relationship with our cruise tourism partners. We are now playing catch-up but, thank God, we are catching up.

I am reliably informed by the Minister that there will be solutions in the works, which will bring about the kind of improvements and the growth of the cruise tourism opportunity in Barbados.

House A38, Sequence 29, 3.50 p.m.

Tuesday, June 09, 2009

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Indeed, he spoke again too, Sir, to the immediate opportunity, that is, the recommendation that we start to look at so managing the ships in the Port that they are allowed after a certain time or at a time to be agreed, to open their facilities to the visitors. Obviously, he was careful to make the point that this was nothing to do with Barbadians that this is the cruise liners themselves opening up their facilities for their guests. It does not mean that we would be deprived of that business. At the same time, we have to grow our business on the land.

Mr. Speaker, you hear our tourism commentators all the time speaking to the fact that we need to build more attractions in Barbados on the land. There are a number of them and we could speak all evening about them. The point being is that we need to build that opportunity even more,

and small businesses and large businesses alike need to cooperate in this effort.

Mr. Speaker, I heard one of our tourism leaders speaking to it. He actually spoke about taking the money from the visitors, I do not want to put it like that, but I know what he means. What he meant is that we got to have the visitors spending money in Barbados. We have to offer them the kind of opportunity here to spend on Barbadian goods and services. We also need to keep improving and training our people.

The Honourable Minister spoke to the question of our taxi operators. We at the Ministry of Transport and Works have some responsibility in this regard. We have started sessions with these taxi operators aimed at getting them to understand how important it is that we sell a consistent package to our visitors.

Mr. Speaker, in spite of the amount of money a visitor may have to spend, you can rest assured that if they for one moment feel that they have been cheated in any way, it would be the topic for discussion at dinner on the evening as they return to the boat. We have to make sure that when we take a visitor off that ship, we take them to the far lands of St. John and Pico Teneriffe in St. Peter and that they go back to the ship satisfied not only with the content of the tour itself but satisfied that they had an honest tour for the honest money they paid.

Mr. Speaker, in spite of the perceived wealth of the visitor, we must understand that all people are careful spenders. The other fact is that a number of persons on holiday are on budgeted holidays, which is important when we want to rationalise the amount of spending which they are capable of actually going into.

Mr. Speaker, we are this evening moving this Resolution to guarantee \$50 million, support more or less, for the Barbados Port Authority by ways of borrowings by the Government from the Barbados National Bank. We are sure that the port officers would ensure that the opportunities which occur out of this transaction will redound to the overall benefit of the cruise tourism business and the cargo handling business in this island.

Mr. Speaker, we have to make sure that we do not find ourselves in the same position that the Barbados Labour Party found itself in where after 14 years of spending large sums of money, there are still a number of projects in this country which have to be constantly revisited by this Administration to be put into any kind of shape that we could take off with and do anything with, and this is regrettable. They could shout to the high heavens, the point is that this is regrettable and it should not be like that.

This Administration constantly has to revert to rationalising and to putting in place the financial vehicles that they keep talking to the Barbadian public about, and I could draw examples of it. We drew examples in the Budget of the millions and millions of dollars that we have had to bring to book in this financial year for the simple purpose of rationalising the wild-scale spending of the Barbados Labour Party Administration with no attention to who is going to pay these Bills. Sir, that is not good financial management.

Mr. Speaker, with this funding arrangement, the Barbados Port Authority will have the opportunity to revisit their programme in terms of expansion and consolidation. I would urge the Minister to make sure that these projects are carefully managed. Mr. Speaker, we did not go into the details of what happened with the moneys that we are dealing with today. We did not go into the details of the container yard, pavements or the road development. All I heard the Minister said is that he was doing some excess roads.

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: He said excess at first, and he sought to correct it. The Honourable Members over there said not excess, access, but I feel it was excess though. I feel there were a number of excess roads that may have slipped into this project. There are certainly remnants of the wastage of Cricket World Cup 2007, so do not keep saying, tell us about it man. Wild spending was undertaken and the most that can be argued is that it is was not at the Port alone.

Sir, we need to understand where we are. We are in this situation primarily by bad arrangements of the handling of the moneys that were used for development. We are in this situation too because of wastage in many areas. We still have to attend to situations which should have been dealt with under the Barbados Labour Party Administration when they had the money and the funds to deal with them. Therefore, they must face the real criticism. In spite of the house keeping nature of this Act, it is largely brought about by the way in which the Barbados Labour Party sought to do business in the last 14 years.

Mr. Speaker, it is with this recognition that I made my contribution this evening and it is with this recognition that I would urge the Minister as he goes forward to make sure his programme is solidly and carefully attended to and make sure that those things which have been highlighted to be developed and to be dealt with are in fact the ones that are dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, if that is done, Barbados and the Barbados Port Authority can be transformed into something our visitors would enjoy being and enjoy

arriving at in terms of the whole walking approach through Pelican and into the bosom of our city instead of the ragtag way in which the Honourable Members on that side have left it.

With those few words, Sir, I support this Resolution, and I thank you for the opportunity to make my contribution.

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

House A38 Sequence 30

4.00 p.m.

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Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this Resolution in respect of this loan guarantee. Sir, I want to look at it from a slightly different perspective in relation to the critical role the Port has to play with respect to national development. I also want to look at the way in which the Port operates, which has an influence in the manner in which we conduct business in Barbados.

Sir, I would not want to get away with the thought that the Port is only here to serve one particular interest. I think we have to be very careful about that. We do not want to suggest that the tourism industry must occupy pride and place, in terms of looking at design for the Port. Sir, the Port must ensure that it serves the Barbadian population in a manner that brings benefit to the ordinary person in the street.

Sir, in that regard, we need to recognise that sometimes we do not appreciate the fact that the way in which the Port operates, has an impact on businesses in this country. As a matter of fact, the way in which the Port operates affects the cost of goods and services in this country. Sir, the fact that it is our main port of entry, means that the extent to which the Port is efficient would affect the cost of goods which come through the Port.

Sometimes what we also do not appreciate is the fact that the ordinary man and woman in this country is actually paying for the inefficiencies at the Port, that is why those persons who operate the Port, those who provide service to the public of Barbados, must appreciate that the way they conduct operations at the Port has an impact on the cost of living for every Barbadian in this country. Therefore, we must appreciate the huge investment this Government is making on behalf of the people of Barbados, in terms of trying to achieve increased efficiency.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to say that in this day when we are spending huge amounts of resources on entities,

those entities must also recognise that they have a responsibility, and that upon receiving these huge amounts of funds to help improve operations, the public also expects to see improvements. Sir, the fact that Government spends large amounts of resources on these entities, must somehow be translated into benefits for the public.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things I think we need to appreciate is the fact that though we will see improvements in the whole question of the facilities for cruise passengers, we must also see improvements in terms of the normal trade in goods and services.

We must also ask ourselves what do we intend to do in the future, in terms of trying to see how we could make the Port more efficient with respect to trade in goods and services. Sir, it is impacting on the cost of goods and services in this country.

Mr. Speaker, in that regard, I also think the unions need to be brought into the argument. Sir, we can no longer proceed on the assumption that certain things are written in stone and that they cannot be changed. If we are to move forward in this country in terms of trying to look to become more competitive, we must address it.

Sir, sometimes we talk about being competitive in very grandiose terms. We do not understand that sometimes there are opportunities offered for countries to be competitive, but that we must seize that opportunity when the moment comes.

Sir, in that respect, I would want to say that in terms of investing in new facilities at the Port, we should also seek to, at least, increase the competitiveness, not only at the Port - because sometimes we stop at the level of the Port - we must understand if we increase the level of competitiveness at the Port, we must also look at the impact it would have on the cost of goods and services in this country. Sir, that is one of the things we do not seem to appreciate. That is one of the things those persons who manage the Port must understand is their responsibility to achieve.

Sir, if we can achieve greater efficiencies at the level of the Port, we are then able to pass on those efficiencies to businesses. As a result, the businesses would then be able to offer cheaper goods and services to consumers. Sir, sometimes we do not see that being realised in this context. Sir, I would want to say that as we go forward we must look at it.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to say that we have not looked at the question of imports and the impact of an efficiently operating Port, neither have we looked at Barbados' ability to export commodities. Sir, very often we assume the only thing we could do is to import.

Mr. Speaker, we in Barbados import a whole volume of goods and services into this country, without thinking that maybe if we redesign the Port differently, we would be able to, at least, have greater export facilitation, which would allow businesses which may have the potential to export goods and services, to be more efficient. Mr. Speaker, in that regard, I think we need to look at the operation of the Port, to see how it could be improved to facilitate greater exports.

Sir, we assume it cannot do this but in the same way that in the past we have exported agricultural commodities, especially sugar, we need to see how we could redesign the Port operations to facilitate the exportation of other commodities. Sir, I think that is an area of emphasis that we need to look at, because very often we think that Barbados is too small to look at the question of exporting commodities.

Mr. Speaker, when we go back to the question of cruise tourism, we find that, in many cases, Barbados is still able to sell commodities to the cruise ships. For instance, our local poultry is being sold to ships that come here, because these ships need to be serviced. Therefore, we have an opportunity to sell locally produced commodities to those cruise ships which, at the same time, provide income for those persons who produce those commodities.

Sir, we need to take advantage of it, but I think we need to go beyond that, because in today's world, we have niche markets that this country can service, once we have the right quality and can show reliability. Sir, there are markets that will pay for the product once that product is of the right quality and we have reliability in terms of supplies.

Mr. Speaker, what we have found, in many cases in the past, is that in order to export certain commodities from the Port, there was a situation where sometimes the condition or mode of operation of the Port was not friendly to the question of exports. I think that is something we need to look at because, very often, we are robbing ourselves of the opportunity of earning valuable foreign exchange as a result of exporting commodities. Sir, I think this is something we need to explore. Mr. Speaker, in this way, we would be able to afford persons who are engaged in the cottage industry in this country the opportunity to export their commodities.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things you would note is that we bring in huge volumes of exports into this country. You would also note that very often many ships leave Barbados empty. Therefore, that would be an opportunity for us to be able to take advantage of cheap rates.

In the normal Law, it does not make sense for a ship to come here loaded with commodities and, at the end of the day, they leave empty because of the fact we have nothing to send out.

Sir, we need seriously to take a look at what we in Barbados can produce to fill those ships when they go out of Barbados. Sir, I do not think we should feel comfortable with the fact that we are merely an importing country, when we have people who can produce goods of very high quality. What we need to do is to be very strategic in the manner in which we market those goods and services that we produce.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to suggest that maybe what we need to do is to look and see how we could handle more volume during the normal operating hours of the Port. I know in a sense it might mean that we need to have a discussion with the unions, but certainly, we cannot have a situation where the country in itself could do more, but at the same time, because of the fact that we are stuck in a particular mode of operation, other persons who would normally be able to benefit more, to do more or to contribute more to economic activities in this country, cannot benefit. Therefore, we have the problem where a few benefit, but at the expense of the majority.

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Mr. J. D. PAUL: Sir, then we have the problem where a few benefit at the expense of the majority. Sir, not only that, in this period where we have a difficulty in terms of the current economic crisis that is facing this world, I think we need to look at it in a serious way and use the opportunity to improve the efficiency of operation at the Bridgetown Port.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say again, that we might need to look at trying to involve the ordinary person in terms of ownership. Sir, one of the things we know is that we probably need to involve ordinary people more in terms of looking at the whole question of ownership, by involving them in the ownership of the Port. Sir, maybe, in that way, we might have a higher sense of responsibility in terms of trying to ensure that the Port is more efficient and more successful.

Mr. Speaker, if I am a person exporting goods and I have shares within the Port, I would want to ensure that the Port, as an operation, serves me better. Therefore, you would have a situation where they would be insisting that the operations of the Port be more user-friendly to my operation.

Sir, these are the kind of things we need to examine and be revolutionary, in terms of trying to ensure that we bring about change in the way in which we operate.

Sir, we cannot continue to assume that tourism will continue to be a flagship industry in the future. Sir, clearly, when we look and see what is happening around the world, with respect to tourism, other countries are coming and offering different products and different experiences to tourists and we have to compete with that. Therefore, we have to at least establish a different way of competing and earning foreign exchange in order to keep our people employed in this country.

Mr. Speaker, we need to look at it and not wait until something happens before we actually do what we need to do.

Mr. Speaker, those are my brief comments. Again, I want to support the Resolution, but I want to call on us to take a look at the operations to see the extent to which the Barbados Port Authority could be restructured to facilitate businesses in this country that would help us to be more competitive in today's world.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged to you.

The Honourable Member for St. James Central.

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. Speaker, in wrapping up this debate on the guarantee of the \$50 million loan to the Barbados Port Authority, I would want to take the opportunity to thank Honourable Members of this Chamber for the contributions they have made and the suggestions in respect of the way forward.

I would also want, Mr. Speaker, at this time, just for the record, to clarify the comments made by the Honourable Member for St. James North when he, in giving an historical perspective of the Port, referred to the Barbados Port Authority as a merger of Port Contractors. I think he was struggling to remember that it was the Port Department, which merged with the Port Contractors to form the Barbados Port Authority Inc.

Sir, just for the record and for clarification, I want to just make that small observation.

Mr. Speaker, the comment was made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North when he said that the Barbados Port has to lead the whole question of the development of cruise tourism. I think that if we recall the presentation made by the Honourable Prime Minister last time he were in this Honourable Place, the Prime Minister spoke at length about the Team Barbados approach to it. I

do not believe we should be looking at the Port as the organisation to lead the cruise tourism, but it is a team approach with the Minister of Tourism.

Sir, the Minister of Tourism has responsibility for promoting and marketing the tourism product in Barbados. I think we need to be clear as far as that is concerned. Sir, it will be a joint effort by Team Barbados as we go forward to market our tourism product.

Mr. Speaker, I would also want to attempt to clarify one other observation he made. Sir, he sought to suggest that Barbados pulled out of some agreement in respect of our Caribbean neighbours in respect of the head tax back in the early 1990s. Sir, to put that in perspective, it has always been a challenge for the industry for the Caribbean to have a settled agreement and to work as a joint body in respect of the head tax.

The cruise ship companies have always been able to divide and rule, so to speak, the island of the Caribbean. Sir, maybe it is one of the legacies of our history and that maybe, is one of the challenges, that we cannot, as a people, work together. Sir, that is a major challenge for the industry, the need for us to be able to have a united front, going forward in terms of establishing what the head tax should be.

Mr. Speaker, I believe there is significant scope for us to be able to increase our revenues in that particular area and, certainly, as we attempt to develop the infrastructure, we need to ensure that our cruise line stakeholders recognise that there must be a win/win situation and that going forward, it is not going to be acceptable for the individual countries within the Caribbean to have to finance that infrastructure, without the significant input and contribution by the cruise ship companies. It must be a win/win situation for all of us.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to clarify another observation. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy was concerned over the congestion in Speightstown. Sir, certainly, based on the feedback that has been given to me from the cruise lines, we should really be looking to maintain the character of Speightstown. Sir, as we try to take our cruise passenger business to Speightstown, there are options in terms of a one-way system through Speightstown.

Mr. Speaker, if you go to Speightstown, on a Saturday morning, you are challenged in terms of the two-way traffic and, certainly, the traffic managers in Barbados could easily look at that particular situation and devise a traffic plan to accommodate any additional visitors we have in the Speightstown area.

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Hon. E .G. HUTSON: Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that we maintain the whole architectural character of Speightstown as well as the whole ambience of the way shopping is done in Speightstown. I do not think the intention is to lose that particular character so that Speightstown will be an additional product, so to speak, that we are offering to our cruise visitors.

Sir, the question of pensions which was raised by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, I know that he raised some concerns in respect to the unfunded liability of the Port. That unfunded liability has been in existence for several years, ever since the restructuring of the Port.

If you look at the audited financial statements of the Port for 2007, which I believe is a document of this Honourable Chamber, as far back as 2002, the deficit on the plan in 2002 was some \$23.9 million. In 2003, it was \$24.7 million, 2004 \$23.9 million, 2005 \$21.6 million, 2006 \$25.7 million and 2007, which was the last year of the Barbados Labour Party Administration, it was \$27.3 million.

As I said, at the beginning of my presentation, \$10 million of the refinancing has been put towards reducing that deficit. That unfunded liability would now be in the vicinity of \$18 million, the lowest it has been in the last eight or nine years.

Sir, there is a commitment by the Port to reduce that particular liability over time. That is important. Under the previous Government there were instances where that particular commitment was not met because of the challenges, the cashflow challenges that we had in respect of the Barbados Port Authority. That was just to clarify and to allow the Honourable Member to be aware of the situation, as far as the unfunded liability is concerned.

Sir, Honourable Members who made contributions to this debate, have been complimentary to the expansion of the Cruise Terminal facility. There was some uncertainty by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph. I think that was an aside, so I do not think I would make any comment specifically on it.

Just for the benefit for Honourable Members of this House, the whole expansion programme will involve the creation of a pier, as well as the expanded development of the Cruise Terminal. As I said, there is a real estate component which is critical, and which will be that expansion of the area to the South of Trevor's Way. Certainly, in terms of the funding of that project, the pier itself, has to be seen as more or less two phases, the pier and the real estate component, because that is going to be critical. That investment in the real estate and the

infrastructure to support the pier is going to be critical to the exercise going forward.

Sir, certainly, an Honourable Member, I do not remember who it was, maybe the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central, made reference to the fact that there is a need to expand the shareholding in respect to the facility. Certainly going forward, there are models that can be used to finance, and to get this project off the ground, in terms of a joint venture company that the Port may or may not be.

The Barbados Cruise Terminal Inc would have opportunities within that particular joint company, as well as the whole investing population of Barbados, because the financing needs to be put in place.

As I said in my main presentation, we have to ensure at all times, as we develop Barbados, that ordinary Barbadians have an opportunity to share in that economic development. What better way than to have any joint venture enterprise that would take the development forward, open up its shareholdings that ordinary Barbadians can buy 100 or 1 000 shares, or whatever according to their own economic means.

Sir, with those few words I now ask that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be now suspended for 10 minutes.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 4.40 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

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House A38, Sequence 34, 4.40 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

ORDER NO. 4 – THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST
INDIES (GUARANTEE OF LOANS) (AMENDMENT)
BILL, 2009

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

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

This Bill before the Honourable House is an amendment to the University of the West Indies (Guarantee of Loans) Act 2007-24. In this amendment we are seeking some relatively simple things really:

Part 2 in the long title of the Act, to delete the words, “the Cave Hill Campus” and substituting the words, “any campus of the University.”

Section 2 of the principal Act, is amended

a. by inserting the following definition in the appropriate alphabetical order:

“Campus” means any campus of the University wherever they are located;”;

b. in the definition of “loan”, by deleting the words, “the Cave Hill Campus” and substituting the words “a campus”; and

c. by deleting the definition, “business day” Section 3 of the principal Act is amended by inserting immediately after subsection (1) the following subsection:

“(1A) Where a loan referred to under subsection (1) or part thereof is to be applied to the financing of work to be carried out at a campus outside Barbados, the terms and conditions referred to under that sub-section may include a guarantee to the full extent of that loan extent of that loan by the Government of the country in which the campus is located.”.

The University of the West Indies, and I am not talking about Barbados, but the system, has got a letter of comfort which is backed and substantiated or supported by a guarantee for some \$5.5 million and the Barbadian portion of that guarantee stood at \$2.75 million. In other words, not only is Barbados guaranteeing the loan, but the portion for the two other campuses or the two other Governments, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica, will be guaranteeing a portion of the loan for the construction of a Vice Chancellery, on land adjacent to the Mona Campus. It is a physical structure to house the Vice Chancellery’s operations of the University of the West Indies.

As a result of this, because the University of the West Indies Guarantee of Loans Act 2007-24, spoke

specifically to guaranteeing loans of the University of the West Indies here at Cave Hill, this takes it now outside of the borders of Barbados into the regional university borders. Therefore, that is why one has to do these amendments to the Act, in order to facilitate this particular loan. In doing that, it is not the first time that the Government of Barbados for the University, particularly the University of the West Indies, would have guaranteed loans, or provided Letters of Comfort to the University of the West Indies, and still ongoing expansion of the infrastructural phase of the University of the West Indies. The Government of Barbados over time became very involved with the University, in the expansion of its physical infrastructure. If one passes the University of the West Indies, one can see the expansion of that physical infrastructure.

The Democratic Labour Party Government has always been committed to the development of tertiary level education. In fact, it was this Government way back in the 1960s, which brought to Barbados the University College. Then gradually, as we moved into the University of the West Indies and its establishment there at Cave Hill, where the land was provided for the construction of the University of the West Indies.

Sir, it is only natural that as a university expands, greater space would be needed to accommodate the growing student population, and to facilitate as well, the new initiatives of the University of the West Indies, as that University seeks to meet the demands - one of the student population that wants to be educated and to be in concert with the development needs, strategies and agenda of Barbados.

Therefore, it was all well and good to start off with humanities, good though they are, there came a time when one had to move into the pure and applied sciences, into the social sciences, into Law, and more recently, into a fully developed faculty of medicine here in Barbados, which started out with just about 50 or so students in that faculty.

I am noting that as we move into the second year of that programme, commencing August/September, there has been a global request for persons in that faculty of just slightly under 700 students, in a situation where, maybe, only 100 can be accommodated. Remember, of course, that the medical faculty was set up on a commercial basis.

The Government of Barbados sponsors some 25 students here in Barbados and then five each in the two other campus territories. Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica are moving the numbers. There used to be 25, 15 and 10, now those numbers have moved to 35, but with 25, being supported here in Barbados in 2008. The Government of Barbados actually supported some 35 students here in

Barbados and still maintained the support of 45 others in the two other territories.

Therefore, one has seen the growth and heavy demand, and that says something about Barbados as a society in the first instance, where there can be an extremely heavy demand for, maybe, 100 spaces by 700 global students, North America, Europe, and the Caribbean trying to get into a faculty that could only take in just about 100, but it was established on a commercial basis, in order to meet certain loan commitments by the University of the West Indies.

At the other end, of course, the University of the West Indies, and I am speaking here of the system, but more particularly, of the Cave Hill Campus, continues to carry out its mandate to the people of Barbados. There are studies that have been done over time, which have shown that as a population becomes more advanced in its knowledge acquisition, in its acquisition of skills, et cetera, that society is able to develop at a quicker pace.

Right now, the numbers of graduates, persons who have gone through university training, are around 32 to 35 per cent. This is still relatively small, in comparison to countries in the developed world, and to some other countries like Malaysia, for example, which is an emerging economy.

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4:50: p.m.

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Hon. R. D. JONES: Even though the number of graduates in Barbados is the highest within the Caribbean Region, it is still some 16 to 17 per cent below the standard which is achieved in some other developed and developing or emerging economies, which means that we have to continue, and this Government has committed itself to it, to provide resources for Barbadian students at the University of the West Indies as well as to support the work of the University of the West Indies over time.

In fact, with the expansion of the research agenda of the University of the West Indies here at Cave Hill, Government, even during these difficult times, as seen in the Estimates which we debated a few months ago, pledged some support to the research agenda of the University of the West Indies, since it dovetails with the development agenda of the Government and people of Barbados.

There are areas of activities which a university in its research agenda must undertake to help fuel the development of that society. Areas such as food, micro biology, food safety, the bio-diversity of Barbados,

sustainable use and wise management of our renewable and non-renewable resources, and the mapping of the future water resource management in Barbados are part of the research agenda.

Some time ago, we heard quite an expansive talk on managing the scarce water resources of Barbados. That is where young people involved in systematic research, and all of those planners, and all of the various persons involved in bringing water and managing the scarce water resources of Barbados, will be able to get some assistance.

There would also be research in tourism, in capital and money market development, and Caribbean regional integration, an area of activity which this Party and this Government has been involved with over time, from the funding of CARIFTA right through to the CARICOM Single Market and Economy.

Mr. Speaker, that linkage, that commitment and that synergy continue to manifest itself in the work of the University of the West Indies which, in fact, should be a beacon in the lives of an intelligent population, in a population seeking intellectual pursuits, and in a population seeking to change the character of a society through academic, technical and vocational studies and other areas of human cognitive endeavour.

We cannot forget educational research as one tries to change the focus of education in Barbados, to make persons responsible, to some extent, for their own learning and to give teachers, tutors and professors, the opportunity to add to their bank of knowledge and to their bank of skills to help the society develop. There would also be research in youth, culture, sports and social life in Barbados. There are many areas begging for systematic research which can be published and which can guide in the development of the society.

There is also research into chronic diseases. Only recently as we put the National Development Scholarships out to Barbadians, one saw areas of study relating to health and allied health, the whole area of clean management. These are areas of activities which are now not sourced in Barbados, but are part of the real development needs of Barbados. This is another area of Government activity which the National Development Scholarship is stressing and providing resources, so that persons can go into the wider global educational arena to do research and acquire training and then, to return to their homeland to ensure that the people of Barbados benefit from that.

The area of aviation and airport management is an area as well on the National Development Scholarship agenda this year. There is also the area of clinical and behavioural psychology. There is a dearth of clinical and behavioural psychologists. If we are to come to grips with

some of the issues affecting our people, particularly our young people, we would need some more behavioural and clinical psychologists to impact.

Mr. Speaker, there are areas beyond the work of the University of the West Indies in its various campuses, including the open campus. The University of the West Indies should be complimented for the further development of the open campus. Ours was located on Pine Hill near the Parkinson Memorial School. That open campus continues to do great work.

A few months ago you had the graduation of the first cohort of students from the open campus at Cave Hill and impacting on those persons who might not yet be ready for graduate or undergraduate study, but building their reservoir of knowledge as they move forward along the education chain to impact on Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, sport and entertainment, international events management, as well as local events management and renewable energy, are also areas of research. There has been a lot of talk about renewable and sustained energy and the offshore financial sector as part of the national development agenda, that the University of the West Indies generally has brought on board in order to facilitate the development of the societies.

When the University of the West Indies was established about 61 or so years ago - Mr. Speaker, let us understand that this is still a relatively young university when one speaks of some of the great universities of the world - the University of the West Indies has been able, particularly at the level of undergraduate study, to make its mark in the world.

There are universities in the world which clamour for University of the West Indies students at a graduate level, because of that very solid foundation which has been implanted as a result of their journey through the University of the West Indies, either at Cave Hill, Mona or St. Augustine's.

There are areas of activity which are still compartmentalized across the various campuses. This is good because the University of the West Indies was set up, not as a university for Barbados, or as a university for Trinidad and Tobago, or as a university for Jamaica, but as a regional binding institution to bind Caribbean people together.

There are persons who would have gone to Jamaica or St. Augustine's, or persons who have come from those other countries to Barbados who now truly understand what it is to be a Barbadian, a Jamaican or a Trinidadian. They create that kind of linkage and synergy that is important to the evolution or the further evolution of what we call "The

Caribbean Regional Integration" or "The True Emergence of Caribbean People."

Mr. Speaker, what is beginning to happen, and which should not necessarily be allowed with the pace at which it is happening, is that a university where the various campuses are, is beginning to take on a local character and a local face, and to some extent, that is a bit dangerous.

The university here at Cave Hill still has the highest ratio of non-Barbadians to Barbadians or to citizens in the university system. Trinidad and Tobago tends to carry the bulk of Trinidadians and Jamaica tends to carry the bulk of Jamaicans. You would still find some Barbadians going to the Faculty of Engineering in Trinidad in order to access engineering studies. You would also find persons going to Trinidad or Jamaica, and I believe some go to the Bahamas as well, to do the legal certificate, the LLB. That gives it a real regional face.

There have been substantial pressures on the Faculty of Law here in Barbados because it is not a large faculty. Trinidad gets over 700 applications per year, Jamaica over 1 000 and Barbados over 265 for entry into the Faculty of Law. Mr. Speaker, the Faculty of Law, in any given year, might be able to accommodate 450 or 460 students.

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Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, there is pressure by the other territories to develop Faculties of Law in their respective territories. Sir, one would have to see how that is played out, but the character that has made the University of the West Indies so unique is being gradually whittled away, as the individual campuses take on a more territorial face, rather than a regional face.

Mr. Speaker, the Cave Hill Campus and the other campuses have not simply been relying on the resources provided by the individual countries, even though those resources are substantial and major to the operation of the university system. They have gone out and established programmes for donations. They have got into investments. They have got into asking the graduates of those universities to make contributions to the operation of their university.

Sir, they have Memoranda of Understanding between other universities. They receive funding from important institutions to help fund the research agenda, whether that research is in the areas of sustainable energy, chronic diseases or whatever else. Mr. Speaker, there have been these linkages created, so that you will find a situation

where the resources of the University of the West Indies, as a system, continues to expand.

Sir, what is important, and what Cave Hill is doing as I mentioned earlier, is that Government has been helping to facilitate the research agenda. Sir, at the graduate level, you can have top Masters Programmes. Sir, Cave Hill, as well as some of the other campuses, have gone into top Masters Programmes to help those persons who want to advance their own professional development as quickly as they possibly can. There is also an area of university activity which demands both in-fill and doctoral studies, which could help to impact on the work of the various universities across the Region.

Mr. Speaker, between 1997 and 1998, there was a relatively large expansion of the Cave Hill Campus, moving from a total of 3 568 students to 7 781. Sir, that total comprised of approximately 6 000 Barbadians, with the remainder coming from many of the non-campus territories, particularly out of the Organisation for Eastern Caribbean States.

Mr. Speaker, what you would find is that as more and more persons receive their undergraduate programmes, there would be a commensurate growth, to some extent, in post-graduate studies. There are currently some 950 students in post-graduate studies at the University of the West Indies, with Barbadian students being approximately 596 of that total students. There is room still at that post-graduate level for more and more Barbadians to become involved.

Mr. Speaker, you would also find that there is a particular demand at the university level. For instance, Social Science has always been a heavily populated area of study, followed by Humanities and Education, then Pure and Applied Sciences, with Law and Medical Science following. Therefore, one has always to look and see what are the true needs of the country.

Mr. Speaker, there are those who go to the University of the West Indies by making a choice, but not too sure that is what they want to do at the end of the day. Therefore, that is where even greater educational counselling now has to be undertaken, so that those persons would not be seeking to return to the university to do another degree. Sir, that is a cost to the State, even though the State only funds one degree at the undergraduate level, unless you are then going into a medical field, where it is allowed because of the fact that you would have done your pre-med programme, then to move into your full medical programme.

Sir, one has to look and see if, in fact, the Pure and Applied Sciences would need greater emphasis, where technology is heavily involved or should one keep moving

towards that heavy focus on the Social Sciences, where Sociology, Economics and subjects as such, are in fact, located.

If Barbados or any of the countries in the Caribbean are to develop at a more rapid pace, the whole notion of the scientific application has to be quickly brought on board. Sir, much of the scientific application would lie in the Pure and Applied Sciences area. Therefore, we want to see an even greater number of persons being properly matriculated and entering that particular area of activity at the University of the West Indies.

Mr. Speaker, what is also significant is that Barbados, unlike the two other campus territories, has an interesting student population face. Sir, about 50 per cent of the student population at Cave Hill are full-time workers and, therefore, Cave Hill has, in fact, designed a system called "The Evening University" within the system, where those persons can continue to work, where they are treated, not as part-time students, but because of the evening university, they are treated as full-time students and are able to graduate in the three or four years as the programme allows. That is quite an innovative measure.

The university is there to respond to the need of the citizenry of a country. The university is there to respond to the developmental agenda of a particular country and, therefore, has to be flexible in how it applies the time schedules to satisfy the needs and demands of that student population.

Mr. Speaker, I remember going to Cave Hill many years ago. I had a Sociology Professor by the name of Dr. Graham Dann, and in order to meet the needs of the student population, we were at campus at 7.00 a.m. I believe the Professor used his discretion in order for the students to be able to access his sociology courses at that time. At 7.00 a.m., whichever part of Barbados you lived, you had to be up by 5.30 a.m., if you did not have transportation. Dr. Dann is retired and has gone back to his native country, but he created that environment.

Mr. Speaker, since so many years ago, you now find the Campus at Cave Hill responding to the needs of a student population by moving into an evening university, where students can access education, without suffering any penalty or spending some six or seven years at the university, in a part-time arrangement, in order to gain their qualifications.

The university has also seen a commensurate growth in resources provided by the State. Sir, based on that particular model and growth, the citizens of Barbados must be complimented for providing the resources for the education of Barbadian citizens, through the Government transfer to the University of the West Indies.

H:No. A38A(36)

5: 10 p.m.

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

Hon. R. D. JONES: Sir, when other countries were demanding fees from their student population to cover some of the economic and tuition cost, the Government of Barbados holistically continues to make a commitment to paying for the economic and tuition cost of the students of Barbados.

The question which must be asked eventually, if this whole matter is sustainable as more and more numbers go in. It is a question which we should engage the wider popular of Barbados in deposit. Sir, I want to position that beside what I said earlier, that is, the need for a country, such as Barbados, to continue to develop much more of its population in under-graduate and post-graduate studies to help this country go forward and develop. It is also an important element of study.

Sir, some teachers have made the point that once they are at the maximum of their particular bar in the scale, in most instances it is Z2, if they do a graduate degree they are not given any remuneration, but they do it for professional growth and development, for self-actualisation, to feel good about themselves.

In a society you need that pursuit as well. It is like reading some of the best books you possibly can, because it fulfills that personal self-actualisation agenda of the particular individual. In some instances you can say that the pursuit of knowledge can soothe the heart of a savage beast. That is what it can do, that pursuit and that acquisition of knowledge within the Barbadian context.

Sir, it has also been argued in other places and in other research, that Barbados as a country, even though we have our share of problems, our share of crime and violence, because of the trust and the nature of the education pursuit in Barbados, we are not as savagely confronted as other territories, in the Caribbean, by this mayhem and not taking a second glance and analysis, before one jumps into the fray and causes great damage with other persons, and the release of the blood on the streets or wherever you have. Sir, this says something, therefore, about the character of the Barbadian we have, that character which was molded over time, through the provision of education within Barbados.

Sir, you will also note, and I believe one of the leading persons in the international trade policy on This Side, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, was one of the first persons who benefitted from the Masters International Trade Policy. There are many

Barbadians who benefitted from this agenda, a new programme placed on the education agenda at Cave Hill.

Then you have Management with Specialisation, Human Resource Management, Marketing Management, Financial Management, International Management, Investment and Project Manager and areas where there is a need, Masters in Labour and Employment Relations and Labour Studies, and some of the other areas that I previously mentioned, where a university, sitting in discussion with the Government as a major stakeholder in academia, a major stakeholder in educational pursuits, would sit with the University and discuss, these are the needs of the State.

Sir, one would even see a greater refinement of those needs as the Human Resource aspect of the Ministry of Education really kicks into gear, where the kind of analyses are done at the secondary level at the Barbados Community College and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic. Within the wider society, you sit and talk with manpower planners, the Labour Department, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and with citizens as a whole, to see what the needs are, what the needs of the community that we live in are, and therefore get the University to design and fashion programmes to satisfy and are ready to meet those needs of the country.

Sir, of course, there are challenges present within the education environment, not only at the University, but within the wider education arena. There are always challenges of adequate or enough resources to do the educational job, or to conduct the educational service.

Sir, if we, of course, are to provide leaders in Government, leaders in tourism, leaders in finance and leaders in industry, we have to overcome those challenges as a country and as a region. Also there is the challenge of a more diversified student population, as the doors of the University are either forced open or pulled open, or, in fact, just open. One would see more and more persons trying to access tertiary education, through the University of the West Indies, and the student population as a whole would become more diversified.

Sir, there is an avenue practised by many universities across the world, where the mature student might be able to gain access to the University of the West Indies, where there is a certain weight given to the experience and the practice in the workplace. Then they are able to graduate with a degree within their area of specialisation. The University has gone that route as well, relative to mature students, persons who would have left school without acquiring all of the requisite qualifications that they need.

Sir, one of the things that the university had noted, between many mature students and working students, is

their application to work is even greater than those students, who just left a secondary school or another institution of that type and go into university. There seemed to be greater focus and greater application. It is a time thing as well. Therefore, one has to support those persons as they move through the university system, making themselves feel comfortable about themselves.

We also have to be able to maintain that ability to recruit strong students for the work of the University of the West Indies. That would mean that our institutions at the lower level, also have to continue to matriculate better qualified, stronger and more focussed students to enter the University of the West Indies.

Sir, the capacity for research has to be further enhanced and developed. As you pass either the Lazeretta, which is now going to be part of the Campus, where the Government of Barbados provided a great expanse of land for the construction of various facilities - there is only one Government. The Government of Barbados is continuous. The Government of Barbados has provided those resources for the expansion of the University, and the Democratic Labour Party continues, as it did from the early inception in the 1960s, to provide resources for the development of the university.

Sir, there is no Government in Barbados that has the face, tenacity or the stomach to halt the educational pursuits of Barbadians.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: We know about the early discussion about putting holes in the School Meals pans and stuff like that. Let us be generous. We have passed those days and they have come to full understanding that this country has grown and developed as a result of the commitment of the nation, as orchestrated by the Government in the particular path of development it has achieved over time.

Barbados, I remember as a youngster, in the 1960s, catapulted by education, brought as a result of the freeing up of school spaces, where you did not have to pay any money, the bringing on board of free school meals, the bringing on board of the Uniform Grant, the bringing on board of the Text Books Loan Scheme.

H A38 5.20 p.m. Sequence 37

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

Hon. R. D. JONES: Sir, more recently the provision of free transportation to the people of Barbados. It is a continuing development of an agenda by the Government

of Barbados to satisfy the legitimate needs and demands of a people.

Mr. Speaker, it has principally, at its centre, the truest development of the human capital of Barbados that there must be no citizen of Barbados, who cannot function in a modern world, who cannot function as part of the economy of a global society that we say we are.

Mr. Speaker, I always underscore what I say that there is still more work to be done. We cannot run off into the sunset believing that we have achieved it all, because when we reach that stage, is when the walls come crashing down.

Mr. Speaker, young people have to stay focussed. Sir, youngsters at the University of the West Indies who should finish their undergraduate programme in three years, but spend time not focussed, not concentrating, not deliberate, and then have to end up spending an additional year or two is a cost on the State. Sir, it has to be stated that it is a cost on the State.

Mr. Speaker, an individual, who leaves the Barbados Community College where there is a two plus two format, two years at the Associate Degree level and you matriculate into the University of the West Indies but he does not spend that two years there, but he spends three years, is a cost on the State, or he spends two years and drops out of the programme.

Sir, that is a cost on the State and, therefore, you have to say to many persons who go to our various institutions, not only the University of the West Indies, that there must be a deliberate focus on scholarship and that there must be a deliberate focus on learning. Sir, it still transforms the lives of people, regardless of what some persons somewhere else might tell you, that you do not need to learn. Sir, other people are telling you that but their children are still trying to access the highest level of education for themselves and for their children.

Mr. Speaker, within the knowledge society we are in today, knowledge creates wealth, and Sir, the greater your level of knowledge, the greater the possibility for the acquisition of wealth for yourself and for your society. Mr. Speaker, that is critical to the role of the university.

The 21st century economy has generated a demand for even more highly skilled workers, and when one looks at the diversity and the exponential expansion, based on information and communication technologies, one could well understand that need and that demand.

This Government is continuing to explore, even with the Government of India, where a lot of brilliant information and communication technological specialists

have been developed over time, scholarships for Barbadians, where they too could be inserted in that environment to learn and to develop software programmes, that would embark on Barbados to develop pieces of hardware, which could impact on the Barbadian society.

Sir, wherever in the world there are opportunities Barbadians, through scholarships and through programmes, engineered by the Government of Barbados, will source them for the development of students of Barbados and, in particular, Barbadian young people.

Sir, we need to continue to let them know that we care about their education and that their education is fundamental to their self-development and for the development of the country and of the society.

Mr. Speaker, the university continues to attract good scholars. Sir, persons, not all, who produce good literature, good text and good research, who get involved in the community in the various forms, through seminars, lectures and whatever else, are impacting on the society in which they are located. Sir, they might not be born here, but they are employed by the university.

Mr. Speaker, I remember years ago, a graduate of history and sociology from the University of the West Indies, being proud of the work being done by the History Department of the University of the West Indies, like the Emancipation Lectures in the Queen's Park Steel Shed and all over the place.

Sir, there was a constant production of historical literature to help Barbadians understand their historical past and the contemporary past. Sir, one could still interface with that excellent literature and, there are also, some professors at the university who continue to work in other areas of activity to help strengthen the university and help to strengthen the country called Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, in speaking, there is going to be room a little later for a major debate on education in Barbados but I just wanted to insert those points because Barbadians believe, sometimes, that we might be wasting our money on education. Sir, I want to dissuade them from that particular view, that any country that cares about its people and that cares about its development, that it would continue to expend resources on the development of its people. Therefore, the guarantee of the \$2.7 million out of the US\$5.5 million in this University of the West Indies Guarantee (Amendment) Bill, 2009, is an investment in the people of Barbados, and it is an investment across the Region.

Mr. Speaker, one has not had as yet any default by any of the Campuses in relation to guarantees by the individual Government. When one peruses their financial

statements, you would realise that they have been honouring their commitments as a result of the various letters of comfort, and various guarantees provided by the State. Sir, one would hope that the university would continue to seek other resources beyond the resources provided by the various Member Governments of the University of the West Indies, that they would continue to find space for graduate programmes both the taught Masters and the research agenda of the university, that the technology would be further integrated, and that more flexibility learning modalities will reach out to the student population, those who do not want to sit in a classroom for hours on end, but are able to go online via the world wide web and access training and education for their citizens.

Mr. Speaker, even now, there are major online universities across the web, adequately and properly accredited, where many Barbadian students are going online accessing and training through these accredited institutions and developing themselves. Therefore, the University of the West Indies also has to participate in that wider outreach, both at the level of the open campus of the University of the West Indies, as well as the campuses within the various territories of the University of the West Indies.

Sir, one of the Prime Ministers of this country, the Right Honourable Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford - I believe it was shared in the newspapers - would be honoured at the graduation ceremony of the University of the West Indies, this year, for his outstanding work in education and politics in this country. Sir, that is another role that the university plays in recognising the outstanding contribution of citizens of Barbados and giving them the appropriate letters to attach to their names.

Mr. Speaker, with those few remarks, in relation to this matter, I beg to move that this Amendment Bill be read a second time.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: I beg to second that, Sir.

H/A38/5.30 p.m. Sequence 38

Tuesday June 09, 2009

House A38, Sequence 39, 5.30 p.m.

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

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Labour Party has always been in the vanguard of ensuring that Barbadians receive quality education, and while I would not want to dig too deeply into the issues, because I too, eagerly await a debate

on education, at this time, I will indicate our support for the Bill as outlined by the Honourable Member Minister of Education.

I want to reaffirm the public of Barbados of the role of education. We are a small country with limited resources. Indeed, our real resources are our people. We do not have the gold, mineral ore, jewels and other things that a lot of other countries have, but we know that our people are our best resource. Therefore, any money that is put into the development of our people, would be supported by the Barbados Labour Party, as has been the case for generations.

I believe that education is one of the roots that not only Barbadians but, indeed, other persons in the world use, in order to prepare citizens for life. I believe that we must continue to focus, in our system on developing rounded individuals with good characters, persons who are caring, persons who know how to share, not only in the things they have, money, food and so on, but the voluntary service that is necessary through giving back to communities and to the society, and the respect for Law and Order.

As I said, it is critical that we look at human resource development. Therefore, we as a service oriented country, without these natural resources, as is the case with others, must continue to place great emphasis on educating our people and preparing them.

Mr. Speaker, we know of many partnerships in the Caribbean. Indeed, we all know about CARIFTA, Cricket, the whole effort towards the CARICOM Single Market and Economy but, of course, for a long time as well, we know of the University of the West Indies and the partnership.

Mr. Speaker, I believe if the Honourable Minister had not put in a few little knocks here and there on the Barbados Labour Party, I would have really let things flow in a more comprehensive way, without speaking about our own achievements in education in a nutshell. Therefore, I want to focus on the efforts that were made by a Barbados Labour Party Government in 1995-96 after the austerity measures that were instituted by the previous Democratic Labour Party Government that ended in September 1994. A lot of it surrounded the same University of the West Indies, and the plans that we learnt of for Barbadian students to pay university costs.

As a result, Mr. Speaker, we all know of that special committee that was delegated the responsibility to have Town Hall meetings. The Committee was given a Terms of Reference, to be able to hear from the people of Barbados, the role of the Government in this whole exercise. Sir, I am proud to say that a Cabinet, under the Barbados Labour Party, ensured that all Barbadian students at the University

of the West Indies must have their education financed by the Government.

Asides.

Miss C.Y. FORDE: I would not support any effort, in the future, of Barbadian students not being able to be given that opportunity, especially when we acknowledge from whence we have come.

As I said, Sir, in the nutshell, I would want to make reference to the White Paper in 1995/1996 focussing on curriculum reform, and a number of other projects and programmes that emanated from that exercise that, I believe, has helped to propel Barbados to the level it is at today. Therefore, the whole theme of "each one matters" and "quality education for all," focussed a lot on the primary education as well as the secondary education.

Mr. Speaker, you will agree with me that as a result of reinforcing that aspect of development at that lower level, the formative years, it will give the benefits, when students are ready to leave secondary school, to enter the tertiary institution, and would have enabled us to eliminate a number of deficits. We still have a lot of them and we can see the proof of the pudding as we move forward in this year and years to come, because the 40 per cent of the students that were identified at CXC level, when we did the White Paper and presented it, Sir, and instituted the measures, has now shown us a benefit of more than 60 per cent of our students gaining passes at CXC level.

This comes, Sir, as a result of EduTech, and children having a more intimate role to play in their own education, the enhancement of the schools plants, the training of teachers, in infusion of the technology in lessons, the flexible transfer system where students who were scoring 30 per cent or less, were given the privilege to defer for one year. I am talking about the stabilisation programme at the primary level, that now helps us to be able to reap the benefits of the escalation of numbers in these institutions.

Sir, in addition, the Teacher Appraisal and Continuous Assessment and all of that, is still in the works and I believe that some further investigation and research need to be put in place, if we are to really reap further benefits, and the restructuring of the 11-Plus or the Common Entrance, where a large percentage of it used to involve multiple choice questions.

We found that sometimes children were playing "enee-menee-minee-moe," if they were not sure and, of course, they could hit or miss in some instances, therefore, the open-ended questions, where children are now required, in most of the papers, to give a written response, helped to change that whole outlook.

Mr. Speaker, we also instituted the reading policy that the Ministry of Education instituted, the diagnostic and remedial testing for students, the Parent Volunteer Programme, the thrust towards universal nursery education, the plans for the National Diploma, so that students who leave school, if they do not write the CXC's, will still be able to have some kind of document to show they have reached third form level, fourth form level and so on, as the case may be.

Mr. Speaker, in 2006 in the Budget, the Barbados Labour Party determined that we have too many deficits in the trade and artisan areas and, perhaps, that would have been the start-up of seeing the influx of a number of non-nationals working in the construction industry that was booming. Sir, six schools were put in the pilot. Additional funds were offered, and space made available at the six schools for an Industrial Arts' Wing.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this has also complemented what had been happening in the Schools' Industrial Arts Exhibition, where three schools, in particular, as I remember, were dominating every year. They were St. Lucy Secondary, St. Leonard's Boys' and Princess Margaret schools, where persons felt they are at the bottom of the ladder and, therefore, these children cannot make tables and they cannot measure. Far from it, Mr. Speaker, those children did excellent work.

Sir, the Barbados Lumber Company, at that time, sponsored the exhibition and I know that it is still going on, but we felt that other schools should be involved, and the Grantley Adams Memorial School was included, at some point in time, and they do excellent work as well.

House A38, Sequence 39, 5.40 p.m.

Tuesday, June 09, 2009

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Those six schools that were identified in that pilot were the Combermere School, Coleridge and Parry School, St. George Secondary, Grantley Adams Memorial, St. Lucy Secondary and St. Leonard's Boys'. The areas of focus have to do with the building trade, carpentry, masonry, tiling, painting, electrical installation, steel bending and any other skill identified.

This brought us to another level, because we are still at the secondary level, where the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic was offering an artisan certificate. Of course, every year 150 graduates have a chance to pursue further training or they would have done so well, they were ready for the workforce. Sir, that is another component of what was done at that level. Mr. Speaker, we can boast of our students coming out ready to face the world of work and to offer quality service.

Mr. Speaker, the national vocational qualifications are being pursued. The planning was taking place, and I believe that the Ministry is fairly advanced with it. Of course, the Caribbean vocational qualification is also important. I know that now that the Accreditation Council has been established, they would be able to look at quality and currency and so.

Mr. Speaker, all of these efforts were put in place, and I would not go any deeper into them except to say that the Barbados Community College, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and Erdiston Teachers' College, saw the benefits of expansion over the 14-year period that the others on That Side continue to say is a sordid mess, nothing happened in 14 years, and keep rehearsing it.

It is so monotonous and the public of Barbados have become so tired of hearing them say that because they have the evidence in their households and in their communities across the length and breadth of Barbados. The people of Barbados have grown tired of hearing it, so they need to come with a new chorus.

Mr. Speaker, in 1997, the Barbados Community College had 2 853 students on average. With the implementation of new programmes and the expansion of the plant, in 2007, my last report, there were nearly 4 500 students. In 1997, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, I am not going to go back to 1994, because the numbers were so small, had 2 292 students and that number rose by about 600 to about 2 872. Erdiston Teachers' Training College had 176 students.

Do not forget, Mr. Speaker, that in 1994, the Democratic Labour Party literally shut down Erdiston Teachers' Training College. This Barbados Labour Party opened back up the training and looked at the pre-Erdiston courses, and now it is a vibrant entity again. Mr. Speaker, the enrollment moved from 176 to 301. Enrollment at the University of the West Indies moved from 3 568 in 1997 to 7 311 in 2007.

The Honourable Member spoke just now about 7 500, so we are speaking with truth, and I respect the Honourable Minister of Education for his forthrightness.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to deal with the enrollment at the University of the West Indies now. What I would like to say further, is that Erdiston Teachers' Training College, the Barbados Community College and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic turn away thousands of individuals every year, not just young people.

Mr. Speaker, when you are now out of school, you have that avarice and that fire in your belly to want to be able to pursue your studies further. Of course, some parents do say to their children, you are not staying here to lime in

my house every minute on a computer talking with a fellow or with a girl and getting lawless and so. They want to see their children off the streets and being meaningfully engaged in improving themselves.

Sir, when we witnessed the number of individuals who were being turned away from those institutions every year, we sought to institute a policy for the University College of Barbados. Today, I am not hearing anything about it. The point I want to make is that we are hearing little or nothing today about the University College of Barbados on which we had spent large sums of money, acquired properties and designated a special unit to work with it.

Sir, that facility was conceptualized to ensure that persons applying for the start of school in September, would be minimised and that more of them would be incorporated into the system. Sir, notice that I am not only referring to the real educational component, that I spoke about the industrial arts and crafts, the performing arts and a number of other areas that the University College would have been looking at.

Sir, one of the main objectives was to expand access to the world-class tertiary institutions. Another one was to respond in a proactive manner to the demand of existing programmes, to upgrade the programmes, curricula and so on. Sir, it called for the amalgamation of Erdiston Teachers' Training College, the Barbados Community College and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic.

Sir, we were on the threshold of launching that University College of Barbados when we left office. We knew that the Principals of those institutions were waiting for appointments, because we did not want to assign them to the institutions and then with the amalgamation it had caused any dislocation.

Mind you, Mr. Speaker, those Principals have been doing an excellent job. I believe that people who are performing should get the credit that is due. They have all fit the profile for the positions they are in. Mr. Speaker, I do not know to this day where they are. The point is, where will our children go when they leave school this September, since this University College of Barbados has not been properly established or launched as the case may be?

Sir, I also know that the legislation was almost ready. There were negotiations with the various unions and so on. I am saying all of that, Mr. Speaker, because I believe that if we are going to continue to educate our people, to build up their hopes and to help them with these various aspirations and so, then we must be able to accommodate them at the time when they are ready to

move to the next level, whether it be at the primary, secondary or tertiary level.

Mr. Speaker, 28 per cent of the students at that time moved from secondary to tertiary institutions. Our efforts over the years, as has been explained by the Honourable Minister, indicated that approximately 35 per cent, so we are climbing. We must not have that large number of students knocking all over the place while they are waiting to acquire further education. I know they can become very disenchanted and be involved in so many activities, because their dreams and their aspirations have not been met. Therefore, I would wish for the Honourable Minister to give us word on what is happening.

You would appreciate, Mr. Speaker, that our Manifesto of 2003-2008 emphasised the vision of a graduate in every household, whether they be from the Barbados Community College, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, Erdiston Teachers' Training College or the University of the West Indies. Mr. Speaker, I believe that by 2020, we can achieve that goal. However, we must put measures in place to look after the students who meet the criteria. Because there is no physical capacity to accommodate them, they are left out on the streets.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to make mention of a Democratic Labour Party in this era right here in this country in 2009, where a former tutor stood in here and lambasted the University of the West Indies, and said what kind of future are we developing and that half of them cannot read and write.

House A38 Sequence 40

5.50 p.m.

Tuesday, June 09, 2009

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, that comment was supported by the Honourable Attorney-General. I do not know if it was a personal challenge or whatever that he had with the university, but if I were a tutor at the University of the West Indies and those challenges were showing their ugly heads when I was lecturing, I would have had to have some kind of discussion with the Faculty Head and with the Principal of that institution.

Sir, on the one hand we cannot be building up, and on the other, be using this Floor of this Honourable Chamber to tear down what we are trying to build up. There are ways in which those issues can be managed in order to cushion their impact.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that we have a number of people in here who have passed through the University of the West Indies, who have studied in other countries, Sir,

that if we were to sit and analyse their level of ability, we would give them a minus two. Therefore, I do not think it is fair for us to be using this Honourable Chamber to be lambasting others, when Honourable Members on that side could sit with their Honourable Minister, the Minister of Education and Human Resource Development and discuss the issue. They could all work together in a conscientious fashion, to be able to address most of those issues that may have been identified.

Sir, that is how Honourable Members on the Other Side operate. I am sure when that discussion was taking place, they totally forgot the public was listening and, of course, they got a good bashing, not only from the Principal, but from others in this country.

Mr. Speaker, not only were we looking at the establishment of a University College of Barbados, the Barbados Labour Party also looked at the physical plant of the University of the West Indies.

Sir, the Minister of Education and Human Resource Development spoke at length of the expansion at the Cave Hill Campus. He spoke to the Errol Barrow Centre for Creative Imaginations. He spoke to the other facilities that have been put in place on the lefthand side going down University Hill.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the right hand side, the Prospect location and lower Black Rock, that 33 acres of land that was offered by the Barbados Labour Party to the University of the West Indies, this was a conscious decision to have those 33 acres offered to the university for its expansion.

Sir, if the University of the West Indies is expanding at different levels and more and more students are coming in, there must be upgraded physical infrastructure, as well as upgraded social programmes, upgraded sporting programmes, coupled with the academic programmes, to be able to propel the students.

Sir, with the vision of the Barbados Labour Party, we ensured that 33 acres of land was put to its best use. Sir, every day, like a beacon on a hill, we can see it there, helping to educate our children. Sir, we will continue to lend our support to those programmes.

Mr. Speaker, I believe too that in relation to areas where programmes can be offered, that the University of the West Indies may be able to capitalise on those areas.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic has a flexible learning programme, an e-learning technology programme, and that they are making an intake of funds as a result of that programme, because of the fact that students, both regionally and

internationally, are using the services through this technology. I believe too that the e-learning component can be instituted further because of the economic benefits that can be derived from it. I believe too, that the regional and international students could benefit and that it would help with the sustainability of the University of the West Indies.

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, I acknowledge and respect the partnership agreement. I believe those countries that do not have campuses on them would benefit by the injection of these funds, which have been reported to us on This Side as being agreed to by the three countries that have campuses, where these countries will put in the funding, in order to establish those universities in the respective country.

Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to the Honourable Members, through you, that we support the partnership agreement, but that we look forward to a full debate on education, where we can look at aspects of growth and development, where we can offer our suggestions to some of the areas that can be strengthened, where we can talk about communities and how they could further expand the voluntary programmes. I am not going to talk about the ones that have already been mentioned, the ones which were implemented in the last few months, because I have enough challenges understanding them and knowing where Government's money has been spent.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that as long as the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development continues with the reading policy, continues with the teacher's appraisal scheme, which is so very vital, continues with the teacher training programmes, continues to work towards an institution - they do not necessarily have to call it the University College of Barbados - that will take care of those persons who are turned away every year. Sir, that would help Barbados to be able to develop professionals, who would not only be used here in this country for employment, training or advisory purposes, but where they would be used across the Region and across the rest of the world.

Barbados has always been at the fore-front of exporting some of its labour through its services. It has always been very good at using its own people to help advance the various causes. Sir, I believe that as long as we get on the right footing, it would become possible for our workers to be able to go into the international arena, and to carry on their duties in the manner that Barbadians of the past, have been doing over the many years.

Mr. Speaker, with those comments, I would not worry with the queries I had previous to having a discussion with an Honourable Member, where that Honourable Member has provided clarifications in relation

to this Amendment. Therefore, I want to say that the Barbados Labour Party will support this Bill.

Sir, I would want to say too that we will continue to keep our eyes and ears open for the various areas in which the Democratic Labour Party would slip. Sir, when that happens, we will criticise them in the various fashions, and where there are areas of advancement, we will give the praise, while being cognizant of the fact that it was the Barbados Labour Party that laid the foundation through the education reform package of which we are now reaping the success 12 years later.

Mr. Speaker, when one talks about the development of a country, that development does not happen in two, five or 10 years. Sometimes it takes a quarter of a century in order for it to give the reality of what the aims and goals are to be. We might have to do a little brushing up here and there, but I believe that the Minister will continue to look after the interest of all in education. I believe he would look after the human development of our people.

Sir, as long as the Minister sticks to the straight and narrow path in that respect, the Barbados Labour Party would have absolutely no challenge in supporting it because at the end of the day, those who would benefit would be our children, neighbours, constituents, who overall, are Barbadians. Therefore, without nitpicking, we will lend our support.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, in supporting this Resolution proposed by the Honourable Minister of Education and Human Resource Development, I want to say a few words on this matter of education, particularly at the tertiary level. I want to begin by congratulating the Honourable Minister for his very erudite presentation in introducing this matter to this Honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, I would prefer, when it comes to matters of education and health, if we could avoid not becoming too overtly political and not try to seek to score cheap political points. I would prefer too if we could also try not to distort the record, but that we should speak fairly, frankly and firmly.

Mr. Speaker, I must say, without delaying too much of this Honourable House's time, that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas has tried to convey the impression that someone on This Side, particularly I, said that people at the University of the West Indies could not read or write. Sir, I did not bother to rise on a point of order because I did not want to stop the Honourable Member from stumbling

to the conclusion of her speech, even though it was clear that the Honourable Member could not get the landing gear down. Mr. Speaker, I never said that.

H:No. A38A(41)

6.00 p.m.

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Sir, as a former tutor and lecturer right up to the Master's level in the university, I expressed concerns, which I did not only express here in the House, but I have expressed to the university, having sat on a review panel for the programmes in the Social Sciences Department with Professor Peeler from Harvard University, and with Professor Viciani from the University of the West Indies Campus at Mona, that when we interviewed, spoke to and reviewed scripts written by students, in our experience as lecturers, but also in our experience as examiners, also in our experience as persons sitting on that panel, that everyone, including the students, agreed that the quality and standard of writing had declined to some significant extent and, Sir, I stand by that comment.

Mr. Speaker, it is not that persons cannot read or write, but we cannot push these things under the carpet. The Minister has only had to say this week at the announcement of the results of the 11 Plus Common Entrance Examination, that the officials have some level of concern with the use of the English grammar. Mr. Speaker, I do not have the most perfect grammar in the world either, nobody in here does, but at least there are some basic things that we know and understand.

Sir, sometimes it is not even the grammar, it is the cutting of corners, Mr. Speaker, in the use of the language. It is people writing university scripts and using what I call "internet speech" or "text speech" like "ppl" for people, "gov" for Government and some other kind of thing that some of the older lecturers do not understand.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that if we are to strive for a higher level of learning and practice in the written and spoken word, then we have to understand that there is a time and place for everything. If you are writing a script in university, then you have to present it at a certain standard. Sir, that is all I was saying.

Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Member takes that to say that people cannot read and write, that is unfortunate, but that is not what I meant.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Sir, I am not elucidating. I said what I said, I meant what I said and, Sir, I stand by that.

Mr. Speaker, I make the point that students are transitioning because of this policy of one graduate in every household, which, of course, I heard the Honourable Member for St. Thomas elucidated on, and that is not what the policy was, when expressed by the Barbados Labour Party.

They said, "one university graduate", but the Honourable Member, in her speech said, "one graduate, whether it is the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, the Barbados Community College or the University of the West Indies" but, Sir, that is not what the policy was.

The policy, as expressed by the Barbados Labour Party, was one university graduate and, Sir, the Barbados Community College is not a university, at least, not as far as I know. In fact, when one heard the Honourable Member speak about the Barbados Community College, it is a good thing that we are a good distance away from lunch, having had it at 1:00 o'clock, because you would not believe it is the same Barbados Labour Party that fought vehemently the former Minister of Education, now Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford, the former Honourable Member for St. Michael South, to not have a community college in Barbados. Sir, when the foundations of tertiary education were being solidified and expanded that Party...

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, I said I am not going to do the politics thing today....

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Well, that makes you uncomfortable, but that history is the history and, Sir, you cannot rewrite the history. Mr. Speaker, just as we did not want free school meals, just as we did not want free bus rides, anything to solidify education...

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, I am not going down there, because it makes Honourable Members on the Other Side a little uncomfortable. Sir, let us deal with the fundamental facts. We are all happy that the university has expanded, that there are a number of students going to the university, more than they were five years, or 10 years ago.

Sir, we are all happy for that. If every person, who is desirous of going to the University of the West Indies was able to get there, I am happy for them and I am even more happy for Barbados, because it means that it is additional

human resources at a high level that we would have trained. However, there has to be a purpose and method to it. There has to be a reasoning. There has to be logic and the mechanism that underwrites a simple comprehension of the principle of form following function.

Mr. Speaker, I am not so interested in how many people go through the doors of the university, I am interested in the quality that comes out. Sir, the University of the West Indies and tertiary education is not fast food like at Kentucky, where you drive through and order something. Sir, it is not that. It is a serious place and we have to be very careful about the quality of the teaching, of the curriculum and of the steady patterns and student patterns at the University of the West Indies. Sir, that is all I am concerned about.

Mr. Speaker, that is my full concern and I believe I speak for my colleagues when I say that is the concern of this Government. Sir, it is quality education. It is not quantity education, so getting up and citing figures that in this year there were 3 000, that in that year there were 5 000 and that in this year there were 7 000 sounds good for the simpletons that hang around the Barbados Labour Party, but for the serious people in the Democratic Labour Party, that does not break a sweat.

Mr. Speaker, understand what I am saying, we are looking at programmes that are being introduced, in my mind...

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Sir, I would not say contradict the other, but they certainly do not necessarily compliment. In fact, in many instances, particularly at the Master's level, they compete.

I have made the point that the planners of the University of the West Indies just cannot get up on some given day, feeling good in mind and spirit, and look around for the next degree to create. It has to match what is happening in the society and what skills we need to have, in order to promote and sustain the development, what that development is going to be and the direction in which it will go, whether in science and technology, whether in services, whether in specialised areas like trade policy, or whatever the case maybe. Sir, you cannot just create a course.

As I said before, there is a course on cricket, on integration study and on trade policy. Sir, there is a course on every possible thing and when you go through the list of the courses being done, there is an uneasy and eerie similarity in it, except for the name of the final degree. Sir, I am saying there has to be a rationalisation of these courses at the University of the West Indies.

Mr. Speaker, there was a time when the regional nature of this university was in plain sight for all to see, where, as an instrument of integration, the Campus at Barbados was known for its Law Faculty, the Campus at St. Augustine was known for Engineering and the Campus at Mona was known for Medicine. Sir, not that the others did not have between them smaller programmes, but it fused the integration element within the society.

Mr. Speaker, many of my best friends are non-Barbadians and they are people I met at the university from other island, but today, to draw on the words of that eminent Barbadian, George Lamming, this network of polytechnics that we seem to have created in the Caribbean with everybody wanting a law faculty and a Law programme, everybody wanting a medical faculty and a medical programme, everybody wanting an engineering faculty and a technical programme, is placing considerable pressure on the resources of countries to keep up with that.

H/A38/6.10 p.m. Sequence 42

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Sir, Barbados knows it, because Barbados is the one country that at least we can say with some degree of certainty, guarantees a free university education right up to, at least, the Master's level. Where are these resources coming from? You cannot just keep piling on and then go to the Government and, Oh! I have this thing, send the students and pay for them. We have to look at the cost associated with it. Then, when you do a comparison of the objectives laid out by the Government, in its various strategic plans, how do they match with what we have? That is the level of planning that I know the Honourable Minister of Education is concerned about and has been looking at.

Sir, then there is the issue of financing. The University has been able to raise a lot of money, but we know generally the University relies very heavily, certainly, the Campus here in Barbados, on the Government of Barbados for support, whether it is through something like this, or it is in direct support. We who are committed to the development of Barbados and young people in Barbados, give our fullest support to it, but it is not something that can continue to be an unbridled horse, galloping away on the financial fields of Barbados. Sir, you have to sit down and look at it very carefully. That is why I say it is important that we know what we want to have.

Sir, you have a situation in which, and I know from my Ministry, other people must know - the Honourable Member for Christ Church South must know, and the Honourable Member for St. Philip North must know that we have a shortage of Technical Officers, good technicians in a number of areas, civil and building engineering,

environmental engineering. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East can tell you that. So, who are we training? What are we training them in?

Sir, I have made this point. Every student in Barbados seems to want to do a degree in Management. Everybody wants to do a degree in Management because they believe that once they get a BSc. in Management Studies they are going at somebody's shop to manage next week. It is not true. It is not happening, and therefore, we have to look at absorption capacity and we have to look at batching it towards what we need to do in our society. Therefore, once we do that, we can better rationalise the resources that are spent by the University.

I am not taken up by all the fancy buildings. I like to see that. It is beautiful when you go up there. The cricket field is fantastic. I am concerned about the quality of the education. I am not concerned about the cricket field, so telling me that when you drive down the right side you see all these new buildings, that is all good and well. I congratulate the Principal and his staff, but I also want to see and hear that when my students are doing exams you do not say the pass mark is 40 per cent and when a fellow gets 35 per cent you tell a lecturer bring him up, either fail him outright or bring him up to the 40 per cent.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I did not say anybody did that, because I know you would run off and say I said so. I said that I do not want to hear that happened. I do not want to hear that is happening.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I never said that I am tired hearing that. I said I do not want to hear that happening. I know what I am talking about.

Sir, I want to ensure that when people do a course of study and they leave the University, that they have some level of competence in the area which they studied. I want also to know that it can put them almost directly into the workforce, and with additional training, the discipline of having done a degree.

Sir, when I went to my first interview, after completing my degree, at the Immigration Department, I did my degree in Political Science. The then Chief Immigration Officer told me, "This is immigration. This is something about immigration Law. What qualifies you? You did a degree in Political Science." I responded to her by saying, "I may not have done Law or anything associated with immigration, but I have the discipline." That is what you called them. The discipline of mind to be able to understand and comprehend in the shortest order

what needs to be done as an Immigration Officer. That is what we need from our students.

Sir, we have to be very clear in this country in terms of our forward planning, about what we want to achieve as a country that has a proud history of tertiary education.

The Democratic Labour Party does not have to sit down silent on any question of education in Barbados, and will not, but we are not going to participate in idle boast about who did what, when and where, if in fact Rome is burning. We have to pay some attention to it.

Sir, the other point is this. We pay very handsome sums at the University of the West Indies to Lecturers and Assistant Lecturers at that Campus. I am saying, as a former student and as a watcher of the University's business, I am not impressed with the level of production and publishing. There used to be an old university saying, "publish or perish". Well if that were held to any standard in Barbados, a lot of people would not survive. We have to ensure that we see the type of work coming out.

Sir, I am satisfied, to some extent, that the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute has been making an effort in this regard, but we need to see it right down through the system. If it is that we have to give lecturers some time off to go and do some research, some authentic empirical field research that assists the wider community in its efforts to development, not only and just for consultancies, as developed now, because apparently you cannot get anybody to do anything unless you put 'Consultancy' on it. I am afraid of the first three letters in the word consultancy. Some of these people write consultancies for you, and when you are finished, you have to write it all over again.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: C-O-N. Everybody is a consultant.

I am saying that the research and the pursuit of knowledge at a tertiary institution has to be one of the primary bases for those engaged in academia, not just for the money, but for the learning, for adding to knowledge, for having pay review work being published all around the world and being recognised as such. Therefore, I think this is a matter that the Minister of Education and the officials in the Ministry have to encourage the University of the West Indies, to encourage their own people to do a lot more of.

I know the Principal of the University, Professor Beckles, is, of course, a leading light in this particular regard. I know that other people like Dr. Don Marshall, and others, have been participating, Professor Downes included, but we need more people, particularly the

younger people who are coming into faculty to do a lot more publishing and to get it out there in the community where it would help.

I support this measure and I stand here, particularly proud, that we have a university that has done excellently over the years. What is the motto of the University? "Oriens Ex Occident Lux", which means, "Light Rising From The West". We know it. I hope we do.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I want to conclude on this matter and I am going to give a little trouble to my friend, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. I think he knows what I am going to speak about, because, after all, I am a Parliamentary Representative and being one I was only yesterday, again in my Constituency visiting the Free Hill area, Black Rock, which is literally in the back part of the University. When I was growing up, when the University of the West Indies was placed there, that village was very small. It has now grown. There are several households over there, a lot of little children, St. Stephen's Primary School, located at the top, even more little children, and in those days the University only had a few hundred people. Today, as the Honourable Member for St. Thomas said, there are almost 8 000 students. Certainly more than 8 000 if you add the staff to the students.

H A38 6.20 p.m. Sequence 43

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House A38, Sequence 44, 6.20 p.m.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I am sure that at least half of those persons drive an automobile. Most of the classes take place at night and there is considerable traffic that passes down from the University of the West Indies through Free Hill, and it is posing a tremendous danger to primary school students and to the residents, particularly the children who play in those streets.

Sir, that area is being used as some type of thoroughfare for people who do not want to go through the front of the university, so they come through Free Hill down through Connell Road - I carried the Minister and showed him, and I hope that the Ministry of Transport and Works is going to go and fix the grill that has been there needing to be fixed ever since - then they swing by Royal Bank and go up the hill, just to beat the traffic going through the front. It is a dangerous exercise.

Sir, I am going to invite, with the concurrence of the Honourable Minister, the staff of the Ministry, to have a Town Hall meeting with the residents and the University of the West Indies, because when I was younger, that back

road to the university was one-way. Somebody has now made it two-way, so you have traffic up and down there. It is a dangerous thing, and it needs to be addressed.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I said that I am going to give my colleague a little trouble. He knows that I have spoken to him about it, but that is not all. I visited the area with members of the Drainage Unit, thanks to the Minister of the Environment, Water Resources and Drainage.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have just about five more minutes to conclude, and you ought to consider the whole question of relevance to the particular matter being discussed.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Thank you, Sir, I am speaking to relevance because the university has to be the community it is in, and if you are discussing the university and what the university is doing effects the community, you have to speak about that, Mr. Speaker.

The final point I am making, Mr. Speaker, is this, and I really need to make this point because when we went on the tour with the persons from the Drainage Unit, it was discovered that in the new building, a lot of the construction that has gone on at the university has actually aggravated the flooding in those surrounding areas, particularly in the Free Hill area.

Indeed, we found a very deep well, almost 50 or 60 feet deep, in which no water at all is being collected, because the person who was doing the construction up there, rather than doing the right thing and put the stuff in the skip that was provided by the people who were doing the construction, they were throwing it down into the gully, and now they have cement bricks and bags and whatever else blocking that well. Therefore, the water goes around the well rather than going in the well and it is flooding away. Sir, whenever it rains, St. Stephen's School floods, and the Honourable Minister of Education would agree, confer and verify what we are doing.

Mr. Speaker, we are saying that the university as an institution of the community, must not only speak to the community on these grand issues of the economy in the society, but they must also accept their responsibility, as corporate citizens within the community, to ensure that they do not cause unnecessary disruption or present danger to the persons who, eventually, may have to use the same university.

Sir, I want to say that I encourage those members of the staff of those Ministries to listen out, because we will have a Town Hall Meeting and I hope that they will be there to address those issues, so that the University of the

West Indies can co-exist as an institution, with the community within which it is placed, so that we can have a holistic and symbiotic relationship that promotes the very best development of the people of Barbados and, certainly, the people of this Region.

I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank you, again.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for the City.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this matter before this Honourable Chamber. I would just like to pick up from where the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West stopped. I wish to say that there is nothing wrong with a country in a very frank manner, looking at any deficiencies which present themselves, in terms of the graduates which are being produced by a university in this case.

Mr. Speaker, I remember in the 1980s, Use of English was compulsory for students in the then Faculty of Natural Sciences at the Cave Hill Campus, and Arts and General Studies, and we had the late Dr. Allsopp, God rest him in his grave, who did a tremendous amount of work in that Use of English Programme. I actually sat in his class and was very excited and enthusiastic, as he developed the Caribbean Lexicography Project, creating a Caribbean English Dictionary. He is one of the Caribbean persons on the Oxford Dictionary Board.

The point I am making is that back then in the 1980s, it was found necessary by the university administration to actually institute a proficiency test in English for students in those Faculties, because they found that even if they had the "O" Level or CXC English Language, issues of grammar, which would not be formally taught in the academic programmes at the university, serious deficiencies were found in that regard, and students who did not pass that Proficiency Test in English, had to do a Remedial English Grammar "O" Level/CXC type crash course.

Sir, the university was not in denial, as Honourable Members on the Other Side would wish us to think, but they accepted that this was a clear deficiency in the quality of the students being produced and they thought to address it. Therefore, I am saying that I believe this is what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West is highlighting, that we have to ensure that not only do we have quantity in terms of high numbers of graduates, but we have quality, and there must be quality assurance in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, you would have heard the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development in recent days, indicating that there seems to be some challenges in the issue of sentence construction and the production of language. This was manifested by the fact that in Section B of this year's Common Entrance English Paper, a significant number of the students could only garner one out of possibly two marks in each of those questions.

The fact that they got one mark demonstrated that there was some comprehension, they understood what was required, but they fell down in terms of the construction of sentences, in the form of standard English principles, and that is why they did not get the second mark. Clearly, it suggests to me that we need to encourage more reading among our students.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West indicated that with this current era of high technology, the use of the computer, which can be very positive, we do have some challenges in terms of the fact that not as many students these days - in fact, people in general - read as much as they did in the past.

Sir, at that time, people read books by Enid Blyton, Louis LaMoore, Nancy Drew and all the others, and they actually signed up in the public libraries. Sir, you know the Barbados Labour Party had the main branch of the public library closed for years and, therefore, created challenges for students at all levels from primary to tertiary. Now, thanks to the good work of the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central, we now have a state-of-the-art modern building at Independence Square open for the public.

I am urging members of the public to promote reading. Let your children join the nearest branch library and encourage them to read. There is so much usage of the television and the Internet.

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6.30 p.m.

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Hon. P. M. T. TODD: We can use the Internet for intellectual stimulation as well. However, with all of the various computer games, the use of MultiChoice, Direct TV and so on, many people are not spending quality time in terms of quiet reading, and therefore their vocabulary and their ability to express themselves in standard English is limited.

Mr. Speaker, I invite the radio stations and the television stations to ensure that there is a place for the vernacular, our native language. I am not denying that. I am very proud to speak in the vernacular when necessary.

That is part of our culture and we should not be ashamed of it, but we must know that there is the question of appropriateness and there is an occasion when we would have to be proficient in the use of standard English.

Therefore, the DJs and the programmers and so on must ensure that we do not send mixed signal to the community where people believe that standard English is not necessary at all and one could get by with just the vernacular and then, of course, we are unable to function in a modern society, especially interfacing in the international arena where standard English would be required on occasions.

Mr. Speaker, what comes to mind in terms of improving quality control, in terms of the standard of performance and proficiency of our students at the University of the West Indies, is the issue of external examiners. I know that in my time it was commonplace to have external examiners for most of the particular subject areas, be it Statistics, Pure Mathematics, Computer Science or what have you. I know that perhaps due to cost constraints, this situation is no longer existing in many instances, so that this external examiner is no longer present.

That external examiner would come in on a yearly basis and interface with the lecturers and examine the final examinations to ensure that the high quality is maintained to enable the University of the West Indies to have our degrees internationally accredited. This is an issue that I would invite the University of the West Indies officials to examine in more detail.

Nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the expansion in a planned way, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West said, with relevance to the human resource needs of our country. I support the expansion of the university within the budgetary constraints of our country.

Mr. Speaker, I note that Professor Avinash Persaud, the world renowned Barbadian Economist, made the point, in terms of strategies, that developing countries like Barbados can employ, in the face of the current global economic downturn, that one strategy would be to invest heavily in the education sector. Knowledge is power as it were. In fact, the Democratic Labour Party has been a pioneer in this regard where we were visionary and introduced fully taxpayers' funded education from primary to tertiary level.

Mr. Speaker, this strong and vibrant middle-class that exists in Barbados owes its existence to these visionary policies, which gave children of the working-class access to tertiary education where they are able to become

accountants, doctors, lawyers, teachers, engineers, et cetera. This also propelled national productivity.

Mr. Speaker, we may take this for granted, but in other territories, even within the Caribbean, there is not a very prominent middle-class. You are either very rich or very poor. In this regard, the rich gets richer and the poor gets poorer, because education is not accessible free of cost at the secondary and tertiary levels. This is something that we should, as a country, hold on to dearly. It is in the national interest, and so, any financial sacrifices we make, would redound to the benefit of the citizens and the country as a whole in the long run, but it must be planned.

In North America people can have degrees in all types of majors that we have not even seen yet. Even with the name of the degree, you are not really sure what was the major emphasis. They do a lot of general studies degrees where you are not really majoring in anything. You are just doing a credit here and a credit there, and so your ability to be an asset to any business entity is compromised, and you have to then go on to post-graduate studies to really be in a marketable position.

Mr. Speaker, we must be wary of this in terms of our Bachelor Degree being so general, that there is not enough exposure in terms of the content of the curriculum to a particular subject area that the student would be sufficiently proficient in.

Mr. Speaker, I was viewing the BBC News or CNN a few weeks ago and it was pointed out that in the United Kingdom, many of the persons who were displaced as a result of the global economic meltdown in the British economy and were, therefore, unemployed, were actually retooling and applying and getting jobs in the teaching profession where there is a global shortage, certainly in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Speaker, persons are now going on to do teaching professional qualifications and so on. Mr. Speaker, although they would be making a little less money than in the financial sector, they are gainfully employed and are not a burden to the society.

In terms of human resource development, this is where we need to ensure that opportunities are provided for the workforce, so that they can retool, and therefore transition from one industry that is retreating into another one that is growing.

Mr. Speaker, we must be appreciative of this, and therefore, I look forward to collaboration between the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development.

The Prime Minister has been very visionary in terms of creating this Department called Human Resource Development as part of the Ministry of Education, where we are realizing that the development of the human resource is vital for national development.

We as a country do not have many natural resources in terms of oil and minerals, but we have a very resourceful and resolute people, and we are seeking to optimize the human resource potential of our country. Mr. Speaker, once we can channel the people in the right direction where there is a need, then we are well on our way.

Mr. Speaker, let me speak specifically about the University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus plant. I believe there is a need for security, not just at Cave Hill, but at all three Campuses. I was fortunate to be Guild President in my time and would have visited both the Mona Campus and the St. Augustine's Campus on a number of occasions to attend the various university meetings. A few days ago you heard, Mr. Speaker, that just outside of the St. Augustine's Campus there was a shoot-out between a car thief and the security forces where the car thief ran on or close to the Campus and students were in a panic.

Mr. Speaker, I remember staying at Mignol Hall at St. Augustine's Campus just a few metres away from the Priority Highway and the major town. What happened at St. Augustine's a few years back is that there was a need for a special police force called campus police that were well armed. The same thing occurred at Mona.

At Mona, there is a town next to the Campus Hall called "August Town" where there is a lot of crime and students and other persons have been abducted, molested and so on, on the Campus itself, so they had to have this armed police force.

I know that back in my time at the Cave Hill Campus students were actually raped and police officers had to be deployed to patrol the Campus. In fact, a Sergeant of the Royal Barbados Police Force had to be seconded for a number of years to the Cave Hill Campus. In fact, he actually resigned and became head of security and is still the head of security at Cave Hill.

House A38 Sequence 45

6.40 p.m.

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Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Speaker, I am saying that the issue of security at Cave Hill will have to be looked at, to ensure that those security officers are properly equipped, including the necessary equipment to handle aggressive

assailants as well as the necessary vehicles to properly patrol this growing campus area.

Mr. Speaker, we can see a lot of expansion going on to the north of the university's main campus and so, there is a need, in my view, for either under-passes or over-passes. We have the major ABC Highway now being a three-lane highway. Sir, I know, in my time, of a student who was knocked down, who became permanently disabled when he disembarked and crossed in front of a bus and did not see the oncoming vehicle. These are issues in terms of the security, not just of Barbadians, but of our regional brothers and sisters who study on campus. Therefore, security and lighting must be treated with some priority.

Mr. Speaker, in talking about the regional nature of the university, as I said, I was fortunate to be President of the Student Guild at the University of the West Indies. I also remember the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central as a former President of the Guild.

Sir, the former Honourable Member for St. Michael South, who is very much alive, was President of the Guild of Undergraduates at the Mona Campus. Leroy McClean, a prominent Barbadian, now with the Canadian High Commission, was a former President of the Guild of Undergraduates.

In fact, the Prime Minister, the Honourable Member for St. John, was the National Affairs Chairperson for the Guild of Undergraduates. Sir, I would want to say that the first time we met was when the Honourable Member was holding the tape at the sand pit, as I was doing a triple jump in the inter-faculty games which he was very instrumental in establishing.

The point I am making is that many Caribbean leaders, a number of former Ministers of Governments in Jamaica, Dominica, prominent persons in Trinidad and Tobago, have all been colleagues at the University of the West Indies and this exposure to each other as students can propel regional integration, because we know each other on a first name basis.

We hear of the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow going to the university with the late Forbes Burnham of Guyana, and Michael Manley of Jamaica, so those bonds that they established as students together have enabled them to form CARIFTA, CARICOM and to propel regional integration.

Mr. Speaker, the point I am making, when I talked about the involvement of students in student government - The Honourable Member for St. Andrew would know of the "Circle K", the college arm of KIWANIS, where I served as a member of that group. I also served as a member of Rotaract, the college arm of Rotary. This

service, this humility that was engendered by students involved in student leadership and community work, reduced the likelihood of graduates becoming arrogant, conceited and condescending.

Mr. Speaker, I can say without fear of contradiction that you were not born with a silver spoon in your mouth. I remember you working hard and long hours in the main library at the Cave Hill Campus, and this would have made us stronger persons. Sir, notwithstanding the fact that the Government and the country have invested millions of dollars in educating our children to tertiary level, I urge these beneficiaries not to be arrogant, not to look down at the maids or Sanitation Service Authority workers because their sweat, tears and their taxes are what provided this education to these persons at tertiary level.

Mr. Speaker, last Independence. I was at Harrison's College and this is what I said to the students there. I urged them never to be ashamed of going to school anywhere and that excellence is important. I urged them not to be ashamed of being intelligent, but that at the same time, to remain humble. I urged them not to be condescending or not to look down at somebody who has been to St. Leonard's Boys' School or at Parkinson Secondary School as being less than they, because we are all human beings.

Mr. Speaker, I can say for a fact that the teachers in our secondary schools are very well-qualified. I have taught at a number of them. There are a number of secondary schools and I can tell you that the teaching staff are very well-qualified, some having post-graduate qualifications. Indeed, there are students who would have been to a number of the newer secondary schools, who would have ended up better than those who went to the older secondary schools Sir, the work has now begun and we should be united as a people.

Sir, I would want to say that I do not at all support the segregation of a society where people believe that, because they have First Class Honours, that they are doctors or lawyers, or that they went to an older secondary school that they are better off, or that they have a guaranteed place in heaven, as opposed to someone who may have gone elsewhere and who may come from a working-class environment.

Mr. Speaker, I said that because I heard a number of rumblings on the Other Side. Sir, there were senior Members of Parliament on the ticket of the Barbados Labour Party, who were publicly ridiculing this Honourable Member because I did not have a vehicle. Sir, that was the arrogant bourgeois, right-wing position of the Barbados Labour Party. That is why the people of Barbados rejected them at the polls.

Sir, whereas that former Honourable Member for St. James South was laughing because this Honourable Member did not have a car, she was driven out of the Honourable House of Assembly and I walked up the steps of the Honourable House of Assembly, to be the Representative for the people of the City, and I thank them very much for their support.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude by saying that in terms of the relevance of the university curriculum to the national developmental needs of our country, I salute the work of the late Professor Headley, in terms of his work on solar technology. I believe we need to promote greater collaboration with industries and businesses in our country.

I remember at the Barbados Community College, they started the Associate Degree in Information Technology, in collaboration with a Community College in Canada. Sir, from those early days in the 1980s, what they did was to make sure that within that Associate Degree Programme in Information Technology programme, a term was in the form of an internship, where the students had to leave the classroom and do an attachment in a real life situation in a company. Some went to the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation and to other businesses.

Sir, in fact, today we have a student, who is a constituent of mine, visiting Parliament as part of a Mass Communication Associates Degree programme within the Barbados Community College, who is also assigned to the Government Information Service.

This serves to ensure that the student has a well-rounded exposure. In fact, what we found is that Associate Degree graduates at the Barbados Community College were getting a lot of hands-on experience that enabled them to write programmes that were more relevant to business applications, where somebody may have gone to Cave Hill, done a very academic degree in computer science, where they just do a Fortran or Pascal, but not really related to accounts which may be in the Faculty of Social Sciences. Therefore, many businesses were sweeping up those Associate Degree graduates, because most of them could be immersed into the system to become productive assets to the company.

Sir, it is not too late for the University of the West Indies to be frank in this regard and to become innovative, ensure that their academic programme is attractive, and that it meets international best practices.

H:No. A38A(46)

6.50 p.m.

Tuesday, June 9, 2009

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Sir, for example, next to Mona, you used to have what is called CAST, the College of Arts, Science and Technology, where you actually went into degrees in Pharmacy and other applications because the University of the West Indies was not a leader in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, in the United Kingdom, there is this sandwich programme in which people can do degrees and if they are doing languages, they can go over to France and emerge themselves in France, so that they can have connection with real life scenarios.

Mr. Speaker, we have the film industry that we are seeking to promote. We have a new Ministry of Culture, created by the Prime Minister, where we realise we can be innovative and earn foreign exchange for our country, in terms of entertainment and film production. Sir, I salute the university because at the Errol Barrow Centre for Creative Imagination, they have students engaged in theatre and drama, gaining the confidence that they could be on the world stage.

Mr. Speaker, I am very excited and this Government is committed to propelling education from primary to tertiary level, to ensure that this country remains resilient and robust as we propel ourselves for higher levels of productivity and national development.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged to you.

The Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for the City concluded his presentation with the assertion that the Democratic Labour Party Government, is committed to propelling the people of this country to the fullest possible education from primary to tertiary. Sir, I have to ask if this assertion is, in fact, supported by action.

Sir, when we left Government, the vast legislation for the University College of Barbados was completed. Mr. Justice Chase, as he formerly was, and other legal draughtsmen, had done the work on behalf of the Ministry of Education, the BIDC had identified physical spaces that would be part of that new campus, but this new Administration that has sought to argue today that they are fully committed to tertiary education seems to have fallen away from what they now claim to be a fundamental tenet, a fundamental principle by which they are guided.

Sir, we are forced to ask with all that they have said about the University of the West Indies and about the importance of tertiary education, how is it that they could

claim to support the ideal that we set, as a Government, when we said that every Barbadian household should have a university graduate. We understood clearly that it was important as we try to position Barbados as a services economy, for us to be able to have manpower that could supply, not just our own domestic needs, but the needs of the Region. In fact, we are bold enough to feel the needs of the world.

Mr. Speaker, when we came to Government in 1994, we found that the pass rate, the rate of certification was only about 40 per cent. Sir, put another way, that means that four out of every 10 students that left secondary school had certificates. Sir, through our hard work and dedication, that rate moved to over 60 per cent.

Sir, it is easy to become a victim of your own success because, when you have a 60 per cent certification rate, then, of course, you have many more of your young people who aspire to university education. Therefore, it was important for our Administration to ensure that there were enough spaces available at the University of the West Indies, and also that other opportunities would be provided and that was where we saw the role of the University College of Barbados coming into play. Sir, that project seems to have been abandoned by the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, it is of especially great importance in an environment, where it appears as though the University of the West Indies is now becoming fragmented in its approach to the delivery of tertiary education.

One Honourable Member, who spoke earlier this afternoon, mentioned the fact that we were now seeing a plethora of faculties, some of which are being repeated across jurisdictions and so, Sir, we now have a case where Trinidad has its own medical school, Barbados has now started a medical programme and we also have a situation where the University of Guyana is offering a Law degree.

We understand too that Trinidad and Jamaica are also looking at establishing faculties of Law and this kind of pattern seems to be repeating itself, across several Campuses of the University of the West Indies and sometimes, with fairly bizarre results.

Mr. Speaker, one of the bizarre results that comes to mind immediately, is the fact that we now have, in terms of legal education, Law schools in Trinidad, Jamaica and in the Bahamas. Sir, students, who would go to the Bahamas for Law schools, one would expect would be Bahamians, of course, but it is open to any graduate of the University of the West Indies.

Sir, those Bahamians, in particular, will do their law degree at the Faculty of Law at the Cave Hill Campus and,

Sir, what is bizarre, is that having gone through the exact same legal education as the Members of this Chamber, who have done Law, The Bahamas, prevents members of this Chamber from practising law in the Bahamas. Sir, the education is identical, the jurisdictions are identical, but we are not allowed to practise Law in the Bahamas.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at those kinds of arrangements, we have to ask ourselves whither the unification effort that the University of the West Indies was suppose to see coming into play across the Region.

Sir, while I am an outsider of education in that sense, I am a graduate of the University of the West Indies and I believe that an important part of any understanding that I have across the Caribbean Region comes from being as I like to say, that was the Cave Hill Campus, where we had Antiguans, Jamaicans and everybody from within the Region.

Mr. Speaker, what appears to be happening now is that the development seems to be trending towards a situation where each jurisdiction may well have a full and complete campus, offering a full range of degree programmes. Sir, if that were to happen, I believe it would be a dark day for the University of the West Indies because it would cease to be the University of the West Indies and be nothing more than a university in the West Indies.

Mr. Speaker, while the University of the West Indies leaders, who are going to be housed in this new Vice Chancellor building, built by this loan we are guaranteeing may have some plan I am not aware of, I believe that the people of Barbados have reasons to be justifiably concerned over what may be called the fragmentation of the university in this way.

Mr. Speaker, I do not mean to suggest that the programmes are fragmented, I leave that for the Minister who spoke previously to suggest, but I do mean to suggest that in its genesis, the University of the West Indies was to be a university, which would not only serve the tertiary needs of the Region, but also serve a greater social good of bringing and keeping the people of the Region together, so that we develop our ideas about governance and our ideas about socialisation in similar environments. Sir, therefore, I believe it must be a cause for concern among individuals when it appears as though we are having to end up with completely separate campuses, with completely separate professional schools and end up with nothing more than three Universities of the West Indies in Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad.

Mr. Speaker, if that is the direction we are trending in, one must ask what is the justification for Barbados guaranteeing one-third of the loan to finance the building of a Vice Chancellor's office?

H/A38/7.00 p.m. Sequence 47

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Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: We have stated, through our spokesperson, on matters relating to education that we support this particular Bill. I have to criticise the Minister of Education, because I do not believe that he was fullsome in his description and it left many of us on This Side still grasping to find out what this was all about.

Sir, we do not know if the guarantee has already been pledged. All we know is, that we are coming to Parliament today to amend the legislation. Implicit in that, if it has not already been given, it will certainly be given.

Sir, how many Barbadians know what it is that the Minister of Education is talking about, when he said an office for the Vice Chancellor, and our one-third share is \$2.7 million. I believe it would be helpful, certainly to us on This Side, and no doubt it will be helpful to the average man on the street, if the Honourable Member, the Minister of Education, had explained to the people that the Chancellor is the Head of the University, but it is a more titular post, and the actual Executive Head of the University is the Vice Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor's Office is in Jamaica.

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Therefore, what the Minister is seeking to do, I have assumed, is to agree that Barbados should guarantee one-third of building a proper office for the Head of the University that we support. I believe that is correct, but if it is correct, then I believe that the Minister of Education should certainly commit to the Barbadian public that the University of the West Indies will have a plan to ensure that it remains a University of the West Indies.

Sir, my understanding, when I went into the University of the West Indies in 1984, was that it was a university made up of three Campuses with a professional school. Trinidad had Engineering, Jamaica had Medicine and Barbados had Law. If what will come now is that everybody will have the same thing, then I cannot see a justification for this particular move.

We, in the current situation are bound, we believe, to support the measure, but we also want to say that while it is important for the Barbados Government to remain committed to the University of the West Indies, I believe that its full commitment to tertiary education must be met by coming out and following on with the work that the Barbados Labour Party did with the University College of Barbados.

Sir, when we were in Administration, we spared no expense. We did not move away from any commitment to support the University. I believe that it has been completely transformed to the kind of institution that it looked like, certainly when you, Mr. Speaker and myself, were in the Faculty of Law. I also have good reason to believe that it is not just the physical environment that has changed, but it is also the approach to the delivery of education.

Sir, I am very happy to see individuals being able to access material online. They are now getting worksheets electronically and all of those things. We understand that they use the Internet extensively, but I also understand that there are some complaints, with the thousands of people we have admitted into the University of the West Indies. Some of the things that have not been expanded would be such things as library facilities. So, if you now have the university with 7 500 students, I would like to ask the Minister of Education to use his good offices, to ensure that with such a significant increase of intake, and obviously to be expanded, that appropriate resources are made available for fundamental things such as library facilities.

There is no doubt that the use of the computer has made sure that there is material available online. While you can Google some elements of international trade online, or you can look up dumping which might be on Wikipedia or something like that, I do not believe it is a good substitute for the hard won research of the erudite individuals who have preceded us.

Those things, being able to hold a Cheshire and Fifoot reading through the lines and footnotes, is by far a different experience to going on Wikipedia and finding out what an exclusion clause is or something like that. You could find it there but it is a lazy way of approaching research.

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: It certainly is. I have no doubt now, that we will be *ad idem* on this particular item, when we call for an increased commitment to other facilities. It is all right to have lecture theatres and so, but if you do not have expanded library facilities, then you have nothing.

Sir, with those few remarks, I again repeat our support for the Bill, but simply wish to sound concerns about one or two developments that we consider may be less than desirable, when we consider the genesis of the West Indies, and the ideas that the founding fathers found dear when it came to regionalism and regional approach to Caribbean people.

I am obliged to you.

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Sir, as I bring closing remarks to the University of the West Indies (Guarantee of Loans) (Amendment) Bill, 2009, I would want to start from the point where the Acting Leader of the Opposition concluded. That is to say, and I thought that I made the point quite clearly, that the University of the West Indies, with the support of the Government of Barbados, through its own internal initiatives, would be constructing a major library facility to take care of the expanded needs of the University of the West Indies. I stated that earlier, and we have committed ourselves in assisting the University of the West Indies.

The other point which the Honourable Member made has to do with what is essentially the contestation relative to the territorial population, and the wider population across the various non-campus and campus territories of the University of the West Indies, but more important, the Campus of the territories of the West Indies at points in time, one would feel particular pressures.

I can tell you that, through the Vice Chancellor and his Office, and the various leaders of the University of the West Indies, there is this very strong desire to maintain, in some way, the traditional character of the University of the West Indies, even though I have said there are pressures.

Sir, in a situation like Law, the numbers which are demanding legal education are so substantial, that something has to give. There will still be the Faculty of Law in Barbados and the Faculty of Engineering in Trinidad, and to some extent the three Medical Faculties across the board, but that is as a result of the pressure.

There are other things which add as well to the regional character of the University of the West Indies. There is nothing which is to prohibit or stop any regional student from accessing any of the courses from any of the various Campuses. There is nothing to stop that outside of the money, the available resources.

Sir, the economies of the Caribbean, particularly some of the Campus territories, have gone through some major meltdown. Even Jamaica at this stage, we are speaking of substantial cut-backs on their own allocation to the University of the West Indies, Mona and the wider university system.

H A38 7.10 p.m. Sequence 48

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House A38, Sequence 49, 7.10 p.m.

Hon. R. D. JONES: We cannot and should not despair and throw our hands up in the air. We should revisit the various protocols. We should constantly revisit the various processes involved in maintaining the University of the West Indies as a regional university, meeting the collective needs of all the territories.

Bermuda is coming on board as a constituent member of the University of the West Indies which it is not now, and that speaks to the view being held by the Atlantic countries and Caribbean countries, relative to the role played by the University of the West Indies in the development of their societies.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West spoke to a very important issue, relative to the whole question of quality assurance at the level of the delivery of programmes at the University of the West Indies, the quality assurance relative to the students who are accessing those programmes, and the quality assurance relative to the professors and the lecturers who are providing those programmes.

Sir, as the Government's representative at the University of the West Indies, I am aware that there is this constant desire to ensure that quality is there, but also that the university as itself, and the university in conjunction with the Ministry of Education only a few weeks ago, had a Summit on Education, looking at those challenges, which impact on the most effective and efficient delivery of education in Barbados, from primary right through to the tertiary level of education within the country.

The Honourable Member for St. Thomas was at pains to point out that sometimes it takes 14 to 25 years for various innovations to impact on the educational services within a country. Therefore, even though the Honourable Member claims so many things, relative to what happened in the last 14 years, if the Honourable Member would want to follow her argument as espoused, then, one would have been seeing the benefits within the period of the operation, when she spoke of 20 to 25 years for certain strategies manifesting themselves.

Let us say that there has never really been, at least on the part of Barbadians, a problem in accessing education. I have said earlier, if any leadership in this country wants to tinker with education, they do it at their peril, so there is a constant quest for improvement. For example, we are seeking to ensure that our teachers come through their professional development and training in this country, because we found that there were about 800 teachers who were untrained in the Civil Service.

Sir, when you have, maybe, a quarter of your teaching service which is untrained, that is a problem, and

that came about as a result of the number of persons who were retiring.

Sir, we have given Erdiston Training College a mandate of three years to have all of those persons trained.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Therefore, we will be able to start training persons before they enter the classroom, in another four years. This is our strategy. I am not talking about the one or two, but large numbers who would deliberately choose teaching as a profession, so they enter at the point of training to do their B.Ed., Associate Degree, Diplomas or whatever teacher qualification that is necessary.

Erdiston is responding to that challenge by the creation of satellite centres, the utilisation of skilled persons in the area of expertise, in either the service or who have gone out of the service, but who have some substance, like the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, to go and interface with her colleagues from Sharon.

The university has to be careful, nevertheless, and we will be engaging the university in even more discussion over the coming months, relative to how there is a mesh between the national development agenda and the development agenda of the University of the West Indies, and how they must merge, how they must dovetail in a very sequential way to bring about what the country needs for its current development and its future development.

Sir, there is really no problem outside of chest thumping. I am one who is not dissuaded by the quoting of statistics. We are systematically going back and reviewing to bring forward the adequate statistics. We cannot be using statistics based on different models to come up to a given conclusion. There are still a significant number of Barbadian young people who are leaving school without a requisite qualification and that is still a frightening experience.

I know that we are developing, because we have made the point in other places that once you have gone through 13 to 14 years of education, you cannot leave it the same way that you came in, and it is virtually impossible, but we have not developed the appropriate certification mechanisms to deal with a whole grouping of people with different learning styles, different abilities, and different views of what they want to achieve.

Therefore, there are things like the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQs), and the Caribbean Certificate for Secondary Education, which every Barbadian secondary school child must have as their exit a school. Let us understand that CXC is a very rigid

academic qualification, essentially set up to test a relatively small number of the student population, in any country. Barbados continues to do reasonably well, but not as we would still want. Therefore, the work must continue and the work will continue.

Sir, it is not about comparing your looking glass and my mirror and simply saying that my face looks better than your face, I have eaten more food than you and I have been given more food than you. This is not really the reality of trying to provide education in a serious society and in a serious country. Sir, that is for partisan politics, and that is not really for serious developmental agenda that Barbados must continue to undergo, in order to achieve the kinds of benefits that this country must achieve, relative to the development of its people.

I agree, as well with the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, that university in the community which had a strong face, must re-engage again even more dynamically. There are persons who still continue to ensure that the university has a face within the community. There are some who simply stay on the hill, or in a classroom on the hill, without really impacting the society in a dynamic way, or for that matter, impacting the university in a very dynamic way.

We will continue to seek value for the resources provided by the State in all areas of education in this country, from nursery level to the tertiary level, into the post-graduate level.

Therefore, there is no need to quarrel, fret or fuss among ourselves, but to join together to ensure that there is the full maximum realisation of the cost-efficiencies and effectiveness of the provision of education within our country, on behalf of our people, and on behalf of our citizens.

Therefore, Sir, the University of the West Indies Cave Hill, will continue to look at its curriculum, its teaching methodologies, the various styles and how they are captured, if we are able to make sure that our brightest and best do not fall by the wayside, ensure that our average students, in truth and in fact, move up that ladder to fill in the apex of the pyramid and continue to enhance the learning environment, both the infrastructural and the resources provided and the quality of the teaching staff, to ensure that they can get the best out of all of those students who go there.

I do not believe that we should be pulling 16 year olds into the university. Many of them are just not ready for that transition between secondary schools. This is why at the secondary level, you are looking to give students an opportunity at some post secondary education to harden them up and to toughen them up for university education.

House A38, Sequence 49, 7.20 p.m.

Tuesday, June 09, 2009

Hon. R. D. JONES: Many persons at 16, 17 and 18 flounder for the first two years at university. Many of them are really not prepared for the rigours of almost self-propelled study. That is what university is, because you are not being fed as you were at the secondary and primary level. There is going to be a lot more debate on this whole issue, but this particular debate stemmed out of the guarantee.

Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Labour Party has given millions upon millions of dollars in guarantees in the past, including this to some extent, and Letters of Comfort, so it is not an originality for this Government, but because of our commitment to education and to the University of the West Indies, particularly Cave Hill, we have continued this trajectory and have brought to the House today for passage, this University of the West Indies (Guarantee of Loans) (Amendment) Bill, 2009 and the relative Amendments to the previous Act 2007-24.

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

Hon. F. J. STUART: 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, Mr. S. A. LASHLEY in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is in Committee.

Clauses 1 - 4, inclusive, were 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 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 and passed and cited as the University of the West Indies (Guarantee of Loans) Act, 2009.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, June 16, 2009 at 10.00 a.m.

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

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, June 16, 2009 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

House A38 Sequence 50

7.30 p.m.

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ORDER NO. 3 (resumed)

Mr. R. C. Eastmond, 19, 20, 21, 22; Mr. S. A. Lashley, 22, 24; Hon. P. M. T. Todd, 25, 27, 28, 29; Dr. W. F. Duguid, 29, 30; His Honour K. St.C. Best, 31, 32, 33; Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, 33, 34, 35, 36, 40; Mr. J. D. Paul, 37, 38; Hon. E. G. Hutson, 39, 40.

RESUMPTION

ORDER NO. 3 (resumed)

ORDER NO. 4 – THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES (GUARANTEE OF LOANS) (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2009.....41

Hon. R. D. Jones, 41, 42, 43, 45, 46, 63, 64, 65; Hon. R. L. Sealy, 47; Miss C. Y. Forde, 47, 48, 49, 50; Hon. C. P. Sinckler, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56; Hon. P. M. T. Todd, 56, 57, 58, 60; Mr. D. D. Marshall, 60, 62; Hon. F. J. Stuart, 65.

SUSPENSIONS.....10, 18, 40.

ADJOURNMENT.....65

Hon. R. D. Jones, 65; Hon. F. J. Stuart, 65.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

BEST, His Honour K. St.C. (St. Michael East)
BOYCE, Hon. J. D. E. (Christ Church South)
DUGUID, Dr. W. F. (Christ Church West)
EASTMOND, Mr. R. C. (St. James North)
ESTWICK, Dr. the Hon. D. C. (St. Philip West)
FORDE, Miss C. Y. (St. Thomas)
HUTSON, Hon. E. G. (St. James Central)
JONES, Hon. R. D. (Christ Church East Central)
KELLMAN, His Excellency D. St.E. (St. Lucy)
LASHLEY, Mr. S. A. (Christ Church West Central)
MARSHALL, Mr. D. D. (St. Joseph)
PAUL, Mr. J. D. (St. Michael West Central)
SEALY, Hon. R. L. (St. Michael South Central)
SINCKLER, Hon. C. P. (St. Michael North West)
STUART, Hon. F. J. (St. Michael South)
TODD, Hon. P. M. T. (City of Bridgetown)
TOPPIN, Mr. R. St.C. (St. Michael North)

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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. Order No. 3, take-slips House A38, Sequences 29-30, about 3.50-4.00 p.m.. The source file carries two reporters' versions of the second half of Hon. J. D. E. Boyce's speech, from 'Indeed, he spoke again too, Sir' to his closing words. The second, slightly fuller, version is printed here and the first version (about 1,200 words) has been left out; the omitted version contains one sentence not in the printed one ('In spite of the house keeping nature of this Act, it is largely brought about by the way in which the Barbados Labour Party sought to do business in the last 14 years.'). Please confirm.

Q3. Minutes. The Speaker calls 'the Minutes of May 15, 2009', while the motion is to confirm the Minutes of 'Tuesday, June 9, 2009', the date of this Sitting itself. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Suspension of Standing Orders. The motion to suspend Standing Orders is seconded, but no question put or result is recorded. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Suspension of Sitting, afternoon. The Leader of the House moves to suspend the Sitting 'for 10 minutes', and the procedural note records suspension 'until 4.40 p.m.'. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Order No. 4. The heading gives 'THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES (GUARANTEE OF LOANS) (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2009', but the third-reading note cites it as the 'University of the West Indies (Guarantee of Loans) Act, 2009'. Hon. C. P. Sinckler refers to the Bill as a 'Resolution'. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met at 10.10 a.m. on Tuesday, 9th June, 2009, with the Speaker, His Honour M. A. Carrington, in the Chair; the Deputy Speaker, His Honour K. St.C. Best, presided for part of the day. Prayers were taken by Reverend Canon Ivan Harewood. Hon. R. D. Jones, Leader of the House, laid four papers on behalf of the Minister of Finance, including the Excise Tax (Rate of Tax) Order, 2009 and the Annual Report of the Central

Bank of Barbados for 2008, and moved the first reading of the Financial Institutions (Amendment) Bill, 2009.

Hon. E. G. Hutson, Member for St. James Central and Minister of International Business and International Transport, moved Order No. 3, the Resolution to approve the guarantee by the Minister of Finance of a loan of \$50 million to be borrowed by the Barbados Port Inc. from BNB Finance & Trust Corporation. He explained that the Port's 2002 to 2007 capital works, including \$12.9 million on roads and \$57.8 million on marine infrastructure, had been financed by an assortment of loans at rates up to 10 per cent; the new loan at 7 per cent over 10 years would retire about \$35 million of the dearer loans and put \$10 million towards an unfunded pension liability of some \$27 million. He went on to discuss the Port's shift system, cruise tourism, Speightstown, the taxi co-operatives and careers in the maritime and civil aviation sectors.

For the Opposition, Mr. R. St.C. Toppin called the measure a typical housekeeping Resolution and turned to tourism marketing and Barbados's standing in the region, drawing a point of order from the Minister about management at the Airport. His Excellency D. St.E. Kellman regretted that a tourism marketing problem seen in 1995 was still being discussed and spoke on home-porting. Mr. R. C. Eastmond raised the differing terms of service of Port Authority staff and Port contractors and the need for better co-ordination with the Customs Department. Mr. S. A. Lashley, Hon. P. M. T. Todd, His Honour K. St.C. Best, Hon. J. D. E. Boyce and Mr. J. D. Paul supported the Resolution; Dr. W. F. Duguid asked what plan the Government had for the rest of the pension debt beyond the \$10 million. The Minister replied, speaking among other things of preserving the character of Speightstown, and the Resolution was agreed to.

After a suspension, Hon. R. D. Jones, Minister of Education and Human Resource Development, moved the second reading of the University of the West Indies (Guarantee of Loans) (Amendment) Bill, 2009, which replaces references to 'the Cave Hill Campus' in the 2007 Act with 'any campus of the University'. He said the University had a letter of comfort backed by a guarantee of some \$5.5 million, of which the Barbadian portion was \$2.75 million, and that Barbados, though it had the most graduates in the region, was still 16 to 17 per cent below the standard of some other economies.

Miss C. Y. Forde supported the Bill and spoke on the technical and vocational pilot in six secondary schools; Hon. C. P. Sinckler, a former tutor and lecturer, spoke of free university education up to the Master's level and how it was to be paid for; and Hon. P. M. T. Todd spoke on

security at Cave Hill. Mr. D. D. Marshall said the Opposition supported the Bill but questioned why Barbados should guarantee one-third, \$2.7 million, of a loan to build a Vice Chancellor's office. In reply the Minister set out the Government's strategy for teacher

training and university preparation. Clauses 1 to 4 were passed in Committee, with Mr. S. A. Lashley in the Chair, and the Bill was read a third time and passed. The House was adjourned until Tuesday, 16th June, 2009 at 10.00 a.m.