THE

SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1981 – 86

THE SENATE

Wednesday, July 20, 1983

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Public Buildings on Wednesday, July 20 1983, at 11.20 a.m. today.

PRESENT

His Honour Senator J. C. W. Wickham, M.B.E., (Deputy President)
Senator the Hon. N. A. Barrow, (Minister of Information and Culture) (Leader of the Senate)
Senator the Hon. O'Brien Trotman, (Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office)
Senator H. R. Linton
Senator Mrs. E. M. Lynch, G.C.M.
Senator the Hon. C. A. Griffith, (Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office)
Senator D. A. C. Simmons
Senator Miss J. Clarke
Senator St.C. E. Howell, (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance and Planning)
Senator Mrs. M. O. Reece
Senator A. W. A. McClean
Senator Mrs. G. G. Reader, M.B.E.
Senator the Rev. Can. I. McK. Jones
Senator L. A. Ward
Senator C. E. Jemmott

Prayers were read by Rev. Canon I. McK. Jones.

ABSENT

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is called to order.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

SENATOR THE HON. N. A. BARROW: Mr. Deputy President, I have the honour to lay the following:

Report of the Fire Service for the year 1982.

Financial Statement showing Net Customs and Excise Receipts for 10 months ended 31st January, 1983.

The Criminal Appeal Rules, 1983.

Financial Statement showing Net Customs and Excise Receipts for 11 months ended 28th February, 1983.

The Annual Report on the Immigration and Passport Department for the year ended 31st December, 1982.

The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 2) Order, 1983.

The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 3) Order, 1983.

The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 4) Order, 1983.

The Reply, Sir, to Parliamentary Question No. 5 is available.

As Senator Greaves is not in his seat, I presume that it will have to wait until he is here to be given.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SENATOR THE HON. N. A. BARROW: Mr. Deputy President, I beg to give notice of the following:

A Bill to amend certain enactments relating to revenue.

A Bill to make provision respecting the regulation and control of civil aviation in Barbados.

Resolution to approve the vesting in William A. Yarde of a parcel of land at Flagstaff, St. Michael.

A Resolution to adjust the rates of salary and allowances and the terms and conditions applicable to certain posts on the Prime Minister's personal staff.

11.30 a.m.

In addition, Sir, there are Orders Nos. 2, 3 and 4 on today's Order Paper, the Final Appropriation Bill for the financial year 1982–83, the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment and the Liquor Licences Amendment. These three items have not yet been given their first reading, and at this stage, if you will permit, I would wish to mention that next week we expect to have coming from the Other Place a new Narcotics Bill and the Codrington Trust (Repatriation) Bill. I am not aware that there is any other Bill, there may be the odd Resolution.

So when at the end of the day's sitting I move the adjournment to next Wednesday, I should be asking the members to be good enough when these Bills arrive with papers that go out to the Other Place – they will probably get them on Thursday or Friday – to study them so that we can take those through all their stages, in addition to these other Bills, when we meet next Wednesday.

By the time the day is over I hope I shall have intimations from honourable Senators as to whether it would be convenient to meet at 10.00 next Wednesday instead of the usual 11.00, because it looks as though the load next Wednesday will be such that we had better meet an hour earlier and dispose of all this. As you know, Sir, there is a prorogation imminent, and I really would not like one or two outstanding matters to be the cause of its delay.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Let it be recorded that the relevant Bills have been read a first time.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

SENATOR THE HON. N. A. BARROW: Mr. Deputy President, the items which fall to be dealt with today are Orders 1, 5, 6, 7 and 8, as I recall. Nos. 6 and 7 are to be managed by me, No. 1 to be managed by Senator Griffith, No. 5 by Senator Howell and No. 8 by Senator Trotman.

Today is a day on which I have a commitment to attend a funeral, and therefore I propose to take 6 and 7 as the first two items.

VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION OF PARCELS OF LAND AT CHRIST CHURCH AND ST. MICHAEL

Order No. 6 was called – To move the passing of the Resolution to approve the vesting in the National Housing Corporation of parcels of land at Clapham, Christ Church and St. Michael, Wavell Avenue, St. Barnabas and My Lord's Hill, St. Michael.

SENATOR THE HON. N. A. BARROW: Mr. Deputy President, the areas of land are pretty far flung except for the fact that they are all virtually in St. Michael, because the part of Clapham referred to is, I think, partly in St. Michael and partly in Christ Church. I think Mr. Adams' house at the corner near Wildey is probably the first house in Christ Church, so that is just into Christ Church. The other parts are properly in St. Michael.

These are all being vested in the National Housing Corporation for the same purpose. It is the Government's policy and practice to acquire land for development by the NHC from time to time, and before the development and sale of such land in lots can be properly carried out, in fact before the sale can be carried out at all, the lands necessarily have to be vested in the National Housing Corporation, because clearly the Corporation cannot give a good conveyance to an intending purchaser if it does not itself own the title to the land.

The areas of land concerned which it is now proposed to vest are 4.89 hectares or 12.08 acres at Clapham, partly St. Michael and partly Christ Church, the same land I am talking about; 7 677 square metres or 1.89 acres at Wavell Avenue, Black Rock; 1 512 square metres or 16 268 square feet at St. Barnabas, St. Michael, and .792 hectares or 1.9598 acres at My Lords Hill in St. Michael.

Broken down, Sir, the position is as follows: the 4.89 hectares of land acquired at Clapham is for resiting those residents of Emmerton Lane in the City whose premises were required for providing the site for the Sewerage Treatment Plant. The area has been fully developed and the existing land tenancy arrangement now has to be regularised.

It is also necessary to sell some properties in this area. The National Housing Corporation will not be able to issue any conveyances in respect of this land until it has a clear title to the said land. I think all of us know the area known as Clapham Park; as we come down from Sargeant's Village it is on the left hand side opposite the Courtesy complex.

With regard to Wavell Avenue, Black Rock, Government has acquired 7 677 square metres of land at Wavell Aveune for housing development. This land has been used for the resiting of those houses which were dislocated as a consequence of the construction of the Spring Garden Road project. As part of the relocation exercise, the National Housing Corporation constructed eight timber houses on the land to provide temporary accommodation for the residents when their houses were being removed and repaired.
11.40 a.m.

Since those persons have moved back to their respective houses, several other persons have expressed an interest in purchasing the National Housing Corporation's eight timber units, and deposits have been made in respect of some of these units. The Corporation, however, is unable to convey any of these properties since it does not have title to the land.

At St. Barnabas the area of land involved is 1 512 square metres. This is land formerly the property of the Anglican Church, and it was acquired for the resiting of houses which were affected by the construction of the new St. Barnabas/Wildey By-pass Highway.

The relocation exercise has been completed, and, as with the case of Clapham, it would be necessary for the National Housing Corporation to finalize and regulanze the tenancy arrangements which presently exist between the relocatees and the Corporation with respect to the land. In order for the Corporation to effectively do this, it must have title to the land.

The area of land at My Lord's Hill has been acquired for housing development and the provision of other facilities. In view of the low quality housing in the Licorish Village/My Lord's Hill area, it is proposed that a proper housing development be undertaken by the National Housing Corporation, and that the lots be made available to persons whose present conditions will require resiting to the area of land in question.

In closing, just let me add that the vesting of land for these purposes become extremely important particularly in view of Government's commitment to embark on large scale sites and services schemes. It would be absolutely necessary for lots to be made available to people so that the sites and services can be put in. Those who want to continue the effort by self-help and having other people assist them in the traditional Barbadian way, would then be able to take full advantage of that kind of assistance from Government.

I move, Sir, that this Resolution do now pass.

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

COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT LODGE SCHOOL, ST. JOHN

Order No. 7 was called – To move the passing of the Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land at Lodge School, St. John.

SENATOR THE HON. N. A. BARROW: Mr. Deputy President, the Lodge School has been operating for perhaps 250 years, and for most of that time on land which has been the subject of a lease from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel; more laterally I think the title has been the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and more laterally the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

The buildings, which became more and more to be buildings erected by the Government for the purposes of public education, stand on lands which were the subject of a lease of September 29, 1880, a 99-year lease; and when that lease expired and there was a renewal for one year, the Government and the Society entered into negotiations for a renewal of the lease.

These negotiations were not successful, and on May 31, this year, the Minister of Education informed Members of the Other Place that Government was in the process of acquiring an area of land at Society, St. John, on which the Lodge School buildings are erected. The adjacent area of land is also being purchased for the expansion of the school. The total land area involved is approximately 5.65 hectares or 14 acres.

The owners of the property, the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, is a charity operating under the Laws of the United Kingdom, and is therefore answerable to the Charity Commissioners in the United Kingdom. But in relation to its powers and the leasing or sale or disposing of property at the Lodge School in Barbados, the Society is subject to the jurisdiction of the courts of Barbados and the Laws of Barbados.

I should mention here, Sir, my reference to the Codrington Trust Repatriation Bill. I am sure that honourable Senators are well aware that the Trust originates out of the will of Christopher Codrington and is the basis of the endowment of Codrington College, and that also in that will was a provision for endowing the school. That will has been the subject of a judgement in the courts, arising out of which was the now famous libel action as a result of an article published in the then existing *Democrat* newspaper.

We believe that it is time the trust operate under the Laws of Barbados and not under the Laws of the United Kingdom, that the purposes of the trust are purposes to be fulfilled within our context and not the

United Kingdom context. Therefore, discussions have taken place with the church, an agreement has been reached, and that is the Bill which is going to be debated next week in the House, a Bill for the Repatriation for the Codrington Trust.

The United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel is the successor of all rights and privileges of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. The lease was a lease between the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, on the one part, and the Board of Education on the other part. Political, social and constitutional changes in Barbados have now led to the Minister of Education bearing the responsibility for matters relating to education and no longer any Board of Education.
11.50 a.m.

As I mentioned, because negotiations came to nought, the Government decided that it was time to acquire the relevant interests. The composition of the Governing Body of the Lodge School is specified in the terms of that lease, and although the lease expired on September 28, 1979, the Government has been advised that the conditions stipulated herein continue to apply until a new lease excluding these conditions has been entered into, or the property is otherwise disposed of, for example, by purchase.

Since the provisions of the previous lease will continue to be legally in force and there can be no change in the membership of the Governing Body of the Lodge School until the property is compulsorily acquired, or until a new lease is entered into, the matter of the acquisition of the property, from Government's point of view, is very urgent.

Without meaning to start any controversy, I think we all need to remember that the Lodge School is an institution that has not in recent times enjoyed the best relations with the Ministry of Education, and has been a little reluctant, to say the least, even to implement ordinary directives which other schools find no difficulty implementing, such as when students may be entered for the CXC, which is really a matter of national education policy.

Moreover there is also the need for Government to have full ownership of the property in view of the fact that there are extensions to the school planned under the World Bank Education Loan Project. Only then will we be able to proceed with these renovations on schedule.

I have mentioned before the Bill for the repatriation of the trust, and when this purchase is completed and the trust is repatriated, the localisation of the schemes relating to both Codrington College and the Lodge School would then have been completed. But I must stress, in relation to the Lodge School – ever since my day as a school boy, and I have not been to school there in the last 36 years, indeed the last 37, has been supported, like all the other schools, by public funds for all this time, there really is no reason to continue an arrangement which allows that school to be an exception to the general application of educational policy in this country.

For what it is worth, I would just like to leave those words with you.

I beg to move that the Senate concur in this Resolution.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Before I propose the acceptance of the debate on this Resolution, just on a note of clarification, the Minister made two specific references to the date of the 99 year old lease. On the first occasion he said 1880 and I am sure he made an error and said 1980. I am just saying this so that I get it in the record accurately. It is obviously 1880.

The question that the Senate concur in the Resolution was put to the Senate and agreed to.
12.00 p.m.

THE BORROWING OF THE SUM OF US$10 MILLION FROM CITIBANK N.A.

Order No. 1 was called – To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the borrowing of the sum of U.S.$10 million from CITIBANK N.A. for the purpose of establishing a Housing Credit Fund.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Griffith.

SENATOR THE HON. C. A. GRIFFITH: Mr. Deputy President, at the end of September, 1982, the Government signed with the United States Agency for International Development, an agreement in which that agency agreed to guarantee a US$10 million loan for housing in Barbados by a private investor.

In June the Government concluded negotiations with CITIBANK for US$10 million, at a fixed rate of interest of 11.65 per cent over thirty years, including a five year grace period for repayment of the principal.

The project has as its goals, the following: to help alleviate the overall housing shortage in Barbados; to improve significantly the existing housing stock, particularly the deteriorating timber houses; to shift the initiative for housing towards the private sector; to broaden the ownership basis of housing in Barbados.

In order to qualify for these funds, families will have to qualify by having income which is below the medium of $16 000 per annum.

The project has three components. One component is for new home mortgages, for which Bds$6 million will be allocated. Another component, of course, is home improvement loan, for which Bds$10 million will be allocated. And the third component will be financing land ownership and improvements, to the tune of Bds$4 million, which takes up the $20 million.

Under the new home mortgages, the maximum amount which can be borrowed will be $24 000 to finance houses up to a value of $35 000, with a repayment period of fifteen years. These funds will be disbursed through the Barbados Mortgage Finance Company under Home Improvement Loans.

The maximum loan under the project will be $8 000 with a repayment period of seven years. These funds will be disbursed through commercial banks and credit unions.

Under the Land Purchase and Tenantry programme, the maximum loan under this category will be $8 000. These funds will be used to extend the loan scheme which was established to assist tenants in buying plantation tenantry lands, to encompass private tenantry lands. Wherever possible, these funds will be used to effect home improvements on tenantries, though this may be on a limited scale.

But, Mr. Deputy President, I just want to make a point here. Just as we have good lawyers and bad lawyers, good politicians and bad politicians and good husbands and bad husbands, there are good landlords and bad landlords. And recently, there has been a great upsurge in efforts by some landlords, who are using all kinds of schemes, to frustrate the aspirations of people who own houses on rented lands by playing on the vulnerability of these people, and indeed, in some cases, the fears. I have seen a significant number of cases that have been brought to my attention.

What it really does when landlords do this, is that it makes it difficult for those people who are affected to plan for home improvement. I believe it is appropriate that Government should appeal to landlords to desist from this practice, because the Government does not intend to be frustrated in its efforts to assist people in Barbados in realising the dream of not only being owners of property, but being in a position to make improvements to those properties when the occasion demands.

As we have been saying all along, it is ironical that in a country like Barbados, which is considered a middle income developing country, we still have some indications of sub-standard housing. Even though I have seen some housing in other countries of the world which really could not be considered as housing as such, we still feel that because of our standards in Barbados, some of the housing in Barbados is sub-standard. And the Government, through this loan and other efforts in the Ministry of Housing and Lands, intends to make every effort to assist people, particularly in the lower income bracket, to have the privilege of owning their own homes.

There are indications that if this project goes smoothly, a further programme will be devised. The success of the project depends, in large measure, on close collaboration between the Housing Planning Unit, which has been established to administer the whole project, the commercial institutions, such as banks and the credit unions, the Barbados Mortgage Finance Company, the targeted beneficiaries themselves and those landlords who have an interest in trying to help people who are renting on their tenantries to own their own house spots and so improve their properties.

I beg to move, Sir, that the Senate do now concur in this Resolution.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: It is proposed that the Senate concur in this Resolution. Senator McClean.

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: Thank you, Mr. Deputy President.

I rise to express my support for this particular Resolution, I hope it would be seen as the first step in establishing a fund which would meet the continuing needs of Barbadians in this and some similar category down the years. I say this because we should note that there will be a continuing need for a facility such as this for low income people, and there will be a need from time to time to increase the amount of funds available within such a scheme.

In addition, one would have to keep under review the ceilings and the qualification levels for participation. I think that perhaps it may be desirable if, at this stage, we index such criteria rather than fixing them now maybe reviewing them in five years' time and so on. Because in between the periods of review, you find that people who would normally qualify now would move out by virtue of inflation and increases in the level of prices, although they are now richer in real terms, so to speak.

So schemes such as these, in my view, would be better indexed to the cost of living and to the cost of construction, the levels of income in the country and so on, rather than having intermittent reviews where you change the criteria by large junks; large, discontinuous junks.

In relation to the terms and conditions, I notice that the interest charged is 11.65 per cent. I presume this might have been calculated on the basis of cost of funds; I do not know if Government is subsidizing the effort or not. But for people at the very lower end of the income bracket, 11.65 per cent especially in a situation where they are not paying Income Tax and therefore cannot get it reduced via that route, the people who are very low down, might be a fairly substantial rate of interest. Maybe, this, too, should be kept under review to see if and when it would be convenient to reduce the rate of interest.

The question of periodic payment semi-annually. There should be some mechanism whereby people can pay monthly if they want to, because some people might experience difficulty in accumulating the money over a six month's period. Even if they talk about putting it in the bank, the way in which needs impinge on poor people, sometimes they have to go into money which they had earmarked for some other reason, and they might find themselves occasionally embarrassed if they felt that they could only pay off this interest once every six months, rather than paying it off in more gradual terms.

Other than that, I think that the effort is commendable and should go somewhere towards alleviating the housing conditions for the poor in Barbados.

I thank you.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Howell.

SENATOR St. C. E. HOWELL: Thank you, Mr. Deputy President.

Mr. Deputy President, I rise in support of the Resolution and like Senator McClean, I hope that this is only the first in a series of funds which would be made for housing people in this country.

I would like to think that the fund would probably follow suit in relation to the Resolution which I piloted in this Senate a few weeks ago dealing with the ICF, the loans for companies, for industry. That is clearly going to be an ongoing programme, and I see no reason why we could not have a similar programme in relation to housing.

I think Government must clearly be congratulated, because it is certainly one of the few Governments in the region which, at a difficult time, is still trying to cater to the needs of those persons who are less well off in relation to housing.

I think the commercial sector should also be praised. I notice that the banks, the various commercial houses and some of the public corporations are now involved in this fund. This is certainly a step in the right direction, because history has shown that there has been some measure of reluctance for commercial banks to take part particularly as far as making loans available to owners of timber homes. So this certainly is something to welcome.

I would like to call on the people outside, particularly those people in the lower income areas, to take it upon themselves to go to the bank – sometimes they are welcome in the bank – and put their case forward and see if they can get loans to improve their homes. Often these people would readily go to a politician and ask him to put in a word for them, go to National Housing and receive loans and repay the loans back, but they would have a lot of reservations in going to the bank. I think they should be encouraged to go to the banks now that the banks have made themselves available to disburse such loans.

The practice in this country, is to be contrasted with that in England; for example, where the bulk of house purchasing is really financed by the building society. I think they cater for about 70 per cent and places like the Greater London Council and the Urban County Councils meet the needs of the remaining 30 per cent.

Once again I want to say that Government should be congratulated, the financial institutions should also be congratulated, and the people outside should be encouraged to go along.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Jemmott.

SENATOR C. E. JEMMOTT: Mr. Deputy President, in supporting this Resolution. I must congratulate the Government for the effort which they have been making in relation to housing. As one who is very much involved, as an employee of the National Housing, in this aspect of the community life, I think there is a very great need for such a venture.

12.10 p.m.

There are a few observations I would like to make. I regret to see that the maximum for repairs and extensions is $8 000. At the National Housing Corporation the maximum is $12 000, and I hope that that will be looked into in relation to the cost of building today.

I do not agree with Senator Howell in relation to the banks' generosity, because I know that it is very difficult for people in the lower income brackets to get loans of $3 000 and $5 000 to repair houses or to put on toilets and baths. Some of the banks frustrate the people very, very much.

I regret that some of this money is not going into NHC to help the hundreds of people who have applications there for such loans, but I hope the Government will look into it and see if it is possible, through whatever mechanism they provide, whereby these applications that are outstanding at NHC would be able to be channelled into some area of one of the banks, whether the National Bank or some other institution, so that people would be able to get their small loans of $3 000 and $4 000 in relation to them.

I know the credit unions are going to be very easy, having been a member of a credit union, in the processing of loans. It is very quick and easy to acquire loans from a credit union, and I am even wondering if the maximum loan here is not less than the Police or Cable and Wireless is offering to their members. Nevertheless, we have to be thankful for small mercies, but I know the credit union will be very generous.

I wanted to bring those few points to the attention of the Minister concerned, and I hope he will draw these to the appropriate Minister and Ministries concerned, because if there is any possibility of making any amendments to these things, I think it would be in the interest of the fellow down the line, particularly in relation to the applications outstanding at NHC for amounts of $2 000 and $3 000. From my observation I do not think any of this money is going to be channelled there, and I think some regulations should be made whereby these people can be recommended to the banks to get these loans.

Thank you, Sir.

The question that the Senate concur in this Resolution was put to the Senate and agreed to.

COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT HIGHWAY 5, ST. MICHAEL

Order No. 5 was called – To move the passing of the Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land at Highway 5, St. Michael.

SENATOR St.C. E. HOWELL: Mr. Deputy President, this Resolution is really quite straightforward. I do not envisage any dissent in this Honourable Chamber. It is for the compulsory acquisition of 50.5 square metres of land of the estate of Mr. Pilgrim which facilitated the construction of the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic Access Road along Highway 5.

It is a relatively small area of land. The usual notices and so forth have all been complied with, compensation and the like, and I would ask that the Senate concur in this Resolution.

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: Mr. Deputy President, I think this Resolution gives the Senate a chance to advert to certain problems associated with the new Spring Garden Highway.

As we know, in recent times there has been an outcry in the Press and elsewhere relating to problems associated with that Highway. Those problems can be decomposed under different headings, the first of which I think would relate to the general problem of crossing the road.

The residents of that area, who are accustomed to travelling to the beach in an unrestricted way, now find that they have to stop to cross the road. I think we have to engage in public education in this matter not only with respect to that problem, but with respect to all of them; and we must accept that now we have changed circumstances, and that people cannot presume to be able to just walk straight over to the beach without any delay again in that general area, that that is one of the consequences of the particular development there.

However, going beyond that, it is also recognised, I believe, by Government that they need to facilitate the crossing of the road by constructing a walkover or a series of walkovers at strategic points, and one would hope that this would be done expeditiously. But until we have the walkovers, we have the particular problem of crossing the road and we should try to educate the public as to how to go about it.

I think the points we have to get over to them is that, first of all, they should not cross the road, let us say, close to the junction at Brighton, and maybe the other ones where you have the road slightly wider carrying about four lanes. It is easier to cross the road where you have the two lanes and you can get from one side to the other in a much shorter span of time, and indeed without having the complication of four lanes of traffic, traffic coming from four directions instead of two. It may also be desirable if we can indicate to the public in terms of notices, which are mainly for advice rather than specific direction, the areas where it is safe to cross the road.

The other thing is that Barbadians have a basic habit of sauntering across the road. Somehow Barbadians feel that pedestrians have some kind of right of way, and that traffic must stop for them when they cross the road, not recognising that the driver is anticipating that they would cross the road expeditiously, so to speak. That would be all right if someone is driving at 20 miles an hour in Bridgetown or in some by-way, but if someone is driving at 50 miles an hour and expect you to cross the road quickly, when they recognise that you are just sauntering across the road it may be a bit too late for them to brake. Of course, motorists should be aware of

these bad habits of pedestrians and make allowances for them at this stage of our life, but we have to educate people not to impose on motorists in that way.

In terms of the question of reducing the speed limit, some people have been arguing that we should reduce the speed limit back to 30 miles per hour. Part of the argument has been that if you have a 50 mile-per-hour speed limit, people are going to drive at 60 and 75. I do not accept that argument, because the law indicates a maximum speed, not a minimum. If you exceed that you are liable to prosecution.

Maybe because we had too low speed limits for too long in Barbados people have got into the frame of mind of thinking that they can drive in excess of the speed limit. We should indicate that clearly if we are going to tolerate that on the other roads, we cannot tolerate it on the one with 50, which is supposed to be a realistic speed limit, and the police should be a bit active in prosecuting people who exceed that speed limit without good cause.

Motorist should also be aware that you can drive irresponsibly and dangerously within the speed limit and you can be prosecuted for doing that. Because you have a 50 mile-per-hour or 80 kilometre-per-hour speed limit, it does not mean that you must dash along at that speed irrespective of what is going on. You can drive dangerously within the speed limit, and the police should also be vigilant in prosecuting people for over-taking without due care and attention within the speed limit and so on.
12.20 p.m.

All in all, I think that basically we as a community have to recognize that there is a bit of a problem down there which is based on intolerance on all sides, the pedestrians who feel that they should be able to saunter across the road to the beach any place, any time; and the motorists who are disinclined to be accommodative of others who feel that they must persist in what they consider, often erroneously, as their rights. I think that is really the extent of the problem.

The road itself and the speed limit of 80 kilometres is no problem. Eighty kilometres is a relaxing cruising speed for any modern aero dynamically-designed car. You do not really have to step on the accelerator for it to develop a cruising speed of 80 kilometres, and you can brake with facility within a reasonable distance at that speed. So, if you get an accident at that speed, it is because of a lack of diligence either on the part of the pedestrian, or the driver, or both.

I would hope that we can embark on a programme of education on radio, T.V. and so on which would bring people to the appreciation: (i) that there is nothing wrong with a speed limit of 50kph; it is not an unfair speed limit in itself. Lack of safety comes about because of other areas of negligence, and (ii), that in crossing any road, and in particular that highway, pedestrians must recognize that they cannot cross as they come up to the road. They may have to wait a few seconds, it seems to me sometimes a few minutes, until they can cross safely; and when they are crossing they should cross with despatch.

It is safer to cross at a point where you have a clear view up and down, not close to the bend, as you have at Brighton; or not close to Brighton junction, where you have four lanes; or the junction by the Light & Power Co., where you have four lanes; but cross somewhere away from those junctions where the road is not as wide and you do not have the complications in watching the traffic from four directions instead of two.

With that, I think the Resolution, as we heard, is not a controversial one. It is worthy of support and I express my support for it.

I thank you.

SENATOR C. E. JEMMOTT: Mr. Deputy President, I must first congratulate Senator McClean for what he has said to us in relation to the Spring Garden Road.

It is regrettable that a priest, who was mentioned in the news a few days ago, would take the attitude he took in trying to educate the public in relation to the use of that road.

I think that the trouble is that both pedestrians and motorists are not really using the road as it should be used. As a driver, I have experienced both motorists and pedestrians doing what they should not do. You will find people just sauntering across the road and things like that.

Only night before last, after this accident happened only a few days ago, I was going down the road and I saw two youngsters on skates actually in the center of the road – and it was dark. I told my wife, "You see what can happen. With somebody coming down at speed and they are in the centre of the road with skates, anything could happen."

I think the public should be taught what to do and what not to do in relation to that road, and it is regrettable that the priest took it upon himself, at a funeral, instead of offering sympathy to the relatives and begging the people to use the road intelligently, to talk about disrupting community life and things of that sort. I think that this is where we get a breakdown in law and order, because obviously the people in that district can feel, well, there it is the priest is telling us we should be using this road as ours and here we are told we should not use it.

I would like to say that I support the remarks made by Senator McClean, and I hope that the Ministry of Transport would look into the matter and try to educate both pedestrians and motorists in the use of the road, and have the crossing, as he has quite rightly said, in the wider part of the road.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR THE HON. N. A. BARROW: Mr. Deputy President, both contributions that I have just listened to, I think, are very much to the point.

As far as I was concerned, when I read the remarks yesterday morning made by Father Springer, the remarks were just simply irresponsible, and they are irresponsible for more than one reason.

Let us assume that, on investigation, the police had found that there is ground for believing that there is fault on anybody's side. He has already sought to try the case from the pulpit. I believe that the gentleman should be advised that, in his anxiety to try Government for everything, he should really try to stop and observe bounds. I noticed it and I was quite distressed by it, because I thought his comments were quite improper in all circumstances.

The fact of the matter is that we are going to build the walk-over, and it is unfortunate that the walk-over has not yet been built. But we must not really fool ourselves in a moment of sympathy in which, when we are out there, we must always go overboard. None of us wishes to see a loss of life, particularly a young life, and such talk tends to make us go a bit overboard and believe that if we had a walk-over, there would not be any such accidents on the highway.

I think we have to understand – I thought Senator McClean was right on to this point – that there is a crucial point to recognize: the speed limit has been too low for too long; therefore, a number of motorists have developed bad habits.

The other aspect is that the road system has remained undeveloped for too long, so that when you tend now to introduce a programme of road development which is more suited to the needs of a modern Barbados, the public also has to be able to adjust to that. So I can understand the call for public education on the point, except that I do not really know what you are going to do, and how effective a programme of public education is going to be.

One of the things I have found which, perhaps, makes people more aware than anything else of what they ought to do is the risk to life and limb, but still you get accidents, and you get accidents which are sometimes caused by recklessness.

Senator Simmons could tell you that once I had to give evidence in a manslaughter case, and it was probably a good thing that I was an eyewitness to the case. That, I believe, assisted his client very greatly because the man was not driving fast. I am referring to Sam Griffith. He was not driving fast. I was driving behind the car, and it was one of these unfortunate things where a lady just stepped off the curb at the wrong time.

After that he panicked and did all sorts of foolish things, as a result of which – I think it was his behaviour after the accident – he was charged with manslaughter. He put himself in trouble that way, but I was a witness.

(SENATOR D. A. C. SIMMONS: Let the Record show that he got off.)

SENATOR THE HON. N. A. BARROW: Senator Simmons said let the Record show that he got off. But I would say take credit for the evidence which I gave, he had better take credit for the skill of the defence.
12.30 p.m.

I am referring to it just for one reason, which is that we forget that sometimes accidents happen when nobody is really being very careless. And on the other hand, you must also remember that people can drive at 20 miles an hour with a speed limit of 30, at 20 miles an hour with a speed limit of 50, at 20 miles an hour with a speed limit of 70 and still drive badly. Speed is not the only cause of accidents, and we really should not encourage the thought that because the speed limit is raised, implicit in it lies the cause of accidents. It is how well you drive and not how slowly you drive.

The other thing that surprised me indeed, referring to the same thing, is that the newspaper should have carried it in that form, because I believe that when things like this occur, there has got to be some kind of journalistic judgment as to whether certain comments, given the circumstances, should be published at all; and if so, whether they should be published in full. I am not talking about any kind of censorship or any kind of muzzling. I believe indeed that the newspaper would have been much kinder to Father Springer had they not published his comments on that occasion.

SENATOR Mrs. G. G. READER: I just want to say a few words here about the Spring Garden Highway, which I drive over frequently. I have found recently that with the high winds blowing, driving a van down the Spring Garden Highway can be a very difficult thing, because the wind hits the van broadside and you find yourself veering to the side of the road. This is a Suzuki van. This is something I would like you to know.

Another thing is that I fight the "Battle of Trafalgar" every morning. Have you ever tried to cross

the pedestrian crossing past the Financial Building to get down the Wharf? The pedestrians walk across slowly. One would think they were on crutches, the speed at which they cross that crossing one after the other, and as soon as one has crossed in one direction, you get one coming the other way and one going the other. It is the most frustrating thing you can do, and how more people do not get killed on that crossing I do not know.

I would like to see boxes painted on the road there so that people crossing the bridge in cars, when they get there, if the exit is not clear, they may enter the box to allow the cross traffic to get through, and I would like to see lights put for the pedestrians there so that they can cross in a group.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy President.

SENATOR CANON I. McK. JONES: Mr. Deputy President, I should just like to make one little comment. I have used the Spring Garden Highway quite frequently myself, and what I discovered is that cars will pass each other and veer over to various sides without showing any indication of lights showing that you are coming out or you are going the other side.

I think that in the education suggested by Senator McClean it should be clearly stated that indicators must be used when you are overtaking another car; and when you pass it and you are going back in front of it, you should be indicating again that you are going in front. I find that people pass in and out without any indicators at all, and I believe it is because some of them may not have had the privilege or the opportunity of travelling in bigger countries where that is the norm.

That is all I have to say, Mr. Deputy President.

SENATOR St. C. HOWELL: Just a few words in concluding, Mr. Deputy President. I want to thank honourable Senators for the very important points they have all made in their contributions. I think both Senators McClean and Barrow touched the nerve of it all. I think it is really a question of co-operation between motorists and pedestrians. I think they both owe it to themselves.

The highway in itself is not bad. We must learn to live with this sort of development; it calls for a little consideration on both sides. I think Senator McClean was the first to put his finger on it and that is welcome. As to the bridge and so on, I think Senator Barrow has answered fully.

The question that the Senate concur in the Resolution was put to the Senate and agreed to.

COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT SPEIGHTSTOWN, ST. PETER

Order No. 8 was called – To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land and building thereon at Speightstown, St. Peter.

SENATOR THE HON. O'B. TROTMAN: Mr. Deputy President, the property which the Resolution seeks to acquire is a spot of land and a cottage on that land presently belonging to Ms. Daisy Dottin. The purpose of the acquisition is to provide some accommodation for the Text Book Scheme, which will operate out of the cottage as well as to improve the accommodation for the Secretary/Treasurer, who at present operates in rather cramped conditions in the main building. It is also hoped that some of the land adjoining the cottage will be used to provide canteen accommodation for the school.

To say one quick thing about the Text Book Scheme, there has been some talk for some time about the rental of the text books, how it is operated and how much people have to pay. I would just like to say that when the scheme started, the scheme used to cost the Government $670 000 a year, and by 1980–81, three years after the start of the scheme, it had gone from $600 000 to $1.3 million.

Since then there has been some reduction in the cost because of the weakening of sterling, and other cost-saving devices which the Ministry has been forced to use, but the cost to the Government is still a lot more than it ever used to be. At present, notwithstanding the fact that rentals have been raised to $20 per term, Government still has to subsidise the scheme by over $½ million a year.

I am only making that point to say that although the rental per child has been raised, in fact the cost to Government has also been rising, and there is no attempt to reduce the cost under the scheme. We are merely asking people to face the facts that books cost more than ever and more books are required than were ever required before.

I beg to move that the Senate concur in the Resolution.

12.40 p.m.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: It is proposed that the Senate concur in this Resolution. Senator McClean.

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: Mr. Deputy President, in relation to the Text Book Scheme, I have heard some complaints from parents indicating that they might have been charged for the deterioration of books in circumstances where they should not be, indicating that

they probably got a book in bad condition and returned it in maybe similar condition, or in their view better condition, and had to pay for the condition in which it was returned.

I do not know to what extent this is a general complaint, but it may be appropriate, first of all, for the Ministry, if it does not have a policy on this, to develop one; or if they have one already to articulate it and make it well known to parents the conditions under which they may find themselves having to pay for books returned in some stated condition.

It seems to me that if you returned a book in better condition than you received it, or in the same condition, you should not have to pay for it. I would presume that any policy in the matter would accord with this. But there have been complaints from parents suggesting that they had to pay for books returned in the same or perhaps even better condition, in that they might have done some repair work on the books. Of course, they were still in bad condition, but they were received by them in bad condition.

I thank you.

The question that the Senate concur in the Resolution was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. N. A. BARROW: Mr. Deputy President, as I intimated at the beginning of the sitting today, next Wednesday we will need to meet, and it seems as though we will need to meet early. I have had no representations against the hour of 10.00 o'clock, which I threw out at the beginning of the session, and therefore that is the hour for which we hope to adjourn for.

Senators who were not here at the time, especially bearing in mind that we almost did not have a quorum by quorum time, I would have to urge them not only to attend next Wednesday's sitting but to attend it early, so that by quorum time we would be able to start, because an abortive sitting next Wednesday could cause the postponement of the date for prorogation.

I would like to remind those Senators that the new Narcotics Bill and the Codrington Trust Repatriation Bill – as I said before – I know of no other – those two certainly will be coming out when the House Papers come out, and we would wish, in addition to those Bills of which notice was given today and those that were read a first time, to deal with those others that come from the Other Place by next Wednesday.

What we would wish to do is to clear the Order Paper, so that in the event of the prorogation being set as early as we at present hope, this Chamber should not be the cause of its postponement.

That being the case, Sir, I beg to move that this House do now stand adjourned until next Wednesday, July 27, 1983 at 10.00 o'clock in the morning.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT adjourned the sitting accordingly.

12.45 p.m.

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