
THE SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1986 – 91

SENATE

Wednesday, May 31, 1989

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, on Wednesday, May 31, 1989, at 11.15 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour Senator M. deL. Jordan, (Deputy President);

Senator the Honourable L. V. H. Lewis, (Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office); (Leader of the Senate);

Senator the Honourable Sir James Tudor, K.C.M.G.;

Senator A. Morrison;

Senator N. W. Boxill;

Senator D. A. Comissiong;

Senator Mrs. V. C. Fraser, B.S.S., J.P., M.C.F.A.;

Senator A. J. N. Phillips;

Senator T. A. Prescod;

Senator J. C. W. Wickham, M.B.E.;

Senator the Reverend Canon I. McK. Jones;

Senator L. A. Ward, G.C.M.;

Senator C. A. Blackman, Q.C.;

Senator Mrs. P. Y. Forde;

Senator J. S. Goddard;

Senator Dr. L. L. Shorey;

Senator the Honourable Dr. C. D. Clarke (Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs);

Senator A. W. A. McClean;

Senator Miss V. P. Brathwaite.

Prayers were led by Dr. the Rev. L. Crawford.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is in session.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT FARMERS, ST. THOMAS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PRIMARY SCHOOL

Order No. 1 was called – To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land at Farmers, St. Thomas for the construction of a primary school.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, the Resolution before us seeks the approval of Parliament for compulsory acquisition of a parcel of land, presently the property of Dunscombe Estates Limited, situated at Farmers in the parish of St. Thomas.

The land covers some 9 200 square metres, inclusive of 196 square metres in a road, abutting and bounding on lands of the Barbados Government and lands of Farmers Plantation.

This land, Mr. Deputy President, is being acquired for the purpose of the siting of a new primary school. This school at Farmers is one of several schools being constructed under the second Education and Training Project financed by the Government of Barbados, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank.

The new school will facilitate the amalgamation of the Hillaby School and the Turners Hall School in St. Andrew. These two schools are included in part of a plan to merge several primary schools. Others will be amalgamated in the parishes of St. John, St. George, St. Michael, Christ Church, St. Peter, St. James and St. Philip under the project.

It was not possible when the Ministry of Education carried out a search to find a suitable site near to the existing schools at Hillaby or at Turners Hall because of the undulating terrain in that part of the Island. Construction of the new school at Farmers then will allow pupils to also have access to an adjoining playing field.

It is proposed also that when the new school is built that the two schools existing will cater to three to seven year olds who would find it difficult to travel to the new school. It also permits the Ministry of Education to implement its programme of providing school opportunities to three year olds.

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

SENATOR C. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Deputy President, I do not think there can be any controversy over the provision of up to date school facilities in this country and the process of which the Minister has spoken has been an ongoing one for some time. However, Sir, notwithstanding the substantial expenditure in education over the years which on an analysis shows that the bulk of the expenditure which appears in the annual Estimates is really an expenditure in terms of statutory expenditure for salaries and emoluments, and the amount actually left back in the Vote is for teaching equipment, books and the like is rather small, nevertheless over the years the amount expended is quite substantial and in this year's Estimates we provided almost \$56 million for pre-primary, primary and special education.

An analysis of that, however, when I looked at it in detail showed that almost \$43 million of that was attributable to emoluments and National Insurance and the like.

I speak today, Sir, on the concern of education in this sense, that although a lot more money is being spent on education, there is however an increasing evidence of illiteracy among the children of our country. I have been recently advised by a senior medical practitioner who is carrying out a programme of evaluation of persons seeking to migrate to the United States that there are 18 and 19 year olds coming to see him who are unable to read and they have attended secondary schools.

11.35 a.m.

I receive at this time of the year many job applications from secondary school people, sometimes graduates, and I am appalled at the level of literacy displayed in the letters.

SENATOR THE HON. SIR JAMES TUDOR: If the Honourable Member would give way, I think, Sir that all of us appreciate how necessary it is to have the restoration work to these buildings carried forward and completed, but not at the expense of the convenience of

the Houses of Parliament when they are conducting public business. I wonder therefore if you could find some means of conveying to those who are burrowing beneath us that they are disturbing us.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Tudor, I am in perfect agreement with this. I think that the Deputy Clerk has already done something about it and we shall have a cessation of this noise in a short while. Thank you.

You may resume, Senator Blackman.

SENATOR C. A. BLACKMAN: I am indebted to you for your assistance, Senator Tudor.

Sir, six years ago the then Minister set up a Commission called a National Advisory Commission on Education which became known by its acronym NACE, and I think two of our colleagues in this Chamber were members of that Committee. Senator Wickham served as its Deputy Chairman and Senator Shorey served for a brief while as a member of the Commission for, I think, about a year.

A number of useful reports were made on the structure of education, but I do not think those recommendations have been shared with the general populace, and I was forced to think about this when I saw a news item last week in one of our newspapers which referred to a report on co-education being presented to the Ministry of Education within the past few days. My concern, Sir, is that over the years while we have spent lots of money on education, while we are not necessarily getting value for our money in terms of what the end product is, in terms of the comments I have heard in terms of the illiteracy and what I have seen in our letters that come to us, there seems to be an absence of consensus really as to what structure we should put in place for our education.

Are we providing an education that is going to take us into the 21st century that we could be comfortable with? Are we usefully spending that money or are we just really building on mud clay foundations which are going to crack in the fullness of time? One of the things I found in researching the papers of NACE which were made available to me through the kind assistance of Senator Wickham was that the Committee found that the Barbados Educational system of yesteryear had as its core a system which prepared men and women to contribute to the needs as these were determined by either a ruling class, or by a particular view of the role of a colonial dependent society. The virtue and success of the Barbadian educational system have lain in its foundation on first principles which have enabled succeeding generations to absorb the sophistications of progress as they arose. Because of this basic structure ...

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, is the Senator going to make that a document of the Senate, because he is reading from something and none of us or most of us are altogether unaware of it.

SENATOR C. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Deputy President, I will undertake to make a copy available for the records of the Senate. It is not my own document and I would have to get copies made of it.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you.

SENATOR C. A. BLACKMAN: Sir, even the observations made by the Honourable Minister is instructive, because this is a document which I think may be somewhere in the files of the Ministry of Education and which as a policy maker, the Honourable Senator, the Minister, has no knowledge of its contents. What I would like to see, Sir, is that as we go forward in education, and we are going to have this thing coming up from time to time, there should be enough material available in the public realm of what is our educational policy. It should not be something where valuable recommendations of Committees like NACE over the years should languish in Government files and not be available to the general populace.

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy President, I think Senator Blackman is making an erroneous inference here. He is assuming that Senator Lewis has not seen the report. I think when Senator Lewis spoke he said he believed the majority of people had not seen it. I don't think the Senator can make that inference.

SENATOR C. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Deputy President, I accept the Senator's remarks. I think in my three years here, Sir, I have never encountered so many interruptions in any one speech I have made.

Sir, I will not be much longer because I do not want to flog a point that I think perhaps is hopefully taken. Some years ago the United Kingdom Government published a white paper on education which looked at the whole gamut of education, and coalesced in one document all their considerations, all the different options that were available to be considered for education. I would like to invite the Government to look at what NACE submitted, to look at what is available in terms of the educational development generally. The reports on co-education should be handed in and make those sorts of deliberations available to Senators and the general population, because the main object of that Commission was to undertake an overall examination and review of the education services in Barbados and report on their effectiveness in meeting national development needs.

For the amount of expenditure we expend on education, I think it is a matter that should not just be a matter for files which gather dust but a matter of

disseminating that information in a wider forum, because, Sir, occasionally we have come to conclusions and sometimes discussed issues against a background of either false information or erroneous information or misdirected information, and I think if we had all that was available made available to us, then perhaps we would not be out there saying things that perhaps have no basis or foundation.

With those remarks, Sir, I support the Resolution which is before us.

SENATOR Dr. L. L. SHOREY: Mr. Deputy President, I too would like to support the Resolution before this Honourable Chamber. In fact I can't imagine anyone in the Chamber not supporting the Resolution, in principle and in reality because it deals with one aspect, but only one aspect of the important matter of education of our youngsters.

We all recognise the terrific importance of good and appropriate physical conditions, but I would like to suggest to this Honourable Chamber and I believe that most would agree with me that though good physical conditions are a desirable component of a sound education programme, they do not constitute a sufficient condition; they are an essential but not a sufficient condition. Other things are necessary.

One of the concerns that has been brought home very forcibly to my mind during the past week is the related matter of provisions for the disabled, sometimes called the handicapped, and it is, I think, relevant in that we are today discussing a Government proposal for acquisition of land for the construction of a building for youngsters of primary age which is eminently desirable, much to be desired and supported, but, Sir, at the same time, it is fairly clear that there are other youngsters whose needs are being very inadequately met.

The Government's Estimates for this year provide something of the order of \$8 million as provision for the Child Care Board and it is a not inconsiderable sum, and it is a very praiseworthy provision, but it is equally clear, Mr. Deputy President, that it is not sufficient to provide for the appropriate facilities for youngsters who are handicapped.
11.45 a.m.

Sir, if you would permit me to remind this Honourable House that the Education Act of 1981 requires, Part I, Section 3, Subsection (b), that the Minister should provide a varied and comprehensive educational service; subsection (e), that he should ensure that efficient education is available to meet the needs of Barbados and it further later on gives him the authority to provide and/or supplement provisions for special education where special education is within the Act defined as education suited to the needs of persons who are disabled.

My concern, therefore, Sir, is that I am somewhat uneasy at what appears to be, I would call it, an unfortunate determination of priorities within the Government and, in fact, within the Education Ministry. For example, at the moment going on at Sherbourne there is the building of what is by report to be an examination centre and I find it...

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, I hope you do not mind. I wonder if we are debating the Ministry of Education, or debating Sherbourne, or the Child Care Board. We are debating the acquisition of land. I think the Honourable Senator is going around the world. I think he should stick to the Resolution.

SENATOR Dr. L. L. SHOREY: Mr. Deputy President, we are debating a Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land for the construction of a Primary School. It has to do, Sir, with the use of Government funds for the building of a school which falls within the purview of the Ministry of Education.

I was referring to other expenditure within the purview of the Ministry of Education and I was seeking to indicate that, in my view, there was an unfortunate selection of priorities for the use of Ministry funds.

If I may continue, Mr. Deputy President. What I think, therefore, that we need to look at is something to which Senator Blackman in another context has already referred and that is, how effectively do our primary schools serve our needs?

It is difficult, Mr. Deputy President, to speak about the use of public funds for the acquisition of land on which to build a primary school without at the same time, I think, giving some consideration to the kinds of uses to which that primary school is likely to be put and inevitably, therefore, attention to the kind and quality of education likely to be provided. It would seem to me that these are two inextricably intertwined aspects of the activity.

If then I could be permitted to say just a little bit about the kinds of concerns stemming directly from this whole matter and more directly in connection with what one hopes would be the outcome of the education provided, it would seem to me, Sir, that we will have to help teachers and there may well be for this purpose needed a clear and explicit policy statement, to look a little more closely at the way in which we handle the teaching of English because when we say that persons are basically illiterate, then we are, in fact, in our context normally referring to the inability of such persons to use with ease and competence what is generally termed Caribbean Standard English.

Part of the problem, I think, Sir, is that many of our teachers work on the assumption that the youngsters who come in at 3, 4 or 5 need only a little more polish to acquire competence in standard English.

Sir, if I could sidetrack for a moment because I would not like to omit it, I would like to pay particular tribute to the Government and the Ministry for seeking to facilitate the admission of youngsters under 5, the 3 and 4 years old. I think that the evidence on the importance of attendance at this age is so readily available that one needs not plead the case. It is a pretty wellfounded case.

If I may continue, part of the problem, Sir, I think that our youngsters encounter is that in the classroom they are often faced with the incredible difficulty of being expected to use with reasonable ease a form of language with which they are not readily familiar.

This is not the place, Sir, in which to go into detail about the available research. I would only wish to draw to the attention of this Honourable House that there is a lot of research in the Caribbean including work done here, in Trinidad and in Jamaica, in particular, for example, a UWI/UNESCO project of the early to middle seventies which emphasises the fact that youngsters coming through the systems have the greatest difficulty in coping with anything more than the most straightforward of sentence structures. I want to suggest, Sir, and I hope, therefore, that the Ministry will give consideration to this, that we need to give serious attention to using some of the methods and techniques of teaching a foreign language and, in fact, recognise that Bajan and Standard English are to use the professional term, different dialects of English. Where dialect has no connotations of superior or inferior, it merely means that the two groups of language structures are different in major respects.

11.55 a.m.

Sir, if Government would be prepared to give consideration to this view and if teachers could be given the necessary training to use different approaches, then I think that what we would be moving towards is helping youngsters acquire standard English as a second language so that they would speak Bajan in which they are going to be fluent in any case, but would also acquire mastery of standard English. Because it is very noticeable that the youngster who in the classroom appears tongue-tied has no difficulty in being very voluble on the playing field two minutes afterwards. And the available evidence suggests that one of the contributory factors to that is that he or she does not feel comfortable with the language in which he or she is expected to speak. If I were suddenly asked to continue saying what I am saying in Spanish, I would become so hesitant that to all intents and purposes, what I am saying would be unintelligible. I think that is part of the problem our youngsters have.

So, Sir, if we are going to make use, and this is the thrust of my contention, if our primary schools are in fact to make the contribution to the acquisition of language which we would wish them to make so that we will not as a previous speaker noted have youngsters at eighteen who are

basically unable to communicate satisfactorily, then I am suggesting that we may well need to give consideration to changing in a very significant way our approaches to the teaching and handling of language.

There is one other aspect, Sir, which I should like to mention and I would hope to establish its relevance very early. There is a lot of evidence that the way in which children progress and their actual orientation to learning is directly affected in every measure by the home environment. Once again, I have no intention of talking about socio cultural factors *per se*.

What I wish to argue, Sir, is that many of our parents, large numbers of our parents give less than adequate attention to this matter and give less than adequate support not because they are ill minded but because they simply do not know. I have, over the years, Sir, tried to argue that just as you tell people, the commercial business places certainly, about the importance of deodorant, perfume, *et cetera, et cetera*, toothpaste, we in education do not sufficiently help parents understand their role.

I am suggesting that if the Government of the country wishes to maximize the effect of the very considerable resources being poured continuously into education, the positive effect and outcome of those resources, and I am at one with Senator Blackman in implicitly commending Governments present and past for this input, the positive effect and outcome of those resources, then I wish to argue then it must give serious consideration to a programme of adult education which will help parents understand more clearly and with specifics the part that they can play, what they have to do, simple matters like how important it is, however tired you are, to read stories to youngsters, to talk to them and not to say to a three year old, I am busy, do not worry, I am busy. Because at three a youngster is beginning to explore his world.

Sir, I am pleading for this because there are thousands of youngsters outside who are not making maximum use of the resources we provide on an increasingly elaborate scale and desirably so, but who are not making use of those resources because the home support is in some measure less than it should.

I am therefore saying, Sir, in conclusion that if we are to get the maximum benefit from the resources we provide at primary level, and this measure before us is but one such contributory factor to those resources, the one contributory element in those resources then I am suggesting that we need also to help parents to be more aware of the part that they can and should play so that the nation as a whole can maximize the outcome from the specific resources it pours into education at all levels, and with reference to today's Debate, the resources which our country pours into primary education.

I support the Bill, Sir, without reservation.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Brathwaite.

SENATOR Miss V. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Deputy President, in rising to speak on the Resolution before this Honourable Chamber, I wish too, Sir, to commend and support Government's effort in this area of providing the necessary physical structures within which our young citizens may receive the education that they much need.

I wish to state, Sir, at the outset that I am a little bit unclear as a result of Senator Lewis' introduction of this Resolution in relation to the school to be situate in St. Thomas, whether or not this school will provide education for persons between the ages of three to seven years only. Perhaps, I could invite the Senator to clarify this position for me if he would be so minded.

I wish, Sir, also to state secondly that just a few weeks ago, speaking during the Estimates Debate under the Head of Education, I urged the Government not to concern itself only with the provision of the physical education plant and structures, but also to place an especial emphasis on the inclusion and the upgrading of sports in the schools' curricula in this country.

I think, Sir, that such a move on the part of Government would reflect the recognition on Government's part of the crucial role that sports can play in the development of well rounded personalities, multi talented personalities, individuals who are well adjusted to be adults in moral society.

I wish, Sir, to repeat that call today and to urge Government to look very carefully and to place very strong emphasis in including sports as a necessary part, as an integral part and as a very important part of the school's curricula. Sir, if the school at St. Thomas is to cater only to persons between the ages of 3 to 7, I wish also to.....

12.05 p.m.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Can I correct the Senator immediately? Because if you repeat something twice, it means obviously that you did not hear the point I was making. I made the point that the school at Farmers is to be a primary school. I made the point that the school is going to be sited immediately next to an area which Government acquired for use as a playing field. I made both of those points. I made a further point that the 2 schools which will form the nucleus of the people for the primary school will not be abandoned in the first instance. They will be retained in order that Government may commence its programme of intake of pupils 3 years old in the 2 schools that are going to be vacated. So that the 2 schools will still be feeder schools in the first instance for the Farmers School which is a full primary school going up to 11-Plus.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR Miss V. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Deputy President, I am deeply indebted to Senator Lewis. However, I should point out to him that I did hear very well what he said in the first instance. I did commence my speech this morning by indicating to him that I did not fully understand. So therefore it is not quite fair to state that I did not hear. Secondly, I wish to thank him for having provided the elucidation on my second call even though he did not take the opportunity to do so when I first requested that it be done. Thirdly, I did not proceed on the assumption that the school will only provide for persons between the ages of 3 to 7. I prefaced my remarks by the small word "if". I said if the school is to provide education for those persons. I am grateful that Senator Lewis has seen fit at this time to clear up my misunderstanding.

Next Sir, I wish to point out to Senator Lewis again that the siting of a primary school or indeed a secondary school, a school of whatever nature, next to a playing field in no way indicates at least to my mind that Government intends to include sport as a necessary part of its curriculum. There are many schools in this Island, Sir, which are sited next to playing fields and indeed the children of those schools and the children of the villages from which those children come do use the playing fields. What I am speaking, Sir, about is the inclusion by Government of sports in its curriculum in a controlled environment with a focus on sports to indicate to the persons who receive their education in these educational institutions that sports are just as important as the academic subjects which they are taught.

Sir, if I may continue, I was stating earlier that I wish today to repeat that call and urge Government to look again more seriously at including sports in its curriculum. I also wish to laud the efforts of those persons who were presently seeking to put the inter-school sports on the pedestal which it once enjoyed. It is a well known fact, Sir, that the inter-school sports provided a much welcomed avenue for young persons to give vent to youthful energies in an environment of controlled and healthy rivalry. Sir, I think that most of us here are products of such an educational system and we know the great benefits that we have derived therefrom and I would wish Government not to deny the younger persons in our midst of this kind of activity.

I wish also, Sir, to touch very briefly on a much troubling area which has been concerning this nation in recent times that of suicides and attempted suicides among our school children. I wish for Government's benefit in this respect, Sir, to cite Section 3, Subsection E of the Education Act, Cap. 41 of the Laws of Barbados and here, Sir, it states the functions of the Minister to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental, physical, social, and economic development of the community by ensuring that sufficient education is available to meet the needs of Barbados. I wish

also, Sir, to point the attention of this Chamber to Section 6 of the same Act where it provides for a National Advisory Commission on Education. Sir, at Section 7, Subsection (1) the Act provides that the Minister may establish Special Committees as he considers necessary to advise with respect to the performance of his function. So Government is well equipped. The Minister and the Ministry of Education are well equipped to look and to investigate very fully into this troubling phenomenon which has been plaguing this society. I think that all right thinking persons, Sir, would recognise that this matter is of grave concern. There must be an answer to the question – why is it that young children in our midst are becoming so disaffected and discontented? What is wrong?

I wish, Sir, to call on Government today to use the means at its disposal either by the National Advisory Commission on Education or by the establishment of a Special Committee or indeed, Sir, the Act provides that he may use the offices of both bodies to investigate fully into any matters which he thinks need to be investigated and to report back to him. So the Parents-Teachers Associations can also play a vital role here. Indeed, the Act provides in the First Schedule that parents and teachers should be given a voice on these Committees as being persons who represent the varying interests in the community.

I wish, Sir, also to point Government's attention to the fact that this being Child Month there can be no better time than to direct its attention to the problems which confront our school children. Mr. Deputy President, today marks officially the end of Child Month but in no way should it mark the end of Government's focus or indeed society's focus on a whole at the problems which are affecting our youth.

Again Sir, I wish to support the Resolution but I wish to repeat my call firstly for the inclusion of sports as a necessary and integral part of our schools' curricula and, secondly, for an investigation into the problems which are plaguing today's school children. I thank you, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator McClean.

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: Mr. President, in rising to support the Resolution, I would like to draw attention to the fact that today we meet to discuss 2 such Resolutions and nothing else and one must ask the question whether 2 such Resolutions are considered to be adequate business to call a meeting of the Senate unless we intend to deal with educational matters in some depth.....

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy President, I consider this question to be out of order. I do not see what it has to do with the Resolution before us.

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: Yes, I continue Mr. Deputy President – unless we intend to deal with educational matters in some depth. So I would like to spend a few moments raising a few matters pertaining to primary education in particular and to education in general.

I think the time has come where we must ask ourselves the question – what is the appropriate role of primary education in Barbados at this time? There was a time when education was preparation for the world of work, when many students left school at the age of 14 and went to work in various areas across Barbados in the cane fields and elsewhere. Today most students continue their education until the secondary stage and, therefore, the purpose of primary education will be somewhat different. There is no longer a terminal activity in terms of formal education. It is among other things a preparation for a higher stage of education. But in that context we should, therefore, address ourselves as to what is the role of education in terms of satisfying the needs of young people. I want to suggest that we should see this as the occasion when young people are afforded the maximum opportunity of self discovery, discovering your own talents, the maximum opportunity to allow their personalities to unfold in terms of whatever gifts have been given to them by the Creator.

I do not think at the moment that our primary education system is so focused. It seems to be focused rather more on the 11-Plus Examination. It seems to be focused entirely on preparation for secondary education and I do not think it is doing an entirely good job of that.
12.15 p.m.

We need therefore to pause and review that entire situation. We must recognise that even in terms of preparing people for secondary level education, that at that stage secondary education and tertiary education should not be entirely focussed on academics. You must recognise that there are many people who have great gifts in areas other than academics who at the moment remain undiscovered because we have no mechanism for discovering talent. We therefore need to revamp the primary curriculum and to put other arrangements in place at the primary level to ensure that the person with the potential to be excellent in some aspect of the arts, to be excellent in sport, to be excellent in whatever area of human endeavour, that we give that person a chance to give an early indication of their potential and that we have systems in place that will allow that child to capitalise on its potential.

Right now our primary education is very much a prison of the personality for a lot of young people. We have a lot of young brilliant people with little inclination towards academics who are forced to go to school to engage in that exercise and hardly anything else, and therefore find themselves being frustrated, experience a deep sense of alienation and develop various complexes, inferiority complexes, in terms of their own ability to cope in terms of

the way in which it is represented to them that they ought to be able to cope. I think that is fundamentally wrong. That way we are squandering much of the genius that is conferred upon this society from time to time as young people come into this world. We have to address that problem and we should start sooner rather than later. So when we are deciding to build new schools we should think about how that new school is going to relate to some new strategy for primary education.

Way beyond that, at the time of building new schools also we have to address the resource requirement in terms of teachers and things like that. I would have been interested in hearing what are the implications of these arrangements, that is, the Farmers school along with the other two that will be retained in some way for three to seven year olds, what is that going to imply in terms of the requirement for teachers, and what is it going to imply in terms of adjustments to the establishment for teachers.

We have – up to now, I do believe, I do not think it has changed as yet – a system in Barbados where there is a set number of established posts in the teaching profession and these posts are allocated to various schools, and invariably the established posts are far less than the required number of posts, so that at any given school you always find a high proportion of temporary teachers, some of whom have been working for many years, some who are well qualified professionally and otherwise as teachers but they cannot get appointed because there are no vacancies on the establishment.

In some instances, especially at the secondary level, these teachers have to go through the humiliation from year to year of applying for one or two vacancies which crop up, 20, 30, 40, 50, whatever number of teachers applying for one or two vacancies that would have cropped up within the school system, most of them to hear that they would not have been successful and must continue in a temporary situation.

I believe the time has come to abandon all of that. If we establish that now and in the next two, three, four years to come there is a requirement for a given number of teachers within our system or at a particular school, it should be possible that that number of people should be able to obtain permanent appointment to the teaching establishment. If perchance some time in the future there is a reduction in need for teachers, you must find a way of addressing that problem, but the way to do it is not to keep qualified people in a permanent condition of limbo where they have to from year to year go on not knowing when they will be called upon to exit the teaching profession at very short notice. That leads to a situation where they exit before they are given notice. It leads to a situation where they lack enthusiasm in the discharge of their duties and so on, and that is another area which we need to address. That is one that can be easily cured. There is no good reason why

we should have at a school the need for 70 teachers and less than 70 people can get appointed to that teaching staff.

With that, I would want once again to indicate that we support the measure in the sense that it is going to provide better facilities for school children in that area of our country, but at the same time we feel that the opportunity should be taken to look at the overall role of primary education and also to look at the way in which Government deals with the teachers.

I thank you.

SENATOR N. W. BOXILL: Mr. Deputy President, I am just going to be short. First I would like to draw to the Minister's attention that in future when they are bringing maps here for the Senate to look at they have to get something more properly detailed. I am sure I can almost speak for the people on the opposite side. I only know where the place is because I happened to represent St. Thomas, but that does not really tell you much to bring something that you really cannot understand at all.

Anyhow, what I would like to draw to the Minister's attention is that the area in which they are going to put this school has a road about two miles long, an exceptionally long road, coming from St. Thomas into St. James, and I am wondering if they have given any thought to transportation, getting these children to and from the school. You will get children coming from the Arch Hall area coming up that way, and you will get children coming from Hillaby as well as St. Andrew coming down, and I think you should give some consideration to having transportation running through that road, because it is exceptionally long. I would not like to have to walk through there in a pair of tight shoes, but I know it because I happened to represent the area.

With those few remarks I would like him to give that some serious thought, because you do not want to open a big, lovely school out there and then cannot get the children to and from the school.

SENATOR THE REV. CANON I. McK. JONES: Mr. Deputy President, I certainly support the Resolution in putting up these schools and improving the physical environment for the children, but as has been said before, I cannot understand how it is that with all these improvements in the physical environment and in the physical spaces for children and so on. When I was in school we had no cellox screens, no anything; it was one building with all the school children in it. You could learn from primary to seventh standard, yet we were able to do extremely well under those almost trying circumstances. Now with all these improvements you are getting, as I had to tell people in church on Sunday, an extra amount of children getting zero in Arithmetic and zero in English at eleven. As I had to say on Sunday, if anything like that

happened to us when we were children, we would not be able to sit down for months, but you can get all this happening now.

12.25 p.m.

I am wondering, Sir, if the Government is taking sufficient interest in trying to understand why it is we are getting these returns for all the money that we are spending. Something has got to be wrong with the teaching profession or with the teachers. Something has got to be wrong. Don't worry to tell me that I could teach a boy or a girl for five years and then to get zero in the subject I taught them. I would resign school immediately. I would consider myself a total failure.

Now what I am suggesting, Sir, is that it is good for us to have or for Government to think even of having schools for children from three to seven, but I am hoping that the Government is paying close attention to the type of teachers they put in those schools, because those three year old children are children who do not even know how to use the toilets or washbasins. You have to have the kind of people who are trained in this kind of work and who have the kind of patience and the kind of love and care for that kind of age group. You can't just build a school and say three to seven go inside there and not mind what teachers you have inside there. I hope that the Government is paying very close attention to the type of teachers they are going to put to teach those three to sevens and also the kind of teachers they are getting for the seven to eleven age groups. Thank you very much.

SENATOR Mrs. V. C. FRASER: Mr. Deputy President, in supporting the Resolution, I would like to see that the physical facilities are well guarded with fences around the building. We hear so much now about drugs and of people being able to get into schools and being able to destroy the school property. I think we need more and proper security if we are going to be building new schools. Also the whole question of agriculture as you know is a very big one. Everybody has something negative to say and not very many positive things, so we have got to start with the young ones. I feel that schools like these that we are going to be reorganising or where we are erecting a new school, we need to have special plots of land where the children can be practically involved in agricultural activity on a day to day basis, not just as I see at some of the schools where they plough the land and they leave it and it is nothing but grass. You may see one crop and then you come back and you don't see another for two years or something of the sort.

I would like to see fruit trees all around the place as I have seen at the Parkinson School, which is very

commendable. Added to that vegetables that can be utilised in the home economics room so that they would not have to be buying those vegetables to send up the cost of the schools expenditure.

Another thing that is very important to me, and Senator Boxill brought out that and I would like to support him on it as a person who has taught courses all over this country, is this question of transportation, because some of these children have to go very far to get to school. It is really difficult for some of them, because of the time they have to get up and the kind of work some of them have to do. They have to tend the sheep and put out the cow and things like that and then to walk that long distance. I am afraid a lot of them still do it, Senator Boxill.

The question of a good handicraft division that is going to be related to the needs of tourists and tourism must be looked at. I say this because many people have been talking to me about orders for certain institutions. They have been ordering bottles, they have been ordering little baskets and things like these. They can never get the supply for the orders they have ordered, and I feel that we have to do this in the schools. I have seen some excellent work at BMEX from the schools, and I believe that the schools can be the place where this type of commercial activity can start and when the children leave they will go on to a suitable job employing themselves where they know all the techniques about making these baskets or chairs or woodwork or whatever it is. It must be utilised in that way, not just for show. But incorporated in that must be courses to teach them about management, which is vitally important.

My last point, Sir, is to do with the handicapped. We must be concerned with building facilities in any kind of building, school or whatever, for the handicapped. There are many new buildings going up and they do not have ramps, they do not have toilets to suit the handicapped. Some people are not totally handicapped, they might be just partially handicapped, but nevertheless these facilities should be there in any modern building. You don't want to go and knock down the toilets again after you have built the schools and spend more money.

With those few remarks, Mr. Deputy President, I again support the Resolution. Thank you.

SENATOR THE HON. SIR JAMES TUDOR: Mr. Deputy President, I think that my contribution to this debate will not only be short, but will be perhaps of a different kind. I so much support and welcome all that has been said on this subject both in the particular line of providing a new school and also in the general line in respect of the anxiety which all the speeches have shown about our education system. What this debate has done for me is to open up a line of thinking which I had not quite frankly developed before, and it is a pity that a debate of this quality on education particularly will not be read by more than

perhaps a few hundred people, at most a couple of thousands. It really is a pity because it would tell us something about our form of government.

Most people believe that when we meet in these Chambers discussing education, we must necessarily be at loggerheads with each other. This is not the case here today and it is not generally the case on other topics. I have two basic ideas about education. They are not original but they are mine. One is, an educational system has to be of some value to be able to identify its own defects. I cannot imagine a case in which a thoroughly bad educational system, if there was one, letting you know that it was a bad system because the ingredients of getting to grips with problems would not certainly be provided by the system itself. I think that you have to have, and I am not saying this in any spirit of complacency or boastfulness, a fairly good and viable educational system to be able to identify the defects of that system. And I think that while we should not in any way be complacent or to rest on our laurels, we ought, I think, to see how many improvements and to what extent we can make these improvements, are possible to the system we have.

The second point is this, and this has to do with the education now of politicians or of legislatures. I think that when we have a debate like this and we have explored in some detail, though not perhaps in any case of any great depth, the defects of an educational system, we may perhaps be telling ourselves that it would be better for us if we had a constitutional system which allows, for instance, Ministers to belong to one House but to speak in both, because all of the issues raised by all of us here today would have been more usefully addressed if we had had a Minister of Education present to take up this matter with us. I think it only requires perhaps only a little imagination to look at the ways in which we can make the constitutional system we have inherited work better by giving some thought to sensible amendment. It ought to be possible for instance when we are discussing this matter today for the Minister of Education to be here with us for an hour or for as long as it takes to meet all the points which we have raised, very good points indeed, very important points, and for us then to continue to debate after we have heard him and vote on it as we see fit.

12.35 p.m.

I think we are coming to the stage where when matters of great public importance have to be debated, we might have to consider allowing those who hold the constitutional responsibility of Ministers to move freely between the two Houses belonging to one, and voting in one, but, certainly, attending to the genuine enquiries and the issues raised in the other House.

This is what the debate has taught me and I am very grateful to have been able to take part in it to the slight extent that I have merely to say that I have been helped

personally by all of the extremely good contributions which have been made but, I think that the point I just brought out is worth considering whether or not we ought not to give our weight to an amendment to the Constitution which will allow holders of ministerial office to come and address both Houses when matters of this sort of importance are being considered although, of course, only voting in the House of which they are quite properly members.

Applause.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, the very novel, not so novel in Trinidad and Tobago, comment made by the last speaker has not escaped my attention and I have mentioned it in another arena. I believe that from the rapping on the table that there are several other Senators who would certainly welcome the possibility of such a new undertaking.

Aside.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: You would get a two-thirds majority on that.

There were so many varying and interesting comments made on both sides that I would not wish to venture a reply to most of them, just to make an observation that some of the points made by Senators, the very point they are making has already been taken care of in the Regulations made under the Education Act and I refer to the points made about including in the curriculum of schools areas like agriculture, physical education and matters like that.

With those very brief comments I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE COMPULSORY
ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN OF PARCELS
OF LAND SITUATE AT MASON HALL
STREET, ST. MICHAEL FOR THE
CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW
ST. MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Order No. 2 was called – To move the passing of a Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition by the Crown of parcels of land situate at Mason Hall Street, St. Michael for the construction of the new St. Mary's Primary School.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, this Resolution deals with Government's

proposal to acquire five parcels of land for the siting of the St. Mary's Primary School in Bridgetown at a location in Mason Hall Street.

At the very outset I would like to make reference to a comment made during the earlier debate and to say that my understanding of the maps permitted me to discover the locations. I agree that in that instance the maps appeared to be somewhat inadequate. I am not certain that the same thing can be said of the maps which are now being circulated.

The acquisition of parcels of land for the St. Mary's School has been going on for some time. Efforts were being made to acquire six parcels adjoining each other which would mean dislocation of existing housing and other accommodation but Government has proceeded with these after negotiating with the several tenants.

In one instance at the point of trying to complete a survey of the land to be acquired, the tenant seemed no longer willing to cooperate with Government so that they have had to proceed with five parcels rather than with the six parcels originally contemplated.

This school is another of those schools continuing a project which the former Government had commenced in pursuance of upgrading the schools in the primary school system. I believe that all Senators are aware of the efforts of the Government to continue improving the plant, not only in the primary school system but in the secondary school system.

I was almost tempted in the earlier debate to make a comment about illiteracy. The problem is that illiteracy traverses not only the primary school system but it goes right through up to the tertiary level and it is really an unfortunate thing. All of us around this table, I am certain, are concerned about it.

I believe we are also concerned about the fact that mediocrity in our community is sometimes lauded when, in effect, it needs to be shown up for what it is. We all, therefore, have a common task to put our shoulders together in our efforts to seek by whatever means to improve the system as exists and it is for that reason I believe that on this side we welcome the various comments which have been made today.

With those brief remarks I wish to move that this Resolution do now pass.

SENATOR D. A. COMMISSIONG: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to support the Resolution. Over the past few weeks I have had occasion to become somewhat

familiar with this issue and it is against that background that I should like to share a few brief comments with the Senate.

It is, indeed, a welcome development, as Senator Lewis pointed out. It is something that had been promised to the people of that part of the Bridgetown area for many years. As I understand it, what is going to happen is that the new school that will be built will be an amalgamation of the existing St. Mary's Junior School and the St. Mary's Infant School which are now located in different buildings on Mason Hall Street.

There has been a long history of promises made to parents of the children at these schools and they had reached the point where they had begun to despair and they had good reasons for this because, for example, the St. Mary's Junior School is in a state of great disrepair. It is, I understand one of the, if not the oldest, primary school buildings still presently in use in Barbados.

There are massive cracks in the walls. There is a severe flooding problem. Any time the heavy rains come they face a potentially dangerous situation in the school grounds so the parents have been very concerned and they have been very worried that these promises had been made, I understand, dating back to the last regime and they could see nothing happening and I should like to encourage this Government to treat the matter as one of urgency.

We recognize that what we have before us today is simply the Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of the land. This is just the first step in the whole process. I will urge that the whole question of building the facility be treated as an urgent one and not only that, but that the parents of the children at these schools be kept informed.

As I said, the parents are very concerned as of now and I know that they will welcome the fact that the Senate is meeting today on this matter but I would like officials of the Ministry of Education to keep the parents, in particular, informed as to developments. They have a Parent/Teacher Association and they can be informed through that institution.
12.45 p.m.

I want to stress this because I have come to realize that this problem of lack of information is one that bedevils in particular residents in this Bridgetown area and in general, people in Barbados.

We have Government making promises to people for example about moving houses in the vicinity of the Sewerage Project and people not kept informed as to when they are to move, where they are to move or anything of this nature. And it creates a lot of uncertainty and distress.

So I am urging the Ministry of Education not to fall into that trap, keep the parents informed. I think Senator Blackman would understand what I am talking about. We are reaching a stage in Barbados where our citizens are demanding a more participatory democracy, and you have to consult with them, keep them informed, otherwise, you get situations like the Dash Valley protest.

Aside.

Laughter.

SENATOR D. A. COMMISSIONG: Senator Blackman asked me to keep quiet on that point.

But it is a serious point because anyone with eyes to see will recognize that there is a new spirit abroad in Barbados. People are not simply content to sit back any more. They are bestirring themselves. Policy-makers need to know that we must consult people and give them the necessary information.

A second point I should like to make about the building of this school is that I am happy that the Ministry of Education did not make a decision to take the school outside of that particular area, and I will tell you why that makes me so happy. The students of the St. Mary's School come primarily from the Baxter's Road area, the New Orleans, Mason Hall Street, Lightfoot Lane and that general area of Bridgetown.

Aside.

SENATOR D. A. COMMISSIONG: I think you may get one or two from Greenfield. In fact, some even come from as far away as the Back Ivy in St. Michael East. But the vast majority come from that basic area surrounding the school. It is one of the poorer working class areas in Barbados, not only in Bridgetown, as most people would know.

And I recall recently when the decision was made to close down the Hindsbury Primary School because of the specific problems that had been experienced there, we had some commentators making the comment that an area like the area surrounding the Hindsbury Primary School with the reputation, whether the reputation was a fair one or not, with that type of reputation, the comment was made that a school should not be located in that type of environment and that you should take the school out of that type of environment. I think that this is a wrong point of view.

I believe that if you have problems with the living area or the environment that the correct approach is to deal with those problems, not to run away from the area and leave the area to further deteriorate. I am speaking in general now. I am not referring specifically to the Hindsbury example because obviously with Hindsbury, you had particular

problems that erupted in someone coming into the school and actually injuring a teacher. But I am referring to the general comment that was made, that schools should be taken out of areas like that. I think it is a wrong opinion. I believe instead what we should be seeking to do is to uplift that living environment and to deal with the problems there, not to run away from it and leave it to further deteriorate.

In any event, Mr. Deputy President, it is a fallacy to believe that good schools cannot operate in poor working class environments. It is a fallacy and it is a fallacy that is borne out by the example of the Westbury Primary School and the Wesley Hall Primary School in Bridgetown, both to my mind examples of successful and certainly in the case of the Wesley Hall School, outstanding Barbadian Primary Schools. So I think that those examples in themselves prove the fallacy. The Westbury School is in fact doing, it seems to me, particularly well, not simply in the academic area but in the other areas of social activity, dance and drama, they have been outstanding participants, as I understand it, in the NIFCA Festival.

So I believe that Government made the right decision to retain the school in its present location, its present general location. What needs to be done now is to put in place a first class modern educational facility in this area. We have to give the people what they deserve. Already the basics are there for such a facility to be built. I have done a little bit of research on this.

The St. Mary's Junior School is fortunate in that it has a very good teacher pupil ratio. There is at present approximately one teacher to every 14 students. I do not think that you would find this type of ratio in many primary schools in Barbados. So it has some advantages going for it. In addition to that, the majority of these teachers are young qualified teachers. In fact, two of them are university graduates and three others are presently attending the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies.

From my relations with the teachers, from my observations they seem to be a committed group. They seem to be a very committed group. As I mentioned they are particularly well qualified. In fact, one teacher even has a special qualification in the teaching of slow learners. This is important for the St. Mary's Junior School because it has faced a problem because of its lack of facilities. You find that many students about to enter primary school have been opting instead not for St. Mary's but for other schools like Westbury and Wesley Hall, well Westbury in particular. This is a reflection of course not of the standard of teaching at St. Mary's but of its poor facilities. Compared with Westbury, its facilities are very, very poor. Students have been opting for the Westbury School instead and it would appear that St. Mary's is ending up with perhaps some of the slower students, the slow learners.

12.55 p.m.

The fact that it has at least one teacher who has some expertise in teaching slow learners is to its advantage. The point I am making is that already the St. Mary's Schools have in place a number of, for want of a better word facilities that can be built upon to make the new facility a truly first class one.

I would like to conclude by once again making the point that the people of the City and particularly that part of the City are looking forward expectantly after waiting for many long years, and I say this after having spoken to some of the parents, to a modern, comfortable, and inspiring school environment to be created for them. They appreciate that it will not be one of the larger schools. The junior school has at present approximately 140 students and the infants school has I understand some 80 to 90. So we are looking at a total student body of about 150. But I would like to urge the Ministry of Education to exercise some foresight in this matter and not simply to provide a facility for 150 students. It would be much more sensible to provide some excess capacity because already the Westbury School is overcrowded. The Westbury School cannot manage the demand that is being placed upon it and, therefore, it will be wise from the standpoint of the Ministry to provide some excess capacity at the new St. Mary's to ease some of the burden off the Westbury School.

So we are looking forward to a modern facility. In particular, the teachers are looking forward to a facility with a science laboratory. At present they teach Science at the school but there is no facility. There is no laboratory. Therefore, it is done on a makeshift basis. So they will be looking forward to a science laboratory and I hope that the Minister responsible, Senator Lewis, could take back these comments to the Minister of Education. They expect a science laboratory. They are looking forward to an art room. At present they do art at the school. But again the basic facility of an art room is not there. Even the fundamental facility of separate classrooms is not present at the present St. Mary's Junior School, something as fundamental as that in this day and age and also a sick-bay. It needs not to be too elaborate but a simple facility for dealing with the everyday illnesses and injuries that school children experience and, last but not least, an all-purpose hard court. At present the students have to trek all the way to the Westbury Primary School in order to engage in a game like netball. I do not think it would be asking too much for an all-purpose hard court for the new school.

I said finally but one other thing. The Specialist Teaching Programme, as I understand it, has recently been introduced by the Ministry of Education where specialist teachers in mathematics and English, for example, are being placed in selected primary schools. Perhaps that programme can soon make its way to St. Mary's.

With those few comments, Mr. Deputy President, I conclude by once again supporting this Resolution.

Applause.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Wickham.

SENATOR J. C. W. WICKHAM: Mr. President, a few comments I have to make might just as easily and with equal relevance been made in the previous Resolution. But I did not want to prolong that one and I have a further reason to be glad that I delayed my intervention to this one, since this affords me the opportunity of saying 2 things of specific reference to St. Mary's. First of all and to correct some of the things that Senator Comissiong has said. The oldest school is not the one he identified but in fact the one which is now the infants school which I am happy to claim the privilege of attending that school. If he noted the architecture, that is the only building in the Island with fluted burrowed columns of wood in the front patio. It was destroyed by both hurricanes, the hurricanes of 1831 and 1898. So that is one point and it has in fact an excellent reputation. I say that without any immodesty. It is older than St. Giles.

In the general tone of these debates on the importance of education a particular thing seems to have been missed by all the speakers, not intentionally I know. First of all, there is always a tendency when we speak about education, in fact, when we speak about anything to say that the Government should do this and that this should be done. But we always leave ourselves out of it. That is, it is always somebody else's business to do it. In the realm of education, it seems to me that the personal responsibility is the responsibility of each person to educate those people around him. It seems to me supreme. That is in fact the secret of our success.

Our communities have got strangled. At one time when people lived near to the schools so that the parents and the school without any Parents-Teachers Association were identified with both the Headmaster and the school itself which was a centre of activity. We do not have that now. Once upon a time parents used to bother about whether their children did their lessons. The parents are not even at home when the children come home these days. Once upon a time you had to get home in time for the meal which was a family affair. However humble the home was the child had to get home in time to eat together. Now with Kentucky Fries and threats of other invasions, that is out of the way.

So you see we have a responsibility. Parliament itself has a responsibility. Parliament itself has done nothing to restore the library to educate us and you know that is a responsibility which we have, and we cannot blame anybody else for that.

Applause.

SENATOR J. C. W. WICKHAM: As to the point which Senator Lewis made about mediocrity being lauded, that is in fact one of the symptoms of mediocrity that they cannot recognise excellence. It breeds mediocrity. It is very sad that many of the faults and results of our so-called educational system, many of the products of that system and the poor results must be blamed on not so much the system as the responsibility of the people outside it to respect what is going on. There have been too many cases where the discipline by the school especially elementary schools has been upset by parental intrusions and upsetting of that discipline. The schoolmaster is no longer, whether he deserves it or not is another question, but he certainly is no longer the pillar of respectable behaviour or example. Even if in fact you knew that some of them were not exactly paragons of virtue, yet the fact that he was a schoolmaster did make him somebody to be respected and when that goes everything goes.

The other point I want to make is that there was a time when our old system of education was established with as many flaws as it had, the people who established it knew what they wanted to produce for the population.
1.05 p.m.

They knew that they wanted only people who could read and write and do a little arithmetic, but they were short-sighted. They did not realise that as soon as you opened that door you opened the door to further ... You cannot teach a man to read and write only, because that learning feeds upon itself. It does not feed upon everybody, but in significant numbers, and as soon as you open that door you open a bigger door, and we have forgotten that. We think that we have to provide everything. All you have to do is to provide the opportunity and provide hope. That is all you have to do.

All of us in here are products of poor families. There is not one of us in here who started with nothing, not one of us, and if you want to say that we are not a credit to an educational system, you are spitting up in the air and letting it fall in your own face.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy President.

Applause.

SENATOR Dr. L. L. SHOREY: Mr. Deputy President, I will be much briefer this time. Let me start out by saying that I too, as did Senator Wickham, share very strongly Senator Lewis' concerns about mediocrity in our country, and I believe that Senator Wickham's subsequent comments have emphasised it much more effectively than I ever could. I should just like to express my appreciation to him for the very clear thinking evident in his words for identifying what the problem is really.

Secondly, also, Sir, let me say that I share the view expressed by Senator Comissiong that I am delighted that Government has found it possible to retain the school in the milieu where it has existed for such a long time, because like my predecessor who spoke a moment ago I had the privilege of attending that school, one of the schools in Barbados which I attended and for which I am eternally grateful so far as the education I received is concerned.

Sir, I will just make one little point on that one and then pass on. Having left that school I learnt nothing new in English or in Arithmetic until I reached the fourth form some four years afterwards, and I think that other persons who attended primary schools of that era – I would not want to say how many years ago – can find it possible to say much the same thing, and I believe it is the kind of outcome that we are hoping to get back to and achieve in the 1980's what we used to achieve – I'll give a hint – in the 1930's.

One last thing, and this was quite implicit in I think a lot of what Senator Comissiong said, the matter of tradition. We may build a new school but we cannot build a tradition like that. Traditions cannot be legislated, they cannot be created overnight, they grow with the passage of time, and I am only hoping that it will be somehow possible that the new school, which will be a new building physically, will somehow manage to retain something of the ethos and outlook which did so much to influence those of us who were privileged to pass through its doors many years ago.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, just about two or three remarks to close and to ask that the Resolution be passed. I am advised from information on file that provision is being made for an amalgamated school population to take the place of the St. Mary's Infants and the St. Mary's Junior School population rising to some 420 pupils over time, so that whereas it will probably start with 140, 150, 160 or 170, the very point Senator Comissiong was making for expansion is being anticipated by the Ministry of Education.

There can be no doubt that St. Mary's Infants School has an excellent reputation, as seen by its representatives here today, and that is generally known in the community. I believe that we all share the concern that not only the intrusions of persons in the vicinity of the schools, but even the parental intrusions in the schools, which we have heard about in more recent times, they now demand that schools have security guards, and this is an expensive arrangement, in addition to the security fences that another Senator mentioned earlier today.

I am advised that on the other side of the coin we are trying to modernise the school plant and that provision is being made in all of our new schools to facilitate the handicapped by way of ramps and special toilet facilities.

I should also like to give an assurance about the immediacy of this school by saying that tenders for the construction of the new St. Mary's School will be closing on 7th June, 1989 and it is envisaged that construction will start by October 1989. Provision is made in this year's Capital Estimates for the start of this new school.

I should now like to beg that this Resolution do now pass.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, I believe that there is some information we could pass on to the Senate. We had hoped to deal with another matter today of Public Business. My understanding is that the Special Select Committee has not completed its meetings and hopes to meet later today after lunch.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: If there is no other business, Sir, I would like to move that the Senate be adjourned until next Wednesday, 7th June.

SENATOR C. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. Deputy President, on the motion for the Adjournment, I just want to draw to the attention of the Senate that whilst we are in the process of celebrating the 350th anniversary of Parliament, we should not let it go unrecorded that this Senate as a Senate is observing its 25th year of existence and that of that 25 years Senator Wickham is really the long standing Senator in that he has served 12 and 1/2 years of that 25.

1.15 p.m.

Certainly, Sir, the measure of the contribution he made today is a suitable reflection upon his seniority and standing in this Honourable Senate.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, I am reminded that the facilities here are presently undergoing some refurbishment and that there are no lunchroom facilities here. I am advised by the Acting Clerk that the arrangements for lunch today will see us travelling to Pelican Village where according to the Clerk appropriate arrangements have been made.

The adjournment which I proposed earlier should be until Wednesday, 7th June, 1989, at 11 o'clock a.m.

The question that the Senate do now adjourn until Wednesday, 7th June, 1989, at 11.00 a.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to, and Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly.

1.17 p.m.

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