

J. Williams

THE SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1986 – 91

SENATE

Wednesday, October 24, 1990.

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, on Wednesday, October 24, 1990, at 11.15 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour Senator Sir Frank L. WALCOTT, K.A., O.B.E., LL.D., (President);

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

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

Senator A. MORRISON;

Senator N. W. BOXILL;

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 Hon. Dr. C. D. CLARKE (Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs);

Senator A. W. A. McCLEAN; and

Senator Dr. F. W. ALLEYNE.

Prayers were led by Fr. Errington Massiah.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Senate is in session.

MESSAGES FROM HER EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

Mr. PRESIDENT: Message No. 8/1990 from Her Excellency the Governor-General to the Honourable the Senate reads as follows:

"Her Excellency the Governor-General has the honour to inform The Honourable The Senate that, acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, the seat of Ms. Gertrude Lilian Eastmond in the Senate has been declared vacant with effect from 15th October, 1990, under section 39(1)(f) of the Constitution.

Her Excellency further has the honour to inform The Honourable The Senate that, in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister, Miss Yvonne Veronica Walkes has been appointed to be a member of the Senate under section 36(2) of the Constitution with effect from the 17th October, 1990."

Another Message from Her Excellency the Governor-General to the Honourable the Senate, Message No. 9/1990:

"Her Excellency the Governor-General has the honour to inform The Honourable The Senate that she will be absent from the country during the periods 26th October, 1990 to 1st November, 1990 and 13th to 26th November, 1990 on private visits to the United States of America and Jamaica, respectively.

Under the provisions of section 29(1)(b) of the Constitution, the Chief Justice, The Honourable Sir Denys Williams, GCM, will perform the functions of the office of Governor-General during the periods of Her Excellency's absence."

Mr. DEPUTY CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Walkes has taken the Oath of Allegiance and is present this morning.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Kindly show her into the Chamber, please.

Senator Miss Yvonne Veronica Walkes, escorted by the Deputy Clerk, entered the Chamber and took her place.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Walkes, on behalf of the Senate I welcome you to this Honourable Chamber and I wish you all the best during your tenure of office.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, I wish on behalf of the Honourable Members on this side of the Senate to extend the warmest of welcomes to the new Senator, Yvonne Walkes. I have no doubt about the manner in which she will take part in the affairs of this Assembly. We have followed with much interest her involvement in the trade union movement and the manner in which she has progressed from her earliest involvement with that organisation.
11.25 a.m.

SENATOR Mrs. V. C. FRASER: It gives me very great pleasure to welcome Senator Yvonne Walkes to this august Chamber. I have known Senator Walkes for quite a long time in the field, not only of Trade Unionism but Women's Affairs and Community Works.

Senator Walkes has always been a person who knew quite clearly what she wanted from life. She continued to pursue her career at the University, after having to drive for many miles day and night. I think that's a woman of great dynamism and she has always been a person who tries to help the downtrodden people. On many occasions I had to seek her assistance at the Labour College for providing the facilities for many of the women from the fields, the women in agriculture, for various seminars, and Senator Walkes was always very useful in assisting these women. She is deeply committed to trade unionism. Indeed, she has represented Barbados very well abroad at several conferences and is one of the women that we can be justly proud of.

Mr. President, I have no doubt that Senator Walkes will perform with the same amount of zeal and enthusiasm and sincerity as she has performed in the community and in the trade union movement.

I look forward to working closely with Senator Walkes in this august Chamber, the Senate and indeed, I welcome her as one of our new senators.

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I would also like to welcome Senator Walkes to this Chamber and I look forward to her contribution to our debates. Thank you.

SENATOR C. A. BLACKMAN: Mr. President, it gives me pleasure on behalf of this side of the table to welcome Senator Walkes and to say that we look forward to her contribution for the period of time that she is a Member of the Senate.

SENATOR Y. WALKES: Mr. President, I want to say thanks to you and the Members of this Honourable House for the gracious expressions of welcome that have been given to me. I want to say that in this challenging time we are going through some very rigorous moments, and although I hope I will not be in this House very long, because my intention is to be in the Lower House representing the constituency of St. Peter. I would, however, say that I am very grateful and I have a deep feeling of humility in being here to assist in addressing the problems that we are having in Barbados and trying to find solutions to those problems.

It is important that we look at problems which concern the youth in this country and have the youth not only feel a part but be a part of our development; not to be ostracized, but to be there with us fighting. When you are out there, you can feel the youth asking you to be true to them, to tell them the truth, to have confidence in them. They want to be a part of what is happening.

I am also very happy to stress that it is very necessary for the senior citizens in this country to feel a part of it also and to be functional. We have to be sure that those are some of the problems we are addressing, because the old must not feel abandoned. I say this, because as I said earlier, I am hoping that we will be able to look at some of the problems. I am saying that we cannot only look at economic and financial problems as the ultimate in this country but we must see that human relations are very, very important and that we must address those two areas.

Men are feeling condemned and left out at the moment and we, the women, (and I hope more women will become involved in both of these Houses, the Upper House and the Lower House), we must make men feel a part of this community – this society. We must be able since we have been very much in the house, very much into training them.

We are hoping that we will become a part of the outer world, the world of work where we are involved with them. We cannot leave them alone. Therefore we must be able to bring them along with us. We must be in the decision-making processes to join with them so that they will be with us also in our homes, cooperating with our families and making a better Barbados and a better society and a better

place for the young to feel much more comfortable, the old and everyone else concerned.

I want to thank you very much for welcoming me this morning and I hope to be with you for very many sessions. Thank you very much again.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, I am commanded to lay the following documents:

The Civil Establishment (Leave Passages) Amendments of 1990.

The Annual Report of the Broadcasting Authority for the year 1988-89.

The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 2) Order, 1990.

The Rate of Interest (Amendment) Order, 1990.

The Annual Report of the Air Transport Licensing Authority for the year 1989.

The Annual Report of the Fire Service for the year 1989.

The Annual Report and Audited Financial Statement of the National Sports Council for the Financial Year ended 31st March, 1989.

The Annual Report and Accounts of the Barbados National Bank for the year ended 31st December, 1989.

The Annual Report of the Child Care Board and Auditor's Report of the Statement of Receipts and Payments for the year ended 31st March, 1987.

REPORT FROM SELECT COMMITTEES

Mr. PRESIDENT: The report of the selection dealing with the Standing Order Committee. I call upon the Minister to deal with the Committee of Privileges, the Hon. Senator Lewis.
11.35 a.m.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, the Report of the Committee of Selection of the Honourable the Senate:-

"The Committee of Selection of the Senate met at the Senate Chamber on Wednesday, August 1, 1990 at 1:45 p.m.

Present were:

His Honour, the President (Chairman)
Senator the Hon. L. V. H. Lewis
Senator N. K. Boxill
Senator A. W. A. McClean
Senator C. A. BLACKMAN

Also in attendance was Mr. Keith P. Roberts, Deputy Clerk.

The Committee considered appointments to vacancies in the various Committee consequent upon the resignations of Senators Sir James Tudor and David Comissiong and appointed the following to fill the vacancies:

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

Senator A. J. N. Phillips

COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

Senator the Hon. Dr. C. D. Clarke

REGULATIONS COMMITTEE

Senator Dr. Frank Alleyne"

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF THE SENATE AND MOVED BY A MINISTER

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, we have on today's Order Paper an amendment to the Caribbean Development Bank Act. In order to deal with it today, I move that approval be given for the suspension of Standing Order 45(2).

The question that Standing Order 45(2) be suspended was put to the Senate and agreed to.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. L.V.H. LEWIS the following Bill was read a first time:-

Bill entitled An Act to amend the Caribbean Development Bank Act.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 1: RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION OF LAND AT SIMMONS ROAD, CLAPHAM, ST. MICHAEL FOR HOUSING PURPOSES

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, this Resolution deals with the vesting in the

National Housing Corporation of a parcel of land at Simmons Road, Clapham. This land was acquired by the Government as part of its continuing programme for sites and services. Indeed, much of the land was also used to relocate houses affected by the construction of the West Coast Highway.

The agency of Government which deals with the resiting of the houses is the National Housing Corporation. Although the actual resiting has taken place in order to ensure that the National Housing Corporation can carry out authorised activities in relation to the further development of the area, it is necessary for this vesting to take place.

The area of land under consideration measures 1 518.4 square metres or thereabouts abutting and bounding on lands now or late of Matilda Farmer and also on lands of the National Housing Corporation.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: Mr. President, in rising to support the Resolution, I would like to invite the Minister to, perhaps, fill us in a bit more in relation to this continuing programme of sites and services to which the acquisition of the parcel of land relates. I also think that to the extent that it relates to the vesting of land in the National Housing Corporation, that the National Housing Corporation is one of those agencies used by Government to implement its housing programme and its housing policies, the Resolution affords us the opportunity to comment, albeit briefly, on matters pertaining to housing policy.

I would like to start by indicating that recent statements emanating from the Minister of Housing, has generated a bit of confusion (at least, in my mind) regarding what is the current housing policy of Government. First of all I would like to refer to the provision of housing for rental units. In response to a submission that Government has not performed too well in this area in the last 4 1/2 years, in response to the suggestion that Government has not implemented any new schemes pertaining to the construction of rental units, the Minister indicated that Governments all over the world are getting out of construction. That statement seems to have been in defence or an explanation of Government's failure to build additional units for housing.

I would like to believe that is not really expressive of Government's policy. But since it has come from the Minister, I have, for the time being, to presume that the Minister can speak for Government and has spoken for Government. On that basis, therefore, it would seem as though Government has moved away from the question of the provision of housing presumably, to the provision of sites and services because we have some indication here of a continuing programme of sites and services and some

activity in relation to the acquisition of land for the provision of sites and services. We have had other such indications during the life of this Parliament and, indeed, in fairly recent times pertaining to the vesting of land in the National Housing Corporation, such land to be used for the provision of sites and services.

A programme of sites and services is entirely commendable and necessary. Also is a programme for providing additional rental units in a country such as ours because we still have a large number of people who are out there in need of such accommodation. There are other aspects of policy which seem to be a bit disturbing. It seems as though Government has no clear-cut policy on the question of the sale of existing units.
11.45 a.m.

Indeed, if it does have a clear cut policy and you use the statements by the Minister to be any indication, the present Government is opposed to a policy of selling existing units in the cluster blocks, so to speak, to the present tenants. It seems as though that view relates to the idea that there are people out there who need rental accommodation, people who cannot afford to buy such units but who can only afford to rent such units. If there is this clear perception on the part of the Minister that there are people out there who are looking for units to rent, I think this should incline Government towards the construction of additional units for this purpose.

On the other hand, to the extent that you have tenants in such units already who have reached the stage where they would like to own these units and are capable of purchasing those units, the general idea that other people want rental units should not stand in the way of allowing those people to own those units, because you are not going to displace them and give them to people who are looking for units. If you do not sell them, all that will happen is that they will remain in there renting them. The presumption that someone who is capable of purchasing one of those units is capable of vacating it and purchasing a house elsewhere may not be well founded, because the cost of acquiring a house elsewhere may be beyond the financial capability of that tenant who may be able to purchase that particular unit, especially if you have a programme such as proposed by the National Democratic Party whereby rents previously paid would count as a contribution towards the purchase price of the house.

Again, if on the one hand Government seems to suggest that some of the tenants in the existing rental units should move out and acquire other properties rather than expecting that they will be sold to them by Government, the question of 100% mortgages would also facilitate that. It is not clear whether the present administration is for or against 100% mortgages. The first indication which we had was that they were against 100% mortgages. In other words, they were throwing cold water on the suggestion coming

from the National Democratic Party in relation to 100% mortgages. All of a sudden there was a 180 degrees turn and the Minister was saying that it is his idea, he was the first one to come up with the suggestion of 100% mortgages and not Richie Haynes, although Dr. Haynes, the Leader of the Opposition never made any...

Mr. PRESIDENT: I do not want to stop you, but do not let the debate run into that sort of order, because we are dealing here with a Resolution to acquire a parcel of land for housing, so do not let us run into those side tracks. It sours the debate. You are capable of doing better than that. Lift it up.

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: I was not aware that I was sliding, but I will lift it up.

The basic point I am making is that as far as the question of the provision of housing for persons who need housing, a programme of 100% mortgages would facilitate this. I am asking the question whether the present administration is for or against 100% mortgages. The Official Opposition, the National Democratic Party, is in favour of 100% mortgages and will so implement such a scheme, but we are getting conflicting signals from Government as to what their position is.

All in all, therefore, Mr. President, what I want to say is that in reflecting on recent statements emanating from the Ministry of Housing one has good grounds for concern as to what has been happening to Government's housing policy, and I am saying that those concerns extend to the fact that the Minister seems unable to make up his mind on what is of merit and what is not of merit in the area of housing, and that is unfortunate.

I thank you.

SENATOR N. W. BOXILL: Mr. President, I thought this Resolution would have seen the green light before.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Now you are going to deal with the debate...

SENATOR N. W. BOXILL: Yes, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT:... not arguments.

SENATOR N. W. BOXILL: No, but I am here representing the Government's side.

Mr. PRESIDENT: No, they have Ministers up here who will do that.

SENATOR N. W. BOXILL: But, Mr. President, I do not want to get into any argument, but the Ministers there are junior to me.

Mr. PRESIDENT: No, I am telling you how the debate will go.

SENATOR N. W. BOXILL: But, Mr. President, you have not given me a chance to start the debate.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Yes, but I am telling you how the debate will go, because I listened to you. My job is to listen to the debate, not to get into the debate.

SENATOR N. W. BOXILL: May I proceed now, Sir?

Mr. PRESIDENT: Yes, Sir.

SENATOR N. W. BOXILL: The Senator who spoke last seems not to be living in Barbados. If he were, he was sleeping. Why I say I can afford to speak, I was Minister of Housing when the Government gave permission to sell the units to the people who were living in those units. We even went so far as to say that the rents the people had paid towards those units would go towards a down payment for the houses. How then could the Honourable Member get in here and make the kind of statement he has made and anybody in his right senses could think I would sit down and allow this sort of...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Do not worry to come with any of those adjectives.

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: On a point of explanation, Mr. President. I made reference to the units in the cluster blocks, the connected units, not the separate units. I made that reference clearly because I was aware that there is a policy in place whereby people can purchase the individual units.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The point is made.

SENATOR N. W. BOXILL: Mr. President, there is something called the Condominium Act which we brought in to make it possible...that is why I said the Honourable Member either was not here or he was sleeping. The problem with the Honourable Member is that he has one year's experience 45 times, or 45 years' experience one time, however you like to put it. That is why I asked if elections were called.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Do not worry with the elections.

SENATOR N. W. BOXILL: I am not electioneering, Mr. President, I just asked a question.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am just bringing you on track. Elections are not in here.

SENATOR N. W. BOXILL: Oh, thanks for telling me, but this is Parliament and therefore we are debating these issues dealing with electioneering.

Mr. PRESIDENT: We are not into electioneering yet.

SENATOR N. W. BOXILL: That is what you think. Anyhow, getting back to the point, the Honourable Member must not make these kinds of statements. He jumps up and makes these kinds of statements, then tonight you will hear – I know you are going to say you do not listen to the radio. I do not listen either, but I cannot help hearing – that Senator McClean said this and Senator McClean said that. Let me put the record straight. That is why I told you I could speak before the Ministers, because they would not know about these things. I was a Minister, I was not a "play play" Minister, I was a true one, as you know, Sir. The Honourable Member must not make these kinds of statements and think he is going to get away with it.

Mr. PRESIDENT: You are not suggesting that the Ministers now are "play play" Ministers.

SENATOR N. W. BOXILL: No way at all. Listen carefully to what I am saying, Sir. The Honourable Member must understand that as long as I am on this side of the Bench I am not going to allow these unfortunate statements to be made by people who should know better.
11.55 a.m.

As I said before, when we went and...we brought the Condominium Act into play in order that people who have these rental units would be able to purchase them. Let me say that one of the problems that we have faced, Mr. President...we were short of surveyors. Up to now, we are still short of surveyors and this is one of the big problems that we faced, especially, in the Beckles Road area. I myself bought a property for a lady who lives in Canada and up to now, I don't think, the lady has title to her property yet, because of the problem with surveyors.

The next thing is this that we must not overlook. When the Bay Estate was bought, the houses were moved from out in Martindales Road because of the flood and they were put out there willy-nilly, without any proper planning. Up to today if you go through some of the avenues in the Bay, as somebody else was telling me, you would have to go up upon the pavement to pass, because the roads were not properly laid out. The houses were put down here, there and anywhere, like how they did with the old estates, when you would go and ask the manager for somewhere to put your house and he would tell the driver "look for somewhere for she to put the house". So, they put some houses looking so...they stuck in the houses there.

The gentleman there can tell you that I'm not lying. I know what I am talking about, because we worked at the Union and we knew what we had when we went out to these places.

The point I am making is that I don't want Honourable Members in here to make these kind of statements and think

they will get away with it. As I said, the Democratic Labour Party made this law, I believe, even before we became independent. It would have to be after we were independent because before Independence I was Minister for Communications and after Independence I was Minister for Housing. So, we made that law and the world knew about it. I am surprised now when I hear people coming out now talking about they are giving the tenants the right to own these properties. It is unfair. It is dishonest for people to make their statements, knowing that what they say is not true, in order to get themselves in the papers.

I can afford to say what I am saying because, as I said already, I'm not running for anything. I run on the beach on mornings. The only time I run is to see if I can get back to the sea in time. I don't have any hopes of running for anything. But I will not allow the Honourable Member on the other side of the Chamber to get up and make these kind of statements against the Democratic Labour Party when I am here. I thank you because I put the record straight.

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: Mr. President, Senator McClean made a statement that this Government has no clear policy in housing. I think that is a rather unfortunate statement because, and I am quoting from the Economic Report of 1989, page 20. I think this document is on record in this Chamber and I am reading page 20:

"Housing starts increased by 39.7% to reach 1,453 compared with the 1040 units started during 1988. The Town and Country Planning Department approved 3,195 building applications during 1989 significantly higher than the 1,603 approvals during the same period in 1988. The leading indicator of house completions, electrical inspections shows that approximately 4,180 houses the highest number in any year were completed compared to 2,667 in 1988."

I have quoted that to show that this Government through its policies, has made it possible for people in Barbados to own their own homes.

I think that Senator McClean, in speaking for the Opposition must be quite clear of the extent to which he wants Government to provide the housing for private people...or for Government to create the environment for private people to build their own homes. Government through its enlightened policies has been creating the environment for people to own their own homes and at the next meeting of this Chamber, you will find that Government will be bringing before this Chamber resolutions to approve the building of...the providing of sites and services for people to build their own homes in various districts, such as Scarborough in Christ Church, Thomas Gap in St. Michael, Rices in St. Philip and Fustic Village in St. Lucy.

I just thought I would raise this to set the record straight. On the question of sale of existing units, Senator Boxill has already addressed this and I shan't be paining this Chamber to go through that again. But I just thought that for the record we should recognize that this Government has made every legal effort to create a climate conducive to private home ownership in Barbados.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, all I was going to say is that it is abundantly clear that we have a modern Rip Van Winkle, who hasn't awoken yet from his sleeping, because the Senator McClean comes in this Chamber and every time we have a vesting resolution he repeats the same questions. He answers the questions himself and then holds up the debate. I beg to move that the Resolution be passed.

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

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE SALE OF LAND AND BUILDING AT ST. CHRIS- TOPHER, CHRIST CHURCH

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President this Resolution seeks the approval of the Senate to dispose by way of sale of certain government property comprising 266.2 square metres of land and a disused public convenience situated at St. Christopher in Christ Church.

The Government's policy in relation to these disused public conveniences is that where use can be made of them for community development purposes they are allocated for that purpose and where they are not required for such purposes Government invites public bids for these facilities. In this instance, a Mr. Richard Shepherd was the person who was successful. He offered the highest amount to the Ministry of Housing and Lands for the purchase of this property, some \$8,500. Mr. Shepherd was required to obtain approval of the Chief Town Planner to change the use of the property so that it may become a residence. This approval was given and permission is now sought to dispose of the property by way of sale to Mr. Richard Shepherd.

I beg to move that the resolution be passed.

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

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE SALE OF LAND AND BUILDING THEREON AT WALKERS, ST. ANDREW

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, this is another instance of property which Government wishes to sell in order to facilitate a resident of the parish of Saint Andrew.

The Resolution seeks approval to dispose of 223.3 square metres of land along with a disused public convenience situated at Walkers in the parish of Saint Andrew to the estate of Archibald Hunte. The land had been acquired from Archibald Hunte in 1967 to provide a public convenience and now that there is no longer use for the public convenience, the Government is proposing to sell back the land to the former owner.
12.05 p.m.

This as I said earlier, is part of a policy of disposal of these public conveniences and the land surrounding them. In this instance the land is reverting to its former owner.

I beg to move that the Resolution do now pass.

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

ORDER NO. 4: CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (AMENDMENT) BILL

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: Mr. President, on January 3, 1990, an agreement was signed between the Government of Barbados and the Caribbean Development Bank which modified certain provisions within the then existing agreement between the two parties. The Bill before us seeks to give effect to the amendments to the whole agreement.

The major points within the new agreement are as follows:-

- (1) The Bank would now assume responsibility for the repair of structural objects and the installation and maintenance of the facilities and fixtures at its headquarters.
- (2) The management and maintenance of the conference centre and canteen adjacent to its headquarters; and
- (3) The Bank will provide security at its headquarters.

The Government should have the right to tax employees of the Bank who are permanent residents of

Barbados on the same basis as our citizens of Barbados. Another major change has been the President, Vice President and senior officials and the professional staff of the Bank would have the right to change automobiles every three years while other staff members, and this is a significant departure, would now be allowed to change their vehicles with a duty-free allowance every five years.

Mr. President, this bit of legislation should be non-controversial. It is giving effect to the agreement which is already in place.

I do move that this Bill be now read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE the Senate went into Committee on the Bill SENATOR M. deL. JORDAN in the Chair.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

The Schedule was called and passed.

On motion of SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE the passing of one Bill in Committee was reported.

On the separate motions of SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE the Bill was read a third time and passed.

ORDER NO 5: CIVIL ESTABLISHMENT (LEAVE PASSAGES) (AMENDMENT) ORDER, 1990

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, the Civil Establishment (Leave Passages) (Amendment) Order which was laid earlier today, seeks to amend the Civil Establishment (Leave Passages) Order of 1966 to permit the spouses of female officers in the Public Service – female officers when they qualify for leave passages will now find that their husbands, their spouses, will be eligible for leave passages under the same conditions that presently apply to serving male officers.

The existing Leave Civil Establishment (Leave Passages) Order provides that where an officer qualifies under the appropriate regulations, he can take along his wife and her passage is paid. But no similar provision exists in the case of female officers of equivalent rank who have husbands. At the present time those husbands cannot be provided with passages out of the Consolidated Fund.

Since 1981, Mr. President, the National Union of Public Workers were in the forefront of bargaining with Government for these provisions but it was only in 1987 that they were able to convince the Government of the day of the necessity to treat female officers on a par with the male officers. Following upon the submissions of the

National Union of Public Workers, other trade unions have made similar representations.

12.15 p.m.

What we are seeing now in 1990 is the implementation of a decision which was first agreed with the unions some time in 1987–88. One of the bases on which there was objection in the past to the grant of leave passages to the husbands of female officers was the fact that after January 1, 1980 new officers are no longer eligible for these benefits, but there were several serving officers at that date who will continue to qualify. It is now held that the appropriate provision should be put in place for them to benefit.

In addition, the failure of the Barbados Government to make this provision ran somewhat counter to the provisions of the ILO Discrimination, Employment and Occupation Convention No. 111 to which Barbados was a signatory since 1974. Indeed, the Convention was ratified in that year. The Ministry of the Civil Service was quick to point out that Barbados' ratification of the Convention in 1974 meant that there was an obligation to promote equality of opportunity and treatment in respect of employment and occupation with a view to eliminating whatever discrimination existed. So that the issue is now clear, and in a few days' time, after the assent of the Governor-General, provided we give it the green light today, the spouses of female officers will be beneficiaries.

As a consequence, Mr. President, any female officer who fits into certain categories will be eligible for the payment of a leave passage for her husband. The categories include teachers at former older secondary schools who were in the Service prior to January 1, 1980, Heads of primary or secondary schools who were in the Service prior to January 1, 1980 and persons in the general Service who prior to January 1, 1980 had been the holder of an office established under the Civil Establishment Act or under any other Act and is in receipt of a qualifying salary from the Consolidated Fund.

On the other side of the coin, officers who are on contract and officers who hold temporary positions do not qualify under these provisions, even if they had been on contract at January 1980 or held a temporary appointment.

The maximum passage which Government will pay in respect of passages outside the Caribbean is \$1500; within the Caribbean the maximum is \$470. Certain statistical information is relevant here, Mr. President. The records show that during 1987–88 an amount of \$114,530 was spent for 110 female officers for 49 passages within the Caribbean and 61 outside of the Caribbean. In 1988–89 \$111,800 was spent on 102 passages, 40 of which were within the Caribbean and 62 outside of the Caribbean. In 1989–90 \$141,380 was spent on 97 passages, four within the Caribbean and 93 outside the Caribbean. It is obvious

that people have been taking the opportunity and travelling outside of the Caribbean.

From these statistics it can be deduced that the estimated annual cost for an additional person will be in the vicinity of \$100,000, rising up to \$140,000 – \$150,000 each year, but this number will decline over the years because of the lesser numbers of persons who will qualify.

During an officer's career that officer will be entitled to four passages, two of which will be within the Caribbean, two outside the Caribbean, and there must be a period of four years elapsing after any one such passage before another passage can be taken. I am advised, Mr. President, that the extension of this facility to female officers is not a contradiction, nor is it a reversal of the declared policy of ultimately discontinuing the practice of paid leave passages for public officers, which policy position was taken in 1980.

I beg to move that the Resolution be passed.

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I rise to support this Resolution wholeheartedly because it represents a slight movement away from the high degree of discrimination which women still suffer in this society both in the area of employment and in other areas. I note that it represents something of a change in Government policy which occurred somewhere around 1987, 1988.

In a sense this Resolution stands as an answer to certain remarks which were directed at me earlier during the course of this session. It was suggested to me that in trying to understand Government policy I should consider things done by a previous administration rather than consider the things that the present administration would be doing, and I am saying quite clearly that is not a proper approach. If we do that, we would be led to the conclusion, in relation to women, that the present administration has not changed its position on matters such as this.

I will continue to deal with the most contemporary information to gain some insight into what Government policy is. On that basis I am heartened that Government's heart seems to be softening towards women. It may be the efforts of our newest Senator to bring the men along with her – I presume she means the men in her party – that may have started to bear some fruit already. I would like to have thought that that fruit would have extended towards the replacement of a female Senator by another female Senator, but I am not too sure that I can draw that conclusion in that in recent times Government has had at least three other opportunities to correct the sexual imbalance on that side.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator McClean, please! We are debating the Civil Establishment (Leave Passages)

(Amendment) Order. I do not think that has anything to do with the debate.

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: Mr. President, what I am saying is that this Order speaks to a question of policy in relation to women. That is the essence of it. Here we are talking about removing an area of discrimination against women, and I am speaking generally about attitudes to women, discrimination against women and so on. What I am indicating is that there is still too much evidence that women are discriminated against in all types of situations. 12.25 p.m.

I was at the time dealing with the composition of this Chamber on the other side, but I won't pursue that point anymore as that is quite evident. But we can also think of the Permanent Secretaries and the senior positions in the Public Service and what happens every time there is an opportunity to fill a vacancy. Women are overlooked in a most studied fashion and that is entirely unfortunate.

We could also think of the candidates that the various parties are bringing forward...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator McClean, that has no place in this Chamber.

SENATOR A. W. A. McCLEAN: Anyway, thank you, Mr. President. The essential point that I am making is that if you look at the Law of the land, if you look at practice within the business, within government and so, everywhere you look, you see evidence of discrimination against women and this is entirely undesirable and I am a member of a party which is fundamentally opposed to such practice.

I hope therefore, that this particular resolution is an indication that other people are joining us in our position that we need to elevate women to equal status with men in all endeavours. I thank you.

SENATOR Mrs. V. C. FRASER: Mr. President, I rise to say that I am very happy that I am still alive to hear that this has at last become part or is to become part of the Laws of Barbados. I heard about the NUPW but I would like to say that the women of Barbados have been fighting for this for a very long time and have been submitting resolutions. I don't know where they went. However, I should like to congratulate the Government for seeing now and bringing it at this stage, because it is always welcome. It took some time.

I am glad that it was realized that the ILO convention was not adhered to and there are several other things that somebody mentioned, that we women are looking forward as I am looking forward to seeing the first female

Permanent Secretary. I am looking forward to several other things which I will not detail here now; but this question of the women having equal rights as far as taking their spouses is concerned, I was wondering how long it would take us to get there, because I know already in private enterprise, in some of the banks, this obtains, where women can take their husbands or their spouses with them and enjoy the same privileges as on the other hand.

Aside.

SENATOR Mrs. V. C. FRASER: They enjoy the same privileges now because we have rectified the situation and I am very happy about the rectifying of the situation, Mr. President, and I welcome it. We, the women are looking forward to several more resolutions which we have assisted in putting forward and fighting for a long time, and we hope that we will get mention and not only the union. I heard the NUPW. I didn't hear a thing about the National Organisation of Women. We have been out there stretching our necks and fighting for these things and then when they become law, we don't always get any credit.

So, I hope the women will get the credit they deserve for having been the fighters for these discriminatory practices against women. I am also happy that I am associated with the party which has seen it fit to make this law and I congratulate the Government and look forward to many more pieces of legislation that will be in consonance with the forward-looking strategies that the Democratic Labour Party have planned for this country and for women. I thank you.

SENATOR Miss Y. WALKES: Mr. President, I rise to support this resolution of the Civil Establishments Leave Passage Amendment Order 1990. It is very important for us to recognize that the Democratic Labour Party, the party that is running the administration of this country at the present time, has recognized this imbalance and decided to correct it.

It is important to realize that the National Commission of Women, the Commission that was set up for the status of women in 1975 made recommendations between 1977 and 1978, stating clearly that this imbalance should be corrected, and the Barbados Labour Party that was the administration at the time and they were declaring that they were the advocate for women, at that time failed to recognize the recommendation of the Commission and I am happy that this Government is seriously doing this. I am also happy and I hope...and the things that I have been

seeing happening to women in this nation in the present time in terms of having women in prominent positions in decision-making processes, I would believe that this is a genuine approach to including women in equal positions. Other governments have shown that they have made a mockery in some situations of having women in prominent positions.

The situation of the first Permanent Secretary, the supposed first woman Permanent Secretary in Barbados is a fraud and a mockery and that was done by the Barbados Labour Party who were claiming to be advocates for women. I have a...I can make this a document of the House. I have a publication here from the GIS Monitor, stating that a Miss Lolita Applewhaite in 1985 was recently made...had made a break-through for women when she became the first female in the history of the Barbados civil service to be appointed a Permanent Secretary. I was to understand in 1989, and the women, we discussed it, were quite disappointed to understand that she was then in 1989 being made a deputy Permanent Secretary. I am saying that women must ensure that they are not made a mockery of and any time something comes up that is valid it must be shown that this is so before we jump on the bandwagon and start raising our hands that we are now in leadership positions.

You see, these are the things that make the youth in this country so disappointed and disillusioned, Sir, because after five or six years it would be recognized that things are fraud that the youth would have thought were genuine. I am saying that I hope that this is a genuine attempt to have equality for women in this country and I look forward to other recommendations being put in place for the benefit of women. Genuine recommendations. I thank you.

The question was put to the Senate and was agreed to.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Just before this sitting certain papers were distributed and I wish to state very clearly. I should have said it before that there was no intention to attempt to do any of those papers today. In any event, some of them have not even passed the House of Assembly.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: I therefore wish to move now, Mr. President, that the Senate be adjourned until Wednesday, 31st October, 1990, at 11 a.m.

The question that the Senate be adjourned until Wednesday 31st October, 1990 at 11.00 a.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to, and Mr. PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly.
12.36 p.m.

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