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# THE SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

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FIRST SESSION 1991 – 96

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## SENATE

*Wednesday, June 12, 1991*

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, on Wednesday, June 12, 1991, at 11.15 a.m.

### PRESENT

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

Senator the Honourable L. V. H. LEWIS (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries) (Leader of the Senate)

Senator A. MORRISON

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

Senator A. J. N. PHILLIPS

Senator the Honourable Dr. C. D. CLARKE (Minister of Trade, Industry and Commerce)

Senator Dr. Frank W. ALLEYNE

Senator Miss Y. V. WALKES

Senator Dr. E. A. SIMMONS

Senator Mrs. Ada STRAUGHN, G.C.M.

Senator Mrs. M. WALCOTT

Senator W. Leroy INNISS

Senator the Rev. Canon J. L. SPRINGER

Senator J. G. BELLAMY

Senator J. A. F. COLE

Senator T. E. BARKER

Senator Miss M. A. MOTTLEY.

*Prayers were led by Rev. Errington Massiah.*

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is in session.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I have been directed to deliver the following message from the Honourable House of Assembly to the Honourable Senate:

"This House has the honour to inform the Honourable the Senate that on the 11th June, 1991, the Sexual Offences Bill, 1991 and the Praedial Larceny Bill, 1991, were read the second time and were referred to the Joint Committee which presently also has before it the Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Bill, 1991.

This House has nominated the following additional Members to the Committee:

Honourable B. M. Taitt and Dr. R. L. Cheltenham, Q.C. and invites the concurrence of the Honourable the Senate accordingly."

This was dated June 11, 1991 and signed by His Honour the Speaker, Mr. Lawson Weekes.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, I beg to move that the Senate receive the message and approve of the appointment of the additional persons as named in the message from the Honourable the House and that the Senate's concurrence be communicated to the Honourable the House of Assembly.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The question is that the Senate receive the message and approve it and approve also the nomination of the additional Members to the Committee and that such be communicated to the Honourable the House of Assembly.

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

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, in view of the appointment of those two additional Members, the balance of representation on that Committee has now been disturbed and I, therefore, move that this Senate agree to the appointment of additional persons to serve on that Joint Committee.

*The question that an additional person from the Members of the Senate be appointed to serve on that Committee was put and agreed to.*

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy President, I would like to nominate Senator Lewis to serve on that Committee.

*The question that Senator Lewis be nominated to serve on that Committee was put to the Senate and agreed to.*

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, I beg to move that the appropriate message be transmitted from the Senate to the Honourable the House of Assembly communicating the last two motions that were adopted.

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

#### PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

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

- (1) The Annual Report of the Welfare Department for the year, 1st April, 1988 to 31st March, 1989;
- (2) Annual Reports of the National Training Board for the years 1986-87, 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90;
- (3) The Annual Report of the Child Care Board for the period April 1987 to March 1988.

#### SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, I beg to move that the Senate agree to the suspension of Standing Order 45(2) to enable us to deal with the Bill to revise and consolidate the Law relating to telecommunications and related matters.

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

#### MOTION RELATING TO THE SITTING OF THE SENATE

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, I beg to move that the Senate approve of the appointment of Senator Amory Phillips to act as Deputy President during today's sitting.

*The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.*  
11.25 a.m.

#### FIRST READING OF BILLS

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, I beg to move that a Bill entitled an Act to revise and consolidate the law relating to Telecommunications and for related matters be read a first time.

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

#### PUBLIC BUSINESS

##### ORDER NO. 1: TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT, 1991

SENATOR A. MORRISON: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to begin debate on the Second Reading of the Telecommunications Bill. The purpose of this Bill is to provide for the regulation of telegraphy, the control of telecommunication facilities and to address the technological and other changes which have taken place in telecommunications particularly with respect to the last 15 years.

The proposed Telecommunications Act, when it is enacted will replace the Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1940, Cap. 286, the provisions of which have been rendered obsolete by rapidly changing technology and the consequential introduction of new services, new methods of offering existing services and the proliferation of equipment used in these services.

Sir, if I may give some background to these bits of legislation. Some time in 1985 the Barbados Government obtained the services of a legal expert through the assistance of the International Telecommunications Ltd. He was to advise the Government on aspects of its Telecommunications legislation in the vast interest of the users so that the Government could fulfill its national and international obligations in this field. Also to undertake the complete revision of the existing legislation in consultation with the local authorities in order to produce a draft Telecommunications Bill.

The consultant held discussions with representatives from the various organisations concerned with telecommunications in Barbados including the Barbados External Telecommunications Co. Ltd, the Barbados Telephone Co. Ltd., the Broadcasting Authority and the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation. We have also had comments from the Barbados Rediffusion Service Co. Ltd. These comments were also considered by the consultant.

Now, Sir, the legislation relating to telecommunications in Barbados, as in many other countries, dates many years back and is scattered in several areas. It is the policy of this Government to revise and consolidate the legislation to reflect technological and other

changes that have taken place over the years and also to facilitate its implementation.

I should like to give Honourable Members a brief summary of the main legislation relating to telecommunications in Barbados using the term in its widest sense. The Wireless Telegraphy Act was enacted in 1940. A few minor amendments have been made up to the year 1984. It is the legislation that covers the widest field in the control and regulation of telecommunications.

The Act also provides for regulation of its telegraphy through the licensing of facilities for the establishment and operation of wireless stations and apparatus and possession of our trading wireless apparatus. The Act also contains provisions for the monitoring of wireless stations to ensure compliance with conditions and standards of technical performance. Initially the term "wireless telegraphy" covered the provisions of telecommunications by telephone, telegraph, broadcasting and television.

In 1980 the Act was amended to exclude broadcasting and television from its ambit. The change was in consequence of the passing of the Broadcasting Act in the same year. In 1984 the Act was further amended to exclude its provisions from the application with the Barbados Defence Force. That is my understanding, Sir. The Act also empowers the Minister responsible for Telecommunications to make regulations on various matters relating to the control and regulation of telecommunications.

Sir, I move on to the Barbados Telephone Act, Cap. 274. The provisions of this Act gives the Barbados Telephone Co. Ltd. powers to break up streets and roads in order to lay cable wires and carry out their work for the purpose of supplying telephone services to the inhabitants of Barbados. The Act lays down conditions for the carrying out of such works by the Company including compensation for any damage occasioned.

In 1974 the Act was amended to impose a fee of \$100 000 on the Company payable to the Government with effect from January 1, 1971 in return for the rights given as mentioned a while ago. In 1977 the Act was further amended. This amendment gave the Minister the power to determine by order the fees payable by the Company. In that respect the latest order which was made in 1983 fixed the fee payable by the Company at Bds. \$750 000. By the amendment which was made in 1977 the Minister for Telecommunications was empowered to determine a surcharge to be made by the Company in respect of every overseas call made. A further provision required the Company to keep such records and books of account as would enable the amount of surcharge payable to Government to be determined.

Sir, if I may move on to the Cable and Wireless (West Indies) Ltd. Act, Cap. 275. This Act was enacted in the year

1939. It empowered the Company to establish and operate wireless telegraphy facilities for overseas telegraph services. That Company took over in Barbados operations which were owned by the West Indian and Panama Telegraph Co. Ltd. which was incorporated in the year 1879.

11.35 a.m.

The Company's rate of charges were to be determined by the Minister. By an Amendment in 1980 the Minister responsible for telecommunications was empowered to determine, by an Order, the amount in terms of percentage to be shared between Cable and Wireless (West Indies) Ltd. and the Barbados Telephone Company Ltd. in respect of revenue from overseas telephone services. In 1983 the Act was further amended to empower the Minister to fix, by an Order, the fees payable by the Company to the Government. In 1984 the assets and operations of Cable and Wireless (West Indies) Ltd. were taken over by the Barbados External Telecommunications Co. Ltd. which was incorporated in that year but this change has not yet been reflected in the Act.

Sir, if I may deal a little with the scope of the proposed Bill. This Bill incorporates all the relevant provisions of the Wireless Telegraphy Act, Cap. 285, provisions of the Cable and Wireless (West Indies) Ltd. Act, Cap. 275 as they relate to the operations of the Barbados External Telecommunications Co. Ltd., and also to the Barbados Telephone Co. Ltd., Cap. 274. It also contains provisions for the technical and frequency assignment functions relating to radio and television broadcasting stations.

There is also provision in Part I of the proposed Act which empowers the Government to grant licences for the operations of public telecommunications services while reserving to itself the sole right to provide such services. This enables the Government if it so wishes, at any stage, to increase its participation in the country's telecommunications services.

The Bill also includes provisions relating to the delivery of public telecommunications services by public carriers including the requirement for the introduction of rates and charges for external telecommunications services to be approved by the Minister responsible for Telecommunications. Applications for increases in local telephone rates will continue to be approved by the Public Utilities Board under the Public Utilities Act.

Provision has also been made and has been retained in the Bill for the control and regulation of the radio frequency spectrum which is a limited national resource. This provision will ensure that international Agreements and Conventions to which Barbados is a party are always observed.

Mr. Deputy President, Telecommunications play a very important role in the socio-economic development of all countries and particularly in the case of countries of the Third World. Many research studies have produced convincing evidence that telecommunications assist both national and international trade. It is also generally believed that the telecommunications sector contributes to foreign exchange earnings in other sectors. Sir, it is in this spirit of co-operation that I want to commend this Bill to Honourable Members of the Senate. Just as the services are now being provided between the private sector and the Government of Barbados I would hope that that same co-operation will prevail when other Members discuss this Bill.

With those remarks and in the whole spirit of co-operation I would like to commend this Bill to Honourable Members and I hereby move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Mottley.

SENATOR Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Yes, Mr. Deputy President, I have listened with great interest to the introduction of this Bill by the Honourable Senator. Indeed I am happy to see the introduction of legislation of this nature. However I have a few concerns which I would wish to voice at this point and to look at the overall framework within which we are dealing. As the Honourable Senator articulated this is a Bill which consolidates the Wireless Telegraphy Act, the Cable and Wireless Act and the Barbados Telephone Company Act to put all the legislation pertaining to telecommunications in one Act.

In 1985 I believe as he said this legislation was drafted. What concerns me greatly is that as would have been expected this legislation reflects the position and the concerns of the international telecommunications union particularly the decisions that would have been taken at the Nairobi Conference in 1982 as would have been expected at the time also. If one looks in detail at the definitions accorded in the Act, for example, related to radio apparatus et cetera and also to the attitude taken towards satellite transmission, receiving antenna et cetera one would see that this is a reflection of the concerns of the ITU of the Nairobi Conference of 1982.

What concerns me is that some 9 years have passed since then and indeed on June 30, 1989 there was a Convention signed at Nice relating to the same telecommunications, reflecting the same international telecommunications unions' concerns. One would have thought that prior to bringing this legislation before the Houses of Parliament in this country that a look would have been taken again at the legislation to update the movements that have taken place not only in terms of technology; and we all know what has taken place in nine years in technology and in terms of telecommunications. Ten years

ago one did not even know of anything called a video machine in terms of wide circulation in this country. Five years ago there was no such thing in terms of wide circulation of a facsimile machine. These movements within the technology have altered the telecommunications landscape greatly. In the circumstances I think that perhaps we would have been better served if greater consideration had been taken of the decisions taken at the Nice Convention on June 30, 1989.

In respect of other areas I am a little concerned that this Act seeks to place emphasis not only on transmission of information but also on the reception. I believe very strongly that that is wrong. I believe that Government has a duty to control transmission of information. But any attempt to restrict the right to receive information is akin to censorship. This is reflected... I see a perplexed look on some Members' faces and therefore I will explain what I mean by the right to restrict the reception of information. I know I am speaking in foreign languages because you have a little difficulty understanding it but I will explain. Nevertheless, Sir, I am referring more particularly to the provision for the licensing of the satellite-receiving apparatus which, if one looks at it, is a right to restrict, the restriction of information through the provision of such licensing. I believe that some time in 1985, 1986 the licensing fees for television were removed and that was part and parcel of the whole spirit that there should be no restriction of any kind to limit people from receiving information of whatever variety.

I believe only this week at a Conference for upper level media managers a Communications Consultant Dr. Reesom Haile addressed them as to the need to remove the barriers on the monopolies of information. I believe he put it in the way that doctors should no longer have a monopoly on information pertaining to health, lawyers should no longer have a monopoly on information pertaining to the Law et cetera; any attempt to encourage the distribution and the flow of information to complement the job being done by our educational system, Sir, in educating our people. I think, Sir, this is the direction in which we as a Third World country must proceed. I believe that we have a duty to ensure that information is readily available to our people, Sir, of all kinds and at all times unless it is, Sir, of a highly national security interest. (I see Senator Lewis looking up and I know he would agree on that point). But, nevertheless, Sir, unless it is information of that particular type, Sir, I believe that our citizens have a right to receive information, and therefore I am a little concerned that the focus in this Act is on both transmission and reception, when indeed, Sir, it should really be on transmission alone.

11.45 a.m.

I want to explain it in perhaps a different way, Sir. I think that no one can argue, Sir, that within our constitution there is a right that people be allowed access to receive information. And, in the context of that, Sir, any attempt to

restrict the right to receive information must beg the question, Sir, whether indeed that is not abridgement of a constitutional right. But, Sir, I hope that is a point. If it is not dealt with here, Sir, I have no doubt that it will be dealt with another place and I will not proceed any further on that point, except to say so far as section 23 of the Constitution deals with the pre-existing laws that were in breach of the Constitution, Sir, and, no doubt what opinion is held in that other place will be dealt with there.

I wish, Sir, also to reinforce the point relating to the licensing and the attitude surrounding the whole Bill, Sir. The Honourable Senator, Sir, just before he sat, quite correctly stated that telecommunications, particularly in the Third World has contributed significantly to the growth in national and international trade and particularly to the foreign exchange earnings of other sectors and, Sir, one cannot disagree with this.

One cannot disagree with the fact that if you have an excellent infrastructural system, particularly within telecommunications ... Because, if somebody is going to export something, Sir, he needs to be able to communicate with whoever he is exporting and therefore barring taking a flight, Sir, there must be some other means by which there can be excellent communications between the two parties. Therefore, once we can attain that standard of telecommunications ... Because I believe that we generally have, in this country, Sir, and I think our development over the last twenty to thirty years, particularly, has reflected that, particularly in the context of the rest of the Eastern Caribbean, Sir, and particularly in our ability to attract a number of non-governmental organisations who base their headquarters here, because of these excellent infrastructural services that are provided here, Sir.

But, Sir, while that is true, I am dismayed that the Honourable Senator and this Government, Sir, have not seen it fit to address the potential of the telecommunications sector as an industry, as a productive sector in this country in its own right, Sir. I see a perplexed look again on the other side of the table. Once again, Sir, I will explain, because at a time, Sir, when jobs are being threatened, at a time when your foreign exchange position, Sir, is said to be in a delicate position, Sir, I believe that it is incumbent upon us as a country to extract as much as is possible, Sir, from any area of activity that can earn us foreign exchange, Sir.

I cannot help the fact, Sir, that some members seem not to know that a large percentage of the Barbados External Telecommunications Company Limited revenue comes, not from business originating and terminating in Barbados, and that they are able to secure the level of jobs that they secure and keep the unions happy by virtue of the fact that a lot of their revenue comes from transit business, business which neither originates nor terminates in this

country and that in itself is a significant percentage of the revenue earned by BET in this country.

That is only one example, Sir, of the telecommunications industry, Sir. It is unfortunate, Sir, that some people are insensitive to those kinds of activities and therefore wish not, Sir, to acknowledge the fact that telecommunications in its own right brings in its own source of revenue as a productive sector in this country, Sir.

It is also unfortunate, Sir, that we don't even acknowledge the fact that a lot of the data-based industries that we see in this country, Sir. We have NDL, we have CDS. A lot of these computer based firms that do business, Sir, once again not originating or terminating in Barbados, but they do business and they pass and collate information for entities overseas.

A lot of these firms, Sir, are contributing to the financial welfare of this country, to the job welfare of this country, Sir, and continue to make an even greater impact, particularly when industries such as manufacturing of garments, particularly when sugar has faced its worst year in sixty years, particularly when tourism is down 20 per cent in April, Sir, that these computer based industries, Sir ...

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy President, on a point of order, I don't know what sugar has to do with telecommunications. Perhaps Senator Mottley would be kind enough to tell me.

SENATOR Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Yes, Sir, as I was saying, particularly at a time when Barbados is facing all of these problems it is good to see that the computer-based industries, the industries relating to information, Sir, which form part of the whole telecommunications business, Sir, that they at least are still holding their heads, reasonably above water, and I am sure that the Minister of Trade would confirm that for us in respect of these industries within the telecommunications sector.

Sir, the point is that telecommunications in its own right is a productive sector and I believe, and I see the Honourable Senator who introduced the Bill, shaking his head, Sir, and I believe that when we begin to exploit the potential in this sector without concentrating our resources on matters that will not necessarily save us, Sir, from the problems which we face today, that we would have begun to enter the twenty-first century in terms of our concept of development, in terms of our concept of how best we can use the skills of our people in a country which has limited natural resources. Until, Sir, we understand that our people are our greatest resource and that if we train them properly those people trained well can provide the impetus for that telecommunications sector, because, Sir, it is a highly and complex and technical area and unless you have a highly trained population and a population, Sir, who is not only highly trained but is always readily retrainable you are

going to find that you are not going to be able to service the demands of that telecommunications sector.

Perhaps, Sir, that is one of the reasons why our telecommunications sector in this country has been more advanced than that in some of the other Eastern Caribbean Islands, Sir, reflecting the level of education and training that has always been available in this country, Sir.

Sir, I would hope that Government, not only, sees the benefit that the telecommunications sector brings to other industries and to other sectors within this country, but seeks to extract from it to its maximum potential, Sir, the benefits that telecommunications itself can bring to this country, Sir.

That brings me on, Sir, to the opportunities, not at the governmental level, Sir, but for the private sector and for the small black businessman in this country, Sir. And, as a result, Sir, I am a little uneasy with a particular section of the Bill, Sir, which offers the first option of any new class of telecommunication service to the existing carrier, either the land carrier or the international carrier, those being as we know, Sir, BARTEL or BET.

11.55 a.m.

I believe, Sir, to reserve unto them the first option is to limit the growth and participation of the average Barbadian who has developed the skill within those sectors to participate, make a living, and to grow in those areas. If we are honestly serious about the whole principle, Sir, of economic enfranchisement or economic democracy, depending upon which side of the fence you come from but which says the same thing that the average black person in this country should have a chance to participate and share in the wealth and opportunities of this country, Sir, we would see that a restriction such as that be not allowed in the sense that it restricts the participation of small businessmen in this country if you reserve the right of first option to those areas, Sir. If we look at it particularly carefully, Sir, I know that there are a number of those same businessmen who have done exceedingly well within the computer based industry, Sir, which involves the use of modems and facsimiles and, Sir, who not only now fix the machines as they started off doing but have their own organisations which distribute, write programmes, which can come in and reorganise your whole business, Sir. They are now going down to the islands in the Eastern Caribbean to deliver those same services thereby earning foreign exchange for us in this country, Sir. Those are the same small black businessmen, Sir, who have done very well. I would not wish to call their names in here; but a lot of us know them. They have done very well for themselves and I do not think that we should seek to restrict their involvement in other areas of telecommunication, Sir, but instead we should seek to encourage them and to provide the facilities both in terms of legislation and administration, and in terms of persuading the banks to have a sympathetic ear to them in their ventures.

For example, Sir, what services they do not presently own they can hire. That is the beauty of the telecommunications sector, Sir. Because really and truly a lot of the services that are used, Sir, within the telecommunications sector even by organisations like BET, Sir, are brought in. One of the hallmarks of Cable and Wireless and the success of Cable and Wireless is that Cable and Wireless has been an excellent management company worldwide. It understands that when it needs services, it hires the services. If we have trained people in our country, Sir, who can deal and deliver those services, indeed not only will they deliver them locally within this country but certainly within the Eastern Caribbean or within the South American basin, thereby offering another opportunity from which we can earn foreign exchange in this country from the telecommunications sector, Sir.

Sir, I would wish also to say at this point that when I speak of participation in new services by small black businessmen, Sir, in the telecommunications sector, I do not want to be vague. I do not want to be just issuing rhetoric like we hear about the National Youth Service now, Sir. But I would like to say more specifically, Sir, that there are areas, for example, like personal radio. Right now, Sir, we have computers which you know can contain modems and, therefore, through which information can pass from computer to computer regardless of territorial or sea limits provided that the requisite fees are paid if they are applicable, Sir. The natural extension to catering a service peculiarly to an individual who is willing to pay for it, Sir, is the development of something called personal radio, Sir.

It is unfortunate that we in Barbados have not really explored the development of radio to its fullest potential and that for some reason or other the development of radio seems to have stagnated somewhat. In fact, Sir, the whole question of radio can be achieved not only through the establishment of transmitters but also through the use of what we now see on the market of the cellular phone, Sir. Personal radio can be developed through the use of cellular phone lines. Sir, for those of us in this country who would wish to finally hear what is being said in the Houses of Parliament, Sir, provided Government releases the authorization to allow these debates to be covered, we can receive a personal radio service which would be operated, distributed, and marketed by an individual. It is hoped that when that time comes, Sir, that that individual who is responsible for the operation, distribution, and the marketing of that particular aspect of personal radio is a Barbadian and more particularly, Sir, a Barbadian who needs the opportunity to participate in the wealth and the opportunities of this country.

I use the example, Sir, of debates. But that is only one small example, Sir. It may be, for example, that there is a market out there for people who only want to listen to "beebop" jazz. It may be that there is a market for people who

only want to listen to classical music. It may be that there is a market for pig farmers who want particular information pertaining to pig farming. This is the value, Sir, of the development of that personal radio service. It does not need the expense of putting up a transmitter, Sir, to operate a market and distribute that service, but it simply requires the use of the existing cellular phone lines. It can be done with great ease but with Government's approval.

That is only one example, Sir, of an area in which there is room for opportunity for investment among the people of our country within the telecommunications sector, Sir. But let us go even a little further. Let us look, Sir, at those bigger companies not only in this country but within the region. It is perhaps unfortunate that there has been no move so far to explore the investment potential, great as it is, of the satellite movement. It is perhaps unfortunate that our businessmen in the region still see investment opportunities purely in terms of hotels, building plants for manufacturing clothes, and plantations valid as those are. I do not wish to be misinterpreted on this; valid as those are. But I believe that if we as a region are to move forward into the twenty-first century with any kind of impetus, Sir, that we must start examining all the possibilities that are out there before us. We must have an attitude that does not persuade that we are the vanquished but indeed persuades people that we in this region are prepared to take on opportunities and prepared to fight out there like anybody else. This is why, Sir, when people argue for the licensing of satellite dishes because of the reasons of cultural penetration, Sir, and the fact that you are going to allow material from outside to come in and contaminate a person's head, I do not agree. Because I believe that as a people it is time that we stand up and fight back, Sir.

If one were to examine the cost of renting satellite time, Sir, you would be amazed at how cheap it is, Sir. You would be amazed at how cheap it is for us in the Caribbean to get a series of programmes together and decide that we will beam it to that satellite and whoever so wishes is going to take it down from that satellite, Sir. Look at the psychology of it all, Sir. We have come along and have accepted the European and, indeed, the age old concept of embassies and missions because we believe that it is necessary to have a presence in a foreign country so that the ideas, views, and the culture of us are reflected in that country and are easily accessible to the residents of that country. But that requires a physical presence there, Sir, and technology in the last 30 years has removed the requirement for a lot of that physical presence. We can achieve alongside with having those missions there. We can reinforce the benefit of that, Sir, when we start to project energies of ourselves in our culture of how we think, how we eat, and what we like.

12.05 p.m.

It is significant, Sir, that as far back as the 1930's and 40's the West Indies as a region had a far greater presence

perhaps than it has now on the world landscape when we look at the fact that, for example, West Indian folk songs were better known than perhaps folk songs from any other region all across the world, and I was totally taken by surprise when I went to the London School of Economics between 1983 and 1986 and realised that everybody there knew about De-o or Island in the Sun or whatever, but I did not know an Indian folk song, I did not know a Nigerian folk song, and the others there did not know it as well. When those folk songs were implanted in the memories of people, Sir, through the radio and Rediffusion in those days – because it was all controlled by that Rediffusion Authority from out of England who spread everything like gospel throughout the Commonwealth – when they heard that, they had images of the Caribbean, images of sun and sea and sand and coconut tree, whatever, but they had an image of the Caribbean and that image associated itself with a tourism product.

However, Sir, once the technological age started to creep in on us and telecommunications became wide open, and the advertising industry as a commensurate arm started to move in, we in the Caribbean lost that primacy of position in people's concepts. Unfortunately, in the last 25 to 30 years... Nor, in all fairness, have we really had the resources to compete at that level, but we have not compeied to maintain that concept of us a region, of us as a people, which would help us in international trade, as I am sure the Honourable Senator Simmons would agree when he is dealing with the ACP countries and doing good work there, that it places that presence to help people to deal with us. When a man understands you better he is better able to deal with you, whether it is on a question of international trade, whether it is on a question of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, whatever it is. I believe that the time has come for the private sector within the region, and I am urging them to take up the challenge and to explore the investment possibilities that are there within the development of satellites.

It is not necessary for you to put up your own satellite, because there are lots of satellites up there with space on them. It may only be necessary to co-ordinate, to put it up, to market and distribute, but let our concept of what is possible for us as a people as we move into the 21st century, and what is possible to earn foreign exchange for us, because as I think the Honourable Senator Clarke tried a few months ago – although I don't think he is quite there yet – he understands that there is foreign exchange to be made within the cultural industry, but I think he needs to take advice as to how we can do it, and I am willing to provide that advice on behalf of the Barbados Labour Party. Nevertheless I think it is clear that there is a vast amount of foreign exchange that can be made within those industries. The only way we can make it is if we have the tools to bring it here, and that is where telecommunication comes in, Sir.

I think it is necessary for us to re-adapt our whole concept of how we address the question of telecommunications. Indeed, Sir, in 20 years time when, hopefully, I will be a little more experienced in this business, I will have the pleasure of looking back and seeing the contribution and the replacement of telecommunications and the cultural industry as one of the prime foreign exchange earners within the Caribbean region.

Let us go, Sir, to the question of how telecommunication impacts on radio and, more specifically, television and licences. The more I think about it I really believe that Government has good intentions, but there seems to be an overall absence of understanding as to the telecommunications sector. I would wish to know from whom they are getting independent in-house advice, because it is significant that the post of Director of Communications has been vacant since 1986 when a Mr. Peter Simmons resigned. This is not an area that most countries can even begin to deal with, and certainly not an area that most people can begin to deal with. I have great, great difficulty in understanding it. It took me three weeks to comb through this Bill and understand and grasp it. Perhaps some of us should have spent the same amount of time doing it, but nevertheless it is necessary to find out whether Government intends to fill that post of Director of Communications so that there is an independent, in-house person who can represent the interest of this country when it comes to negotiation with people who are in that area and who probably have been in that area for many, many years, so that the interest of this country within the telecommunications sector is always safeguarded. I hope we will have an answer pertaining to that.

I say that there seems to be an absence of understanding and I will go further. I have already said that telecommunications is nothing but a tool through which information passes, whether it is the telephone, whether it is the facsimile machine, whether it is the satellite, whether it is a radio, whether it is a television, whatever, it is only a tool through which information of some form passes. I am submitting that to look at telecommunications without developing your policy on the information sector is not to understand telecommunications. This Government has failed to look at information in anything other than its propaganda use, which may be valid, but there is a broader purpose and use for information. I referred earlier to the speech made by Dr. Reesom Haile at the communications conference which called for the breaking down of the monopolies in information, and I believe it goes even wider than this.

Let us take the example of regional integration, Sir.

SENATOR A. MORRISON: If the Honourable Member will give way, I would like to respond to the

statement made that the Government is only interested in information for propaganda purposes. I do not think the Honourable Member means that, Sir. We are not a propaganda Government, nor do we indulge in matters of propaganda for information.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you for your intervention.

SENATOR Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I am very grateful to the Honourable Senator, Sir, but nevertheless it is interesting that this Government at the first CARICOM Ministers of Information meeting since 1983, at which the Barbados Government was present, did not see it fit to send representation to the CARICOM Ministers of Information meeting in March of this year in Jamaica, a meeting at which major decisions regarding the information sector were taken regarding the whole CARICOM region. That is why I say, Sir, that if we are really serious about developing ourselves as a people developing this region, and indeed about the regional integration effort, that rather than talk about a Caribbean Association of Parliamentarians, or a House of Parliament for Caribbean people, that the people out there have no confidence in, that it would be anything other than a talk shop, that we should take it upon ourselves to use telecommunications to open up the radio and television licence market to provide the necessary information to educate our people, because ultimately, Sir, until the average man in the street is fully educated and understands and appreciates the benefits of integration, we will have great difficulty in attaining it. Until that average man understands and appreciates and calls for it, a lot of governments in this region will continue to put national domestic matters first and streamline policies to cater to national domestic matters and not put the interests of regional integration above that.

12.15 p.m.

Sir, I believe that if we, in Barbados, are really serious about developing our people and about giving them an opportunity to participate in the wealth of this country, about carrying them beyond the stage where they are now, not only will we pursue an educational system but we will ensure that the available media that are there, that of radio, that of television, are used also to provide information to educate people, not necessarily in the formal mathematics and English, which is necessary, with all due respect to Senator Straughn, but also in how to live, how to apply for a mortgage, how to get a bridging loan, how the insurance industry impacts and also why it is necessary that you should insure your house, particularly during the hurricane season. These are all matters which can be addressed through using the medium within the telecommunication sector.

The resources are strained and limited at the moment. Until we open up those licences for personal radio,

television, we continue to keep a monopoly over the information sector in this country and we deprive our people of the right to receive information, Sir. I call upon this Government and indeed, anybody who is to follow them, that they must allow free and easy access to information in this society, if we are to go ahead.

Sir, we see in Jamaica that they have already opened up and issued new radio licences and new television licences. We see it in Trinidad. We see in St. Lucia that there is Helen TV as well as BDS in addition to CBC, which is beamed there. Barbados is like an oasis, Sir, in a desert which is holding out and saying, "No." If you don't want to privatise CBC - Fine! But at least, open up the system, although we in the Labour Party still believe that CBC should be privatised and the workers should be given the right to own their own organisation and give small Barbadians the right to participate in it. At least open up the system so that other Barbadians who wish to participate in the telecommunications sector and who wish to build something to leave for their children have the opportunity to do that!

Sir, I feel a sense of excitement when I talk about the telecommunications sector, because it is almost like being a pioneer in a pioneering age in terms of how we look at the telecommunications sector. I think we need to look at it, not just as a means to help us out in other areas, but as a dynamic force in its own right. I hope that Government's encouragement - as I am sure that it will do once it begins to understand the full implications of the telecommunications sector - will also inspire organisations like BET and Cable & Wireless to open up and understand the importance of the telecommunications sector to the development of this region. There is absolutely no reason why CANA, the single Caribbean news agency, Sir, should have operating costs because of high rates, as it does.

I would like to see the Cable & Wireless and its various forms throughout the region - BET, JAM-INTEL, Grenada External Communications - as a group of people get together and decide that their contribution to the regional integration effort, especially in the face of the West Indian Commission moving about now, is to offer to the Caribbean News Agency bargain basement prices so that the movement of information between the islands happens in a more meaningful and effective way; so that those of us in Barbados at the end of a day can sit down and say, "Well, we are no different from those in Roseau"; and those in Roseau will say, "Well, we are no different to those in Kingston"; and those will say the same thing throughout the region. Until they begin to get information about the other people in a meaningful and on a day-to-day basis, whether through the call-in programmes or news, Sir, they are going to find it difficult to appreciate the concept of regional integration.

I hope that Government's involvement in this area will give impetus to organisations like BET and Grenada External Telecommunications to give the Caribbean News Agency that break and give us a chance towards achieving regional integration.

One last point before I sit down, Sir. I believe it has been mooted, Sir, the merging of BARTEL and BET. I believe that that is a useful exercise at this point. Sir, if we look at it closely, we would realise that a lot of the technology that the two are using now, is the same. The development of the facsimile machine, in particular, has brought them even closer together. The digital use of telephones and the use of the fibre optics has also contributed. But more importantly, the shareholdings with Cable & Wireless, I believe, owning approximately 65% of both. The shareholding, therefore, reflect almost the same major composition and perhaps, Sir, there is to be some benefit in the merging of the two which will eventually inure to the benefit of all Barbadians. I think that that needs to be examined and explored in more detail without just leaving it by the wayside, Sir. I will, Sir, bow to the experts, once they have examined it, but I think we should examine it.

Those, Sir, are my views on the telecommunications sector and before I forget, I think that one other area that Government believes that it understands the telecommunications sector is if we look at the difference in duty between cellular phones and VHF radio sets. They are really the same instrument. They are both radios. Yet the VHF radio set faces a far higher duty to enter this country and that is the set that is used by the average small, black Barbadian in his small business involving transportation or in little larger businesses where people are on the road a lot. Those are the things that perhaps we need to look at to ensure that there is a more equitable distribution of burden upon the people in this country when it comes to taxation within the telecommunications sector.

If Government, or whoever is in Customs, understood, there would not be discrepancy in little or no duty for the cellular phone and a "mob-a-ton" of duty for the VHF radio. So, I hope that that too will be addressed.

In closing, Sir, I wish that this is only the beginning and that, indeed, Government will, if necessary, seek the independent advice that it needs by filling the post of Director of Communications again, by ensuring that we look at the telecommunications sector, not only as a means for development for attracting other industries, but that we look at it and we understand it and understand that we, in Barbados and the wider Caribbean, are well poised to extract the benefits of turning the telecommunications sector into a major productive earner. The people who stand to benefit, Sir, provided Government addresses it in a proper way, can be the small black Barbadian who is technical and who understands how to put some wires

together and who can understand that it is necessary to be retrained at timely intervals to keep up with technology.

I am sure that I will have very little disagreement on that point in this Honourable House. With no further point, Sir, I wish the Government well, but I would like them to build upon where we are at and to understand that you cannot leave legislation like this sitting down for a long time. You have to keep it up to date. We hope that their department will ensure that this House is visited regularly with the necessary legislative requirements to turn this telecommunications sector into a major foreign exchange earner for us. Thank you, Sir.

12.25 p.m.

SENATOR Mrs. A. STRAUGHN: Mr. Deputy President, in supporting this Bill one of my special interests lies in section 36 on page 31 — restriction in respect of satellite television receiver antenna. This section, Sir, I consider of particular significance to the functioning and operations of the Film Censorship Board of which I am Chairman.

Frequently when we are called upon to examine films submitted by the film exhibitors for public viewing the Film Censorship Board brings severe scrutiny to bear on those films which we consider of questionable value and suitability. It is at these times that we are accused of being harsh on the film exhibitors. At these same times they alert us to the fact that the possibility of entry and viewing of these same films of questionable value and suitability exists because of what could be regarded as unrestricted use of satellite television receiver antenna.

Mr. Deputy President, I submit that the institution of the measures as laid down in section 36 should be of some help to the Film Censorship Board and of this we are truly grateful.

SENATOR Dr. E. A. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to support this Bill. I want to make a few observations. Before I make those observations I want to make a few comments on the discourse by Senator Mottley. Let me say at some times I had great difficulty in following the logic but that may be due to my own inadequacies and not my good comprehension of telecommunications as it stands today. I recognise that telecommunications is a very rapidly progressing area in the world and one has great difficulty in keeping up with all the technological changes that are going on. That brings me back to the comment made as to the Bill itself.

I think that one would recognise that any country, including Barbados, whenever a telecommunications bill is brought for discussion, it must already be outdated because the speed at which telecommunications is going forward as you are drafting that Bill, as it is coming out from the legal

people, the telecommunications is not stopping. It is going forward so there will always be a lag period.

Barbados stands in the first rung of telecommunications in the developing world. I am at a loss when I hear a big issue made of the restriction of Barbadians receiving information. I am also lost when I hear that the removal of the TV licence had to do with the removal of restriction from receiving information. I did not understand that fundamental concept in the removal of the TV licence. I thought that was a nuisance area.

Barbados is one of those developing countries which is known by the international agencies as one of the freest countries in the world when it comes to receiving and giving information. I do not think that any international organisation has ever seen Barbados or any Government of Barbados as an agent of restricting information going forth to its people.

SENATOR Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Sir. I do not wish the Honourable Senator to misinterpret what I said. I specifically said restricting the right to receive information. I did not talk about censorship. I think there is a difference between the two.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you. Proceed.

SENATOR Dr. E. A. SIMMONS: While I am on that, Mr. Deputy President, let me say that in terms of monitoring the information that goes forth to people let us not overlook the fact that the telecommunications in the world today can be used as a weapon of disseminating information. We know too well in the Caribbean how wars are fought through the telecommunications system. Any Government has to be mindful of the fact that telecommunications, though it has great benefits, it also has a lot of negative elements which have to be monitored. We must not be unmindful of that. When one talks of the liberty, one also has to look at the necessity to restrict certain elements of telecommunications that can be very harmful. I do not think when we make a big issue of restrictions that we should be unmindful of the fact that one has to look at the detrimental elements of telecommunications.

I heard the Honourable Senator make a big issue about the privatisation of CBC. I want to remind the young Honourable Senator that the party for which she speaks was the Government of the day from 1976 to 1986. It had ten long years in which to privatise the same television station for which they are now calling for privatisation. CBC did not come on stream in 1976 or in 1978. CBC was there for a long time. While they were there they even had the experience of looking at television for several years. They had the opportunity then to privatise CBC. I want to know how all of a sudden, come the post 1986 era, there must be

this haste to privatise CBC. But that must be seen in the context in which it is given.

I want to know how the Senator calls for the filling of the post of the Director of Telecommunications. She said it was filled by an independent. We may take opposite views as to whether the person who filled the post was independent or not. Maybe the post needs to be filled. I do not know. Whether the person who filled the post was independent I take a little issue with that.

*Aside.*

SENATOR Dr. E. A. SIMMONS: Independent of Government but not party. Oh, I understand what you mean! But, Mr. Deputy President, I am happy to see that the Government of Barbados is addressing this issue of telecommunications because we know that telecommunications is, as the Honourable Senator has said, a vital industry. I do not know why she wants to say that the Government of the day does not recognise this. Everyone recognises that telecommunications is an industry in itself. Barbados is in the forefront of developing countries in using telecommunications as an industry. One only needs to look at the rapid development that is taking place in Barbados.  
12.35 p.m.

If you look through the Caribbean and you look at Barbados where it is in telecommunications compared with the other countries of the Caribbean – I do not want to call any country's name – you can see that Barbados is way in advance of those countries. We know that in some of the bigger countries in the Caribbean people will take their plane ride to Barbados in order to conduct business because of the good telecommunications system that we have in Barbados in order to transact their business with overseas people. Let us not be too biased, myopic analysis of the situation. Let us not go down the road as how successive Governments...Because the telecommunications system in Barbados did not develop since 1986; it has been in place and it has been developing with successive Governments. Let us not go down that narrow path. It is because of the broad vision of the directorate of Barbados over the years that we have been able to have the infrastructural development of our telecommunications system as it exists today.

What I would like to see us do is to use that telecommunications system for the development of other countries in the Caribbean. Let us share it and even go further beyond maybe for other developing countries, let us say, in Africa and the Pacific. Those who have got the lag. I think we need to share some of our telecommunications systems.

But where I also have to disagree with the Honourable Senator is when she says that this present Government is

not sensitive enough at the educational level. It was this present Government who introduced computers into the schools of this country in order to make children literate.

SENATOR Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Sir. In 1983 computers were in some schools in this country already.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Simmons you may proceed.

SENATOR Dr. E. A. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy President, what I am saying is that the mass availability of computers in the schools of Barbados was made by the Democratic Labour Party because we recognized, and it was a fundamental move in making a developing country computer literate bringing it into line with developed countries. Because if you analyse what is going on in the developing world Barbados I would dare say is probably the first country that has made computers available to school age children bringing them into a new sphere of development. Because we know that we are moving into a world where if you are not computer literate you will be left behind. You have to start at the stage of the schools. The whole thinking in terms of computer is something that we do not acquire easily at our age. Computer literacy is a way of thinking. It is a new philosophy. I have to commend the Government of the day for taking that bold move against all odds in bringing that sort of programme into Barbados. Because we will see that spin-off not in two years or three years but five and ten years down the road when those children are graduating and are hoping to move into markets not only in Barbados but markets in the developed world and also take their places in other countries of the developing world including the Caribbean because we have been able to give them a new way of thinking.

The final thing I want to say, Mr. Deputy President, is that I hope that in the near future we will see the telecommunications system used more readily in Barbados in accessing information to trade and that we will be able to use this. Because only when we have this basic information will we be able to compete in the international market in terms of trade in order to earn foreign exchange and foreign dollars. I am not quite sure whether the Honourable Senator said that it is time to replace the physical presence of our Ambassadors overseas.

SENATOR Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Sir. I was very careful to say complement the overseas missions that one would use the medium of telecommunications to also reinforce that presence overseas.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator Mottley.

SENATOR Dr. E. A. SIMMONS: Let me thank you. I have misunderstood what you said. But I think that it is already in place that the foreign embassies at least the Barbados Embassies overseas their Missions are already supplemented by the accessibility of the telecommunications system.

In terms of beaming images to the satellite and back down I think although that may be conceptually very futuristic we have to deal in a real world. We live in a country where we have a population of 250 000 and scarce resources. Although we can think in those sorts of ways, we can daydream in these sorts of systems. We have to be realistic about what is going on.

Let me say that I want to support this Bill, that it will take Barbados into the future, that we need to update it; we need to follow it. And I am quite sure that once people in Barbados are made more aware of where we are in telecommunications that we will be on the road to success.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy President.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Springer.

SENATOR THE REV. CANON J. L. SPRINGER: Mr. Deputy President, Sir, I have a few comments on this Bill which I think would be rather for consideration in the rules that will govern or direct the application of the Bill when it becomes Law. So I make these comments in that regard because I would rather see legislation of this sort got ahead with as quickly as possible. As Senator Simmons indicated by the time you get it passed there are changes. Therefore we should not really delay. It is in that sense that I make my comments.

But before I point to particular sections let me say that I am really surprised and disappointed to hear Senator Mottley refer to the one restriction that she would support – that that was in the interest of national security I think. I hope I am not misquoting. And she tended somehow to have glossed over other areas where I think we must have some restriction in terms of flow of information. For example in areas of morality which raise their ugly head from time to time in our TV. I have been hearing lots of comments recently about the amount of violence on CBC. But I think that CBC is really innocent compared with other sources. I speak particularly with reference to the availability of dishes and the video machine and video shops and the amount of sexual immorality that is displayed to which our young people are exposed daily with no control whatever; and also to the amount and the level of violence to which they are exposed from the same source. I hope that something will be done to remedy this situation. Because I believe that the video shops, the dishes and the video machines are responsible more than anything else for the incidence of violence and sexual immorality that we are experiencing in this country, and I hope we deal with that.

My first specific reference has to do with Certificates of Competency under Section 28 on page 20. While, Sir, I think that it makes some sense to have the decision in the hand of the Minister responsible as to who is capable of setting up a system and also the kind of examinations, I have a problem with that section that deals with the right to waive the qualification – reciprocity, that section on page 29 dealing with reciprocity. I wonder if this is not some kind of a loophole by which some persons who are not regarded as qualified could find themselves setting up a system in some other territory and then come back and expect and be acceptable or accepted because they had been operating somewhere before. I rather that there was a system that had specific guidelines and standards and levels known by which the Minister would then be directed to take whatever action was necessary to declare persons as competent. That is my first comment.  
12.45 p.m.

My second has to do with section 36 – Restrictions in respect of Satellite Television receiver antenna – on page 24. This deals with the non-commercial use of the satellite T.V. receiver and antenna. I note, Sir, that because of the lack of proper supervision since 1986 many of these persons who own satellite receivers have not been paying fees because the fees have not been collected. I don't think it is true to say that when there were no more fees for T.V. licences that it applied to the satellite dishes.

SENATOR Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Sir. When I referred to the abolition of licensing fee for televisions I never referred to it as a reason pertaining to the satellite dishes. I said it was the beginning to remove the restriction on the right to receive information, Sir.

SENATOR THE REV. CANON J. L. SPRINGER: I was not referring to anyone specific at that point. I was just making a general point here. Sir, there is from time to time a misunderstanding about that, that those fees were abolished. That is not the case as Senator Mottley quite rightly said. I would like, Sir, to make the point that we have lost a significant amount of revenue in this country because these satellite dishes are not properly supervised or inspected or policed, and I hope that something would be done to deal with that particular problem. That is related to section 40 over page, which provides for inspection of telecommunications systems. I would like to suggest, Sir, that it is time that these inspectors be given some work to do. I don't know that they exist, I am learning from the Bill here, but I would like to know that they are actually identified and that their work is undertaken in the interest of the country being able to collect these outstanding revenues.

My next point has to do with page 27, section 43 – the investigation of harmful interference. I think it is known and it has been the experience of many persons across the country that from time to time they have this harmful

interference where their television sets and other equipment is concerned. It is only fair that there should be some policing again of this so that the television station will not have to bear the blame for things not being the way they should be, when in fact it is some at the local level in certain districts. This can only be dealt with if the inspectors, having the right to inspect, do inspect when these matters are reported to them.

There is another form of interference in sections 58 and 59 on page 31, which I would like to draw attention to. That has to do in essence with the misuse of the telephone system as one system within this broader system of telecommunications. Those persons, who like myself, Sir, have had to get involved in counselling of people who have been suffering anxiety, have discovered that a number of persons suffer great abuse by their own telephones through lawless persons, who seem to have nothing more to do than to get on the phone and to call them and to continue calling and abuse them and to say all kinds of things. This is becoming a pastime in Barbadian society and these people go further than just calling others at their homes, Sir. They call them at their work place, which is even worse. So that the victims of such interference cannot perform at their work place at the highest level.

I am calling, Sir, for a system to be put in place by which these people can be dealt with. A fine of one thousand dollars in section 59 is not adequate. There must be something more to it than that, and I hope, Sir, that the rules, or whatever the method of the implementation of this Bill, when it becomes law will deal with matters like that. Those are my points, Sir, but I, in general will support the Bill and hope that we will be dealing with additions to it as we go along, Sir. Thank you very much, Sir.

SENATOR Mrs. V. C. FRASER: Thank you, Mr. Deputy President. I rise to support the Bill and I want to say, like Senator Straughn, the question of giving the Film Censorship Board more clout has always been a great concern of mine. Even in the selection of films for ... We only have one television station. But my understanding is that they are not involved in the selection. The selection is done and then they are involved in the censorship.

I feel, Sir, that the time has come when we will have to get something in here to look seriously at the videos. I have not really seen anything about the video. To me, this has been one of the most destructive elements in terms of the names that these videos carry. One has to recall the name of one which says, 'Mary had a little lamb'. Many young people bought it and it was everything other than Mary had a little lamb. It was vulgarity at its highest. I think something should be done so that the videos that come in this country can be examined, so that people will understand whether or not we are not encouraging, in this country, some people to make money off our young

children in this country. That is communications, too, but it is bad and ineffective and disgusting communications.

That is not communications for the betterment of this country and often those of us who are involved in school boards and so on, we hear of activities of young children going to various places where they see these vulgar video shows. I certainly believe that the Censorship Board or some area within the Communications Act should be able to have some kind of restriction or empower some of these inspectors to be able to inspect these kinds of places, probably in collaboration with the police; and something has to be done.

It is very burning on my heart because too many people are being destroyed and this is not home video I am talking about. I am talking about places that show these videos where young people's minds are being destroyed and I think this is one of the very serious areas of destruction as to what communication should be used for in a developing country like ours. On the other hand, I should like to congratulate the Government. However late a thing comes, the important thing is that it has come. There is a time and place for everything on this earth. It has come and it will be worked on. I know that these films are very expensive. Sometimes we would like to see certain things. I quarrel too about certain films that we would like to see on television. But I would also like the business community, while we are talking about privatisation, sponsoring some really educational films on television on some of the local programmes that we cannot get sponsored that are really effective.

12.55 p.m.

Quite recently we have been seeing one of CBC's staff, Mr. Claude Graham, doing a very effective job on agriculture. I think that if we get more programmes like trade and agriculture sponsored on that communications media people will understand the importance of the communication system. I think that many people were surprised to see and to know that we had a rain forest in Barbados. That was because here again an effective tool was being used, that is the media. But it was being used to educate the people of Barbados. If we had sponsors in this community who have a serious commitment to the development of communication in this country as a tool for educating our population of not simple affairs but serious economic and cultural affairs in this country, then I think it is going to redound to their own benefit.

I cannot understand why we keep talking about privatisation and we are not calling for the private sector to become more involved in this sponsorship. All of the soap operas that come on television are sponsored by big Barbadian firms. They are living off the same work of the people in this country who are working to produce to help them to become successful. Why then do they have to sponsor soap operas that are so expensive coming from

other countries which cost us a serious amount of foreign exchange? If we are talking about building up educational systems within a communications system, why cannot that money be spent to do this to develop our own country rather than to say that if we privatise that it is going to be better? Now if the same people that you are talking about will only sponsor the soap operas that are very expensive, do you think that if you privatise that they are not going to sponsor those kind of things more? Let us use our common sense. If I own something now, I will be able to do what I like with it. When it does not make money, well you know what I would do. Shut it down. Let us face facts. A businessman is in business to make money.

We must recognize that Government has got a serious responsibility to its people and I would like to see a more regional approach to the whole question of communications. I know that in Barbados we are more progressive than a lot of people. But I do not think that we should just sit down and say that we are progressive and "blah, blah". Because I look at this region as a unit. I feel that when a majority of the population in this region are illiterate, whether it is lack of communications or not, I as a Barbadian feel very hurt. I have been involved, Mr. Deputy President, in a system in Jamaica where we were looking at communicating to the illiterate people. I must tell you that that was one of the very difficult types of systems. How are you going to get across the message to people who cannot read or write and who do not understand things?

I believe that since we are moving towards Caribbean unity that we should see to it that all of the people in the region, not only yourselves, be involved in this activity of communications. We must also look seriously at what is happening too. In the area of radio, there have been people coming into the Caribbean and setting up radio stations. It is all well and good for people to talk about privatisation. But you have to look at where is that transmission going and what is being transmitted from your country. That takes a whole lot of inspection, censorship, and vigilance. I do not know of anybody in Barbados who does not have access to the news media. Sometimes I have to turn off my radio. Believe you me! We have all sorts of call-in programmes in this country.

I do not think that anybody should accuse the Government of Barbados at any time of trying to cipher any discussion in this country. I think discussion is fair and free in Barbados and people are able to call in and say even what they like. Sometimes they have to be cut off because they say things that may not be legal and the radio may be sued.

Mr. Deputy President, I am very happy that the Censorship Board will have a little more clout under this. But I must reiterate that I feel happy also of the fact of how far Barbados has developed as far as communications are concerned. I was recently in Trinidad and I heard that it was

a standing joke that some business people came here even to get their telephone messages. That is very good because we get some money. I understand this is very true and they come up here to get their various means of communications and so on. It is no secret that many international organisations would always opt for their headquarters in Barbados because of the easy flow of communication to the outside world. This is a plus for Barbados.

When we talk about marketing the telecommunications system, I would like to see many more package programmes or local programmes done on video, disseminated, and sold abroad so that we can earn money through this particular system of transmitting our information not only to the Caribbean but to the extra-regional areas. I feel that this is one of the areas where we can earn quite a bit of money. We can have our own soap operas and cultural presentations put on video and we can sell them to the outside world.

Mr. Deputy President, in closing, I want to say that I do not think that we should expect the impossible from a Government of a country when we the citizens should be asking ourselves what we can do to help to develop this country. Communication is not static. There are many programmes that we can do without charging a fee. That is communication. Those who are qualified in certain areas can offer their services to do television programmes for children. I have seen in England some Saturday morning programmes where children and adults are involved in preparing a week's menu for the family, in budgeting for the family, and in making simple things to save the family money in growing trees and different little things of that sort which are very important to the development of family life. Also how they should pray and react to various things. All of these are things that we can do because we do have videos coming here with these things. Health and safety. All of these can be packaged and they can be sold abroad.  
1.05 p.m.

The radio programmes could also be sold abroad. In the same way we get radio programmes coming from the BBC, there is no reason why we cannot do some of the most important programmes on education, on culture, history and technology. We have had many things develop in this country. Dr. Colin Hudson has been developing all sorts of things. We could package these things and present them on television and have radio scripts and so on and we could send them abroad for money.

I hope that we are going to take a serious look at that aspect, but more than anything else I hope we continue to follow up getting more local educational programmes sponsored and that we use the media to inform those persons who are uninformed about Government's programmes. I do not see anything political in informing people about Government's programmes. Government is put there by the people and all the capital works that are

being carried out in this country should be seen on the television and should be explained to the people so that the people would get a clear understanding and there will not be silly arguments as to what is right and what is not right, because there will be somebody there to educate you, to point out how to do things. Why is Government doing this? What is the rationale? Is Government earning income from it? How does Government see this as a tool to assist the people in the country?

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy President.

#### SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy President, it now being the hour of 1.12 p.m., I move that we suspend for one hour for lunch and resume the sitting at 2.15 p.m.

*The question was put to the Senate and agreed to, and Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT suspended the sitting accordingly.*

#### RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: This sitting is resumed.

SENATOR A. MORRISON: Sir, I should just like to refer to some points made by various Members on this Bill.

Mention was made of the satellite antennas, receiving apparatus and things like that. I am in agreement with the submission made by Senator Straughn and wish to reiterate the policy of the Government in this regard. Advances have been made in technology using many types of equipment of varying standards and quality, some of which have been imported into this country. They have been manufactured abroad and with that situation it increases the risk of interference with lawful telecommunications services.

There are other types of equipment, Sir, like satellite receivers, which have a potential for adverse social impact, which has been borne out by Senator Simmons as well as Senator Straughn, so Government will have to overlook the control of those kinds of equipment so that we will be able to make sure that people do not import certain apparatus which, with a limited amount of modification, may be used to violate the secrecy of this country. You cannot have a free-for-all situation without any kind of governmental control.

On the other hand, Sir, the radio frequency spectrum is a limited natural public resource, which I adverted to in my opening remarks, and that is why we have made detailed provisions in the Act to control that aspect of the radio spectrum. We had to outline procedures in the Act to regulate the obtaining of licences and we issue certificates of competence to people who wish to operate in the

repairing or transmitting of such equipment, and also, in the case of the point raised by Senator Springer, where we recognise reciprocity, we will have to have somebody of a professional nature to examine the equipment in order to advise the Minister on whether we should accept such equipment by way of reciprocity when applications are made. There will be a committee which will advise the Minister on such procedures when there are certain applications.

Of more importance, Sir, Senator Mottley has been concerned about the right to free access for receiving stations. I think it was her Government's administration, when consultations were made with the particular Ministry at the time, which saw the need for controlling the use of satellite receiving antennas. That was a policy of the last Government, with which we have no quarrel. We are of the same opinion. That is why they made recommendations in 1983 to prohibit the use of such equipment for commercial purposes, and that they would have a say in being able to monitor equipment like that.

Sir, the provisions in this new legislation makes it possible for the staff of the Telecommunications Unit to be upgraded and also to be increased. I hope that when we come here for an increase in staff for the Telecommunications Unit Members on the other side will only be too glad to support those proposals, because we intend to carry out a real inspection of various types of equipment and we will be able to realise a lot of fees which right now we have no way to recover, certain fees which go a-begging under the present circumstances. The inspectors will have the right, on behalf of the Minister, to inspect and also to carry out inspections in the case of the Caribbean Broadcasting Act and to be able to recover fees which we are not able to get at under the present circumstances.

As far as the ownership of the telecommunications services is concerned, we have been pursuing a policy which was actually pursued in the 1980's in which it has become possible, by the introduction of the last administration, which took a very important step towards regulating procedures under the old legislation, we have been enjoined with the private sector, both in the administration of BET and also BARTEL. We started a policy in the sixties when we brought out the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, an entity which could stand alongside the private sector in providing a service. That policy was carried on by the Barbados Labour Party Administration when in 1984 they took a chance to get some shareholding in the Barbados External Communications Ltd.  
2.20 p.m.

Sir, the policy would appear to me to be that while the Government recognised that private enterprise should continue providing public telecommunications services, the Government, to which I belong, would like wherever

possible or appropriate to participate in or increase its participation in the ownership of these undertakings on behalf of the people of Barbados. Right now, Cable & Wireless has 65% shareholding in BET, Government has 11% and the private sector has 24%.

Sir, it is our policy, because the heavy capitalisation required in providing these services, in order to keep up to date with modern trends, would demand cooperation between the private sector and Government. With reference to Senator Mottley's statement about our not taking advantage of telecommunications as an industry, I would like to inform this House that we have already started in that direction and that there is something called Infomatics which we have recognised and that we have already set up a teleport facility at the Deep Water Harbour, which is now run by Caribbean Data Services. There is another one on the drawing board for Barbados. So, we have been well aware of the value of telecommunications as an industry. As we go ahead, we will pay more attention to that aspect of it.

We are grateful for the comments by various Senators and I should like to assure Honourable Members that we would take whatever action necessary to remedy any defects in the present legislation and that we recognise that it is a continuing exercise in the field of telecommunications to keep updating organisations based on new innovations in this industry.

The whole matter rests on supervision and certain administrative arrangements which will become necessary to supplement the technical aspects which have been put in place in this legislation. We hope that when we upgrade the Telecommunications Unit in the Ministry of Telecommunications, we will be able to be more efficient in the collection of certain dues and to be able to see that there are no interferences at the same time that other people are using the lawful telecommunications services.

I think I have covered most of the points raised and I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

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

#### COMMITTEE

*On the motion of Senator A. MORRISON, Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT left the Chair and the Senate went into Committee on the Bill, Senator A. J. N. PHILLIPS in the Chair.*

SENATOR A. J. N. PHILLIPS: The Senate is now in Committee. I am to draw to the attention of Honourable Senators that this Bill has some 75 clauses. So far, I have not had any notice of any amendments to any of the clauses.

*On the motion of Senator A. MORRISON, Parts I to IX were called and passed.*

*The Schedule was called.*

SENATOR A. MORRISON: I beg to move that the Schedule be the Schedule to the Bill.

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

*On the motion of Senator A. MORRISON, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.*

*On the motion of Senator A. MORRISON, the Bill was read a third time and passed.*  
2.30 p.m.

#### ORDER NO. 2: RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE SALE OF LAND AT POREY SPRING, ST. THOMAS

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, this Resolution seeks authority of Parliament for the sale of a parcel of land together with a building thereon at Porey Spring in the Parish of St. Thomas. During 1984 a decision was taken to close several public conveniences throughout the Island. Since that time we have come to this Chamber seeking permission to dispose of the land to persons who had indicated an interest in this land.

A decision to sell the properties or lease them to members of the public was advertised and a Mr. John Taylor of Spring Farm in St. Thomas made the highest offer for this property at Porey Spring in the Parish of St. Thomas. It is Mr. Taylor's intention to use the property as a village shop. Some time in early 1989 Cabinet agreed that the property should be sold to Mr. Taylor. He was so informed and sought and obtained the approval of the Town and Country Planning Department for a change of use of the premises. This approval was, however, granted in mid 1990. This draft Resolution now aims at putting Government in a position of disposing of the land to Mr. Taylor.

The custom in instances of this nature is that the land would be sold back to the original owners and if there is no approach by the original owner, to grant it to the highest bidder. Mr. Taylor proposes to pay some \$7 000 for the parcel of land at Porey Spring which is some 228 square metres or thereabouts on three sides on lands of Content Plantation and on Highway D.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

## SYMPATHY

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, during the adjournment of this Honourable Senate our attention has been drawn to the fact that one of our Members, Senator Joseph Payne was hospitalised. My information is that he is recovering. I believe that Members of the Senate would wish to express their sympathy to his family at this time and also to wish for him a very speedy recovery.

I beg to move that the Senate so agree.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I should also like to add my personal wishes for his speedy recovery. I saw Senator Payne yesterday evening and I can confirm that he is,

indeed, recuperating very rapidly. He is no longer in ICU. He is now in Ward A6. I invite you therefore to concur in this.

There being no dissenting voices it is concurred in.

## ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, there being no further business on the Order Paper for today, I beg to move that the Senate be adjourned sine die.

*The question that the Senate do now adjourn sine die was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly.*  
2.35 p.m.

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