
THE SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1991 - 96

SENATE

Wednesday, May 6, 1992

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, on Wednesday, May 6, 1992, 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 Labour, Consumer Affairs and the Environment)

Senator Dr. Frank W. ALLEYNE

Senator Miss Y. V. WALKES

Senator Mrs. M. BARKER-WELCH

Senator Dr. E. A. SIMMONS

Senator J. J. PAYNE

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

Senator Mrs. M. WALCOTT, S.C.M.

Senator C. O. WILLIAMS

Senator W. LeR. 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 Fr. Errington Massiah.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is in session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE PRESIDENT

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: In accordance with the provisions of subsections (6) and (9) of Section 13 of the Ombudsman Act, Cap. 8A of the Laws, I have the honour to submit my report on my functions under the Act in respect of the year 1991.

This report has been submitted by the Ombudsman and the letter which I just read to you was addressed to myself.

The report is accordingly laid before Parliament.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

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

The Road Traffic (Amendment) Regulations, 1992.

The Road Traffic (Security of Load on Vehicles) Regulations, 1992.

The Caribbean Common Market (Origin of Goods) Regulations, 1992.

The Report of the Commission of Enquiry into escape from Glendairy Prison of Junior Brathwaite on August 19, 1991 and from the Maximum Security Section of Denzil Roberts, Peter Bradshaw, David Oliver and Winston Hall on September 5, 1991.

Training Report for the year 1st April, 1990 to 31st March, 1991.

The 1991 Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Central Bank of Barbados.

The Economic Report of Barbados for 1991.

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

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: I beg to move the suspension of Standing Order 45(2) to enable us to deal with one Bill which is before us today. Notice of the Bill was given on 28th April, 1992.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: I beg to move the First Reading of a Bill entitled an Act to amend the Employment Levy Act.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 1 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT
VAUXHALL, CHRIST CHURCH TO ERECT
A SENIOR CITIZENS' VILLAGE

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, this Resolution seeks the approval of Parliament for the compulsory acquisition of 5418.3 square metres of land at Vauxhall in the parish of Christ Church. The purpose for which the land will be used is for the erection, construction and establishment of a senior citizens' village.

The information available to us indicates that the land in question can accommodate a number of housing units. It is proposed to use concrete slabs for construction of these units and the establishment of this village will signal a departure from the usual arrangement where the National Assistance Board arranges to have chattel houses constructed on rented lands and these are made available to persons who are in need.

Historically the programme has been based on the use of wood for construction, but it is recognised that the maintenance of these wooden units creates a problem over the years.

Another feature of the existing system is that because the land is either leased or rented, it constitutes a very temporary arrangement and it is quite insecure in terms of the person who occupies the premises. In addition, the use of chattel housing on rented lands does not allow for the

units to be constructed in such a fashion that these persons in need are able to have adequate lavatory and other bathroom facilities. There have been instances in which elderly clients have had, because of the use of these wooden houses with toilet facilities which are outside the building, to go out into weather at nights. The use of this land which is owned by the Crown will allow for such arrangements to be avoided. It is felt, therefore, the acquisition of this land will partially solve some of these problems.

There has been no objection from the Town Planning Department to the use of this area for the purposes as stated. The site falls within the urban residential corridor as allocated in the Physical Development Plan as amended in 1986 and the land will be in harmony with the use of lands in surrounding areas. We know well the Vauxhall Village in which there is a school and a church. It is a quiet suburban district.

I beg to move that this Resolution be passed.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, I personally am very glad to see that something is being done for the senior citizens. I believe that a society can be judged by how it treats those who are less fortunate and in this regard, our senior citizens deserve better treatment than they have been getting in the past. They deserve the best because they have worked hard to bring the country to the level of development which we all now enjoy. The party I represent has always been mindful of this and we did a lot of good work on behalf of the senior citizens in Barbados. We, on this side, have no problem at all with supporting this Resolution. However, there are a few things that we can look at.

11.25 a.m.

It is not always in the best interest of the older people to move them from their familiar surroundings and take them to a completely new environment. One has to be very careful about these senior citizen villages. The concept is good; but at the same time I would like that we do not concentrate on these villages to the exclusion of the Home Help service which is of tremendous importance to a lot of old people because it allows them to remain in their homes and still be cared for. I hope that we do not allow the stringent, economic circumstances to curtail or hinder the activities of the Home Help service.

I want to make this final point. We must not believe that all senior citizens require is somewhere to live. It is a very important part of the exercise but, what is more important, is that the younger people in society pay more attention to them. It is not good enough to carry them into a village and the only people they will see, apart from the ones who will be helping them, will be people of the same age group as themselves. I am calling on all those involved, the churches, youth groups and other social groups, to pay more attention.

I can be personal in this regard because of the church I attend. We love to go and visit old people in their homes or in institutions. Personally, I get a lot of help and comfort from my association with people of a ripe age. I want to appeal to all of the youth groups to spend time and energy helping senior citizens. Go and read for them! Spend an hour or 2 in their company! It will be of tremendous benefit not to the senior citizens alone but also to the young people who will benefit from such an association. We must not believe that all senior citizens require is somewhere to live and some food to eat. They require social interaction and the company of those of a much younger age.

With these few remarks I support this Resolution.

SENATOR Dr. E. A. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy President, I want to associate myself with supporting this Resolution and I want to agree with the last speaker. I want to make a few observations with respect to our senior citizens. I think it is a worthwhile thing. In this case we are trying to use a sort of a permanent home for senior citizens. I can tell you from my personal experience that I have seen abuse of the system where the department responsible for the repair of senior citizen homes has repaired them and then these properties are claimed by other members of the family when they should go to other senior citizens. I know of instances where homes were repaired and the families move the old people out and rented out the property that was repaired by Government funds. We need to be a little more watchful in these areas because it is important if we are to deliver the kind of quality care that we need to.

I am really interested that Senator Barker has mentioned the Church because I think institutions have an important role to play with respect to our senior citizens. I am personally involved, on a weekly basis, with senior citizens at St. Barnabas Church and we, at the St. Peter Parish Church, started an outreach programme where we erected a building and part of that facility was to allow working class people who had their parents at home to bring them in the morning and drop them off in a pleasant environment and take them back home in the afternoon. We know that as people get older they tend to get senile and become forgetful. One of the problems we have with senior citizens is the problem of house fires and destruction of property because they tend to leave the stove burning – forget; and there is nobody around to supervise them. We need to put these structures in place. The church and other social institutions have an important role to play in this respect.

I think where our society is failing the most is in the role the family has to play. I cannot agree more that we have to take a new look at how we are treating our senior citizens. We have adopted this attitude of developed

countries, especially North America, where we think that our role as children is to take our old people and shove them away in a home where we cannot see them and they cannot see us, to visit them once a year, or once a month, and carry expensive pajamas and house robes for them. We have to be more serious about the family structure. If there is one thing that is very important within the family structure it is that small children grow up in a household where there are senior citizens and that the senior citizens have a meaningful role to play in that family. Then the children will develop respect for senior citizens.

One of our problems in this country is that since we have put our parents in old peoples' homes the little children do not appreciate the role of a grandmother and a grandfather. As a matter of fact, I was listening to *CBC* radio to a programme they have where they go out in the afternoon and interview people in the villages. They interviewed an old man in Vauxhall or somewhere like that. His complaint was that the young children in the area had no respect for him. The interviewer immediately left the old man and spoke to some children and asked them if they liked old people and a little boy said, "No, we don't like old people." He asked him "Why don't you like them?" He said, "Because they are no use. They have no right being around." He asked him whether he had a grandmother. He said, "Yes," and he asked him whether he went to visit her and he said, "No. I don't go to visit her because I don't think that she is important." He brought back the old man on the line and the old man said, "That is precisely what I was telling you about the young people in this country."

Within the family structure, we have to make sure that we have grandma and grandfather there again so that little children in this country can build up a healthy respect for senior citizens.

Let me say something about the seniors in our country. Within that community we have a wealth of brain power. It is not only that we have to respect them because they are our own but we have to listen to them because they have infinite knowledge from which we can draw. Anytime a society cuts off a source of knowledge that society is poorer for that experience

I am glad that today we are looking at the whole structure of our community with respect to our old people but I think we need to look further at the structure of the family and we, as a people in this country, have to become more committed to the older people.

With those few words, Mr. Deputy President, I support this Resolution.

11.35 a.m.

SENATOR C. O. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy President, I would like to be associated with what the Leader of the Senate and the other two Honourable Senators said. There is no point going over it. I think it is a very commendable Resolution and I find it very easy and pleasurable to support. I was not quite sure what the Honourable Leader, Senator Lewis was referring to when he said "concrete slabs" as against board. I agree why it should be done but I think we must realise that concrete slabs can cause tremendous heat generation here in the tropics. I would think, hopefully, that in some way consideration is being given to design and they would not be hot houses for these most unfortunate, or fortunate old people to live in.

More particularly than anything else, Sir, I rise to express concern about how these houses will be built. Will proper building procedures be advertised? Would it go to the most competent bid or, as is practised nowadays in certain Departments of Government it will just go to somebody that is called up and told, "We want you to build 3 or 4 houses for senior citizens." I sincerely hope that the trend I see developing in Barbados where a lot of work is being done without the bidding procedure being put in place is halted as soon as possible.

I think all Barbadians should get a fair shot at it. Let the best man win. That is how the country will win. I implore upon the Minister to transmit the desire to whoever the authorities are to make sure that the job is done in the best possible way for the best possible money. This country does not have any excess money, as I discern, that it can waste. I certainly hope that proper bidding procedures are conducted.

Thank you, Sir.

SENATOR Mrs. V. C. FRASER: Mr. Deputy President, I am very happy to see this Resolution and I support it *in toto*. I should like to say, however, we must always remember where we have come from. There are a number of citizens in this country who have been looking after senior citizens for a long time. Some of them have been doing this without any reward, public or otherwise.

I would like to support the people who have been doing these jobs, teaching senior citizens various skills and so on, not only in institutions but in churches. I can think immediately of the Evergreens. One of our Honourable Senators is the Minister of that particular Church, St. Leonard's. I think they do an excellent work there in having not only a senior citizens' recreational facility but a day care facility as well where people can go to work and leave their senior citizens, come back in the evening, collect them and take them home.

There are certain constraints we must look at in our society. Some people are working and they are the only breadwinner. It may be a daughter and she has a senior

citizen, her mother. She does not want to put her in a district hospital but she wants her to be somewhere during the day where she is quite safe and can get a proper meal. People do not mind contributing to this type of thing.

The tendency is whenever we have things that are quite governmental, there is always a different kind of attitude towards that type of senior citizens' home or village. I sincerely hope that Barbadians will remember the work senior citizens have done, how they have built this country, how they have made their contributions to education and all aspects of the development of this country and realise that it is our responsibility collectively and not only the politicians' responsibility as everything seems to be these days. Everybody seems to want everything from the Government.

Before we were running day nurseries. We were running senior citizens homes. We were teaching people all sorts of skills and it was not the Government. It was the various organisations and groups. Some, thank God, are still going like the Soroptomist Village and so on. Now, that is another concept where people pay a low rent. I am not thinking of that so much. I am thinking of the one where people cannot afford to pay a rent. We will call on all the various organisations and support these things by even getting some ground provisions, vegetables and so on to give to these institutions so they will be able to prepare a proper meal for these senior citizens.

I am concerned too about the type of equipment in buildings with senior citizens. I am concerned that we need to have fire extinguishers. We need, if they are not able to go to the stoves, to have a meal brought to these people either through the Salvation Army or some other agency. But those people should not be going to any stoves. Also, we need to look at what sort of ramps we have for wheelchairs and things like this.

There is an exhibition currently on at the Grande Salle where they are looking at healthy ageing. I should like to invite every Senator to look at that exhibition. It shows all types of modern equipment even to put on the pipes for people who have arthritis so that it extends the length of the pipe and they just press a little lever. I know in Germany they are like that. You just put your hand and activate the pipe and the water comes on. You do not even have to touch it. We have to look at these things for senior citizens. We have to look at the right type of materials we use to put on their beds to make them comfortable. All of these things are at this exhibition.

There are all kinds of things to take care of the skin. We must not just think that people growing old have no more pride. I must tell you we are seeing a lot of senior citizens who I wonder if you should really call them senior citizens. They look so well and are very healthy people. I was talking to one the other morning who is 86 years

old. She said she has never been ill. Therefore, she is able to help the same senior citizens. I wish some of us would remember that, if we live, one day we will be a senior citizen too. If we do not live we would not be that.

We need to encourage people to help the senior citizens of this country. We need to encourage people to go around and help them get their water and electricity bills paid, and look after their pensions for them. I know of many people who do it. I believe in doing that. You do not need to be in any newspaper or anything like that. You can do it very quietly. If we get in a village a small number of people assisting the senior citizens of that particular village I do not think Government would have the problems with senior citizens that we have right now. Some people tend when they are older to bring in a lot of old things in a house, papers, bottles and so on. We really do need people. I know the Boys' Scouts and many of these organisations do help but sometimes they do not help until a month or so passes by. By that time these senior citizens have a whole lot of things accumulated. I can tell you this because I know of one I assist. There are bottles and endless bottles. Then you get roaches and all sorts of things. They just collect these things.

I am appealing that churches in the area could have some volunteers to go out to these people who are living in Government houses alone to see the state of their houses. The Salvation Army and the Red Cross usually find it out because they go on a daily basis but you need somebody else who would assist in removing those things to the garbage, perhaps, sitting down and talking to those elderly people.

Another thing I would like to see the media doing is putting on record interviews of the many senior citizens who have something to tell us about, something to educate us about and bringing programmes to the populations about their contribution, not just a single interview but doing a whole series, an ongoing thing.

11.45 a.m.

We have many people in the geriatric hospitals who are walking around with a wealth of knowledge and experience and especially at this time now when people are looking at how did people survive? Everybody is looking at survival. They can tell you what it was to survive, how they were able to save their pennies, how they were able to start their houses. I think that this would do well, if we can share their experiences. So I am appealing to the media to focus on some of these people in the written word, put their photographs in the newspaper, let people see them. Some of them are still out there working their gardens. I know many at 80 who get up every morning at 5.00 o'clock and go out there and work a garden and sell produce. This is a fact of life. They are very strong. Many of them go for a sea bath at 5.00 o'clock. I feel that we should be talking to those people. Do not wait until they

are dead. This is one of the things that hurts me in Barbados.

Everybody waits until somebody is dead to say how wonderful and beautiful they were. But they are dead. They can no longer speak to you. All that they may have done, nobody else knew anything about. Many people are not going to reach the museums and so on, only if they are the intellectuals. But these people are the hidden intellectuals in our society. I sincerely hope that the media takes this to heart and does something seriously. Also many of these senior citizens could sit on boards and committees. Many of them have a lot to contribute. They feel wasted when they are not asked to do anything. I hope that we are looking in that direction like in Washington they have the Great Panthers, a group of senior citizens who have various skills, accounting and what else, and the Government and various people call on them for advice when they find that they are going into problems. They have architects and various people whom they call on for their advice. I hope that we would be looking at that very seriously and not just at erecting buildings and making a village. That is all right but developing human potential even further although they are senior citizens... They can go a lot further. Some of them are going to live quite long with all the good medicine that we are giving. We must be very careful that we continue to see to it that every Barbadian realizes we have a role to play in looking after and protecting our senior citizens.

Mr. Deputy President, I thank you.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Springer.

SENATOR THE REV. CANON J. L. SPRINGER: Mr. Deputy President, I should like to support this Resolution and not just the Resolution which is really for the acquisition of land but the project that is envisaged.

Let me say at the outset, Sir, that I think I can speak for most of the churches, if not all in Barbados, and make the point that all of the churches really have got very commendable programmes going where their elderly are concerned. So we need to take note of that and congratulate them. I see this is a project that takes the care of the aged a little further than that. I hope that Government will ensure that such projects will not degenerate into the old almshouse type arrangement again. We have to make sure that this ideal is held before our eyes all the time.

The second thing is that I hope that there would be ongoing discussion with the community and the organizations and institutions to see what improvements can be added because I myself would like to think that this is only an experimental project and that there will be others which will spread far and wide across the island.

There are some characteristics which I think we need to bear in mind as we make provisions for this new type of senior citizens home. The Honourable Minister made reference to the security which is a very important aspect that must be maintained. We all know that out there in the community there are some people who could only be described in Christian charity as hawks who prey on the elderly, wait until they get their pensions or have any money sent from overseas. They make use of this and wait for the chance to get the little house that the old lady managed to work so hard to obtain. Usually at the time of death somebody comes forward claiming to have connections but they are really only coming to take some part in the burial to be able to claim whatever is left. This is a way, I think, of protecting those who are most vulnerable to that kind of attitude in society. Of course there is the growing crime wave which is affecting some of our elderly people in their homes. So those who cannot have the security provided at home then they could feel safe in this kind of situation.

The second characteristic I want to refer to is that of independence. Many people think that the trauma that the elderly experience is being removed from their own homestead. I do not think that is the real trauma. The trauma is when they are no longer useful. Such institutions as this envisaged must make provisions for those who are still useful to continue using their hands. I imagine you will have two types of persons in the institution, those who have to be taken care of... But then there are those who would have been cooking at home and would not burn themselves up. But then with a central supervisory system in such an institution you could watch them and still allow them the opportunity to continue their cooking, continue their washing and certain aspects of life like this to give a sense of being a real person and not just one sitting down and waiting for somebody to come and do everything for them. That loss of independence is the great trauma of old age.

The last characteristic I would wish to refer to is the opportunity to mix with younger people. This could be done in two ways:

- (1) by ensuring that arrangements are made, from time to time, as one Senator indicated for the youth to go in and be in touch with the elderly; and
- (2) there could also be arrangements where some of the children who are now in the nation's children's homes are on the premises of such institutions, so that the young see the old and the old see the young and they react.

I think one of the greatest losses in our Barbadian society is the failure on the part of the young to be exposed to the story telling of the old for one of the surest ways of

passing on the culture of a society is through the oral tradition. Stories being told by the elderly and the younger ones around learning and learning about ethics and morals and values and about their culture because they are in touch with the stories that the old used to tell but do not get the chance to tell any more because those they want to tell them to are too far off. But we could organize this or Government could by bringing some aspects of the children's homes on to these premises as well. If we bear these characteristics in mind, Sir, I think that we would have some institutions that would have removed the old label of almshouse and the old label which I still see in a senior citizens village label. We don't say old people's homes anymore but there could be something of a labelling in the senior citizens idea if it simply means that it is the corner of the earth to which you relegate the old.

Thank you, Sir, I support the Resolution.
11.55 a.m.

SENATOR Mrs. A. STRAUGHN: Mr. Deputy President, in supporting the Resolution, so much of what I had noted here to say has been so well said by other Senators but I think there are still at least three observations that I should like to add.

One is with regard to respect for our senior citizens. I think that this lack of respect has gone just beyond the senior citizens as such but to significant adults a lot of respect has been lost. A lot of us would remember that in our young days (and I am being slated as senior citizen of which I am very proud)... When Senator Fraser was just talking collecting, I can say I have been a collector for a long time, and especially of bottles. Thank God they don't get roaches but I hate to see these beautiful bottles that are manufactured just being thrown into the garbage. It seems a waste. I don't even know if I would want to recycle some that I have, they are so absolutely beautiful. But we are losing respect for significant adults. A lot of us can remember that we had a number of significant adults in our lives, our godparents, our teachers, our big sisters and brothers, because they looked like adults to us. They were adults in our eyes and once we were looking at them through our perspective they were adults. That respect, sad to say, is being lost and in some cases is almost totally lost. The question also is, is it all to blame on those people who have to pay the respect or also on those people to whom the respect should be paid?

Our senior citizens used to be regarded as venerable figures. You had to look up to them, even if not in height in stature. I am wondering if we have not lost some of that.

The other point I wanted to bring up, is not counter to what Senator Springer brought up about the trauma of moving people from where they are used to living. I think that, as a major aspect of urban sociology, a lot has got to go into the planning and the placement of these people

that are absolutely transplanted. A lot of these people go through a transplantation trauma and by that I mean they lose some of their associates and in planning this type of thing we should try to place these people as close as possible to their associates so that there is a form of continual interaction. It is not just moving them from the familiar places but it is putting them into a kind of estranged environment where they, themselves, can feel absolutely alienated. I think that aspect of urban sociology has got to be looked into very carefully, or as carefully as possible.

Another point about the importance of the transmission of stories and the respect with which we held our senior citizens is the fact that a lot of people who are biological grandparents or surrogate grandparents are still very young and that is because so many of our people are having children at such a tender age. Therefore that idea of seniority and respect and revering these people can easily be lost.

There is a lot to be said for our health services because there are some old people, senior citizens as Senator Fraser says, who look very young and are very, very active. So that is a credit to our social services and especially our health services and the ability of so many people to look after themselves health wise even without the social services.

As a general comment I should like to say that I support any measure that looks after humanity and especially to those people who have made such a valuable contribution in one way or another to any society.

Mr. Deputy President, I thank you.

SENATOR A. J. N. PHILLIPS: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to support this Resolution and to make a few comments and observations. First, Sir, I am assuming that the village would probably be carried on by the National Assistance Board in a similar manner to the way in which the Board looks after the wooden structures which have been provided for many senior citizens.

I listened, Sir, to the Honourable Minister as he made his opening comments. He did make reference to the houses being constructed in stone as opposed to the wooden ones which we now have. I have no problem with that except to say that the concept of the wooden ones was that after the wooden ones were used by a person who had become deceased that they would be moved to another place for a person who was in need of similar housing.

Sir, one has to look at the whole situation of senior citizens and see it in the light where a mix may be desirable. In other words, Sir, if there is a good family understanding, as indicated by Senator Simmons earlier on, such families may desire to have their old grandparents or

whatever relatives they are to them, situated near to them as opposed to situated in another location.

Now Sir, I want to look at the village which we are looking at having put together. I believe, Sir, that we need to provide a congenial atmosphere for the elderly. I look back to years ago when the St. Joseph Hospital was in operation. I am not sure now what is the condition there as it relates to the ground but I thought that the ground of the St. Joseph Hospital, in those earlier years, was the sort of ground that with a senior citizens home, that is the sort of thing I think you would want to provide, where these elderly people can walk on evenings and where you have tree, benches and so on, rather than have them just in enclosed houses with little activity, that you create an atmosphere that causes them to want to be there. It is like going from home to a park where you can relax and watch nature at work and talk to other people of your own age, probably talk about the old times and matters of that nature. Indeed, Sir, I implore those persons who will be making the decisions concerning the senior citizens village to look at the sort of surroundings that we provide for our senior citizens.

In addition to this, Sir, one has to look at what happens in other countries and relate it to our country. It is to my knowledge that in the United States of America particularly, a large number of senior citizens go to what they call the Bingo Houses on a day-to-day basis. That is because they need to keep their minds activated. It is something that amuses them to a large extent. I do not believe that the investment which they spend on a day-to-day basis would be much, probably \$2, \$3, \$4, whatever. But what it does tend to do is to bring people of similar ages together in an atmosphere of relaxation and in the United States the main area there is Bingo. Maybe here in Barbados we could have another sort of entertainment that may catch the attention of older people and we should look at this sort of situation.

In addition to this, I see the need for certain central services, central services being a central office where access to medical attention would be easy. In other words where one of the persons occupying the village who may become ill or need to get a message to someone or they need some other service, that is they need a taxi to go some place – all I am saying is that in this village there should be a central services office whereby communication could be carried from this office to whatever section of the community the elderly would like to communicate with. I am not terribly concerned about the sort of interaction there is between the youth and the elderly. Quite frankly, I think this is going to be a difficult gap to fill because younger people are not too concerned about older people. One wonders with the sort of attitudes which you get from young people if older people really want to communicate much with them because of this general fear and so on that older people have of younger people, especially with

the modes of dress and the sort of continence that you see from some of these people. It is fearful for those of us who are ageing furthermore for those of us who are already aged. One has to look at this thing rationally and not be too concerned about that sort of interaction.
12.05 p.m.

Sir, I look at the Soroptimist Club and Evergreen Club and also those clubs that cater to the elderly and what I observe is that the people who organise and run these clubs are already in the category of the aged. All that is happening is that they are only stronger than the others. But you do not see any large amount of young people around there trying to assist the old people. It is really old people helping old people. Do not let us get too concerned, Sir, about the interaction between the young and the old. Although I do take the point that if the young are willing to talk to the old where they can get a sort of historic perspective of Barbados and what happened in the olden days, perhaps it would make some of them more subdued citizens and we would not be tormented as we are by some of these wild people who are running around the place.

Sir, by and large, those are my supporting comments concerning the village that I would not want to see another concrete jungle created. I would like to see the sort of village whereby persons can enjoy being residents of such a village.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy President.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, I have taken note of the many useful contributions made by Members. I should like to indicate that the intention is to use this as a model village, not that out of this experience there will necessarily be another one or several. I think that Government is moving in this direction in order to try and discover whether this may be an alternative means of facilitating people who are elderly and in need. It will in no way conflict with the use of the Home Help Services and I will certainly communicate the suggestion that any other arrangements which have been made in the past for building houses to Government's specifications should be abandoned if this was intended and that tenders be used for this sort of model village which is being proposed for Vauxhall Village.

I beg to move that this Resolution be now passed.

The question that this Resolution be now passed was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 3 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT
CATTLEWASH, ST. JOSEPH FOR THE
CONSTRUCTION OF A PUMP HOUSE
FOR THE BARBADOS WATER
AUTHORITY

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, the Resolution deals with the acquisition of land at Cattlewash in the parish of St. Joseph. My information is that this land has already been used several years ago for the construction of a pump house. The Pump House is, in fact, constructed on two parcels of land. It expands two parcels of land across the boundary line. The owner of one of the parcels of land donated the land to the Crown and its right of Government and the other owner was willing to sell. However, when searches were conducted, there appeared to be two problems. The first was that the second parcel of land appeared to have been jointly owned at some time by two parties, one of whom passed away, and there is no evidence to show that there is any succession of the estate of that individual. The second problem arose because there was a covenant on these particular lands which denied any construction other than for a dwelling house and appurtenance thereto.

Sir, in order to avoid any difficulties, no private treaty arrangement could be made with the owner of the lands although that was the route that was contemplated in the first instance and Government was required to move towards acquisition. This matter, as I understand it, has been going on sometime long before 1986 and there is no point now in delaying the matter any longer. The Crown has taken whatever earlier steps which were necessary before reaching this stage. In fact, the records of the Land Valuation Department do not show there was ever any second owner. So one will understand that for a very long time it is believed there is only one owner.

The Pump House is used by the Barbados Water Authority and it is presently in service. I do not know if there is anything else I can say other than I beg to move that the Resolution be now passed.

The question that the Resolution be now passed was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 4 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING COR-
PORATION OF LAND AT HAGGATT HALL,
SAINT MICHAEL, FOR HOUSING
DEVELOPMENT

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, Members of the Senate may recall that in September 1991 this Honourable Senate dealt with a resolution for the change of use of 4.868 hectares of land at Haggatt Hall in St. Michael. This land was

originally acquired for public purposes relating to the relocation of the Transport Board and in September 1991 the House and Senate agreed that the purposes of the acquisition should be changed from relocation of the Transport Board and that it be used for housing purposes. At that time the Senate was informed that the land would be used for the relocation of squatters who were residing in the Zone One protection area. What we are now doing is continuing the action by seeking the approval of Senate to vest the land in the National Housing Corporation. I believe that on another occasion the question was asked whether or not the change of use and the vesting could not be done together. Because of the peculiar legal processes which have to be done, it has to be treated as two separate and distinct actions.

Sir, I now move that this Resolution be passed to vest the 4.868 hectares of land at Haggatt Hall in the National Housing Corporation.

The question that the Resolution be passed was put to the Senate and agreed to.
12.15 p.m.

ORDER NO. 2 – EMPLOYMENT LEVY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1992

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy President, in rising to move the Second Reading of this Bill which seeks to amend the Employment Levy Act, I should point out that the amendment which took place in October last year received full and thorough ventilation and debate, and I would expect this to be a rather simple matter.

What we are setting out to achieve by this amendment is that the employer's contribution to the Employment Levy, which was increased from 0.5% to 1% in October last year, to 1%, for a period which ended on 31st March, 1992 be now extended. The proceeds were placed in the Public Employees' Fund and under this extension will continue to be so placed.

It became necessary to extend the life of this because those public employees who were severed are now able to share on an equal basis, that is, to receive the same benefits as though they were employed in the private sector, instead of the former one month provision.

Since September 1991 it has now been estimated that the cost of severance, because of this more generous provision for public service employees, will now be about \$9 million. The original cost, when the public service employees were limited to one month's payment, would

have been about \$2.6 million. So what it is trying to do here is to ensure that public service employees receive no less favourable benefits than those of their counterparts in the private sector. No additional fees will be charged and the rates will remain the same.

As I said earlier, Mr. Deputy President, full debate has taken place on this and unless we care to be repetitious, I do not anticipate any particular problem.

I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, I do not intend to be repetitious, nor do I intend to be longer than the one hour which is permitted me by the rules of the Senate.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: That is good to hear, Senator Barker.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, I am not going to beat around the bush, I cannot in all good conscience support this amendment to the Employment Levy Act. There are many reasons why I will not, and why I will invite members of the Senate, both on this side of the Table and on the other side, to join me in this exercise.

First of all, Sir, when the amendment was made in the mini-budget of September last year, we were concerned that this measure broke an important international Convention, that workers should not be called upon to pay for their own severance. This is an ILO Convention.

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: Sir, I really do not want to interrupt the honourable speaker. The measure before this Chamber is the employer's contribution to be extended. It has nothing to do with employees, just for the record.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you for your elucidation, Senator Clarke.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, I hope I am hearing him correctly. He is saying that the employees like myself would not be called upon to pay this. I am not sure that this is correct, but I bow to his greater wisdom.

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: It is a simple amendment to a Bill to extend a period, the life of a Bill that expired on 31st March, and it affects the employers, the bosses.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, with due respect, the original amendment which we passed in October last year amended the principal Act, the Employment Levy Act, and it says, Sir:

- "6. (1) Subject to subsection (2) amounts received by the Directors under this Act shall be paid into the Consolidated Fund.
- (2) One half of one per cent of the contribution made by an employee or self-employed person shall be paid into a fund to be called the Public Employees Fund."

So I do not think I am wrong in this regard. I wish the Minister would check, but I am under the impression that the Act we amended in October last year was directed towards the employee's contribution, because the employees were called upon to pay an additional 0.5% of their insurable earnings into the Employment Levy Fund. I would be very glad for a clarification, but I think I am right that the employees contribute to this Employment Levy Fund.

If I am right, and I think I am right, and I know I am right, it means that this is breaching an important ILO Convention, a Convention to which we are a signatory. The trade unions are also signatories to this very important Convention. What would happen if employees were made to contribute to their own severance fund? It means that the employers would bear no cost when it comes to severance and they can, on any flimsy excuse – because a severance is not a dismissal – sever the worker, because it would mean no cost to them. It is important then that the employer, when he is severing a worker, bears the cost of this severance, which would encourage him to find alternative measures, because he knows he has to meet a severance payments commitment at the end of the day.

When this Convention is breached, it leaves the workers exposed. The party which I have the honour to represent is committed to the development and the security of the workers' rights, and no matter what people on the other side will say, I stand proud to be a member of the Barbados Labour Party, because we were the ones who, in those dark days of the 1930s, were instrumental in forming the first major trade union, the Barbados Workers' Union. So it pains me to see that 50 years later the said Barbados Workers' Union is not vociferous in its condemnation of the breach of such an important convention. Sir, history will not absolve them because their silence is not in the best interests of the worker. They should have been protesting most vehemently to the ILO that Barbados stands in breach of this convention.

12.25 p.m.

I am very annoyed that the NUPW, the BUT and others have not been as vociferous as they should have been in protesting this important breach. Barbados is not, in spite of what people may think, the Democratic Labour Party. Parties come and parties go, all Barbados has mainly is its name, and when its name in the international

community is not what it should be, the country as a whole suffers. That is the main reason why I will not support this Amendment. It stands in breach of something which is fundamental with regard to the rights of workers.

Sir, according to the Bill this money is paid into the Public Employees Fund. The Prime Minister, in the Other Place, told us that by the end of March there was about \$2.7 million in this fund. That is the figure I saw in the newspaper, and I hope I am right on this. This money was collected in the last 6 months, from October last. The Prime Minister also said that no money will be paid until May of next year 1993. In other words, the money is there in a special fund, which according to the amendment, is administered by the Accountant General. I am quoting from the Bill we passed in October, "and is used exclusively for payment of benefits to redundant public employees."

By now, the figure would be around \$3 million, given that the April deduction would have gone into the fund. There are \$3 million of the workers' money in the Public Employees Fund! The question we want to ask is, "Why do we have to wait until May of next year to start paying out this money?" Noting that for the past 6 months the workers who were severed were able to collect, albeit at a reduced level, unemployment benefits through the Unemployment Benefits Fund and 6 months have passed and they are no longer receiving the unemployment benefits. We know that there are little or no jobs being created at this time in Barbados. The ones who are severed will find it almost impossible to get alternative employment.

We also note that the Government has made no plans, with all the idle land that they have in their control for extending land lease programmes, to help these workers. A lot of these workers spent 30 years...

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: The Minister of Agriculture is not in his place, but it was said in this Chamber, and I am sure the Honourable Member... I know we were recently dealing with the acquisition of property in Sargeants Village for elderly citizens which might be a case of senility.... However, the Minister of Agriculture made it quite clear during the Appropriation Bill that there was a programme in place where idle lands were being made available to people who sought them, especially those who became unemployed. This was said in this very Chamber.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, lots of things are said in this Chamber, but we have to wait 2 or 3 years for them to come into fruition.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you for refreshing our memories, Senator Clarke.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Be that as it may, I am very glad that the Government has now admitted that it

has a lot of idle land. Nevertheless, the point must be made has that these persons who were severed have stopped receiving unemployment benefits. There is little or no chance of their obtaining alternative employment while \$3 million of the public's money is sitting down in a fund called the Public Employees Fund. Why not pay out some of the money to alleviate some of the suffering that these public employees must be undergoing, given the fact that it is going to cost \$9 million to pay the total bill. If there are 2 000 employees, each man could receive on account \$1 500. The money the Government has collected from us, albeit not in the best tradition, is there already. I see no logical reason why the money cannot be paid out. Why does it have to wait to the end of the structural adjustment programme? This has nothing to do with structural adjustment primarily because the money is not going into the Consolidated Fund. It is going into a separate account, as we were told in October last year when the Bill was discussed. It had nothing to do with the IMF and the IMF targets.

I am appealing to Government, as a matter of urgency, to start paying out that \$3 million it has collected from the public for the express purpose of payment of benefits to the redundant public employees. If there is another reason, I would be glad to hear it. I cannot think of any logical or sensible reason why the Government should not pay that money on account.

When November comes there will be another \$3 million or so collected and then the workers can get a second instalment and, at the end of the year, then they can get the final payment. That is sensible and a human approach to the matter. There is suffering out there because some who have lost their jobs have children and other dependents to look after. All the Government has to do is to give the relevant instructions to the Accountant General.

By now, Sir, you would know who is suffering and who is not. You would know the entitlement so it should be an easy matter to give some money on account. So I am calling on Government to do that.

This brings me to another point. Casual and temporary employees of Government should become eligible for severance without any special dispensation. This is a matter of policy. Some people have been casual for 20-30 years because in certain departments such as MTW most of the weekly paid employees are casual employees. People have been working there for their whole working lives and are still casual employees. But they are still casual employees. As such they are not legally entitled to severance as private employees would be. I feel the time has come where those employees should not have to wait for any special dispensation from the people. They should, as a matter of course, be entitled to the same benefits as people in the private sector.

12.35 p.m.

Sir, while I am on severance, we know Government has stopped laying off people. We have that assurance that all the severance has been done. As a matter of policy in future, Government should, as far as is sensible, stick to the policy of last in first out. As far as is sensible because it is not always the most advisable policy to follow in every circumstance. We know if the Government had adhered to that principle they would not have found themselves with a massive \$9 million severance bill. It would have been significantly less.

I know of people who have been working for 35 years in the Ministry of Agriculture, who were severed last year whereas we know people who have been in for less than 5 years, and 5 years is significant, have retained their jobs. Obviously the cost of severance would be much higher in that case.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. Deputy President, I did not wish to interrupt the Senator. This is the second occasion since his intervention that he has said something that is not true. I do not think he knows that it is not true. If a man has worked for 35 years, the man would be entitled to a pension so the question of severance would not arise. A man who would have worked in the Ministry of Agriculture for 35 years you could safely say he is over age 55, and that he would have been entitled to pension. The persons in the Ministry who have 35 years of service and were encouraged to take the opportunity to go, have all been asked to complete the necessary documentation in order to get pension.

The Honourable Senator said earlier that if a person is a casual employee he is not entitled to severance. Now, that is not altogether true because a casual employee who has continuous unbroken employment would be entitled to severance.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, if that is so, why is it then that last year we had that big hullabaloo because the Government said they were only going to pay one month of severance for the employees. It was only after protests by the unions and others who marched up and down Bridgetown that the Government changed its mind and decided it would pay severance at the new rate.

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: On a point of order. I think there are two things I should attend. I beg to take umbrage here in the causality that the Honourable Speaker is trying to attach between Government's action and some other action out there. Causality has not be established between the two things. Government felt Public Service employees should be treated no less favourably than those in the private sector. You cannot assume that there is any connection between people walking up and down Bridgetown regardless of how often they do it and then the Government's action, not this Government's action.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, I stand ready to defend my position that it is only because of the action and protest of people that Government changed its mind with regard to payment of severance. That, Sir, is my opinion and I am entitled to my opinion just like he is.

Sir, the principle of last in first out must, in the future, be adhered to, and I will repeat, as is sensibly possible because it is not always the correct policy. As a general principle, that policy must be adhered to. I am saying if that was adhered to, the severance bill of \$9 million would have been, maybe, half of what it was and the result could have been that the extension of the increase in the Employment Levy might not have been necessary.

Sir, with those words, I invite Members on both sides to vote against this Resolution to send appropriate signals to Government that when they sign a piece of paper, they are not committing themselves but the country of Barbados to certain conventions. I would hate to think that our name would be so tarnished in the international community that when we sign conventions between ourselves and Norway or Sweden that they say, "You know you signed here many years ago and you are still broke. What guarantee is there that you are not going to break this convention?" That is a very important thing. I would invite Members to condemn Government in the only way we know how because we might not want to go and march anymore but we can condemn them because we have the power in here to condemn Government for its action by defeating the Resolution and causing Government to look again at the whole question of severance for the employees that they so ruthlessly sent home in October last year.

I thank you, Sir.

SENATOR C. O. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy President, I am assuming that we are discussing what was on the Order Paper in respect of employers is correct.

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy President, based on the file here there seems to be some discrepancy which I am trying to have resolved. I am not quite sure at this point. We shall proceed on the assumption that Senator Barker's position is the accurate one at this point. I will make a definitive statement before I wind up.

SENATOR C. O. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy President, in that case I would like to reserve saying anything on this until it is clarified because I certainly have two very different opinions.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: All right. You reserve your right to speak on the matter.

SENATOR C. O. WILLIAMS: If and when it is clarified as to which it is. Thank you, Sir.

SENATOR Mrs. A. STRAUGHN: Mr. Deputy President, I have found myself almost in the same position as Senator Williams but I will still speak.

On the Order Paper we have "To move the First Reading of the Employment Levy (Amendment) Bill, 1992". In looking at what we worked on in this Chamber on September 20, 1991 and which was put into effect on October 7, 1991, it is on this premise I wanted to make a few comments because to me, again I will either sit or stand corrected, whichever position becomes me better, that this is an amendment to an amendment.

While we see the very grave need for funds at this stage and there is no disputing it, the strong need for certain measures and adjustments so that these funds may be secured, we have to look strictly at interpretation. In the session we held on October 20, it said that this Act shall come into operation on October 7, 1991 and shall cease to have effect on March 31, 1992.

With reference to Cap. 47 section 50, Part II, there is a statement in connection with the National Insurance and Social Security Act which says:

"Without prejudice to any specific provision in this Act any regulations or order under this Act may contain such incidental or supplementary provisions as appear to the Minister to be expedient for the purposes of the regulations or order."

That, of course, is accepted. But, Mr. Deputy President, mental preparation is a vital prerequisite for the ability to cope with any form of change. It is a vital prerequisite for the ability to cope with any form of change. In this case, Mr. Deputy President, this is an extension of a change which was instituted. It also had an attached limitation, a time span, the 31st day of March, 1992. An alert to this measure was given in the recent Budget speech. This strengthens a point that I have raised in this Chamber more than once, Mr. Deputy President, and that is a strong need for public education. I stand part of that public. Measures of this nature when they have to be taken, if we are educated – and again I repeat, I stand a part of the public which would need to be educated – into why we have to do what we have to do I am sure that our tolerance level would be greater and our understanding for that matter would be greater. In all humanness, Mr. Deputy President, the interpretation of this measure could easily be a betrayal of trust, the interpretation, as it stands.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy President.
12.45 p.m.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Williams.

SENATOR C. O. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy President, I am led to believe that the employer concept is what we are discussing. Let me say up front, Sir, that there is no way that I can support his. I think it is well established... Though Senator Straughn brought it up that there is great need for money, the reason that there is great need for money is not by the action of any employers in Barbados. I think the situation we find ourselves in today could have been avoided. We know the catastrophic results and now one single section of the community is being asked to foot the bill for the Government employees. The employer does not only employ or pay his employees, he has to pay the Government employees. Only employers.

Mr. Deputy President,...

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Clarke. You are on a point of order I presume.

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: On a point of order. After much checking here apparently Senator Barker was correct that it was the employees and not employers section. In my briefing papers I have employers section. It is no intent to mislead but rather it was an error and Senator Barker was alert this morning. It is the extension of the employees section. I am sorry for any confusion or misdirection that the Senate had on this.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you for your elucidation, Senator Clarke. You did reserve the right to speak so you may continue Senator Williams.

SENATOR C. O. WILLIAMS: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy President. I can now support it. But I will go on to say that this is milking the cow that is supplying the milk to death, if it were in the former state because the more people you employ, the more money you pay. What encouragement is that to employ people? There is a lot I had to say on it but I would not worry. I find certain references in this Chamber, especially offensive. I ask you a rhetorical question. Am I a worker? I hear references in this Chamber to employers and workers. Are you telling me that an employer is not a worker? I heard Senator Barker use it 50 times and I find it offensive because I am a worker and I want to be referred to as a worker. If I am an employee worker or an employer worker I am a worker. If I were an employee I would find it derogatory too. We are all workers I hope. Some of us get away without doing it but we are either employers or employees. All of us are workers and if there is any differential intended to try and describe the people more accurately, it should be the worker that employs or the worker that is employed.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Simmons.

SENATOR Dr. E. A. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy President, I do not want to detain the Chamber. I rise to support the Resolution. I just want to make a few comments I think on some of the things that were said.

I think it is important to recognize against this background that we are living in a world where there is a deep recession. Senator Barker made the comment that he would like to see all workers – and we would like the best for all of our people. In the ideal state, if anybody loses their job whether they be temporarily employed or fully employed we would like to see them get compensation. But we have to face reality. It is not practical to do so in the average state and definitely not when they are going through a depression can we do it. We have to face reality. Although it is good to have the rhetoric and talk about the ideal state, we have to look at the real world in which we are living.

If we look, for example, at the United States which, for us, is our model economy the strongest economy in this part of the world except of course West Germany – I am not talking about as far East as Japan – but if you look at the United States you will find that the President of the United States only a few months ago had to say to workers, had to say to the Congress, "I cannot pass an Unemployment Bill because the Government of the United States cannot afford it."

If you go further and you look at the state of Ohio, one of the richest states in the United States in Dayton, Ohio up to about 6 years ago there was the Good Year Tyre industry. Hardly a single student who went to high school went on the college because the pay was so great in Dayton, Ohio that the students from high school went directly on to work for Good Year Tyre because they were earning more money than college graduates with engineering degrees and medical degrees.

This year the Governor of the state of Ohio – I saw him on CNN crying in front of the state house because the people were marching on him because he had to lay off workers and he was crying and saying, "I have to lay them off because I do not have any money to pay them with. What do you want me to do? I cannot keep them on because I cannot pay them." That is the state of the world in which we are living.

Senator Barker asked why is it that the trade unions in Barbados have not made a hue and cry about what is going on. I will give you part of the answer. In December last year the social and economic partners of the LOMÉ Convention held a hearing in Brussels on Structural Adjustment Programmes. We had representatives of the World Bank, representatives of the International Monetary Fund and we had speakers from both the developing countries and a Paper presented by Dr. Onimode which

I presented as a document in this Senate and one presented by the European Parliament. But what was significant was the attendance. The trade unions had representatives there listening to that meeting. They came to be educated. I must hang my head almost in shame because I saw no Parliamentarians. That is why we will get up in here and talk idle because we do not know what is going on in the international arena. We should try to find ourselves at those sessions.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Barker. I presume you are on a point of order.
12.55 p.m.

SENATOR T. E. PARKER: Yes. I hope, Sir, that the Honourable Senator was not referring to me when he talked about idle talk.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Barker, there are several persons who spoke before you, therefore, I do not think that you have any reason to take offence. Thank you.

All right, Senator Morrison, please don't interrupt us. Proceed Senator Simmons.

SENATOR Dr. E. A. SIMMONS: The point I am making is that we all recognise, as social and economic partners in a developing role, that we have constructive roles to play and the point that I am making, and Senator Straughn made the point, we need to be educated. If we are to be educated, at times, we have to go to where the knowledge is to seek it. What we have recognised, when especially developing countries are going through structural adjustment programmes, the private sector has a role to play, the government has a role to play, the union has a role to play, and very often the role although at times there is confrontation and there are times when you have to back off in the interest of the development of the country. The point I am making is that maybe what you are seeing the unions doing now, is as a result of exposing themselves to the experiences of other developing countries who have gone through similar programmes to the ones we have gone through.

There is only one other point that I wanted to raise that you raised, Senator Barker, and it is the concept of last in, first out. I think we have to be practical. If we are looking at production and that is a key word, we have to get away from those stereotypes. When we look within an institution, whether it be a private institution, or a Government Institution, we have to look at the people who are producing. If you came yesterday morning and you are producing, you should stay because that is what we have to do. This nonsense because somebody came to work 20 years before me and is sitting down doing nothing and must therefore stay ...

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy President, I said "in a sensible...". I used those words twice – that I saw it as a general policy but it must be sensible to apply. It is not every case that is going to apply. The Honourable Senator is speaking as though I said it is supposed to be a general blanket rule.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: All right, we appreciate that. What you said is recorded.

SENATOR Dr. E. A. SIMMONS: Mr. Deputy President, I am disagreeing whether he said sensible or nonsensible. We cannot convey to the people the impression that because they went to work on a job for a long time that they must have security of tenure. We cannot do it, because if you say a sensible first in, last off, you are still sending the message that because somebody has gone there working for a lot of years that they can sit around and do nothing. What we have to place the accent on in this country is production. This is where we, in developing countries, have got to be very serious about what we are doing and that goes not only for the private sector it goes for the public sector as well.

How do you measure production? Mr. Deputy President, these are just a few of the comments I wanted to make because I think that we, in Honourable Chambers like this ... As I said before Senator Straughn keeps talking about education and we must be very, very strong about the messages we send from these institutions. We have to be very, very serious. We are supposed to be the role models of this country and I know from time to time we will get up and we will make our political points. That is well understood, but we also have to send very, very serious messages and we have to be very, very firm about it. We know that we are going through a difficult period; we have to take unpopular decisions and this must be done. But we hope that in the long run it will be in the interest of all people who are involved. I thank you, Mr. Deputy President.

SENATOR J. G. BELLAMY: Mr. Deputy President, I do not wish to delay the Chamber much longer but I must rise, particularly in the light of some comments that have recently been made by Senator Dr. Simmons which I wish to totally support and that is in the dispute, if that is the correct word, that has just taken place in respect of last in, first out.

I believe that since these debates are covered by the media that we must be very clear in the messages that we send from this Chamber. I do not wish to associate myself and from the response I gleaned going around the Table, virtually every Senator in this Honourable Chamber will convey the impression to anybody out there that because they have been in a place a long time, whether they work or not, they are going to stay. I think that is a very bad impression to emanate from this Chamber. I would like

to associate myself totally with the comments of Senator Dr. Simmons.

As far as this particular message is concerned, I also have no difficulty in supporting it. However, it disturbs me a little bit the way in which it has unfortunately had to come before us. I am fully aware of the fact that the Government, up until late last year, really did not make provision for the payment of severance. It was never on the cards, therefore there is no money lying around.

As we well know in Barbados there is no money lying around anywhere and it has to be generated. On that principle I have no difficulty with this amendment. However, the amendment as it was originally made in October, last year, was made with specific dates and effectively what has happened now is that by virtue of this amendment they are rolling over dates as has been done with the Companies Stabilisation Tax which was rolled over in the Budget which has been referred to as a tax free budget. But that could not possibly be right since we do not have the opportunity of debating the Budget in this Honourable Chamber. I just thought I would make a few comments in respect of that as the occasion presents itself to me so to do. In the case of this measure it was to end on March 31. In the case on the Companies Stabilisation Tax it was to end on March 31. In both cases they have been rolled over indefinitely.

It is unfortunate that we have not, apparently, been able to amass all of the information needed to allow the Minister of Finance to introduce the measures that are obviously going to be introduced and have been promised during the course of this fiscal year. It is because of this that these measures have had to be rolled over. I think this is unfortunate because I would like to see us get to a situation where we can stand with assuredness and put measures in place that we understand what is going to happen.

I am concerned from a point of view of the business community that we need to understand in this country exactly what measures we are working with, so that we can plan for the future development of this country. It is very difficult to plan effectively when one is in a vacuum awaiting measures that we really do not have any idea at this point in time of what those measures are going to be.

I am extremely pleased to learn that there is going to be considerable consultation between the social partners in the formulation of the measures that are to come and that is something that I have been calling for for many years, the truly tripartite consultation that I see as the only way forward for this country. I sincerely hope that it develops along those lines.

In respect of this, and since the debate on this measure has now gone into a few other areas, I cannot sit down without addressing another matter on which I have spoken many times in here and elsewhere and about which I am extremely disturbed to see recent comments being made. The matter I refer to is the matter of Government's indebtedness to the private sector. I am seeing comments now which indicate that the targets established by the IMF have virtually been met. I recently heard a reference that the debt of Government to the private sector has been reduced to negligible proportions, I believe, was the wording used. But from reports that I am getting and from facts that I have seen, I am not in agreement with that statement and I would really like a complete disclosure in respect of what Government's indebtedness was to the private sector of Barbados, what it was before and what it is today, because I am of the opinion, from reports I am getting, that it has not been reduced to anywhere near negligible proportions. It is still substantial. The only other point that I would like to make on this measure refers to a suggestion put forward by Senator Barker and that is, if the money is being accumulated in a fund, it seems to me reasonable that there should be some method worked out for the disbursement of that money rather than holding it for an extended period of time. At this point in time, I believe that many of those people who will benefit from the Fund will be in need of some assistance. As Senator Barker pointed out, their unemployment benefit will have already run out or will be near to running out and also the paying out of the money will continue to keep the money in circulation which will help in the stimulation of the economy as a whole. On that basis, I would agree with the suggestion that was made.

1.05 p.m.

With those comments, Sir, I support the measure.

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy President, once again I would like to apologize for the error which I made in the introduction of this Bill when I confused employer with employee. Nevertheless, I did not think it detracted from the debate because Senator Barker was quite upset regardless of what was being introduced in the debate. I do not think that he suffered from the amount of words he got into the record, but again I do apologize.

On the question raised by Senator Bellamy about the stabilisation taxes and other measures not introduced, I will still take some time out to respond to them. I do believe at the time of the Appropriation Bill I stated then and I believe it was stated in the Other Place by the Minister of Finance that we are looking now at this point in time at the total tax structure. We have for a long time been having these ad hoc and piecemeal arrangements of tax structure and we are reviewing the whole system which will take some time. I do hope you can bear with us. I do recognise that business people would like to have as

much uncertainty removed from the business environment as possible, but Government on the other side takes time to have these measures put in place.

On the question of consultations, this Government started back in 1988 to have consultations and has done more consultations with the private sector and other social partners than any other Government on record in Barbados. It is the policy of this Government to continue with such consultations.

I beg to move, Mr. Deputy President, that this Bill be read a second time.

The question that the Bill be read a second time was put to the Senate and agreed to.

SENATOR THE HON. Dr. C. D. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy President, this Bill has been certified as a money Bill and, as a consequence, I beg to move that this Bill be read a third time.

The question that the Bill be read a third time and passed was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: That passing of the Bill clears the Order Paper for today and I beg to move that this Senate be now adjourned *sine die*.

The question that the Sitting be now adjourned sine die was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT adjourned the sitting accordingly.
1.12 p.m.

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