
THE SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1991 – 96

THE SENATE

Friday February 25, 1994

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, on Friday, February 25, 1994, at 10.20 a.m.

PRESENT

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

His Honour Senator J. J. PAYNE, (Deputy President);

Senator the Honourable L. V. H. LEWIS, (Minister of the Environment, Housing and Lands) (Leader of the Senate);

Senator A. MORRISON;

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

Senator the Honourable Dr. C. D. CLARKE, (Minister of State, Ministry of Economic Affairs) (Deputy Leader of the Senate);

Senator Mrs. M. BARKER-WELCH;

Senator Dr. E. A. SIMMONS;

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

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

Senator the Venerable Archdeacon J. L. SPRINGER;

Senator J. G. BELLAMY;

Senator J. A. F. COLE.

Prayers were led by Rev. Errington Massiah.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Senate is in session.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Lewis.

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

The 24th Annual Report and Financial Statement of the Barbados Development Bank for the year ending March 31, 1993.

Instruments adopted by the International Labour Conference at its Eightieth Session held in Geneva in June 1993,

The Development Plan 1993 to the year 2000.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Lewis.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, I move the First Reading of a Bill entitled an Act to revise and amend the law with respect to Offences against the Person. I beg to move that this Bill be read a first time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 1 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT
THIRD AVENUE, LONG GAP, ST.
MICHAEL FOR THE PURPOSE OF
ROAD IMPROVEMENT

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Lewis.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, this Resolution, dealing with the acquisition of 480.1 square metres of land at Long Gap in St. Michael, comes as a consequence of road works which were done in 1985 by the Ministry of Public Works. While executing a road works project at Long Gap, it became necessary for use to be made of this land which is owned by a

Mr. Ethelbert Alleyne and the owner requested compensation. It was surveyed by the relevant officers in the Ministry of Public Works and in order to continue with the action it was necessary to utilise the provisions of the Land Acquisition Act in order that settlement might effectively be made because there may have been no title available. I beg to move that this Resolution be passed.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 2 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
PUBLICATION IN THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE
OF NOTIFICATION OF THE ABANDONMENT
OF THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF
LAND AT SCARBOROUGH,
CHRIST CHURCH

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Lewis.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, in 1991 the Crown proceeded to acquire some 28 parcels of land at Scarborough in Christ Church for the implementation of a national low income housing project. Subsequently it was realised, during the planning stages of that housing project, that some of the tenancies which existed at Scarborough fell within the noise effective forecast zone relating to the approach to the Grantley Adams International Airport and the provisions of that noise effective forecast zone 40 arrangement restrict the erection of new houses.

I am informed that the abandonment of this acquisition will not adversely affect the tenants involved in the area, most of whom have been living there for more than 20 years and have effected substantial improvements in their houses. So, if the Crown pursued this acquisition the benefits which would normally accrue to tenants under the Tenancies Freehold and Purchase Act would not necessarily have been achieved.

The real problem of this, Mr. President, and some other projects in this vicinity lie in the fact that it is necessary from time to time to reflect upon the facilities relating to the Grantley Adams International Airport and for it to pass certain tests in relation to the international requirements and if Government proceeded with this acquisition and enhanced a low income housing project in the area it would in fact be doing detriment to its own commitment to ensure that there is an upgrading of the International Airport and therefore a freeing up of the lands in these approach areas.

In addition, it is believed that effects could be deleterious to the health of individuals if there was an intensification of housing in this approach zone area. But

having taken the step to acquire and recognising the difficulties, Government is now taking the bold action of abandoning its earlier intent of acquisition.

Let me say now that this will not conflict with Government's committed intention of carrying out low income housing programmes nor will it affect their commitment to proceed with sites and services programmes which will have to be carried out in other parts of the Island. Indeed the Development Plan which is laid today, will produce some evidence of Government's commitment to a housing policy which targets low income housing and middle income housing as its responsibility. I beg that this Resolution be passed.

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

ORDER NO. 3 – TO MOVE THE PASSING OF A
RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING IN
THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION OF
LAND AT TWO MILE HILL & PINELANDS,
ST. MICHAEL FOR DEVELOPMENT FOR
HOUSING PURPOSES

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, this Resolution before the Senate relates to the vesting in the National Housing Corporation of lands which comprise what is known as the Two Mile Hill Development. It comprises 5 156.22 square metres of land purchased by Government from the Pineland Plantation in the 1940's when Government purchased the entire plantation lands which measured some 324 acres one rod and 26 perches. Two hundred acres of that land were vested in the Housing Authority, the predecessor of the National Housing Corporation, for the development of the Pinelands Housing Estate. But this small area which is north of an area utilized by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Agricultural Development Corporation is separated from that area by a roadway and remains vested in the Crown. This area has been tenanted since 1947. There are 14 lots which have been surveyed and which the National Housing Corporation proposes to sell to the existing tenants. But it is impossible for the NHC to sell lands which do not belong to them and what we are proposing now is to vest the lands in the NHC to enable these sales of the 14 lots to proceed. The roadway which services these 14 lots goes off Two Mile Hill and goes around behind the areas of Ilaro Court and Sherbourne. The housing is far west of Ilaro Court boundaries.

I beg to move that this Resolution be passed.

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

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Lewis.

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, I do not propose to proceed with the other Item on the Order Paper, the Bill relating to the Offences Against The Person Act today. But I believe that this Honourable Senate would wish to pay tribute to one of its Members whose passing was recognised in this community during the past two weeks and I refer to the late Senator Boxill. I propose that the Senate use the opportunity to pay such tribute.

OBITUARY SPEECHES

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, it is not often that one is able to reflect upon an individual who has made a peculiar contribution to the life and the growth of a country or when such a Member has had an opportunity of serving in both Chambers of this Honourable House of Parliament.

I have the distinct honour to have known the late Neville Boxill for more than 55 years. When I went to school, I got to know of the late Neville Boxill because his sister is married to a relative of mine and this relative lived in the area of Dalkeith Road where I was born and where I lived for much of my life as a bachelor. I make that comment since there are assertions about rock of ages and length of life. I was probably four or five years old when I first met the late Neville Boxill.

I reflect upon this because I remember very well those days when I would visit the Lynch family and he would be around. This was in the 1930's before 1937. I had the privilege of going to St. Matthias Boys' School as well and I left that school in the Sixth Standard also and I went on to Combermere. I played on the Garrison and I played in Dayrells Road and pitched marbles in those areas. I did not play hockey or softball at the Garrison, but we played football and cricket and we followed the horses and polo at the Garrison. I knew of the so-called Bath Corner University. My father had some opportunity to teach Neville Boxill at St. Matthias Boys' School. At that time his late brother-in-law was also a schoolteacher, the late George Lynch, who was a relative of mine. So that my connections with him were in terms of a family relationship.

I remember him playing football at the Garrison, one who was almost shaped like a ball chasing a ball on the right wing but effectively getting it across in front of the goal bars. I remember seeing him with others who practiced the art of weightlifting. I also remember him talking with the late Arthur Smith who was the father of Cameron Smith and that bunch and with Humphrey Walcott and Harold Bayne and Bennett Niles. I heard him make a comment about Bennett Niles the other day on the radio. I knew them all. But it was after I had grown and

been in the Public Service and knowing of Neville's having gone off to the Navy and his having worked in Netherlands-Antilles, Curacao and Aruba and after his return to Barbados his involvement with the Barbados Workers Union that I know a little about him, although we were never close friends. I visited his house a few times. But he was the sort of person when he made a commitment to anything or any organisation you could depend upon him. This was the experience that one had within the Democratic Labour Party. He was one of the people who encouraged me to identify with the Party when after my retirement from the Public Service it was known that I had been asked whether I would be willing to assist the Party in a specific matter. We spent a number of evenings together trying to see whether we might not have established within the Democratic Labour Party a co-operative society. Nothing came of it eventually, but we spent many evenings together. We were not interested in a credit union, we were interested in another form of co-operatives, because we felt that there were a number of people in this community who needed to band themselves in a citizens' group for the benefit of themselves and their connections, and we saw the possibility of establishing on the premises at George Street a co-operative shop-store activity for the benefit of the membership of the Democratic Labour Party. We did not succeed on that occasion and I believe a time may still come when it will be possible for that to happen.

10.40 a.m.

But if we were having meetings and there were three people present, Neville was one of them, because he was a sort of person that when he had given his word he was going to be totally committed to whatever he had given his word for.

Neville was one of those persons who made financial contributions and assisted the late Errol Barrow when his dream was to construct the auditorium at George Street. That is testimony to the work and commitment of several of the leaders of the Democratic Labour Party. But it was when I came into this Senate, after the 1986 election, that I was able to observe Neville Boxill more so. I had seen him in action in the Other House when in the Public Service I would have to go to That Place every year for the annual Estimates exercise. I did not have the privilege of seeing him otherwise, but I knew that he was one person who could defend himself, he could take the lead, he could attack when it was necessary and he was very strong in his defence of those principles with which he identified and to which he was committed.

He was an extremely matter-of-fact person and sometimes people regarded things he would say as a joke, but most times if you reflected on what he said there was a lot of substance in them, and although it was said

with a smile all over his face and he was jocular about it, there was a lot of depth in many of the things that he said.

In this Senate I got the impression that he was a little bit tiring of the political cut and thrust and there were times when he would be very strong and punching and at other times he would be very gripy during his period here in the Senate, but whatever one says, he ended up being the friend of all. The fact that politicians of all shades, all political persuasions identified with his passing and were present to offer their condolences to his relatives is testimony of the even-handedness with which he lived.

A comment was made a few days ago to me that he never liked doctors and that whenever one spoke to him about his health he would say: "Man, I don't know what you're talking about health. I am never ill, I am always well." It is very possible that even the day before he died he would have said that. The fact is that he lived a full life and we are the beneficiaries of his living.

I wish to take this opportunity, Mr. President, to offer condolences to his widow and surviving relatives.

SENATOR Dr. E. A. SIMMONS: Mr. President, I would like just to follow what the Leader of the Senate has said and add my condolences and to express my condolences to the family of the late Senator Neville Boxill.

I will be very short, but I want to say something I think is important, because I think that Neville Boxill represented in this country an example of those bright people of yesteryear who, despite the fact that they were not given the opportunity of a secondary and tertiary education, demonstrated that raw talent is what you really need, and if you have that raw talent then you can utilise it not only for the betterment of yourself, but for the betterment of your fellowman. Neville Boxill epitomised this.

What was so significant about him was that he would make some very short statements, to the point, and when you sat back and analysed them you recognised the importance of what he had to say. Although he was a man who liked to talk a lot, whenever he gave you a punch line, whenever he had said something that was important, he was able to condense it in a very, very small package to convey a wide meaning.

I think that the sentiments which were expressed since his passing demonstrates fairly well how much he was appreciated as an individual. However, I remember during his political life the amount of criticism that he got, not

only from the man in the street but from the newspaper columns. I am gratified to see that at his passing people can look back and the same ones who levelled criticisms at him were now there to praise him. I remember very, very well an incident in which it was reported that when he was the Minister of Communications and Works, or Transport and Works – whatever it was called at that time – he was very critical of the people working at the roadside and criticised them for not putting in a day's work, and he was lambasted on the radio and on television. But some years after I can hear people say that he was a no-nonsense man, he understood that you had to give an honest day's work for an honest day's pay, and I think that if there was one person at that time who understood what productivity – what we are talking about now – is all about, was Neville Boxill, the man who insisted that you had to put in a day's work.

I think it is these basic principles that Neville stood for that we admired in him. At that time, although we were critical – because, you know, those were the good days when people felt that you just had to get to work and that was enough – Neville Boxill never felt that way. He always felt that a man had a contribution to make and that contribution in work was important.

I hope that the philosophy of Neville Boxill will continue to live with us for a long time, and I want to join the Members of the Senate in expressing my condolences to his family.

Thank you.

SENATOR Mrs. M. BARKER-WELCH: Mr. President, I too shall be fairly brief, but I would like to join with the remarks made by the two previous speakers regarding our late colleague and friend, Neville Boxill.

I knew Neville Boxill some time ago. He was very friendly with some members of my family and I was always impressed by the way that he was able to size up a situation and in a few words could express some very valid opinions. But he was also such a witty and humorous person that he gave joy to all of those who heard him.
10.50 a.m.

I remember there was a group of men and one or two women who met at the sea on mornings and I was fortunate enough to be in that group, my daughter and I, for some weeks, and Neville was the centre of attraction in that group. He could tell a different story every hour on the hour and one with meaning and that had everybody laughing and at the same time thinking.

He made a very great contribution on the CBC radio programme Looking Back. I was not able to hear it

because at that time of the morning I am usually at work but about 2 mornings I was on my way there and I listened to him on the radio talking about years gone by. I hope they have the tapes of Neville's accounts of what used to happen because it would make for good educational reading for the young people of Barbados.

Sometimes it seemed as though he was harsh or very stern but underneath he was a very soft person and he remembered people and their problems. He would suddenly ask me, "How is your brother doing now?" He knew my brother 9 years ago when he had some problem. He was very interested in what was happening and any persons in the St. Thomas area he would ask for. He would be doing something very serious and all of a sudden he would say, "Maizie, how is so and so doing?" I thought that was very nice of him. He had a very great memory. That was one of his strong points.

I do not think that any of us remember him without smiling because he was that sort of person. He was relating a story about a seaman friend and coming down the road in my car I kept laughing. I am sure that some of the passersby wondered if Maizie Barker-Welch had gone more crazy because there was I laughing away at the story Neville was telling. And that was one week before he passed away.

I think that all of the wonderful things that were said about him are true and I know that his stay in the House and in the Senate was appreciated by Members on both sides of the House. He was that sort of person. I know that he was a very good family man because his wife and I are good friends and I am sure that his family and all of us will miss him but at the same time we will not miss him with a hopeless sort of grief but it will be with joy and thankfulness for the privilege of having known Neville Boxill.

He made a great contribution to his country, in the country and also when he worked in Canada, and I am sure that when the history of this period is written that the name Neville Boxill should surface very often as someone committed to his country, to his work and to the people in general. I think it is a very good role model for those people who think you have to be a lawyer or you have to have a degree in order to serve people.

Some years ago when I was talking to some friends I mentioned the fact that we no longer have people like carpenters and other people like that in the House of Assembly. I remember at one time a man called Mr. Ramsey made a very great contribution to this House. He did not have a degree. He was not a lawyer but I think that people have to get back to looking at the kind of person

they elect for their representative. We have an example in England. The present Prime Minister of England is not an Oxford or Cambridge man. He was an ordinary man who went to work at 16 and rose in the work he was doing because he gave a day's work for a day's pay and he knew that the sky was the limit.

I think that Neville Boxill's life will go far to teaching the young people of Barbados that you have to have ambition, talent and the tenacity of purpose that Neville Boxill had.

I would like now to offer my condolences to his wife and to all his sorrowing relatives.

SENATOR THE VENERABLE ARCHDEACON J. L. SPRINGER: Mr. President, I would like to say a few brief words in condolence to our late departed brother, parliamentarian and Senator. I cannot say I knew him as well as other Senators who have spoken but I knew him well enough and while I endorse everything that was said by Honourable Senators I would like to underline 3 things that came across to me either in the conversations I have been able to have with him through the years or as I followed his political career when he was in active politics.

He was able to blend 2 things together. He as fiercely loyal to his group and loyal to his Party and at the same time an independent mind. He somehow managed to hold these 2 things together, an independent spirit and voice and yet he could be fiercely loyal to his political party.

The other thing I would like to underline is that he was a man who always spoke his mind and sometimes in speaking his mind he would offend those who were within his particular group, whether the Party or some other more informal group. The Honourable Senator, Dr. Simmons, has referred to those incidents when he spoke his mind about attitudes to work. I well remember those remarks he made and when one recalls that many of the people he was referring to because of their lowly state in life would have been his personal friends or the people he cared for most, then you understand how he could put service of country before personal friendships. He was not afraid to say that people who propped up hoes all day long ought not to be allowed to get away with that. He offended people but I think it had some effect.

What I think our political colleagues must realise out of this and the experience of his life is that in the long run people admire all of us, including politicians, for taking stands such as he was accustomed to taking.

The third thing I would like to refer to is that while for all his years he was known by a lot of people but for many in Barbados he was simply a name on the political

scene he was able through his participation in the morning programme on CBC to reach the whole of Barbados and beyond and the word is that there was an increase in listenership during the period that he was on that programme.

I would therefore like, Sir, to offer to his surviving relatives my most sincere condolences.

SENATOR Mrs. V. C. FRASER: Mr. President, I should like to say of the late Neville Boxill that he was first of all like a father to me in that – many of you do not know this – but I understand that when I was being pitched into the world he was one of the men at the bedroom door waiting to hear the cry and from then he thought of me as his daughter. I think I owe him quite a lot for the politics I have been able to learn. In my grandmother's yard in Dayrells Road, he was one of the many people who used to lift weights there with my father and uncles. It was so fascinating. There was where I heard about Sir Winston Churchill and I heard about all the great leaders of the world. I would hear some very profound arguments as to who would be the future people to run and rule this world. I would listen very seriously and analytically. Neville had a way of saying "Come in the midst and hear what we are saying. I am sure you will learn from this." Throughout my life anything I did that he was proud of, he would always call me and say "I am proud of you. Go forward. Keep the flame burning."

11.00 a.m.

This man was a very kind person. Whatever little he had he would go around to some of the people whom he had known in Dayrells Road for many, many years and he would always give them a little something whenever he came from sea. He continued this.

I was speaking to a lady one day and she told me, "But you know Neville pays my light bill?" I said, "That is not surprising to me". Then another one was telling she had this bill and what he did with it for her without any fuss or fanfare.

He adopted so many children, although he had so many of his own. It was amazing the number of children that were raised up in his house. They were all there at his funeral claiming "Well, my daddy has gone". I must say that God rewarded him to see them go and do well. I am not talking about his real children. A number of them have been, in turn, very good to him. This is one of the things that he could say that he was blessed in the sense of passing on love to other people.

He even knew how to laugh at himself and that was something that was really sweet about him. Sometimes people thought that Neville would get very angry about

something and after that no anger, just a laughing person who would say, "Well, I know you must have been vexed with me with what I said about you but I said it in all truth, you know." He would say "But you know it is true." Whoever it was he was never afraid.

I recall the days too when he, my father and my uncle pioneered something called "The University of the Bath Wall" where they would go down by the Bath corner in Dayrells Road and literally hold a meeting, discussing the issues of the day. It was so fascinating the amount of young people at that time. There were people like Tom Clarke, the Smith boys and so who use to join them to hear what these men had to say. Sometimes these arguments would go on well into the night and some of these young people would get a trashing, the parents wondering where they were so late. At that time you could not be out after 7 or 8 o'clock. After a while he would go around to the parents and say "Now, listen, why did you flog him? He was at the University of the Bath Wall and he was learning something."

He also had a great interest in reading. I believe that Boxill must have read every book in the Library. Whenever he travelled he used to ensure that he brought me a book. I remember he was one of the people my brother and I got a magazine from on Fidel Castro. He would always visit our home.

I do not really feel bitter or anything about the fact that Neville died in that way because this was the way he wanted to go. He always used to say that he would go on the Garrison Savannah and he wanted his funeral there so that the whole of Barbados could come and see Neville and then go to the Military Cemetery. I was even making a joke and saying to his wife that he really did not get that desire because he was not laying in state on the Garrison Savannah. But he felt so much that he wanted to be with his people and even in death, he never lost the common touch. Sometimes you would not even see him but he would shout you off. Whoever you were, wherever you were Neville would be there with you.

I think that looking back at this we have to thank God for his life and service. Many of us who have benefitted from it are grateful to God for having known and being associated with that person, Neville Boxill. I think he leaves a lot for us to emulate in his forthrightness and his non-compromising spirit. If he believed in something he was not going to compromise with anybody. He would just say what he believed. I recall the debate in here when we were talking about not hanging these teenagers and so on. He was very strong that "if you can kill you can be hanged". He was a man who stuck to his guns about these things.

I hope that those of us who are involved in politics would cut out a lot of the fear and see that we do what Neville would want us to do, go forward united, keep plugging away and keep praying for Barbados. A lot of people seemed to have missed the little religious and spiritual aspect of his life. Deep inside Neville could take a lot of things that people could not take in sorrow. I well remember when his nephew was cut up in pieces in Jamaica. Everybody was crying and Neville said "Carmetta, in these things God gives me strength because I have to stand up for my sister, my nephews and therefore, I have to get and keep that inner strength and pray that God will keep me strong to hold their hands".

Mr. President, this man has left a tremendous legacy for us. It behoves us all to see that what we call the grassroots politicians are moving on but they have left some young people who, if they will only emulate what they have done and given selflessly, they had no money to give, but they gave of themselves for the love of country and the love of God. May his soul rest in peace.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I should like to be associated with the eulogies of the late Senator Neville Boxill which have been expressed today. I did not have the opportunity to know him in early life but when I got to know him, I was

certainly impressed by his sincerity of purpose and his wit. Very often as we chatted, I would remark about his wit.

I think this is the end of an era in which we have seen service given by so many who did not have the benefit of a formal secondary or tertiary education but who have really contributed very much to the life of this country. I think it is important that we recognise this and also take a leaf out of Neville's book when it comes to the sincerity of service.

I should like to express my condolences to his widow and his family who grieve his loss.

11.10 a.m.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Lewis.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. L. V. H. LEWIS: Mr. President, as it turns out we have concluded the business on the Order Paper that we can do today and I beg to move that this Senate be now adjourned until Wednesday, March 2, 1994 at 11.00 a.m. when we will continue to debate the Bill which was read a first time today, the Bill relating to the Offences Against the Person.

11.12 a.m.

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