
THE SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 - 99

THE SENATE

Wednesday, August 14, 1996

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, on Wednesday, August 14, 1996, at 11.15 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour Senator F. W. GOLLOP (President)

His Honour Senator C. L. BOLDEN (Deputy President)

Senator the Honourable R. FARLEY (Minister of Industry, Commerce and Business) (Leader of the Senate)

Senator the Honourable P. C. GODDARD (Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and International Business)

Senator the Honourable G. S. H. MURRAY (Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office)

Senator T. E. BARKER (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs)

Senator Miss O. P. SYMMONDS

Senator D. T. GILL

Senator Miss J. C. ODLE

Senator N. A. LYNCH

Senator N. P. WELCH

Senator J. A. WORKMAN

Senator Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON

Senator S. P. BERNSTEIN

Senator C. LeR. TROTMAN

Senator C. K. LAURIE

Senator Mrs. V. J. DAVIS

Senator Mrs. A. P. THOMPSON

Prayers were led by Rev. Errington Massiah.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Senate is in session.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. President, I rise to give notice of the following and ask that they be read a first time:

(1) Special Areas Development Bill, 1996

(2) Financial Institutions Bill, 1996.

The question that these Bills be read a first time was put to the Senate and agreed to.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 1 – TO MOVE THE SECOND READING OF THE SHIPPING CORPORATIONS BILL, 1996

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. President, I rise to move the second reading of the Shipping Corporations Bill, 1996. This Bill seeks to provide a regime for the incorporation of corporations to own and operate ships and also to undertake other activities which are incidental to the business of shipping. I should state, Sir, that these navy ships may be registered under the Barbados Register as well as ships from other registries. Basically, Sir, this Shipping Corporations Bill is really designed to enable Barbados to compete more effectively with other jurisdictions in this area of ship registration and it provides a facility for the incorporation of these special purpose corporations for the business of shipping.

Sir, there are a number of vessels already registered to fly the Barbados flag and that possibility of flying the Barbados flag is obtained under the framework of the Shipping Act, 1994-15. This new Shipping Corporations Act when passed, Sir, will work along with the Shipping Act 1994-15 to create an entire package which will facilitate what we could refer to as a one stop shop package with respect to ship registration and operation.

Now in terms of the qualification for registration as a Barbados ship and thus be able to fly the Barbados flag, Section 8(4)(c) of the Act speaks to one such aspect of that qualification and Section 8(5) speaks of the other. So there are two qualifications one will need to meet in order to register as a Barbados ship under the Shipping Act and basically Section 8(4)(c) speaks to the matter of the ownership, that is the 44 of the 64 shares are owned by qualified persons. The definition of that particular Act speaks to a Barbadian shipping company or a company incorporated under the Companies Act or any other special Act of Barbados and it also allows for CARICOM ownership, and other qualifications for registration as a Barbados ship would relate to companies that are internationally registered, a foreign going ship as it is defined and approved for registration where the ship would be engaged only in foreign going trade. That is really an off-shore ship if I were to carry the analogy between the registration of a ship and the registration of other companies comparing the registration under the Companies Act of Barbados with the International Business Companies Act where the purpose of trade relates to non-Barbadian and non-CARICOM activity as opposed to domestic activity.

Now, Sir, the register of ships is one of the principal instruments used in administration of the shipping industry and in the context again of the Shipping Act, there is provision for a register of ships and for that register to be maintained by a Registrar appointed by the International Transport Division. In terms of the administration of that area, there are two broad areas of administration – one of which the Director of Maritime Affairs in Barbados maintains a register of small ships that are under 150 gross tonnes but more specifically ships that are of Caribbean trade and coastal trade ships and international ships of larger vessels and more particularly engaged exclusively in foreign trade are those registered with the Principal Registrar who operates out of the Barbados Ships' Registry in London. Of course, at this point in time as is required full duplicate records are maintained in both locations and that is a specific requirement of the legislation.

Sir, the question one would therefore ask is giving the existing provisions of the Shipping Act with respect to registration of vessels and the like, why would one require a Shipping Corporations Bill? To adequately answer that question, Sir, I think that one would need to have an appreciation of the operation of the international shipping industry. Traditionally, Sir, the majority of owners in the shipping industry usually register a separate company to own each ship. That is the nature of their particular industry. So they basically structure their assets in such a way that each ship is owned by a single company and the assets of that company are essentially of the ship and equipment and so on.

Sir, generally speaking, when the owner purchases a ship, he would normally register it under his chosen flag. In the case of Barbados, Sir, using the provisions of the Shipping Act, you register it as a Barbados ship or you could register it under the Liberian flag, Panama, Bahamas, Bermuda and other known ship registries. Usually, Sir, the owners are desirous of simultaneously being able to register a company to own the ship and have that company have the same nationality as the ship.

11.25 a.m.

Now, Sir, there are some jurisdictions who require as part of their registration process that the owners who choose to fly the flag of that particular country also must register the owning company in that jurisdiction. It is interesting to note that two of the most successful jurisdictions, Bahamas and Panama, do not have that as a requirement in terms of registration. They allow for flexibility, that is, where a Bahamas registered company can own ships flying other flags and ships owned by companies registered in other jurisdictions can register and fly the Bahamas or Panama flag. What is being proposed in this legislation is to adopt the approach used by Panama and Bahamas and allow for freedom and flexibility in terms of choice of registration and flag, however offering the facility as a means of inducing persons who seek to register ships also allow the facility for the registration of the corporation which will own the ship. This is being done because international experience has shown that in other industries the whole business of one-stop shopping for international transaction is really preferred. Persons would want, as far as is possible, to be able to conduct all of their business in one jurisdiction, so that the need to leave the Barbados jurisdiction to go to another to have appropriate shipping corporation legislation would be eliminated. In addition, the need to go through the ship registration process under the Shipping Act and then go through the other corporate entities, either IBC's or domestic companies under the Companies Act would be eliminated.

We recognise that if we are to give a greater opportunity for the ship's registry to be able to increase its share of the market with respect to tonnage and the number of vessels registered, we need to give them additional attractions, added incentives, and this Shipping Corporations Bill will do just that, Sir. It will allow an owner to approach the ship's registry to register the ship in accordance with international regulations, fly the Barbados flag, as well as to register a Barbados company to own and operate the ship.

The Shipping Act, as you will discern by now, Sir, does not provide that facility for incorporation of corporate entities. The Shipping Act provides a very modern, up-to-date method of operation with respect to the

registration component. The Shipping Act ensures that all of the relevant ILO and IMO regulations with respect to safety and other international matters are adhered to, but the missing link has been that there was no regime by which ships' owners could easily incorporate the company to operate Barbados registered ships. As a matter of fact, Sir, an example like that was seen some time ago where a company wanting to register two new ships approached Barbados with respect to registering under the Barbados flag. They also wanted to register Barbadian companies to own the particular vessels, but then the particular mechanism available at that time would have been to incorporate under the International Business Companies Act and they opted after a while still to go ahead with the Barbados registration of the ships, but the ships are owned by Bermudan companies because the ease of incorporation of shipping entities was easier in that jurisdiction than it was in Barbados. So that Barbados would have earned the fees which would have accrued from registration of the ship but lost out on the earning of fees with respect to the incorporation of the corporate entity to own the ship, as well as the legal fees and other expenses which would have gone to Barbadian attorneys and other professionals if the owning company had been incorporated in Barbados.

This Bill basically, Sir, would provide opportunities for additional earnings to be made from international ship registration by providing greater opportunity for the persons who provide professional support services and others to benefit. Of course I do not have to speak of the general spinoff in terms of those particular earnings.

This particular Bill before the Honourable Senate, as indicated in the Objects and Reasons, is designed to provide that facility which was not provided in the Shipping Act, that is, to provide for the establishment of corporate bodies which would own and operate ships and to do other such things as are necessary to the ownership and the operation of such ships.

If we look at the Bill itself, Sir, there are some important observations that have to be made. The first observation would be that the majority of the provisions of the Bill coincide with the provisions of the Companies Act of Barbados, Cap. 308. One of the major differences, however, would be the provision of a separate Registrar for shipping companies, shipping companies being treated as a special class of company and the Registrar who deals with the registration of ships is also made the Registrar of Shipping Companies to ensure that the close functional co-operation in terms of the responsibility of owners and registered ships will be reflected in the administration of the relevant legislation.

Now, Sir there have been suggestions in the process of the development of this Bill that the alternative path

could be chosen, that is, rather than reproducing many of the provisions of the Companies Act that a Shipping Corporation Bill could be produced which would simply cross reference the relevant sections of the Companies Act. After discussion with the relevant bodies, particularly the Institute of Chartered Accountants and the Bar Association, it was accepted that provided the role of the Registrar was properly clarified and their function with respect to ensuring that those corporate entities, those special shipping corporations, would not fall outside of the general requirements for corporations in terms of the need for one to be able to ensure the rights of creditors and to serve appropriate notices and to record actions by or against the company, that once those provisions could be adequately taken care of, that these bodies with whom we consulted would be able to accept a Shipping Corporations Bill that attempted to place all of its provisions, even those that are already within the body of the Companies Act, that that particular approach would be acceptable. The result of that consultation is the Bill that we have before us today.

The other observation I would want to make is that the shipping corporations registered in this Bill are accorded the non-residential status and therefore they are not subject to the Income Tax Act, Cap. 73.

Another important observation is that this Bill, like much of our other offshore legislation, does not permit the issuance of bearer shares and that is again part of our general attempt, whilst maintaining confidentiality, at not going the route of the secrecy rules which would obviously then make us quite too similar to some of the tax havens which, because of their secrecy provisions, have attracted some types of business we do not want, money laundering and the like. Barbados, as you know, Sir, prides itself on operating more as an international business centre using a network of international treaties and, whilst we respect and maintain the confidentiality of the individual owners and operators, we do not allow the operation of bearer shares. We do not allow the operation of those affairs.

11.35 a.m.

So Sir, just to take us through the Act. In terms of the structure of the Act, there come 15 or so parts and the first 4 clauses are the usual definitions and some explanations and Part 1 of the Act provides for the formation of the operation of the shipping corporations. Those particular clauses specify the type of information which is required to be submitted when one intends to incorporate a shipping corporation under the laws of Barbados. Information such as the name of the corporation, the registered office in Barbados, the names and residences of the directors, the agents, the attorneys and so on and the authorised share capital, types of shares and the like.

Part II of the Act in terms of the way in which it is constructed concerns the capacity and powers of

an individual and the corporation which again would be similar to the provisions of the Companies Act. It provides for the appointment of an attorney to the corporation and related matters. It speaks to the matter of suits and proceedings by or against the corporation and lawful notices and so on.

Part III of the Act, Sir, seeks to provide for the regulation of the share capital of the corporation and that is the section that specifically indicates that corporations are not allowed to issue bearer shares or bearer share certificates for the reasons I outlined earlier.

Part IV provides for the management of the corporation in the appointment and removal of directors and their powers and liabilities and so on.

Part V speaks to the rights of shareholders.

Part VI – share regulation and control of voting by proxy.

Part VII makes provision for the establishment of the registered office in Barbados and specifies what records one would need to be able to find at such registered office.

Part VIII deals with the transfer of shares and debentures and certificates.

Part IX – take over bids. I think that in this particular section this Bill goes ahead of the Companies Act of Barbados in that there is a plan for the amending of the Companies Act to make suitable provision for takeover bids, especially to recognise the fact that there is now a Securities Exchange in Barbados. Once you have public companies trading in shares there will from time to time be situations in which takeover bids are implemented via the publicly traded stock and this particular legislation would be ahead of the existing provisions of the Companies Act with respect to takeover bids.

Part X regulates things like the fundamental alteration of the articles of the company, particularly the rights and obligations of dissenting shareholders.

Part XI deals with bringing of action by aggrieved shareholders.

Part XII relates to debentures issued under trust and other deeds.

Part XIII relates to liquidation of the corporation under bankruptcy and other dissolution other than by insolvency and Part XIV deals with a number of issues, the

functions of the Registrar, for example, the investigation of the shipping corporations. There are miscellaneous provisions including the provision that the Minister may make regulations relating to the administration of the Act.

That basically Sir, would be the rationale behind the development of this Shipping Corporations Bill and I sought to explain the relation between the Shipping Corporations Bill and the Shipping Act, particularly why in the face of one in existence already we also need a Shipping Corporation Act and I have provided an overview of the structure of the Bill and highlighted the general provisions therein.

We could not speak of shipping and the operation of a Ships' Registry, especially in the context of a Bill which has as its stated purposes the enhancement of the operation of that Registry and making it more competitive in the national area of ship registration without also speaking to one or two aspects of the operation of that particular Registry.

In the area on which I would want to focus and to share some information with this Honourable Chamber is that the Ships' Registry which operates out of London, a major shipping capital, also exercises what is called flag state control over the vessels under its jurisdiction. Again, Sir, it is important to understand a little about how the shipping industry works and the business of flying a flag of a particular country on a ship really is more than simply a matter of following some international convention.

Countries that have ships' registries have certain international responsibilities and obligations with respect to safety, inspection of ships, with respect to accidents, with respect to certain international obligations under the IMO, the International Maritime Organisation, as well as the ILO, the International Labour Organisation and the Ships' Registry is charged with the responsibility of administering its affairs in such a manner as would seek to ensure that all ships flying the Barbados flag do operate in a manner which is consistent with our international obligations and such like.

11.45 a.m.

For example, one of the functions of the Central Registry in London, Sir, is to keep the Registry in Barbados up-to-date on a daily basis, Sir, with all transactions and activities relating to the Registry. In fact, Sir, there is provision in the terms of the agreement between the operators of the Registry and the Government of Barbados for the provision of computer communication linkages of both hardware and software, to ensure that the Director of Maritime Affairs in Barbados is fully linked up to on-line capacity with the Registry in the U.K. to ensure that the information is always up-to-date.

As I said, Sir, the exercise of Flag State Control is basically what I want to focus on and to explain what that means. It is basically the means by which the obligations of ships flying the Barbados flag are fulfilled. As part of the operation of the Registry, the Registry, is required to ensure that all Barbados ships and ships registered under the Barbadian Ships' Registry comply with the relevant ILO Convention, to which Barbados is a party, Sir, in particular, SOLAS, the Loadline Convention, and the Marphal Convention.

To facilitate that, Sir, what we have provided is that the Principal Registrar, at the Registry in London, must, of course, be a qualified mariner with appropriate experience, and even the Deputy Registrars must be persons who are able to function at that level. Again, there is more to this business than simply putting a flag on a ship. It is not for decoration, Sir.

To ensure, Sir, that our responsibilities in respect to safety and the like are adhered to, the Government has contracted 9 of the top classification societies. There is an organisation called the International Association of Classification Societies, and the top line of those, have been contracted by the Government through the Ships' Registry to undertake surveys and issue the required statutory certificates for and on behalf of the Ships' Registry.

In addition, Sir, — these are all part of how these international agreements work themselves out there is a network of nautical inspectors and this is required under the Shipping Act. These nautical inspectors are to be appointed. There are estimated to be available some 300 nautical inspectors in 65 countries. A network of inspectors will be appointed to inspect Barbados' ships annually with respect to safety and so on.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON R. R. FARLEY:... I have been advised is the all encompassing term that would be best used in this context, Sir. I am grateful to the Honourable Senator on my right. These inspections for seaworthiness will also be conducted on request if we have any reasons to suspect that once a year may not be enough in a particular context.

What this does, Sir, is that it allows countries like Barbados, countries all over the world really, to use available certified resources to do testing on our behalf. It is akin to the situation which is used by Standards Organisations all around the world. Where once a Standards Organisation is accredited as being fit and proper

to conduct certain tests and whose integrity is intact, other Standards Organisations around the world accept its accreditation. The Barbados Standards Institution, for example, is accredited by the United Laboratories, U.L., that famous trade mark, Sir, as well as ANC, both out of the United States, to carry out certain tests on their behalf.

UL, itself, does not necessarily have to take a particular product to its labs in the States for testing, but they accredit other labs around the world to undertake certain tests on their behalf. The use of these nautical inspectors as well as the classification societies, Sir, to undertake certain inspections and examinations on our behalf is really part of an existing recognition around the world that accredited bodies can and should be used to undertake activities on behalf of other entities.

It is also required, Sir, that all casualties occurring with respect to ships registered in Barbados or registered in the Barbados Registry, must be investigated by the Principal Registrar or other persons appointed by the Minister. There is special provision, Sir, for reports to be made in the case of casualties involving the lost of life, the sinking of ships, or major structural damage incurred by ships. Again, these are provisions of the IMO, SOLAS, and the like.

Also, Sir, there is provision in terms of the way the Registry is to operate. They have to ensure that appropriate insurance is taken out by ships registered in Barbados. There is also, Sir, a Flag State Implementation Committee which will seek to ensure that the administrative arrangements are updated and upgraded to accommodate any changes which are accepted by the IMO Maritime Safety Committee.

The other point that I want to make in dealing with this matter of International Shipping, Sir, is that we cannot help but realise that another important contribution which can be made by international ships registered with the Barbados Registry is that we can use our contacts with those ships and their owners, to seek to ensure that the level of Barbadian employment in the international shipping industry improves to a level, hopefully where it used to be before, and, hopefully, beyond that. I think, that there not too many Barbadian families who would not have had one or other of their relatives involved in international maritime affairs at some point in the past.

Over the last 20 years, however, that number of Barbadians employed on international ships has declined for a number of reasons. There has been a preference by some of the ship's owners for workers from other jurisdictions who did not have the benefit of the guidance and education provided to Barbadian workers in terms in what their just deserts are with respect to contracts of

services, and contracts for service to these ships. To put it another way, Sir, the Barbadian excellent seafaring folk have been the sufferers of being back-raised by cheap labour from other jurisdictions.

There is, however, a recognition after many years of ships using some cheap labour and so on, is that the international community will not necessarily sit still and allow unfair practices and so on to continue in terms of the conditions of work for persons operating on ships. Also, Sir, that some of the cheap labour that has been obtained in other jurisdiction has not necessarily been as productive, and therefore has not necessarily had the positive impact on cost which owners would have been examining.

I think, Sir, one of the important factors there has been the excellent work of a number of the international bodies, such as the ILO, in seeking to bring both a level of awareness as well as some level of pressure, Sir, on ships' owners to stay within the four walls of decency, I am almost tempted to say humanity, Sir, in terms of the types of terms and conditions that they would want to use in employing persons on their ships. If they do that, Sir, they would then recognise the attractiveness of workers from places like Barbados.

The responsibility, Sir, for improving the employment opportunities for Barbadian workers in international shipping, is not the responsibility of the ships' owners alone.

11.55 a.m.

We as a country have to ensure that we have available the appropriate number and skilled able-bodied seamen. Over the years the number of able-bodied seamen has declined. Part of it was that after a while with the declining opportunities for Barbadians to get work on ships there was also the discontinuation of the Seafarers' School which was the principal training ground for persons wanting to get their initial qualifications as able-bodied seamen and subsequently gain additional experience.

What we have done, Sir, is that we have resuscitated the Seafarers' School. In fact I believe that either late last year or earlier this year the first batch of 30 persons would have graduated from the Seafarers' School and therefore able to have a greater chance of getting employment on board the vessels.

In addition, Sir, the nature of the opportunity has changed. Traditionally the opportunities available were largely in the areas of merchant shipping. Today, with the abundance of cruise vessels all over the world, including

those that call on Barbados, the greater opportunity has really become available in the cruise businesses.

It is not widely known that in terms of the ratio of passengers to crew on these ships, it almost approaches 1:1 overall, on the luxury vessels but the average would be half the crew to passengers so 5:1. That would constitute a higher number of crew on a cruise liner than you would have on an equivalent size merchant vessel.

In addition to that, Sir, the range of skills that would be required in the cruise business would be broader. Not only would you require your engineers, navigational people and your general traditional seamen, but you also require workers in the hospitality industries, the entertainers, cooks, waiters, activities' coordinators, the various masseurs and other persons who provide services because, in effect, the cruise ship is a floating resort and all the types of skills that one would require to have in a large tourism resort are required in the cruise ship business.

We have also been working through the Barbados Hospitality Institute on having our persons who are doing training in the various hospitality areas exposed to work on cruise vessels. In fact, as part of the work attachment in some of the courses, a number of persons have gone on cruise vessels for a week to ten days to work. I know of a number of persons who were in the course for chefs have as part of their work attachment gone not only to hotels here in Barbados but have also gone on cruise ships working the Caribbean circuit and have equipped themselves very well. A number of them have been invited to join the staff of those ships on the conclusion of their work attachments.

What is also important, Sir, apart from that training we are providing from the hospitality side as well as the seafaring side is that we have decided to use our connections with these shipping companies, both through the Ships' Registry which has been mandated to seek to obtain employment for Barbadian seamen with the ships registered with the Registry as well as others, but also through our working relationship with the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association we have been seeking to push the cause of having additional employment on cruise vessels in the same way we have been pushing the cause with the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association of having more Barbados and Caribbean manufactured products being utilized in the provision of goods and services on those cruise ships.

Sir, I am suggesting to this Honourable Chamber that this Shipping Corporations Bill is but one part of a wider recognition of the need to enhance Barbados' position within the international shipping community. As indicated, the Shipping Act, 1994, makes quite adequate provision for the general registration and operation of ships.

The Shipping Corporations Bill will facilitate the registration of Barbadian corporations which will own those ships. We are also seeking to improve the employment possibilities for Barbadians in their international shipping business. We are using the Barbados Ship Registry in London and our contacts to push the matter as far as the merchant shipping goes. We are also working with the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association from the perspective of enhancing employment in cruise ships. Sir, I am pleased to commend this Shipping Corporations Bill, 1995, to this Honourable Senate. I beg to move, Sir, that this Bill be now read a second time.

SENATOR N. P. WELCH: Mr. President, I rise to give my support to this Bill. I see it as a further attempt by successive governments in Barbados to diversify the foreign exchange earning capacity of the country and in much the same way a number of years ago when we had looked at the offshore financial services sector as a means of generating much needed foreign exchange. I see this as another attempt which would allow us to further enhance our foreign exchange earning capacity.

It is interesting that this is not the first attempt at pushing Barbados in this direction. In 1994 two Bills were passed, one relating to the pollution aspects of shipping and this, to me, has been a bit late in coming because Barbados had been left to some extent behind the Bahamas and Panama in this particular area. In spite of the fact that it is my contention that it was late in coming, I think it is still worthwhile that we have come this far.

The reports from the Ministry which I am aware of so far have been such that the success of this project has progressed beyond expectations. By April 1996 some 65 ships were permanently registered by the Barbados Registry in London with nine more ships pending. And when we think that this represents some 350 000 gross tonnes we can see what significant strides we have made in this direction. Presently ships including two large crew carriers of some 300 000 tonnes each owned by a company called Galloway Shipping have been registered in Barbados under this present legislation and there is an agreement with (Fednab)??? of Canada to bring approximately 50 ships to this Registry and I think that this is very, very important. 12.05 p.m.

One of the most important things however which I find very interesting in a registry as young as the one we have here in Barbados is the fact that it is among only, as far as I am aware, one of two ship registries which have been certified ISO 9002 and in the Honourable Leader of the Senate's presentation he made reference to standards and I think it is remarkable and the Ministry should be

commended on its efforts to have this Registry ISO 9000 registered. This is the direction in which international trade is taking place. A lot of people will not do business with any company whether it is manufacturing or service oriented unless they can produce a certificate saying I am ISO 9000 and I think that this might be the situation which might create an advantage for Barbados having gotten into this business late into catching up with the other jurisdictions who have been ahead of them.

I am aware, as I suppose as are a lot of us, that the Barbadian Able-Bodied Seamen, probably suffered seriously with the demise of the Harrison Line which was a line that I would say exclusively or predominantly employed Barbadians because they were willing to pay reasonable wages, offer decent conditions and wanted the type of expertise that the Barbadians offered. I am hoping that in the not too distant future that we in Barbados can, with the activation of the able-bodied school see a greater increase in the number of our able-bodied seamen being re-employed again. I know that 37 of the graduates who came out of the school last year have gained worthwhile employment and I am hoping that this trend will continue.

I also want to reiterate the statements made by Senator Farley. I know that for the last two years a number of students from the Hospitality Division of the Barbados Community College have been given internships on a cruise line operating from Florida and doing the Miami route and I think that this is a testimony to the type of students we are producing at the Community College and also the fact that we have been able to do something through our association with the Florida Cruise Association to help to get some of our people employed in this area.

Mr. President, it would be remiss of me as a Caribbean person who understands the seriousness of this Government in dealing with matters of the environment and who know that this Government has signed what is called the BASIL Convention which more or less regulates trans-boundary movement of hazardous waste and recognising that the Caribbean as a whole is very heavily dependent on tourism as a source of foreign exchange earnings and also that with much of the fish reserves of the Caribbean Sea more or less fully exploited and having to look at the Atlantic side of our island for sustained catches of fish which is a good quality protein and a cheap source of protein, I think it would be remiss of me, Sir, if I did not take this opportunity to condemn the proposed shipment of hazardous waste from Japan to Britain. We know that Britain has established a reputation as being perhaps the country which is most adept at converting spent nuclear fuel into a reusable energy source. But at the same time having been a signatory to the BASIL Convention I do not know which conclusion to come to, if we are not being serious enough in the Caribbean at protesting against these things or if the international community are not taking

the people in the Caribbean serious enough and therefore ignoring us. I am therefore calling on the Members of the legislative bodies in the Caribbean as well as the NGOs to leave no stone unturned in addressing this issue head on because in the unlikely event, in spite of all the safeguards that we have on these ships, that we have, God forbid, a leak or a spill in the Caribbean Sea I think we would be doomed for ever and I am one who believes that the environment in which we live is not ours as such but it is borrowed from future generations, our grands and great grands and the least we can do is to use every sinew in our body to defend our future generations.

It is with these few comments, Mr. President that I support this Bill.

SENATOR C. LeR. TROTMAN: Mr. President, I rise to give support to the legislation that is being considered here, the Bill before us, but at the same time I think that we should take the opportunity to examine certain practices, certain problems which there are within the shipping industry and that we should endeavour to use this occasion as an occasion where we can, if not directly through the legislation, through the influence that would come by having the Shipping Corporations Act, use the legislation to influence what takes place in this particular area.

I think that the Leader of the Senate has been correct in looking at different aspects of shipping as they relate to the country and he has taken time out to draw to our attention that the cruise ship aspect of shipping is an important aspect for us as a people and that the increasing level of employment opportunities which there are in that area are such that should bring us into a position where we might be able to increase our employment levels. I would argue that that is a position with which any one could agree and yet I think we have to recognise, Sir, that in Barbados and in the Caribbean generally, we have increasingly to be making greater demands for a reasonable share of the labour that is required for shipping.

The Minister was quite diplomatic, Sir, in the presentation of his argument regarding the causes for people in our area not managing to get the level of employment that they used to command. I think there have been several reasons for this. Initially the fact that the NUS in Britain did not maintain the same level of relationship with Caribbean seamen as they used to but much more important than that has been the effort which is now made across the world to look to Asia and to Central and Eastern Europe as the sources from which they will get labour.

The problem for us, Mr. President, is that in many of those circumstances we find ourselves at the losing end on several counts. One of those counts is that we ourselves

lose the opportunity to have Barbadian or Caribbean seamen on board vessels. But at the other level there is a problem which evolves upon us in that because in many of these instances workers from those parts of the world are not always familiar with the conditions under which they should work, are not always familiar with the wage levels which they should obtain and only begin to understand that when they are on board the vessels. When they reach the Caribbean, surely when they reach Barbados we find ourselves sometimes in particular predicaments with them either being forced off the ships and therefore making demands on the Barbados Workers' Union as an example, or because they are not forced off the ships we could find sometimes that delays are created in our own Ports which might affect the level of efficiency which our Ports generally might be known for as there are disagreements which can only be resolved when they actually come into port that cannot properly be resolved at sea.

I think it is necessary for us to recognise that there is very fertile ground for unfair practices whether they are practices relating to the International Monetary Organisation or practices relating to infringements of the International Labour Organisation and the conventions that there are in those two institutions. The reality is that at sea there are several reports of unfair practices of contracts which are not honored that are imposed and sometimes not paid for, of rates of pay that are cut sometimes for very frivolous reasons, or persons who are sometimes threatened by being taken off a ship and being required to return to their bases without the benefit of the contractual air fare that was there at the outset. Were it not for the International Transport Federation of which the Barbados Workers Union is a member based in London and the fact that we keep in touch with one another and therefore we are able to attempt to persuade captains of vessels at port in Bridgetown, for example, this practice would get even much worse and we ourselves will find our Barbadian sea persons – I think that I can see seamen – in a very precarious situation with their being no sounder bases for their contractual relationship.

12.15 p.m

It is important in setting up the registry and it is important in having this Act become part of our legislation for us to be able to use an occasion such as this to attempt in any way we can to influence this kind of practice for the better. It would seem to me, Mr. President, that the need continues for countries like Barbados to speak out on matters of this sort so that we will be in a position to hear our voices joined with other voices of like minded persons who wish to see additional trade but at the same time who wish to see fair labour practices and who wish to see a reasonable competitive relationship rather than a situation where ships will avoid registering in countries such as ours or will avoid carrying any individual country's flag

but might go in the direction of having a peculiar flag of convenience outside of what we may require as conditions and may use the occasion of those flags of convenience for the kinds of labour practices that we speak of. That has implications for us not only from the point of view of the standards, but it has implications from the point of view of our competitive relationship in terms of numbers of people we can get employed and it will also have implications for us in terms of the effective use of our facilities. I am sure that when we recognize that in this competitive world, which is now a village, that we are increasingly seeing attempts being made by some persons, not all, in living up to any set of standards to cut corners, concerns to reduce pricing in cost and concerns to avoid obligations. I think this is an occasion where we have to be able to ensure that we do not permit that to happen to our citizens and other responsible constituents.

I think it is well where the Minister speaks, Mr. President, of the tourism plant and the fact that a ship in some instances in tourism is a floating hotel, that we need to recognize the need for using whatever regulatory processes there might be to address another very important item. I would think that that relates to the level of pollution which we come face-to-face with particularly out of cruise tourism. I am not for a minute about to suggest to you, Mr. President, or to anyone else that we are not now locked into cruise tourism as part of our development as a country and I am not suggesting that we should discontinue allowing the cruise ships to come to the country. I am not making those kinds of statements. What I am saying is that ships are among the greatest pollutants than there are anywhere in the world. I do not necessarily have to refer to those which against all good conscience will seek to use the Caribbean waters and pollute those waters on the way to Japan on the way to France. I am not referring to those kinds of reprehensible behaviour by ships. I am talking about cruise tourism and I am talking about the relationship with this particular legislation.

I am saying, Mr. President, although we may not be able significantly to influence the level of pollution which takes place outside of our waters and which will still impact on our waters as the ships may or may not observe normal regulations in terms of how they deal with their waste, that we are going to have to an extent greater than we have been able to do it before to attempt to get those ships and the shipping lines that are involved to help to contribute to the cleaning that we shall have to be doing from time to time within our national waters in an effort to remove the pollutants. I do not believe that it is inconceivable to have an arrangement where those cruise lines which use our waters particularly will be called upon to assist in the efforts that we make as a people to improve the waters and to allow us to continue to fight for the development of safer marine life for our people. That is by

no means an easy task and I know that we have looked at the matter from several different angles. My own organization has in fact approached – that is to say the Caribbean Congress of Labour – the Heads of Governments within CARICOM with a similar proposal quite some years ago. It would be quite possible that individual Governments have now committed themselves to this course of action. But this bit of legislation before us provides the opportunity for us to revisit the matter and to make it very clear that there is the need for some comprehensive action not having Barbados work alone but comprehensive action which will involve other jurisdictions, if I might coin a term which the Leader of the Senate used earlier today and using our joint energies and our joint influence to try to influence who pollute to help us in the effort to clean, I do not know how we will effectively be able to address this other third aspect of the concerns which normally we shall have.

It seems to me that there is a tradition which has gone on for years that would say that people who are at sea for long periods when once they get to land that they need to have some freedom. They need to get their land feet as it were and sometimes they tend to be a little more boisterous and little more unrestrained than otherwise they might be. Not necessarily amorous, Mr. President, but unrestrained and I do not refer to anything regarding their amorous inclinations because I have no experience in that particular area. But I am aware of their amorous inclinations. I am aware that we do have some concerns in our port and I would imagine in other ports within our region of reports of damage that are related to that effervescence of spirit which attends the occasional visits we get from some. I do not know, Mr. President, if it is easy to say to someone that he or she ought not to enjoy himself. But it might be that we have to find some way of being able to have those persons enjoy our country and what it has to offer but at the same time when they enter early in the mornings 2 or 3 o'clock our facilities going back to the ship that their effervescence of spirit does not spread to attacks on those persons whom we have employed especially in security at our ports. It is a difficult matter to handle but it is a matter which this occasion should be used to address and I would wish to suggest that it is important that those persons who also have jobs to do in the same way that those persons have jobs who work on the ships and those who are involved in securing the ports will be protected from the free spirits that apparently flow on occasions where ships dock. Free flowing of spirits will sometimes cause difficulties which I am sure nobody would wish to have.

I believe that the legislation itself will go a long way towards giving us an opportunity to have some influence on what happens in shipping and regulating them and generally to upgrade our stock and therefore I have no difficulty whatsoever in being able to say that the

labour movement would find itself quite willing to be supportive of this legislation, that is through my own presence. I am very pleased that we are able to address this matter but I would like to suggest that we do have as well to speak more firmly and more frequently in matters which relate to cheap labour, the abuse of conditions for our workers by some vessels, and the fact that we in Barbados do find that we are the net sufferers as a direct consequence of that kind of behaviour.
12.25 p.m.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Mr. President, I should like to endorse the comments of Senator Trotman and also Senator Welch especially in connection with hazardous waste and the condemnation of it passing through our waters.

I just want to make a very small contribution, since the Caribbean Sea is our livelihood, both for fishing and for tourism, and any form of pollution is cutting away at our lifeline. Therefore, I would like to suggest a few ways and means of putting pressure on those persons who are responsible for the transportation of hazardous waste through our waters. One way in which the nurses have been able to do this is through the International Council of Nurses, where we put forward resolutions at the international level, at a very high level, and try to put pressure on all of those international agencies about the transportation of hazardous waste. I would like us to appeal to other Associations who are associated with other international bodies to submit resolutions to these bodies condemning the transportation of hazardous waste through any waters, and especially through the Caribbean waters, because if there is a spill you cannot say sorry, it is not going to prevent the killing of our coral reefs or to send away the tourists who would not be able to come here any longer. We have put quite a lot of our eggs in the basket of tourism and we really need to protect that.

Again I should like to call on the various Associations, through their international bodies, just as the nurses have done it through the International Council of Nurses, to put pressure on other countries not to transport hazardous waste.

Thank you.

SENATOR Mrs. A. P. THOMPSON: Mr. President, I should like to make a small contribution. Of course the Opposition will not be opposing the Bill, since it has already been noted that in 1994 legislation had been brought in Barbados to deal with this particular area.

I have had a major concern which the Leader of Government Business managed to address for me, because

I consider the flying of the Barbados flag to be a very serious matter and I kept asking myself some questions: What are we putting in place to protect Barbados? I thought to myself there must be a number of countries who would want to fly our flag – they call them flags of convenience – for whatever purposes and I wanted to find out what we were intending to do to cut out any rascality or any matters which could not necessarily result in positive reporting of Barbados. I felt pleased when I heard him say that there is a classification of societies and nautical inspectors, because I treasure my Barbados and I would not like to think that other countries could do damage to it when I try my best to keep it in very good order.

I continue to ask about the creation of employment under this legislation. We note that in recent years, despite the introduction of the legislation in 1994, I have not heard of any increase in the numbers of Barbadians going to work at sea. I am sure many of us would remember in the past that within even the poorest houses in Barbados one could tell that a seaman lived there, because as you visited those homes you would see some of the most attractive figurines, they dressed in a manner that most Barbadians could not dress in, and we know that the contribution made to the economic development of families of Barbados is fairly significant by the seamen in the past.

I am hoping that this legislation would cause many other Barbadians to gain employment in this area, since we are attempting to lower our unemployment rate. I am going to follow this particular area, because I want to see what positive results we can get from the introduction of this enhancement of the legislation which is already in place. I thought there was no need really to reproduce the Companies Act, I thought we would have brought just that area dealing with the registration of ships. When I got this big document I wondered when I would finish going through it in order that I could make a meaningful contribution during this debate, only to discover that most of it is a reproduction of the Companies Act.

Mr. President, I have also a concern about the pollution, the negative externalities, associated with shipping. Sometimes when vessels leave Barbados you could actually look across and see floating on the water a number of objectives which have been disposed of. I agree with those Senators who are appealing for Government to find some form of mechanism to put in place in order that the owners of these vessels can in some way be asked to compensate for their contribution to the pollution of our ocean and for the destruction of our marine life.

I listened recently to a programme on the radio and I was not aware that we had lost so much of our marine life in Barbados. I do not know whether this has

anything to do with the infrequency with which we can get our sea eggs. I really love to have my sea eggs, raw or cooked, and in recent times I have not been able to enjoy that delicacy. I understand that it is as a result of this level of pollution that Barbadians can no longer enjoy a dish of Barbadian sea eggs, so I am hoping that the introduction of this Bill and other Bills which could enhance the protection of our marine life would help in this area.

I have a concern too about the type of lifestyle which is associated with individuals who work on the waters and who are away from home for a long time and who when they return seem to want to catch up and in the process of catching up with others catch other things. It seems to me that it is an area where, as we continue to be concerned about the life expectancy of the Barbadian and making sure that we can have a people who are in the prime of health in their youth who can in their early years make their contribution to Barbados, that we should seek to educate. I don't know what programme is in place for individuals when they are going overseas to work on ships.
12.35 p.m.

In the past they used to attend sessions at a union of seamen that we had at one time in Barbados but I had heard that they had some kind of orientation programme. I think we need to return to this, especially at this time, when there are so many scourges out there within the societies outside of Barbados and in Barbados. I think we should be attempting as much as possible not to have too many of these social diseases brought into Barbados because our nationals have been exposed to them in other countries. We need that as part of our programme in preparation for work on these vessels.

I think we need to send a warning and get the message home to our people that it is very important that they go the extra mile to protect themselves and to protect their country. As I said, I just want to make that brief intervention and say that the Opposition will not be opposing the Bill.

SENATOR D. T. GILL: Mr. President, I rise to associate myself with the Bill before this Chamber but most of the previous speakers would have addressed the environmental issues, the economic return for the country, and along that line, but in flipping through a copy, and it says Re-insurance, it is news and analysis from the worlds of the insurance market. It deals with the protection and indemnity of these ships and the importance of Flag States as well as the Port States and it is somewhat interesting to see from their table and from their analyses that not all of the States whose flags are flown do conform to certain basic regulations.

In other words, Sir, one should not only look at the economics that may accrue but also the seaworthiness of the ships and the possibility of the country sliding into any disrepute. A quick glance shows that of some 15 to 20 countries surveyed, a few of them did not even meet 50% of the basic requirements and that was done by individual inspectors separate and distinct from the states associated with the flags which were flown. Countries like Liberia, out of 49 of their ships visited, 32 of those ships required basic recommendations. So we must be very wary and we should try to lift the standards and remain in the first top 5 or top 3 of the league.

As you well know, Sir, the function of the International Maritime Organisation and in this article they had a word of caution for the Flag States and if I may quote, it states:

"Flag States have a pre-eminent role in ship's safety but many do not accept such responsibilities. In looking at this role the function of the IMO also comes into focus. Suffice it to say, that there are already enough IMO conventions guidelines *et cetera* that if applied would ensure maritime industry of high quality."

They go on to say that these countries should not be only flying their flag of convenience as a matter of dollars and cents and that that should not be the primary reason. They go on to say here:

"It is also interesting to note the virtual absence of some nations recognised as committed, as achieving high standards of maritime safety and marine and environment protection."

I would like, Sir, that Barbados could follow the pattern of Australia. Australia although not being a regulatory body has been able to put down some fairly firm guidelines and has been able to achieve some relatively good results. The review showed that the fundamentals relating to the operation of a Port State and they are referring to Australia and especially Port State control draws on the practice on the experience of the Australian Government through its maritime safety administration, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, and their basic guidelines have been towards a basic objective of having the eradication of unsafe ships from the maritime trade and secondly, the overall standards as apply to the safety of the ship and /or the safety in terms of marine environment.

If Barbados is getting itself firmly entrenched in this line of activity it would be to its benefit to follow such strict guidelines and not only keep the flag flying high but keep the name of Barbados flying high. I thank you, Sir.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. President, I rise to make my contribution in this debate. First I would like to say that since Barbados is passing these laws it brings us down into what is being called an open registry of shipping. I would like to see the principal office located in Barbados. I say that because quite recently I had enquiries from someone in the United States as to the construction and registering of a cruise vessel and it took me a considerable time to find out about the Barbados registry for ships. I have no fear in saying that even the officers at Port Authority did not know how to find it.

I think if we are going to put up such a registry founded on the laws of Barbados that the principal registry should be in Barbados and not in London.

We are still labouring under the Commonwealth belief that London is a capital. London used to be a great ship building nation years ago. It is no longer so. Therefore we do not have to place our office in London to attract business. There are ships' registries all around the world. Communication around the world is far better than it was 20,30,40 years ago. If Barbados prides itself as being one of the leaders in fibre optics and communication technology there is no reason why our principal office must be located outside of Barbados. If we have to employ a specialist, there is no reason why he cannot be based in Barbados, and all the other surrounding and supporting jobs fall to Barbadians.

12.45 p.m.

The Act, itself, draws heavily on attorneys-at-law. I know that there are some people who believe that the attorneys-at-law in Barbados belong to a cottage industry. This Act itself draws heavily on attorneys-at-law, it draws heavily on the formation of companies and registering in the corporate registry of Barbados. This I want to say, that I hope after the passing of this Act, those responsible will understand that the attorneys-at-law should be serviced as efficiently as the corporate registry now services the accountants. If we must play a part in the development of Barbados, I do not see why we must be treated as lesser citizens.

Mr. President, Senator Trotman was particularly worried about actions against seamen on board vessels. Those of us in the legal profession, and Senator Trotman in the union, know very well that on most of these ships that carry a flag of convenience workmen are recruited in the Far East, Singapore and those places under certain contracts. When they are aboard the vessels, they meet certain difficulties, and I think this is something we have to look at. When those ships go into places like Great Britain and certain other places, those seamen do not get the attention of the various Seamen Unions in those countries. They wait until they get to Barbados, and then

those of you who can remember will know that within the last 3 or 4 years there have been many vessels that come to Barbados, and the seamen decide that they are going on strike or they jump ship, or some other action like that. It is left, not only to the Barbados Workers' Union, it is left to attorneys-at-law in Barbados, it is left to the YMCA and those organisations who have to go to the calling of these foreign persons who have jumped ship. Then you find that most of the contracts are written in a language other than English, and the seamen, themselves, do not even understand the terms of those contracts.

Now, we in the legal profession, have had to call on the University of the West Indies for translations to understand what the rights and privileges are of those seamen. I am going to say here, that since we are going into what is called the "open registry," we are forming the corporations in Barbados for the registration of the ships, we are allowing the flag of convenience of Barbados, and as I heard somewhere, certain financial benefits are going to fall to those persons who form companies in Barbados and who recruit workmen in Barbados. I am asking that any contract of employment for Barbadian seamen should be subjected to the laws of Barbados, because if they put a Barbadian off in Grenada, put him off in the United States or put them off in Hong Kong, since the ship is registered in Barbados he should have the right to have his case tried in Barbados and get the judgement of a Barbadian court. I think that is one of the things that we have to look for.

Another point is, we talk about pollution. Those of us who follow these things know that ships go out into what is called the international waters when they are outside the economic zone of Barbados. That is where they wash their tanks, and it is only after this exercise has been completed and the tides bring the oil and what not onto our shores, that we are aware of a pollution situation, but we do not know the vessel that has caused it.

I do not believe that Barbados is sufficiently equipped with the technology, the ships and what not, to be able to trace which ship it was that caused the pollution on our shores. I believe, sometime last year, somebody got up in the morning and found grease all along the East coast, Bathsheba, and what not. The National Conservation Commission has had to send their people down there to clean the shores for the satisfaction of Barbadians. This, one understands, would have to be taken up in the international forum where we can all strive to have some sort of a compensatory aspect built into our negotiations for situations of this size said. I believe smaller countries like in the Caribbean, and those other Small Island States, will suffer the difficulty of having to clean up somebody else's mess when the beneficiaries are elsewhere.

Now I want to say that though what I am saying may sound far fetched, I think Jamaica is Headquarters of

the Law of the Sea Conference, and Jamaica is in the Caribbean. There is no reason why Barbados, in the Caribbean, a Member of CARICOM, Jamaica a Member of CARICOM, we cannot fuse what we are doing here for the Caribbean. Since the Headquarters of the Law of the Sea Conference is in Jamaica, there is still no reason why the Headquarters for this operation cannot be located in Barbados.

What we will be doing when we do that, will be publicising Barbados as a nation sufficiently competent to register ships, and at the same time we are publicising the Caribbean as a body of islands that are competent enough to handle the vagaries of the sea, whether it be ship or whatever is it, the exploration for oil or whatever it may be. I hope those responsible will look at that and see how we can make the Caribbean a more important place in the eyes of the trading businesses of the world.

Thank you, Mr. President.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2.00 p.m. today.

The question was put that the Sitting be suspended until 2.00 p.m. today and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
12.55 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR N. A. LYNCH: Mr. President, I just want to add my words of support for the Shipping Corporations Bill because I, like Senator Welch, believe that we have lagged behind as a country. Many of our regional neighbours when he mentioned the Bahamas and Panama... but our neighbours like St. Vincent and the Grenadines have long used this form of registration to diversify the earnings they can receive internationally in terms of foreign exchange.

I think we have missed the boat, so to speak, in terms of how much we could do for a Bill of this kind. My own experience goes back – I know a lot of people might not know this – to having worked for some years when I lived overseas for a shipping organisation. As a matter of fact, I represented the Harrison Line, the Haplogloyd and Nedlloyd lines and CGM during my years of work overseas.

Sir, if there is one thing, although we can seek to use this forum to encourage better practices at all levels, I believe it is not very often that I agree with Senator Trotman on a lot of things he says, but today I certainly concur and endorse his words regarding the conditions of employment for people who work on these ships. There are some horrendous horror stories – I do not want to discourage employment – regarding the conditions on those ships and that is why we have had to seek employment from certain parts of Asia.

Sir, if there is one thing it would be remiss of me if I did not touch on it would be how we consider and encourage cruise tourism in Barbados as opposed to the land-based product. For many years now I have been hearing how we need to encourage and consistently encourage more and more cruise ships into Barbados. It is a grave concern to myself. It is also of grave concern to those people who ply their trade and have investments in land-based tourism.

For one thing, these ships continue to get bigger and bigger and as they come into Barbados I do not believe that we have optimised and maximised the receipts and takings we can get from the cruise tourism industry. I think we neglected too to realize how the cruise tourism industry honestly and seriously affects the land-based product. For example, every morning or week, especially during the winter months, these people are allowed to park that big floating resort in the port in Barbados, and it is a floating resort, at the expense – they certainly do not pay what hotels pay. They certainly are not taxed in the same way in which hoteliers are taxed.

The other thing, Sir, that is important, is that I believe that the head tax we get from those ships is certainly not in any way in keeping with what is real in the world. A part of that, Sir, too is the aspect of sourcing of employment. I know they buy water from the Water Authority and a little thing here and there at the Pine Hill Dairy. But, seriously speaking, we have to be very serious about this. We seek to encourage these people without really seeking empirical evidence about how it affects Barbados, how it affects tourism, how it affects employment in the tourism industry and we need to ask ourselves. What is it? Let us come to grips with this. How many people really get off those ships when they come into the Port? We really need to do some serious research into how many people get off those ships. How much do they actually spend in Barbados in any one day? You will see the kinds of things they do. Lots of them encourage people to actually stay on board, and this is fact, and not actually come on land because they believe they can provide any amenity that you have on the land. I think, Sir, when we put initiatives in place, serious fiscal initiatives to encourage them, I think we have to be very careful and analyse how much it really does affect us.

The other thing is this, Sir. I think the Bahamas and Puerto Rico are glaring examples of what cruise tourism has done to land-based products over a period of time. Anybody who is familiar with the Bahamas knows that the Cables Beach area, which used to be a big tourism resort area in the past, was run-down in the past decade or so. It is now coming back but between the early 1980s to the late 1980s what happened in Cables Beach was serious. They encouraged a lot of people to come off the ships as day trippers and the land-based product went down. The quality of the product went down. Not only did their receipts from tourism go down but their arrivals obviously fell. But the people who actually came did not spend any money because they were just day trippers and it affected seriously their tourism product. It also affected the Puerto Rican product in San Juan and that area. It is only now coming back.

I think, Sir, that rather than just saying sweepingly that cruise tourism is going to enhance the receipts we get in terms of employment and the receipts we get from the industry, I think it is about time that we really took a serious look at how one is affecting the other and how we can maximise from both areas.

The other concept is, Sir, that I do not think that Barbados as a singular entity would ever be able to control how much we get out of cruise tourism, I think it has to be done on a regional basis. It makes no sense trying to say that Barbados alone can say that the head tax will go up because obviously what will happen is they will just run to another country. This fear is created every time people talk about cruise tourism and about them taking the ships away, taking the ships where? There is nowhere else to take the ships but here because with this climate we produce an 80-degree average temperature year round. We have a safe environment. We are safe enough to the United States for them to ply their trade and to be here with us. You think they are going to take those ships and go to Asia? You think they could take them to Europe? They cannot take them to Europe during the winter. They have to be in this region and I think we need to put our heads together and come up with some viable alternatives how we can maximise our takings from the cruise industry and also keep this land-based product viable. Sir, there are many reasons why Barbados needs to look seriously at it.

Senator Trotman was perfectly correct also in the area of pollution because there are some videos that have been taken of those cruise ships in port and if you see what they do to the marine environment around them, it is amazing. Also a couple of miles out there was a photographer once planted on one of these ships. If you saw the kind of video he brought back in terms of what they do with their waste, in terms of what they do with a lot of the pollutants that come off those ships it is necessary for us to study this

cruise tourism product and stop telling people in Barbados that we are just going to open the flood gates and let all of them come in.

There is one of them now running an ad. The ad states clearly: "Your last resort should be a hotel." These are the people we are trying to encourage and we are employing about 10 000 people in the Barbados hotel industry. We have 6 000 rooms and while we continue in Barbados to lose hotel rooms, these ships get bigger and bigger.

I want to caution and bring it squarely to the Government not only to encourage cruise ships in Barbados but to be very clear with what we get from them and how they really affect the tourism product.

I thank you, Sir.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I rise to support this Bill and to welcome it to strengthen our international business capacity and our offshore capacity. I take some of the comments that have been made by various Honourable Senators in the course of this debate. I particularly note the call for the primary registry of the Ship' Registry to be relocated in Barbados. I think this is a commendable objective and one that may well be facilitated knowing what the current capacity is for telecommunications and online capture of data to facilitate this process. As you will recall, the structure under which the Ship Registry currently operates proceeds 1994 so there will have to be an evolutionary phase in how we approach this matter.

I would like to make some comments regarding the issue of pollution and to note that we are very quick in our society to point the finger at other people for problems we quite often create for ourselves. I say this to say that the major damage that has been done to our inshore waters in the area of pollution has stemmed from our own pollution of the coastal area and from over fishing and out of season fishing particularly as regards to sea eggs being harvested in this month of August which does not have an "R" in it and through the dynamiting of fish along the reef areas. The dynamiting of fish is something that has killed every organism within a certain radius of that explosion. They do not recognise that when a fish is dynamited the sea eggs are dynamited, the sea weed is dynamited, the plankton is dynamited and coral is disturbed. So we ourselves have contributed significantly to the inshore pollution.

2.10 p.m.

We must also recognise that the modern ships that are coming out and the recent improvement in sanitation codes and so on have created an environment in the cruise industry where the wastage or the sewage is captured

and it is off loaded in designated ways at designated ports for introduction into the sewage systems of those locations. So no longer can a new cruise ship be constructed without the capacity to handle internally its own waste products from the kitchens, from the wash rooms and from the facilities on board. I think that the cruise industry has gone a long way to remedy the deficiencies that were true 20 and 30 years ago and therefore we cannot use old data in a current day debate.

Now, I do think that we always have to be vigilant about the potential for pollutants and this will be from cargo vessels, from oil tankers, from cruise ships. But these are issues, I think, that are being addressed and are being improved upon. When we come to the issue of the type of business being brought to our shores with cruise tourism it is up to us to maximise the opportunity for revenue generation and the opportunity to turn the short-stay visitor into a long-stay visitor through proper marketing and creating the environment that would make that individual want to return to Barbados as a repeat visitor to Barbados to experience our culture, learn about our history and to enjoy the beautiful infrastructure that we provide for the holiday visitor in Barbados.

So it is dependent on us to take those actions and not wait for somebody else to do it for us or to institute punitive measures of extraction of revenue. The carrot is always better than the stick and we need to learn to use the carrot. With those few remarks, Mr. President, about the issues of pollution and about the location of the registry and I would dare say with the improvements in the expertise and so on that we will develop over the years, I wholeheartedly support this Bill to the Senate. I thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY the Senate went into Committee on the Bill, HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN in the Chair.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Senate is in Committee. I propose that we deal with this in parts.

Clause 1 was called and passed.

Clause 2 was called and passed.

Clause 3 was called and passed.

Clause 4 was called and passed.

Part 1 was called and passed.

Part 2 was called and passed.

Part 3 was called and passed.

Part 4 was called and passed.

Part 5 was called and passed.

Part 6 was called and passed.

Part 7 was called and passed.

Part 8 was called and passed.

Part 9 was called and passed.

Parts 10 to 14 were called and passed.
2.20 p.m.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY, HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN reported to HIS HONOUR the PRESIDENT the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

Part 15 was called and passed.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY, HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN reported to HIS HONOUR the PRESIDENT the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

ORDER NO. 2 – TO MOVE THE PASSING OF A
RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE LAND
REGISTRATION SUSPENSION
ORDER, 1996

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. President, Senate's approval is sought for this Order for the Land Registration Suspension Order, 1996. This Order which has been made by the Minister in accordance with the Land Registration Act, Cap. 229 is required by that said Act to be subject to affirmative resolution. The Order would in effect suspend Sections 14 and 15 of the Land Registration Act and that suspension is being proposed for a further period of 3 years commencing from the date of the coming into operation of the Order. This suspension of Sections 14 and 15 has been going on for the past few years. In 1990, there was a suspension for 2 years and then in 1993 there was a further suspension for 3 years which expired on March 14, 1996.

The Registrar of Titles has reported however that a further suspension of the Order is necessary in order to facilitate the completion of work by the Chief Surveyor in order that the necessary demarcations might be done. The lack of those demarcations has effectively prevented the Registrar of Titles from issuing certificates of titles and certificates of change as required in accordance with the Land Registration Act. To date, Sir, titles have been declared on some 5000 parcels of land. However, there are almost another 5000 – 4,529 applications – for registration currently before the Registrar of Titles. Sir, given the need to have the work of the Chief Surveyor completed as part of that process the suspension of Sections 14 and 15 are required.

So that, Sir, the Order as I indicated is one which I indicated is subject to affirmative resolution which is why this Order is before Parliament for approval and I beg Senate's support for the passage of this Order which would facilitate the systematic registration of the titles in accordance with the Land Registration Act, Cap. 229. I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

ORDER NO. 3 – TO MOVE THE PASSING OF A
RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING GOVERN-
MENT ON THE CREATION OF THE
CHARTER AND THE ESTABLISH-
MENT OF THE FACILITATION
UNIT FOR RETURNING
NATIONALS

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. President, the Resolution before us seeks to congratulate the Government on the establishment of a Facilitation Unit for Returning Nationals. Basically, it seeks the endorsement of this Honourable Chamber for not only the establishment of that Unit but for an endorsement of the objectives. This Resolution before us, as clearly indicated in the Resolution, seeks to bring a sense of order to a matter that has over the years been subject to many different interpretations in terms of what returning nationals were or were not entitled to. It also seeks to bring into very sharp focus one of the fine areas of difficulty which has plagued societies like ours for a long time, and that is the absence of coherent, accurate and timely information. There are many things out there that are happening, many things that people are entitled to, but the intention is not good enough. It is important that the information is there. In fact, Sir, when I think of this Charter for Returning Nationals, I remember my days in the House of the Lord, Sir, that one of the verses that our Sunday School Teacher would always remind us of, Sir, is that the road to hell is paved with many good intentions. That Sunday School teacher would

make that point to underscore the point that it is not good enough to have the intention of serving the Lord at some point in time, but that you must do it immediately, every day and all day. So that all of the good intentions you have, Sir, unless you back them up by resolute action, when you are somewhere down in Hell you will still have your good intentions.

2.30 p.m.

Sir, it is not enough to have the good intentions to facilitate the return of nationals and their full integration into Barbadian society. It is not enough to have the intention of maintaining linkages with Barbadian organisations overseas, it is not enough to have the intention to create investment opportunities for nationals of Barbados living overseas. It is not enough to have a good intention to develop a skills bank and to draw on the vast human resource potential of nationals living overseas. What is important is that action be taken to give effect to those high and lofty objectives.

What we are doing today is basically bringing to fruition what, were we to follow in the footsteps of other persons, including the previous administration, would really be nothing more than interesting and wonderful ideas. But this Government, as you would have seen by now, Sir, is a Government of action. I have here with me this document: "Barbados – Returning Nationals – Information Booklet" which I am quite pleased to make a document of this Honourable Chamber. As I said, one of the problems that has faced Barbados is the absence of information. We all know too well, and unfortunately so, of situations in which even some of us in this Honourable Chamber, sometimes you pick the phone up and call Government Departments or private sector companies to get information and dependent on when you call or whom you call you may either get no information or you may get information that contradicts the previous information you get. In fact, Sir, in developing this Charter for Returning Nationals, we followed a particular process. That process saw a wide range of consultation being undertaken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They held consultations with nationals who had returned and a number who had indicated that their return was imminent. Some of the findings that arose in terms of factors that were identified as deterrents or potential deterrents to persons who were considering relocating to Barbados, at the top of the list was the difficulty in obtaining detailed accurate and timely information on Barbados, whether it was from Missions abroad or from a single agency in Barbados, and this information they were looking for was on relatively simple things. Things relating to procedures and requirements involving relocating to Barbados.

Sir, the fact of the matter is that if you or I had to leave Barbados today for a number of years, in the

normal course of things there will be changes in regulations and other administrative arrangements that if you or I were to apply our 1996 model of information to a given situation in the year 2005 we will probably find ourselves filling out the wrong forms, making applications to the wrong departments, and the like. That was one of the areas identified.

Another factor identified was the high level of bureaucracy which was required to do certain simple actions. For example, importing a motor vehicle, the number of places to which one had to go to conclude certain business. They basically also identified what they perceived to be indifference or even in some cases lack of good will which they believe was directed towards them as returning nationals. But again that is their perception.

Again relating to the matter of information, they said they were unclear about many of the regulations and they considered some of the regulations unreasonable. Of course another major complaint was the high level of duties and taxes which they were asked to pay on items, particularly the motor vehicles, having already paid duties and taxes on these vehicles in other jurisdictions. Also too, given the state of the market for vehicles and other commodities in other jurisdictions, one could easily find that one could be asked to pay more in duty based on current methods of valuation within the Barbados Customs law, and one would actually have paid for the original vehicle in the country of origin. Those were some of the issues that were raised.

The matter really is also a bit more fundamental and the reality is that we have to accept that Barbados belongs to all Barbadians, whether they live here or elsewhere. In fact, Sir, I like what I see in this booklet. At the back of the booklet there is a quote from "Welcome The Morning Sun" by *El Verno del Congo*. It says:

"This land is your land,
This land is our land.
Welcome the morning sun."

I believe whoever would have chosen that quotation from that particular song really captured what I believe needs to be the spirit of our approach to these matters, that is, that the person who remained in Barbados for all of his life and did all of his work in Barbados is no more or less a Barbadian than the person who would have lived his life somewhere else in the world. He is no more or less a Barbadian, they are all Barbadians. In fact, Sir, if we were to step back and take a look at the situation from the very broad perspective, we would recognise that contributions can be made to Barbados and in the name of Barbados in a variety of places and at a variety of levels.
2.40 p.m.

To illustrate, Sir, clearly whilst we need to have persons in Barbados working to build the country up from this end, there also must be recognition that tremendous gain can be had from having thousands of Barbadians living in diverse parts throughout the world. I am sure you have had the experience yourself, Sir, where on going to some of the more out of the way places in the world you have come across Barbadians living there but, more importantly, Sir, those Barbadians, having equipped themselves well and having made sterling contributions in their chosen professions and their chosen communities have so established a perception of what the Barbadian is about that Barbadians are not blacklisted. They are not cast in a negative light merely by the announcement that they are Barbadians.

You know, Sir, that the reality of the world is that human beings are in general very judgmental and the fact of the matter is that there are some countries in the world that when a person from that country announces his nationality he is put under immediate suspicion of one thing or the other. The fact of the matter is that one of the reasons why Barbados has had that reputation is that in addition to the quality of our life, the quality of the governance of our public affairs in this country we have also had Barbadians who have lived abroad in many and diverse places and who have distinguished themselves in such a manner that the nationality of being a Barbadian has become synonymous with industriousness, with decency, with honesty and hard work and many other positive attributes.

What we have set out to do with this Charter for Returning Nationals is to establish first of all that we recognise that contributions by Barbadians can be made in many different ways and in many different places. It also recognises that there are a number of burdens which have been in our opinion unnecessarily placed in that direction. I make an example of cases where persons having paid duties and taxes on particular commodities already, in some cases the commodities might have been in their possession for a while having outlived a pretty significant part of their relative value and life, the fact of having to pay additional imposts on those items becomes more of an irritant not to mention the financial imposition.

What we are also doing, Sir, by way of making it easier for individuals who desire to return to Barbados to do so is to make it possible for us to broaden the base of human resources that are available to this country. Again, the other reality is this. Once we have a vibrant educational system, whilst we are able to produce graduates at the primary, secondary and university level who can challenge anyone in the world in terms of their intellectual capabilities, there are particular areas in which there are deficiencies. Take, Sir, a computer science graduate leaving the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill and going

to work in Barbados. There are only limited opportunities in terms of the range of applications to which he can address himself at this point in time. He may get far in terms of producing business related applications, payroll and inventory and the usual things related to traditional business. However I don't think there would be much scope for any computer science graduate to gain any experience in writing software for controlling the paths of rockets and other projectiles. The fact of the matter is that in relation to that second computer science graduate that I mentioned the possibilities of developing software for controlling the paths of rockets and other projectiles and for a wider expanded range of activity may be limited. Using that example illustrates a wider point. That is if we are able to have some of those people who received the benefit of sound education in Barbados exposed to a wider range of experiences throughout their professional careers, when they are able to relocate to Barbados they also bring their acquired knowledge with them.

There are many experiences to show where persons who have worked for 10 or 5 years ago in particular areas, particularly in the technical field, have been able to use the experience of operating in a larger, more complex environment to extend the boundaries of Barbados' efficiency and effectiveness in similar areas. So we are satisfied that to the extent that this charter will make it easier for persons who want to relocate to do so that it would be helpful.

Sir, the broad philosophy behind this is that this land is your land and this land is our land and it is the land of all Barbadians. The reality is that right now we have as many Barbadians, first and second generation Barbadians, living out of Barbados as we have in Barbados. Some persons estimate that the first second and third generations of Barbadians are 250 000 here and 250 000 there. The fact of the matter, Sir, is that part of the establishment of the unit is not just to help people to return home because there are many persons who have already had their children, who would have married citizens of the other countries and who have built solid and successful lives and careers in new locations who will not necessarily plan to return home to reside. However, Sir, that deep and abiding interest in assisting in the development of Barbados continues.

Part of the work of this Facilitation Unit for Returning Nationals will be to develop a skills centre for Barbadians living abroad, also to maintain contact with Barbadian organisations operating overseas and generally through having persons placed in the missions abroad to serve as a means of gathering information and maintaining contact with Barbadians throughout the world. You have heard, I am sure, Sir, of a number of Barbadians who will

meet you socially when you are overseas and indicate that they are interested in helping. They don't plan to return. They are interested in helping and they want to know in what way can they help. Unless there is an organised method for marshalling the resources of those individuals I am afraid that their capacity to help will not be maximised.

So Sir, whilst we are speaking today primarily about the Charter for Returning Nationals, notice that the Resolution speaks to the establishment of a facilitation unit and in the Resolution amongst the duties which have been identified for the unit in terms of the objectives that have been stated in the Charter is the creation of an attractive package of concessions to returning nationals as embodied. They also address one of the first problems that I identified and that is the provision of comprehensive and accurate information to returning nationals at both overseas and local locations. They also address the matter of maintaining the skills bank at overseas missions as well as developing and maintaining the technical and assistance programme drawing on the skills of appropriately qualified Barbadians abroad. As well as develop, Sir, a "2S" in the Charter, develop and maintain a technical assistance programme, drawing on the skills of appropriately qualified Barbadians abroad. That is an important component, and at "G," Sir, maintaining contact with organisations abroad.
2.50 p.m.

Sir, I am suggesting that this particular activity goes beyond the mere grant of concessions on miscellaneous collection of household effects, other personal effects, tools of the trade, and so on. What this really speaks to, Sir, is establishing a firm connection, building a strong and solid bridge between Barbadians living in Barbados and Barbadians living wherever they may be in the world, Sir. We have failed as a nation to capitalise on the deep and abiding interest and commitment, although many Barbadians, Sir, many of whom, like I said, do not necessarily have any plans of returning to live in Barbados, but who would be very interested, in being able to make a valuable contribution if only they knew how. Through this Facilitation Unit, we plan to use them, Sir, in a number of special technical assistance projects to further the development of Barbados.

Sir, the other aspect and focus is on those persons who are very much active. There are a number of these returning nationals, Sir, who will be in a state of retirement. We have heard talk over time about the development of a retiring industry where we will encourage persons from all over the world to come to Barbados and procure the necessary accommodation, medical services, other general support and care services to retire in Barbados. We believe, Sir, that Barbadians living abroad can also be a prime target for this particular industry.

In fact, one of the strong arguments that was put forward as far as the need to streamline the concessions granted and to eliminate some of the burden is that with respect to attracting those persons who would have retired in many cases, the house, car, and other personal holdings are essentially the bulk of what they would have, in terms of fixed assets, and that the pensions, which many of them would have, although generous compared to Barbados' pensions would obviously not be best spent in paying duty on items around.

Sir, whilst it is true that we need to ensure that our Barbadian nationals who return to live in Barbados can be fully and properly integrated with little difficulty as possible, and whilst this Unit will certainly seek to give effect to that and give assistance, we have, for example, the mandate to liaise with other government departments in terms of providing information and other assistance, as well as working with the private sector and other agencies in facilitating this.

This is not to suggest by any stretch of the imagination, Sir, that this Unit or indeed any other government department, Sir, can or should even think about seeking to overstep its boundaries and actually execute certain actions on behalf of returning nationals. This Unit will not be seeking to provide legal services to these people, or even offer any free legal advice. It will not be attempting to act as an agent to contract services and so on, on behalf of these individuals.

These individuals as part of their own reintegration and activity within their new communities, will, obviously, need to make their own efforts, and to take responsibility for making the judgement call in terms of which professionals they engage. They would have to, obviously, exercise all sound and normal judgement in terms of what types of contracts one would enter into with builders or with any other persons from whom they want to procure services. They would have to recognise, Sir, particularly for those persons who have lived abroad for a while, that you simply do not walk into a new district, even if you were born 10 miles away from there 50 years ago and expect instant recognition and instant accommodation. They, themselves, have to make effort, Sir, to ensure that they so conduct themselves in a manner which will make it easy for persons to deal with them.

It cannot be denied, Sir, that part of the difficulty which has been experienced in terms of Barbadian nationals returning home, has been elements of misunderstanding and false perception on both sides. You have the situation of Barbadians who have lived here all of their lives and take the view of, "We have lived here all the time, and therefore we have made greater contribution

than those of you who have ran away." We also have the other unfortunate side, Sir, both sides are unfortunate, where there are some returning nationals who unfortunately take the perspective that having lived in a larger country and one that in some ways is deemed to be more sophisticated, that Barbados is somehow still in the dark ages and that they have to return to rescue Barbados and Barbadians from the dark ages. Both of these attitudes, especially if they are displayed in our face to face, Sir, can only result in further confusion and, indeed, in some cases confrontation.

Basically, using the location of this lofty Chambers, Sir, to appeal to both sides, Sir, to lighten up a bit and not to approach matters which are effectively in the nature of building new relationships, be it in business, be it between professionals and clients, be it in neighbourhoods, Sir, do not approach with those preconceived notions and attitudes which can only serve to make the matter difficult.

Sir, I believe that this Resolution congratulating the Government for its recognition of the integral role which returning nationals and nationals who continue to live abroad can play in the development of this country, as well as congratulating the Government on taking the necessary action which has seen the establishment of a Facilitation Unit for Returning Nationals, which, as I indicated, also seeks to bridge the gap with nationals who remain overseas.

Also, Sir, this Resolution seeks to congratulate the Government on establishing a Charter for returning nationals, and having, Sir, the foresight to actually publish an appropriate booklet which, like I said, is an example, which I believe many more government agencies need to follow with respect to providing information which is easy accessible to all and sundry.

I would only add, Sir, that what the Facilitation Unit also needs to do is to recognise that in the age of modern technology, printing booklets alone is not the way to go, but that other means such as the Internet need to be employed in order to ensure the widest possible dissemination of information. As I said, it is an example that other government departments would do well to follow because, as I said at the beginning of this presentation, that the absence of adequate information to the general public, Sir, on the services offered by government departments on the procedures which are required are really part of the major problem which is encountered in the attempt to administer the public affairs of this country.

Sir, I commend this Resolution to the Honourable Senate, Sir, and I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.
3.00 p.m.

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: Mr. President, I first want to preface my remarks by saying that I am a born Barbadian and I left Barbados at the age of 3 to live with my family in Trinidad. I had no choice at that stage of my life. I was fortunate that from the age of 8 my parents saw it fit to send me back to Barbados regularly to spend the summer vacations with my grandparents, my aunts and uncles. In 1969, after leaving school, I came to Barbados and in the early 1970s I set up business. I am saying that because of what I am going to get into at a later stage in my contribution.

When I went into business, we had in those days low overheads, rent was very cheap, National Insurance was very low, there was no consumption tax, stamp duty was just .10¢ and duties in my particular field was just 15 per cent. There was very little competition. I was able in those days to do very well and I have established a good foundation in the business that I have some 25 years later.

Now, in dealing with this, Sir, most Barbadians migrated for mainly three reasons, to seek gainful employment, for better opportunities and for a better standard of living particularly in the last 30, 40 or 50 years. A lot of them even went to build the Panama Canal and because of marriages and starting new families overseas, a lot of them were unable to come back to Barbados but their main objective when they left was to return home to their country, Barbados, at some stage of their life. A lot of them went with the intentions of just making a little money and coming home within a few years. But, like I said, because of marriages and other commitments, a lot stayed on and went on with the feeling that they would come back to Barbados to retire and some have done this.

It is hoped, Sir, that with these incentives that we have that Barbadians will be able to return to these shores and I welcome the Resolution. But before I welcome the Resolution, I want to issue a word of caution, a word of warning or advice to those returnees and to make a few critical comments on the Bill.

The first area I want to deal with, Sir, I will call it Caution No. 1, or Advisory No. 1, if you like. An adult Barbadian citizen/or by descent, who has never lived in Barbados and what are we offering this particular descent of a Barbadian citizen in Barbados? Well, just like when we go overseas, the climate is different, the people are different, the culture is different, we experience what we call a culture shock, the same way when they come into Barbados they will have some form of a culture shock as well because they are accustomed living in the first world countries where the way of life and the pace is a lot faster. They have to be also very careful that they do not get caught up by some of the vagrants around when they hear these foreign accents.

I want to know where are these descendants of Barbadian citizens going to find jobs? We have an unemployment rate in Barbados of 19 or 20 per cent and we are experiencing today graduates from the University of the West Indies, graduates from foreign universities.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. President, on a point of order. The unemployment rate is now 16.2 per cent, not 19 per cent.

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: Mr. President, he says that with great delight. He is happy it is 16 per cent. Unemployment as high as it is today, Sir, I can remind you that there are graduates of the University of the West Indies and there are graduates of other foreign universities who have difficulty finding jobs in their related or specified fields. We have situations today where graduates are so frustrated that they are trying to get into the United States and Canada to find jobs. I am just saying, Sir, so when we are attracting these descendants what are we attracting them to do? Increase unemployment?

You have an engineer qualified from the University of the West Indies. You check in Bridgetown, he has gotten a job because he is an engineer. What is he doing? He is a salesman, selling. I warn these overseas people who are descendants of Barbadian citizens to be very careful and look before they leap.

Now, Sir, I turn to Caution or Warning No. 2 and that is to those who return to set up business. Doing business today in Barbados, Sir, is an extremely difficult and expensive exercise. It starts from the very beginning of Senator Bolden who says that I do not knock around the law courts as often as I knock around Swan Street. He will tell you that even forming a limited liability company sometimes is very difficult in the Registry of Barbados.

I want these people who are coming in here to set up business to remember a few things. Remember first when you are setting up business you must have an excellent product in order to get sales. Remember you must be competitive. Remember it is their money that they are investing. Remember it is their hard work and sweat. Remember it is their company that is paying 9.75 per cent on the gross wages to the NIS. Remember the high duties they have to pay, the consumption taxes and stamp duties some of which will go when VAT is introduced, I admit. Remember that when the bank lends you money you are signing collateral. They do not give you anything in this Barbados and then you look at the big outlay that you put up and look at the returns that you get and if you give credit, sometimes it can take as much as 5, 6 months to get in the money. After all of this, if you are fortunate to make a profit, then comes the big bad wolf. Government takes 40 per cent of your profit in corporation tax. They take

your stamp duties and your consumption tax. They share your National Insurance. They take 40 per cent of your corporation tax and they come the next year and tell you to prepay on the previous year in anticipation of a good year. When they ask you to prepay on the previous year, you are mashing up their cash flow.

Sir, I quote page 10 – Taxation, of this contract that everyone here is so proud of, this Manifesto. It reads:

“The level of taxation is too high. As a consequence it is expensive to do business in Barbados. This in turn prevents economic expansion and job creation. Taxes must be reduced in order to re-energise the economy and bring the measure of relief to the population.”

Sir, if that is so, and you will recall in the Estimates this year I called on all the small companies and small businesses which this Government is encouraging that any company making \$50 000 or less in profit should pay 25 per cent corporation tax I even go further and say they should even make it 20% corporation tax and so, Sir, comes caution or warning number 3 and this relates to the elderly or retirees. I want to warn them to be very careful especially those people who are on fixed incomes or pensions from overseas. They must be careful to look out for inflation over the years. As they get older inflation in this country will increase and on fixed incomes they can find themselves in a lot of trouble. They are in, not for a culture shock, they are in for a financial shock. They have to look out for the cost of food. The cost of food is exorbitant in this place and all of us know that when we get visitors from abroad, Senator Bolden gets a lot of visitors from abroad too, they will go in the supermarket and they will ask the question, how do you all afford to buy food in this place? Food is expensive and the tourist ask it all the time. The Bajans returning ask it all the time. And then No. 2, look out for mortgages. Those people who are pensioners obviously cannot get mortgages, but those who are younger and can get mortgages the interest rate has just been raised by this present Government from 9% to 10%, just a little reminder.
3.10 p.m.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, on a point of order, the Government did not raise mortgage interest, because the Government does not have the power to raise mortgage interest. The Banks raised the mortgage interest.

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: I am sorry, Sir, the Central Bank raised the mortgage interest rate from 9% and 10% and this present Government allowed it. No.3.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, please.

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: They must look out now for utilities because electricity is not cheap in this country and with Value Added Tax coming on January 1, 1997. Look out for gasoline. It is very expensive. Compare gasoline in the United States and Canada. In Canada and England it is cheaper and I warn them, Sir, do not even think of replacing the duty free car because when you see some of the prices. I am not pulling down Barbados. I am making, Sir, a contribution which I think is important to our fellow Barbadians, our brothers and sisters who are coming into this country and I am warning them to look out for what is happening in here and when they have their houses they are going to be issued with land tax. They must remember that. They pay taxes where they come from but they must remember that land tax is not cheap here any more and what is worse they must look out for insurance on their houses. House insurance is more than exorbitant. Everybody knows of the two crises with hurricanes and they raised the insurance astronomically to say the least. So my simple advice to them as I welcome them to come to Barbados, is to come to Barbados and spend three or six months to see what the position is as far as their finances go otherwise they are going to be in trouble. My warning to them is to look before they move, check it out carefully.

In most cases a lot of these people come down to Barbados and they sell their homes, and most of their assets and they bring all of their money into Barbados to settle in Barbados and lo and behold a lot of them do not register the money that they bring into this country.

Aside.

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: Now, if you are telling me that they do not have to register the money, my question or warning to them is they will not be able to send back out any money later on unless they go to the Central Bank and get approval. It is an irrevocable situation for those people to come here and find themselves in a mess a year or two later and they cannot go back to where they came from because the money starts to erode and they cannot get foreign exchange. When they want to send back out their money they get a rude awakening when they go into the commercial banks and are told they have to get approval from the Central Bank. I hear it regularly because I am in the bank regularly and hear these people saying, you never told me this and you never told me that and now I want to send money for my daughter and for this purpose and that purpose, I need Central Bank approval.

The same foolishness with the Central Bank applies when you go away on business you spend \$2.0388, almost \$2.04 to buy a US dollar and you are supposed to surrender this money when you come into Barbados and when you surrender it, you surrender it at \$1.99 or \$1.98 knowing full well that in three or four months you are going back out.

What are you saying you should do? Do you surrender it or leave the money with a friend overseas, or bank it overseas?

There is a need, Sir, to free up currency control in this country like in the rest of the Caribbean Countries. Years ago Guyana jailed people who left with US\$15.00 in their pockets. Today Guyana is free. You can walk in with US, you can walk back out with US, pounds sterling, whatever. Guyana, Trinidad, Jamaica, everywhere else has opened up controls. What is wrong with Barbados? I would like to encourage, Sir, that the Central Bank allows Barbadian citizens to open foreign accounts, not only certain select businesses who do foreign exchange business, open foreign accounts, let money flow in, let money flow out.

We know that there are over 200 000 Barbadians, the leader of Government Business has just said, living overseas and many of them in the United States and Canada would like to put money in Barbados, a good way of getting US dollars coming into Barbados. Only yesterday, again I am in the Bank, and I see the Clerk of Parliament whom we in this Chamber hailed for 25 years of good service standing up frustrated at the counter. He told me so. He had a plane to catch in 3 hours and he was getting horrors and phone calls back and forth from the Central Bank to get foreign currency to go away, and to go away with whom, two former Prime Ministers and the present Deputy Prime Minister. It has reached the point where it is ridiculous. I am hearing criticisms on the opposite side that what I am talking is nonsense. They want to talk about how good their contract is. Their contract on page 11 says we will liberalise the exchange control regime in order to make the operation of foreign exchange account more effective.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, order, please. Other Honourable Members will have the opportunity to speak.

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: Sir, I am saying that the Members on the Government side are criticising what I am saying and on page 11, I will repeat, it says "we will liberalise the exchange control regime in order to make the operation of foreign exchange accounts more effective. Let the money go in and out. Let the Bajans bring back money. It will ease up the situation and I am sure we will be better off at the end of the day.

Also the duty-free incentives. By all means I welcome the duty-free incentives. They can bring back their televisions, their fax machines, they can bring back whatever they like. But the biggest problem I have is those duty-free cars, the 2 duty-free cars that they are allowed. I know that in another Caribbean country they allow 3 duty free cars. I know of a man in that country who has his brother, wife and daughter residing in Florida. They come

back imitating as returning residents and bring back 3 Mercedes Benz – one for his brother, one for the other brother and his wife. I will tell you about mine. 3.20 p.m.

Aside.

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: Let me say that these duty-free cars that are allowed to come in here are going to create a serious problem. It is a loophole which the Government has to look at carefully. We have in this Chamber a Senator in here...

Certain remarks were asked to be struck from the record by Mr. PRESIDENT.

Also, certain remarks made by HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN were asked to be struck from the record by Mr. PRESIDENT.

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: Sir, there are people in Barbados who are waiting for this Resolution to pass. When this Resolution passes and becomes law, they are only waiting to bring...

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: On a point of order, Sir. I have never known that a Resolution brings law into effect and I would like to find out how can a Congratulatory Resolution create a law. That is what I am trying to find out.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Please proceed.

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: I am talking about the duty-free cars. I am talking that a racket could easily develop in this country. I know of people in certain places...

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: On a point of order, Sir. I have to interject on this point because the Honourable Member did not read the Charter. So for the benefit of the Senate...

Mr. PRESIDENT: That is no point of order. If the Honourable Member did not read it or did not understand it, that is a different matter.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. President, he is misleading this Honourable Chamber because he is saying that you are allowed to bring in 2 cars. That is not true, Sir. With your permission, I want to read the Charter which says 2 motor vehicles per family but not more than one per person whether new or used will be allowed in free of duty. These vehicles may not be disposed of under 3 years. So a fellow cannot bring a car in and sell it. He has to keep it for 3 years. I would like for the Honourable Senator to stop misleading this Chamber.

Mr. PRESIDENT: My understanding was that 2 vehicles could be brought in but maybe I am wrong. Perhaps you can explain that Senator.

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: Yes, Sir, that is what I said, two vehicles, two per family. I am not specifying two for one person. I am not into statistics like the honourable gentleman over there. I know that the Resolution says two vehicles per family. There is nothing wrong in having a vehicle in someone else's name and you drive it and that is the loophole, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: You have 3 minutes to wind up.

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: Yes, Sir. I would like to see the Government cover that loophole and what puzzles me, Sir, is that the Resolution calls for congratulatory pats on the back for the Government, the Government that has the majority in the Lower House and here. The people of Barbados gave the pat on the back already to this Government and gave them a mandate. They are to govern for a parliamentary term. When that parliamentary term is up and we go back to the polls, it is up to the people to decide whether they will give them another pat on the back if they have fulfilled their arrangement with the people of Barbados. But to come in here and give yourself all of the kudos makes me wonder two things: Are you conceited? I do not think so. Are you insecure? I am not sure. So with two minutes to go, I will just say that I welcome those returning residents to our shores and to their shores, as well as I hope that the advice that I offered will be helpful to them. I hope that they will take heed and they will look before they leap. Thank you, Sir.

SENATOR Miss O. P. SYMMONDS: Thank you, Mr. President. I do not want to descend into bay fast by replying to anything that the Honourable Senator said after I have made my contribution and, therefore, I would like to deal with one or two points he made first and desist them. His alarmist and patronizing tones do not really surprise me. He began by talking about culture shock, a risk that people anywhere take when they emigrate. He said it in reference to those who he said had never been here. There were several people who were not born here, who did not even have links to Barbados who have come and settled here, love it and are happy here and are able to adjust. One of the greatest writers of this century said once that we are born somewhere by chance but we find our spiritual home. There are people who have gone to other countries not only to better their lot but just because they like the way of lifestyle there and have settled and have made a contribution. Therefore, this idea of culture shock is nothing really to make any fuss about.

Then he also talked about the elderly and retirees. I am a retiree as everybody knows, but there are many areas of compensation. Yes, you may pay a little more for food but then you have not got to spend money on winter clothes and fuel and those are two very big items. To top that, you have a beautiful climate, a warm climate with the sea and that is a point too, as the Honourable Senator to my right said, good fresh food.

Now I wish to help with the pats on the back. I wish to applaud the Government for this Resolution. There is a saying by a writer who wrote the words "Never be so homely" and years ago there was a very popular song with beautiful words, a haunting tune that went something like this: "Amid pleasures and palaces though we may roam, be it ever so humble there is no place like home." This is relevant because I wish to emphasise that however long Barbadians may live abroad they look on Barbados as home. They talk about Barbados as home and they are full of thanksgiving for these concessions. There have been many here for Cropover and many of them have said to me that they had been asking for definitive information like this for a long time but there was no specificity. There was nothing enumerated and therefore this new cohesive unit and this very attractive detailed booklet are very important not only because of the concessions but they help to show returning nationals how they can adjust into the Barbadian culture.

3.30 p.m.

I wish to say, Mr. President, that it is, as the Leader said very ably, going to take a tolerance and understanding on both sides. Adjusting is not easy. Sometimes for those of us who have lived abroad for a number of years when we come back home we find it hard to adjust to a way of life which we left and all the more reason that this booklet will help those nationals.

I know from dealing with children and their parents over many years what a wrench it can be, what a sacrifice to leave your home, to leave your children in the hands of grandparents to seek a better life overseas and in the case of England, Mr. President, I was there in the 1950s when emigrants started coming in large numbers and some of them did very well. Some suffered hardships. Some even suffered indignities and they did it all with a sense of purpose and most of them sent back home gifts of money. They have made a large contribution to this country and the least we can do is to repay them for what they have done for their country.

I think that it is wrong, it borders almost on being unpatriotic to make people feel that in coming home that they are going to be faced with untold difficulties.

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: Mr. President, on a point of order. I was not in my speech saying

anything unpatriotic. I was simply cautioning, warning and advising our fellow brothers and sisters overseas who are returning to our shores to be careful to look before they leap. I said nothing unpatriotic.

SENATOR Miss O. P. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, what caused people sometimes a great deal of angst was the problem of cars, having to have their cars for about 3 years before they could come home and the furniture having to be used and that really was a bit unfair to have those stipulations but, as usual, a caring... However many times we use that epithet it cannot be too much for this caring and farsighted Barbados Labour Party Government.

Many of them have said to me that they had thought of coming home but what scared them was the thought of the large amount of duty that they would have to pay bearing in mind that the things that they have purchased that they would have already paid duty on them at home. They are going to bring in money. It will help to circulate. They are not coming back empty-handed. Barbadians have too much pride for that. What is more they have skills and the overseas missions are working on the skills bank of Barbados nationals and some very highly qualified persons have already registered.

I am also pleased to learn that some of them are already giving voluntary service to child care and to the elderly. So they understand that they should contribute to the society not just in terms of monetary contributions but in terms of social work, education, investment and in whatever way that they can. Therefore, Mr. President, I have very great pleasure in wholeheartedly supporting this Resolution.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Mr. President, I am supporting this Charter for Returning Nationals but my contribution relates more to an extension of this charter to the locals. I will just give some examples.

One of the objectives of the Charter is to facilitate development of a retirement industry in Barbados and I would like to see this extended to our retired population and this could be done in collaboration with the Association of Retired Persons. As you know, Mr. President, we have an aging population and we need to find some sort of industry to keep these persons occupied because if they are not occupied they tend to use their thinking facilities much faster than if they are working.

Mr. President, my other contribution is also with regard to section (d) of the objectives No. 2:

"Develop programmes of investment opportunities aimed specifically at Barbadians living overseas, and widening local investment opportunities available to returned nationals as well as overseas Barbadians."

Again I am asking that this be extended to the locals, because when we retire we do have money as well and we do get gratuities and it is very difficult because sometimes we do not know about the various investment opportunities. For some reason when one is about to retire one receives packets in the mail from overseas and it is not advisable to invest one's money in ventures that one does not know anything about. I do not know who gives these names out for the persons overseas but when I was about to retire, and I retired early, I got all of these packets of information from overseas corporations.

I would like to see the programmes developed here for those persons returning to include the locals who are retiring and having gratuities and lump sums of money so that they can invest it and they can grow.

Regarding the skills bank, both in Barbados and overseas, here again, I would like to see this extended to the retired population in Barbados. This can be done in collaboration with the Association of Retired Persons, which is trying to get off the ground and which has quite a large number of persons.

3.40 p.m.

We do need to maintain a skills bank because we really need to harness the skills, not only of those who are returning to Barbados, but also of those persons who, even though they have retired, still have a lot to offer to our society. Mr. President, I feel very strongly about this because looking at the developments in our society, I am afraid a lot of guidance is necessary and we need to use the skills and expertise of some of these retired persons regarding making decisions, confidence building, professionalism, *et cetera, et cetera*. We need to get back to the utilisation of some of those skills which I saw in evidence when I returned to Barbados in 1966. For example, whereas in the Ministry you have Permanent Secretaries that are purely professional *et cetera, et cetera*, we need to use these people's skills, not only those who are returning.

Another objective is to develop and maintain a technical assistance programme, drawing on the skills of appropriately qualified Barbadians abroad. Again, this is excellent, but I would like to see this extended to the retired persons here. You have been trying to start a skills development programme, you are trying to start building different programmes for the youth, and I would like to see not only those persons returning being utilised, but

also those persons who have retired and still have quite a lot to offer.

To liaise with organisations of returning nationals in local projects in which they are and can be involved. Again, I will like to see this extended to the local people who are retired. Mr. President, we need to do this, and this is very important. I will tell you why I think that it is important, Mr. President. After one retires, there is a great void. People in Barbados have not been educated to make plans for retirement. In some countries there are persons who develop hobbies, and who develop interest in church and other organisations so that they know when they retire they will be working for the Boys Scouts or the 4 H, *et cetera, et cetera*. This is not the case in Barbados. You tend to get people who retire and they sit at home and all they do is eat, get fat, and heart attacks earlier than they would normally get. We really need to harness their skills and we really need to take a serious look at preparing our local people for retirement.

What happens is, retirement age hits most Barbadians very suddenly. Suddenly you are retired and you are at home with nothing to do.

Mr. President, regarding the cars. I think we should allow the nationals to bring the cars back. I see we have people working in Foreign Embassies *et cetera*, who are allowed to bring in cars duty-free, and who are allowed to drive them and then after so many years or after they have gone back they are allowed to sell them. I think the same should apply. If people sell the cars before the limited time, they should be made to pay duty.

If you return to Barbados and you are only allowed one car per person, it is very difficult to take advantage of this situation because you cannot bring another car in. You will have to buy a car locally. I think what one has to do is to monitor that very carefully, one car at one time. Not go out again and bring in another car after those 3 years, and I do not think that would cause a problem.

I hope that you will be successful in developing this department which I feel is very necessary, but, again, I would like to see some of these ideas extended to our local retired population who do have pockets of money and who is not really sure how to invest it. The Stock Exchange is trying to open up and offer progress, but we need to know a bit more and we need to have other avenues for investment.

I will like to support this Resolution.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, first of all I will like to make my contribution by

trying to bring this debate back on track to make it deal with the relevant Resolution before us, and to say at the outset that the Barbados Labour Party and this Government has any cause or any intention of apologising for this very worthwhile and far reaching measure.

I think, Sir, that the people who are "nit picking," "snipping" and "niggly piggyling" at this Resolution are caught at by the horns of dilemma, or in Barbados, as we say "they are in a speed wobble." The Resolution talks about welcoming the establishment of FURN, the Facilitation Unit for Returning Nationals, and then it calls on Parliament to congratulate the Government.

Now we know that this is a step that is to be welcomed. They know that it is a step to be welcomed, but in the political nature of things, they find it impossible to congratulate the Government. That is understandable. What is not understandable, Sir, or what to me is not supportable, is the approach in which they try to withhold that congratulations the things that are being said, the whole attitude towards this Unit.

If I may begin, Sir, with the comments of Senator Bernstein which I am sorry that he is not here to defend himself. I hope that he is here and if he has any objection he can do something about it at some other date. I believe that he was well intentioned, but like the Honourable Leader of the Senate said, "The road to hell is very often paved with good intentions." I found his attitude, despite his intention or his perceived intention on my part, to be exceedingly patronising almost to the point of being insulting.

We are talking about people who are largely persons who are retired, in the large measure. I have dealt with some of them even before this Resolution came into being, they are retired, they are wised to the world. They are people of experience, they have survived in more hostile climates than Barbados and therefore they know the ways of the world. Therefore they are not little children and they have no right to be spoken down to and indulge in a lot of negative attitudes as though they do not know the ways of the world.

If I did not know him better, I would be made to feel that he was seeking to establish some psychological electronic gate that only certain people should come back into Barbados having passed at that electronic gate. Sir, I think I know him a little better than that.

When one adds all these measures together, we realise that if the Honourable Senator had read Page 16 of FURN. It is saying that these people are not coming back into

a vacuum. They are persons who are in constant contact with Barbados. They write, telephone, send FAXES, and above all they visit. They are in contact with people and they know what to expect of Barbados. In the booklet on Page 16 it says that Barbados has established Missions in certain parts of the world to represent its nationals living there, and it says that...

SENATOR S. P. BERNSTEIN: On a point of order, please. This book that he is referring to that I would not read on Page 16, Sir, is a book that I only saw for the first time today. I do not understand how you could expect that this book would come in here today and I would read the book from front to back and then know what is going on, Sir.

3.50 p.m.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, the Honourable Member is only confirming that he did not read it. I do not know why, but I am saying that you are confirming that you did not read it. Thank you for confirming that.

It is a public document that has been in circulation since March. There are many things which are not distributed in this Senate but fall off people's trucks and people have them. This is a legitimate document which has been in circulation. The content of this document has been known for some time and as part of preparation to the debate I thought this would be one of the first things to get your hands on.

The point is at page 16, it says:

"In each of these Missions an officer is designated to assist returning nationals. You are invited to contact your nearest Mission, and seek clarification on any aspect of your return to Barbados."

There is a system for providing people with information apart from the informal network, apart from their family connections, apart from visits themselves. They know what is coming to Barbados so then to seek to patronize them by telling them they have to look out for land tax, light bills and that sort of thing as though they are coming from the hickies I think is an insult to them. It might not have been intended but that is the way it comes across and I feel they should feel very offended at it.

Sir, apart from that, there are already a number of organisations established in Barbados that, as it says, again on page 16 of the booklet:

"There are a number of organisations/associations established by returning nationals which are designed to help returning nationals make a smooth transition

back into their native culture. These organisations/associations are listed in the directory section of this booklet."

If you look at the back of the booklet, they have a list of organisations which already exist to tell people about life and conditions in Barbados. It mentions the Association of Barbadian Resettlers from Britain, the Barbados Overseas Resettlement Association, the Society for the Resettlement of Caribbean Nationals, the Barbados Ex-Overseas and Friends Association and the National Resettlement and Development Council. There is already an abundance of organisations made up of people who have lived abroad, some of whose friends and family are back here and they are being provided with information so they are not coming back here to any waste land that the Senator might have either wittingly or unwittingly sought to establish that Barbados has become.

I must say, Sir, that I resent very much that in the attempt to belittle or begrudge the Government of any congratulations of this measure, that what has happened is that some of these returning nationals have told me themselves that they have begun to feel as though they are unwelcomed in Barbados. I know some of them. My immediate neighbour at home is a man who lived in Britain for 26 years who has come back and set up a construction company. Even before this unit, he has been busily engaged in building, repairing and refurbishing houses for dozens of Barbadian nationals over the last six or seven years, and invariably I get a chance to talk to them when they come to visit him so I know that of which I speak. They are making them feel that the Government is moving through FURN and through these concessions to make them feel welcome, make their return to Barbados easier and more comfortable as though we are giving away Barbados. We are not giving away Barbados. All we are doing is seeking to give Barbadians who have already given back to Barbados when they lived abroad to help them feel welcome and resettle in Barbados.

Sir, any of us who have lived abroad for any period of time, and I had that experience at one time, knows what it is to be away from Barbados, knows of the dreams, especially in the winter, especially when things are rough about coming back to the rock. A dream that has not only motivated Barbadians but has kept them, more than one generation, going, surviving, prospering and thriving for time immemorial. It is something that keeps you going, the dream of coming back to Barbados perhaps once and for all. Some make it on vacation, some never do, but it is a dream that I say never ever leaves the chest, memory and the fervent wishes of any real, real Barbadian.

We have, Sir, a Barbadian diaspora where Barbadians are spread all over the world and just like how it is the fervent wish and commitment of every person of

Jewish extraction I know to contribute and feel attached to and involved in and want to return to their motherland, Israel, Barbadians who to some people because of our thriftiness and our ability to survive have been called the Jews of the Caribbean, we too have that feeling when we have lived abroad of coming back to Barbados. Therefore, we do not want to come back to any nightmare as has been conjured up by the presentation or near nightmare of Senator Bernstein.

Aside.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: I am talking of my perception. I am saying that any returning or intended returning Barbadian who heard some of these cautions would feel that we are coming back to a nightmare rather than a dream. I am saying, Sir, that is not so.

I had the good fortune, Mr. President of having attended a Thanksgiving service at St. George's Parish Church on July 21. It was called a Thanksgiving Service for all Returned and Returning Nationals at St. George's Parish Church put on by the National Resettlement and Development Council, one of the organisations to which I referred. It was a beautiful Sunday afternoon. I do not very often go to church on Sunday afternoons because I very often spend my time recovering from my lunch but it was a very welcome experience. I think it was a combination of the event itself plus the idyllic surroundings of St. George's Parish Church. I think Senator Thompson would appreciate the beauty of St. Georges' Parish Church as a visitor like me because we are very familiar with those surroundings. Even though she has not had the good fortune to become the MP for St. George North yet, I am sure she still would extoll the virtues and blessings of St. George's Parish Church.

Sir, it was a very welcome afternoon and anybody who was there who experienced the emotionalism of the moment it was a very heartfelt occasion. The only person I felt, to me, who was uncomfortable was the Leader of the Opposition especially when the President of the Association in his address made it clear that he was congratulating the Government for having done this because it was a dream which he had been told could not happen. Nobody ever made any serious steps. Now we are hearing that people thought about it, they had made a decision at Cabinet, they had taken a decision by this officer but it has never been put together in any cohesive manner the way it has been done in FURN, and that is what makes the difference that now once and for all, for the first time people have a package. People can look into one document rather than going helter skelter all over the place. They can find out what are their entitlements, the procedure, information *et cetera*. I do not understand why some of us would want to begrudge them of this good fortune.

We seek to do it for foreign investors. We seek to do it for offshore companies. We seek to do it with the Shipping Registry, a one-stop shop and this is what we have done in the case of FURN, set up a one-stop shop so they know what they can or cannot expect when they come to Barbados.

I know a great deal has been said about the cars. There seems to be some obsession with the fact that there can be one car duty-free to one person or two cars per family. The point is that while like Senator Bernstein said they are people who will try to beat the system, they do it every day around Bridgetown. The point is when you are coming, you have to be registered. You have to establish your *bona fides* with Customs. You also establish your *bona fides* with the Missions abroad. Above all, the system that is being used at Customs is computerized so if your name is already in the system as having brought in a duty-free car, it is not easy to beat the system that way. You can sell the car, sure, but the point is that you cannot run a racket by bringing in one every two or three years or every year to establish a business of it. That is impractical because there are checks and balances. There is a mechanism that has been put in place to prevent this.

Do not forget. This whole system evolves out of a long series of discussions like the Leader of the Senate said that is taking place with the nationals, their organisations, their Customs, the Barbadian authorities in various parts of Barbadian life to try to come up with a comprehensive document that would seek to put everything in one spot and in place. Therefore, it is not something that has been done willy-nilly. It is not something that has been done off the top of somebody's head as a cheap election gimmick because there is no election immediately around the corner.

The point is we have sought to satisfy the yearnings of Barbadians and we have sought to fulfil a pledge which we gave them when discussions were held with them and they expressed their wishes to see such a system put in place. All we are doing is fulfilling that. I think what has irked our opponents is that we beat them to it. As anybody knows, an idea is an idea but unless it is translated into action it remains an idea. Nobody can deny that you have had the idea. If you say you had it, fine. That is possible but the point is you never ever took the step to put it into reality and put it into action and that is a fact. You do not want to thank us for it, fine. You do not want to congratulate us, fine. But please, do not, in your attempt to deprive us of that congratulation in any way undermine the pleasures of the Barbadians returning home.
4.00 p.m.

Sir, I want to make the point that in coming back home we do not anticipate that these Barbadians are going to be wards of the State. They are not going to be dependent on the State. Like I said they are

largely returnees who, in many instances are prepared to sell their properties and bring back cash to Barbados. They are people who will be drawing pensions. They will be bringing back skills. They will be bringing back experience and they will be bringing back expertise so they have a contribution to make to Barbados.

It has already been said that some of them have got involved in some of our social welfare institutions, some in the Children's Homes. I know some of them who have been engaged in helping the Nightengale Home in counselling children and they have some very worthwhile contributions to make. I think that we need to encourage them because to a large extent all they want to do is contribute further towards the development of Barbados and to feel happy and settled in their home once again. Therefore I empathise with them for feeling somewhat disenchanted at the petty resentment that is being attempted to be applied by some of those who for one reason or another do not want to see them feel settled and accepted in Barbados. It is felt, I am sure by our opponents that if they were to say, yes this is a good idea, we welcome the establishment of it, we congratulate Government, that it would be virtually like saying we are giving away political largesse to your political opponents. But if it is a good measure those who think so will benefit from it in the long run and will be prepared to express that and those who do not will do the contrary.

That is not all, Sir. Sir, there are a series of things which, for those who might think that this is either unnecessary or no big thing if one were to get to know of some of the problems that those who have attempted to return to Barbados in the past have experienced in the process then one can begin to understand and appreciate the difference that FURN will make to their lives. For instance in the past one had great difficulty in obtaining detailed and accurate and timely information on Barbados. They were frustrated by the bureaucracy involved in resettling. FURN is designed to minimise that, if not eliminate it.

They were offended sometimes by the attitude of some of the officials they had to deal with at Immigration and Customs. FURN is designed to bring that to a minimum if not eliminate it completely. They were unclear as to what they should do and what they could bring in, the age limit of vehicles, how taxes would be levied, what taxes would be paid. They were unhappy and disenchanted at the high level of taxes and duties they had to pay on their motor vehicles. Sometimes these duties amounted to more than twice the value of the vehicles and they felt that it was unfair to make them pay twice.

Putting that apart, Sir, when a person brings in a duty free car in Barbados, whether it be a Suzuki like I drive or a Mercedes like Senator Bernstein drives, whether it is one

or the other, the point is, when you bring it into Barbados you have to buy gasoline and eventually you have to buy tyres and you have to have it serviced. It has to be repaired at some time and you have to buy parts. In other words why extract a tonne of money out of a person's pocket to put it into the treasury when that same person's money which becomes disposable income which will be spent on maintaining a car, refurbishing the car, licencing the car, buying gas for the car, or they could buy a house, they could repair the house or they could give some to their family or who knows, the point is that money flows directly into the system through people and generate economic activity. But the past Government felt it was better to take out their pound of flesh or more at customs. Sometimes extracting money which people have not budgeted for and it posed a tremendous amount of difficulty and burden on those who were coming back, not having anticipated that they would have to pay these duties.

As a matter of fact I know of people who sought to ask Customs whether they could pay, because of the impositions on their cars, in instalments so that they would not lose their cars, cars which they would have invested in because as retiring persons it might be the last good car they would ever be able to afford or buy for the rest of their lives. The point is that there is a method to this. It was not done by madness. There was a logic, there was rational discussion, there was examination of the past history and what we have been seeking to do, Sir, is to put those matters right.

It is against that background, Sir, that we have to support this Resolution. It is against that background that I seek to congratulate the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for this initiative for bringing it to fruition and I would like to congratulate one of the officers, Mr. Jeff Hunte, for the great work he has done. He has brought a tremendous amount of work to it having worked and having been familiar with the plight and thoughts and the wishes and the hopes and aspirations and dreams of nationals by serving them abroad, particularly at the High Commission in London and Sir, therefore they will come to a welcome atmosphere on behalf of the Government and we would seek to hope that the rest of the community would find it in their heart of hearts to ignore the sniping and the political guerilla warfare that is being waged either directly or indirectly against these nationals by our opponents and stick to the fact that they are all Barbadians. They are Barbadians who have Barbadian connections, who have Barbadian relatives and friends here who want to come back and it is incumbent upon us that if we have been educated to make visitors, when I say visitors, non Barbadians, who come here on a cruise ship, or for a week or three weeks as visitors, if we are expected to make those people feel welcome, people whom we may never, ever see again, our flesh and blood, our kith and kin, Sir, have

a great deal more right to be given that welcome and we should roll out the welcoming mat on every occasion and help them to get past the culture shock that Senator Bernstein talked about but which is a reality that when you come back there is a certain amount of traumatic dislocation and we have to help them to adjust. He made half of a good point there on that one and I give it to him.

It is going to call for adjustment on both sides, those Barbadians who have been here and those who are returning, they have like any human exercise, there has to be give and take and compromise and adjustments on every side. It is not beyond Barbadians to do it and I would hope that once this Resolution is passed here this afternoon, that the way will be paved and that these skirmishes that have been taking place over this issue will come to an end once and for all and that we can get back to the business of welcoming Barbadians who are returning and making them feel they are good and proper Bajans. I thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: Mr. President, I rise to add my contribution to this Resolution and to congratulate the Government on actually putting words into action. I want to start by reading the first paragraph of the Resolution where it states that whereas the Government of Barbados recognises Barbadian nationals overseas as an integral part of Barbados' assets and resources and the invaluable contribution they have made to the development of the nation.

Mr. President, long, long ago before a lot of us in here were born, many Barbadians had to go overseas to seek opportunities which were not then available in Barbados. They did so with some assistance, certainly in the nineteen fifties in terms of subsidized fares in order to enable them to get to countries far and wide, particularly to Great Britain. There was also opportunity through the recruitment in the British forces and that too gave many Barbadians an opportunity. And during those years to follow, Mr. President, many of them, when they began to do well and to make good, sent a lot of those funds back to Barbados which I think many, many families in Barbados would have benefitted from, my family included and without which many families would not have had the opportunities that now exist today.

The remittances that they sent back in those days also gave the opportunity for an increase in revenue of the Government at the time and so, I think it is only fitting that in this day and age when many of those as they reach the evening of their years seek to return home because we all know home is where the heart is and as one of the Senators said earlier once your navel string is buried here there is always that pull to return home, particularly when you have made good and would want to come back and share some more of that wealth here in Barbados.

Mr. President, a lot of the returning residents will really come at no cost to Government. Yes concessions have been given but when you really consider it, the amounts that they have sent back in years gone by and the amount of contributions that they can continue to make in the present day in terms of investing, in terms of creating opportunities for work because many of them are not coming here to work themselves but to create opportunities for other people to gain employment. A lot of the returning residents have quite a bit of disposable cash to invest in Barbados. It is true as one of the Senators said and he issued a caution saying: "Test the waters first." But, Mr. President, the majority of Barbadians returning have not just gone and stayed away forever. They have come back from time to time, maybe some not with the frequency which they would enjoy, because as you know when you are working overseas you cannot up and jump home for 5 and 6 months at a given time but many of them have kept in close contact. Those who have not done so, much to their folly perhaps, but the opportunity is here now for those who have never done so to have the opportunity through FURN.

4.10 p.m.

Mr. President, in all of the Missions overseas...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Just a moment, Senator Odle. Please proceed.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: Thank you, Mr. President. I wonder if it is getting a little warm or hot because the air conditioner looks as though it wants to fall from the place.

Yes, the point I was developing was that a lot of these returning residents are bringing resources and cash to Barbados to assist. So while some feel as has been stated in the Other Place that Barbados cannot accommodate all returning nationals, Mr. President, as Barbadians the opportunity is there if you wish to return. If you do not want to return, that is OK. But the point is that the majority of those who are returning are doing so with significant amounts of cash and experience. In order to tap some of these resources and put them altogether, in every Mission overseas there is an officer assigned specifically to deal exclusively with FURN. In days gone by, I remember very well because when I was a student in the UK in the early 1970's, I almost felt that I was out there in the world alone because in those days certainly as a student you had no opportunity or you were not aware of any opportunity to go and stand on a piece of Barbados soil, if I could put it that way. We did not know where to turn for certain information. Fortunately for me, I lived in a hostel where there were many other West Indians and we sort of made our way through during the time that we had to be there.

I say all of that to say that certainly on one occasion when I had a call to go to one of the Units at the time

that it was almost as if we were not important. Two young Barbadian students went and they treated us rather off-hand and, Mr. President, I took umbrage at that, even in those days when you are shy and quiet they treated you very slight as if you had no place to come here to this Mission. It was not a good feeling and because of that I always take the opportunity wherever to let young students going overseas know where they can go and sort of help them along the way. That will no longer happen, Sir, because this present Foreign Minister of Affairs has given the Missions overseas a mandate that they take care of Barbadians overseas. If they wish to come, give them as much information that will help them settle there and here we have gone a step further in creating opportunities for them to resettle in Barbados when they so desire.

Mr. President, a lot of the returning residents will bring with them all of their belongings as outlined in this wonderful little booklet which I myself am seeing in this form for the first time. I have seen it in a draft type thing but this is certainly user-friendly and there is every bit of information in here to help a returning resident settle.

There is some concern expressed about the loss to revenue in terms of the taxes. Mr. President, I would like to suggest that these are going to be out-weighed by the amount of foreign exchange that is going to be brought into Barbados by a lot of these returning residents, a lot of Barbadians – sisters and brothers like you and me. Many of us who went away as young adults stayed on for one reason or another as Senator Bernstein stated who formed liaisons and would have stayed away. So this could have been anyone of us in here now seeking to return to the land of our birth or to the land of the birth of our forefathers. This comes at no cost to Barbados in that regard added to which they will be bringing things that they would have purchased outside because in previous years when they came back to Barbados certain things they may have had to pay high taxes on instead of purchasing them here. That represents a savings for Barbados insofar as we would not have had to look for foreign exchange here to purchase goods from overseas.

Mr. President, many of these persons are retirees and the case is put – how are we going to find jobs for our young people returning? Of course, some young people are returning but we know that the majority of Barbadians returning to these shores are retired persons – retired due to the advancement of their years and some will be doing an early retirement, and more often than naught every single one of them have had the plan in the back of their minds to return to Barbados. Some have hastened because of the living conditions overseas and particularly as many people want as they grow older to be with their families and a lot of Barbadians who have families return back.

They want to come back so that they are with their sisters and brothers and some who still have their mother and father alive. When they return to Barbados they will most certainly enjoy a better quality of life. In the larger countries certainly you can enjoy a quality of life because perhaps there is a lot more liquidity, a lot more availability to purchase lavish furniture, go to the theatre and many restaurants and you name it. But there is a quality of life that exist in this country that calls all Barbadians to return home and to cause many Barbadians who live here to enjoy it more. I had the opportunity to speak with a former member of staff of mine who has just moved to Bermuda. Bermuda as we all know experiences a certain quality of lifestyle that surpasses many places because of the value of their dollar and their tourism product and so on and she said to me: "I never knew that I had it so good in Barbados. Sure, I make a lot of money where I am working now more than I could ever earn in Barbados even working for myself." But I will tell you that she misses Barbados for the warmth of the brothers and sisters. Certainly, from the point of the climate because Bermuda gets cold during the winter months. But that warmth is an integral part of the comfort of the resettling for persons advancing in years.

Mr. President, I think that many of us in here will be touched with a little creak in the joint from time to time which is exasperated by cold weather. Many senior citizens returning will no longer have that problem with such great impact and in addition, here is an opportunity for some of those persons to share with the existing community of senior citizens and certainly with the Child Care Board and other service oriented organisations.

4.20 p.m.

As far as the retired persons and senior citizens, I would dearly love to see some of that investment going to a joint venture arrangement, perhaps with the Government, to establish senior citizens villages. A couple of weeks ago we spoke about the Soroptimists and the lease of land to help them to expand and to do more for senior citizens in Barbados and here is an opportunity for investment for Barbadians returning home to work with Government on setting up such a place, because as we get older more and more we realise that it is neither safe nor secure anywhere in the world, it is lonely for most people at any level when you get old and you live alone.

Mr. President, living alone brings on all sorts of syndromes which I am sure Senator Rickinson as a nurse would be able to expound more widely than I would. Certainly, in my family, as old age has crept on I have had at least two members of the family who suffered with Alzheimers disease. This could happen to younger people too but what happens when the person suffering from such an ailment or any other as comes with old age is living alone? Oftentimes with nobody to care for them.

In Barbados we have a very active Home Help Service and this is perhaps an opportunity to highlight a Manifesto pledge with respect to upgrading and expanding the Home Help Service. I am not suggesting that returning nationals would be the beneficiaries of the Home Help Service as it currently exists but they are people too and are Barbadians who may need assistance in their homes. This could be had at a cost because as I said many of them coming have a certain amount of disposable cash so I am not suggesting for one moment that the Home Help Service provide a free service to those who can afford it but this is perhaps an ample opportunity for those who can afford to pay for it to have service from the home help.

This would certainly create a lot more jobs within that department and at the same time give very real support to an area that we know is expanding as the Barbadian population continues to age. So I would really like to see this joint venture in the creation of retirement villages to alleviate some of that loneliness and that living alone type of situation.

Mr. President, many returning residents, particularly the ones who came before, had problems with legal battles and construction matters and as the Leader of Government Business said it is not the responsibility of FURN to manage on a personal level anybody's affairs of that nature. Of course it is their responsibility to check the marketplace very thoroughly. For those who have had problems with attorneys-at-law there is a disciplinary committee of the Barbados Bar Association to deal with some of those problems. That, too, is in the booklet so that persons who have suffered, can seek some redress.

Mr. President, this Resolution really seeks not to isolate Barbadians returning home as a separate category of people but to facilitate their return not that there are special favours being offered but it is certainly that we are making it easier. As one of the former speakers said, any change after a long time residing anywhere is an adjustment. The newness makes resettling sometimes a little difficult and we are seeking with this Resolution, the establishment of the Charter to facilitate. Further there is an individual at every Mission overseas that individuals can go to on a one on one basis to clarify any concern he may have to make his return to Barbados easier.

Mr. President, we all know that home is where the heart is and the heart of every Barbadian both living here and living overseas is right here in Barbados. So, Mr. President, I have no hesitation in supporting this Resolution and the Facilitation Unit for Returning Nationals and to compliment the Government because as I started off by saying – it is irrelevant who said what first and whose idea it was. As Senator Farley says, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. These good intentions have come to reality in the recent past and so I really want to

congratulate the Government on this Resolution and urge all Senators to give it their fullest support. Thank you.

SENATOR Mrs. V. J. DAVIS: Mr. President, I just want to make some contribution to the passing of this Resolution congratulating Government on the creation of the Charter and establishment of the Facilitation Unit for Returning Nationals. I must say that I will support this because I have been meditating on the term returning national. I have been meditating on it for the simple reason that I believe that people and society must give honour, glory and praise to all those people who contributed to make the society what it is today.

When I talk about meditating and returning I think it is a very interesting theme especially in Caribbean literature. We have *Pleasures of Exile* by Lamming. We have "*Retour au Pays Natal*" by Aime Cesaire. We have the whole notion of place, displacement, migration, immigration, home as themes in Caribbean Literature. I think you only have to let the poets say it for you in the most economical way that they possibly can. I would like to quote from our own Kamau Brathwaite, who in his book writes the passage and it is from "*The Journeys*." It brings this whole question of Caribbean migration and immigrations into a wondered historical perspective. He says,

"E
Gypt
in Af-
Rica
Mesopo-
tamia
Mero-
e
the
Nile
silica
glass
and brittle
Sa-
hara, Tim-
buctu, Gao"

He goes on and he ends his poem by saying,
"Castries' Conway and Brixton in London,
Port of Spain's jungle

and Kingston's dry Dungle
Chicago Smethwick and tiger Bay.

Never seen
a man
travel more
seen more
Lands than this poor
path-
less harbour-
less spade."

Now what is interesting to me about the question of returning nationals, is not only as Brathwaite, very understandably, looked at the whole question of returning and displacement, and migrations, and he goes all the way back to Africa. Of course, the point is that all these migrations have a common economic route.

4.30 p.m.

It is also interesting, and I know that the sociologists and psychologists, but particularly, a man as renowned as Sigmund Freud saw it. The motive of human society is, in the last resort, an economic one. So that all these journeys that we have been as a people participating in have obviously, had an economic basis. We do not have to go to the fact that slavery was an economic proposition.

Now, I am saying all this to say that, I would repeat, it probably is not enough for us to simply think about our returning nationals as economic propositions. We know how we have been victims of this West Indian concept of them as just economic digits. We have to think about them in terms of how we offer to our society and our children growing up the whole concept of history, the whole concept of those values which we must instill in them.

This is why I like Brathwaite, because I want to say in this Chamber that I think it is quite unconscionable for us, and this might seem a diversion but it is not, not to think in terms of the contribution of our ancestors. I am particularly thinking about the fact that we do not recognise August 1 as Emancipation Day in the same way that we might be tempted not to recognise the role of labour, the role of the defendants of slaves in the building of the new world and the building of Europe. These returning nationals are people who not only worked hard in this country, but they left because they needed money, they needed a better life.

Now Brathwaite had also mentioned in his poem Cuba and Guyana. We could talk about Aruba, we could talk about all the places, all the journeys of Caribbean peoples in search of a better life. I would think that it would be a terrible shame, and I think it would be a blot on us as a people when we deal with people who have been to, as someone used to say to me, "the waters of chastisement," if we are not going to be as welcoming and as understanding of their role in the building of this country, Barbados, which we are so proud of today. If we do not begin to teach our children the value of gratitude, the value of honouring, praising and upholding our own people in the struggle that has been going on for hundreds of years in the building of this country, I think we would forever be ashamed of ourselves, and we will in turn inflict upon ourselves the treatment of our children and the children yet unborn, because we have not taught them

gratitude. We have not taught them how to honour, to love and to care for those people who have truly been builders of this country Barbados.

Just before our final, philosophical point about the question of home and returning nationals, we must always remember that home is more a psychological than a physical reality. Home is the consciousness of our own sense of self. Home is the sense in which we are at peace and at home with ourselves, in the way in which we accept ourselves, in the way in which we understand ourselves as overcomers, in the way in which we understand ourselves not simply as survivors, but as people who have been conquerors, who have conquered ourselves as disciplined people, who, through discipline and hard work are able in the final years of their lives, these people who are returning, to live a reasonably decent existence.

I would urge, not only the members of this Honourable Chamber, but all Barbadians to try to teach our children, not only the history, but the history that takes us back way beyond the mere 300 years, that would make us people who love ourselves, who appreciate ourselves, who honour our own and who do not have to wait on other people to tell us who are our genuine heroes.

This afternoon, I take the greatest pleasure to lend my voice to the Resolution congratulating Government in the creation of the Charter and the Establishment of the Facilitation Unit for Returning Nationals. I do hope that all the returning nationals would feel welcomed, and would feel that they deserve the best that we can possibly offer them in Barbados.

Thank you.

SENATOR N. A. LYNCH: Mr. President, it certainly gives me the greatest of pleasure to add my own comments to, and to congratulate the Government on this Charter which seeks, Sir, to put returning nationals, all nationals of Barbados, in their rightful place.

I wondered in thinking about this, and in meditating like Senator Davis on this Charter, I have continued to wonder if people have really taken seriously the concept of the Charter. A Charter, as I understand it, is a written document. Historically it was handed down by either the sovereign or any part of the legislature dealing with, Sir, it is not a law, but supposedly given to a community its rightful due.

Sir, I want to say that the importance of this debate does not hinge, as far as I am concerned, on all of the historical nature of returning nationals, or people who, as I see it, are retired. I believe, Sir, that the significance of this is certainly the significance of a process for the accommodation of all Barbadians wherever they may be.

Sir, I want to say this, the people who are being targeted by this Charter, the people who even put this Unit into place, I think, did not even realise the far-reaching effect that this particular Charter is going to have upon the development of Barbados into the future.

Sir, this is not only about retirees returning home, and about people who are second generation Barbadians who are either living in North America or in Great Britain or somewhere else. This is not just about those younger Barbadians who supposedly lived here for a time and then were transported to another place. Sir, the real issue of this particular Charter and this accommodation, hinges upon the futuristic significance of FURN.

In Barbados, as we see it now, we Barbadians must start to develop Barbados as we seek to take our rightful place in terms of a whole globalisation of this world. This is not about Barbadians living in the Pine, or about Barbadians living in Brixton. This, Sir, is about an effort. How can FURN really effect and redefine the boundaries for where Barbadians are, and really and truly, and took all Barbadians in place for Barbados to take its rightful place on the global economic stage?

Sir, do communities really matter to this country in its development? FURN is about and for Bajans who aspire to excellence no matter where they may be, and those who truly embrace the concept of development.

This Unit should not be "pooh-pooh". I have heard all of these submissions, these "poor rakey" submissions regarding how people view this Bill. I think, Sir, that anyone who seeks to either "pooh-pooh" or bring some "poor rakey" submission to this argument, as far as I am concerned, not only reveals their ignorance of the present, but their inability to understand the future of this country. Sir, it saddens me that we have people in certain high places in Barbados, and respectable places, who simply do not understand what the significance of this Charter is about. Sir, a great part of what makes it significant, and I cannot say it enough, hinges on our future development. 4.40 p.m.

Sir, I returned to Barbados in 1989 after having lived in North America for almost 14 years. I think I certainly qualify by all means, certainly in my imagination, to be a returning national. If when I worked overseas as a Barbadian, I had something like this to look forward to, Barbados would have taken on a whole different significance and importance for me as a person who worked overseas. Sir, the awareness that at any time you can return to this country and return under circumstances that actually facilitate your interest takes on a whole new significance for persons working overseas.

Sir, the boundaries of technology have removed and stoned out all of the walls where Barbadians are concerned. This, in itself, has implications for entrepreneurship within the wider globe as it relates to Barbados. In other words, a Barbadian does not even have to be in Barbados to work to establish a business in Barbados or to employ other Barbadians in Barbados. It means that FURN has created a scope for all Barbadians to be linked with their brothers and sisters wherever they may be and open different dynamics where globalization, where the socio-economic development of Barbados is concerned.

Sir, I want to say this too. It creates the greatest linkages and special significance for overseas Barbadians because I can live in Brooklyn and work for Barbados. I can live in Brooklyn and be linked by a modern to Barbados and that, in itself, takes on significance but whenever I am ready to return to Barbados physically I can also do that and it can be facilitated.

Sir, FURN is about the capacity of a small country of 166 square miles to utilise its capacity and all its resources to take its rightful place on this globe. I believe that this is a chest thumping matter. All those people who are talking about if you should beat your chest, the Minister should beat her chest. I know it might be difficult for a woman to beat her chest but the Minister needs as far as I am concerned to beat her chest on this particular Charter.

Sir, I am not only praising the Minister but all the civil servants who worked hard. All those of you who wish to poo-pah this Charter...

Mr. PRESIDENT: You have used the word before but under the Standing Orders, Senator, Debates must be conducted in English.

SENATOR N. A. LYNCH: Those, Sir, who seek to trivialize this Charter, those who do not attach any importance or see it as important, and other people who seek to rip it up, and all the other things they seek to do, this trivial pursuit, I believe, it is necessary for us to say this. The Opposition talks about novelty. We are not saying that this is new and I keep saying this. Every time you make a mistake as a Government the Opposition ribs you on everything that you do and any time you do anything supposedly that develops Barbados, and I understand that it is our mandate. I understand the people have given us a certain mandate but, at the same time, when issues come to Barbadians which Barbadians should know about and if the Opposition knew that this was such a great thing they should have done it themselves. They should have done it when they had the opportunity and it is necessary for people like us to say that they did not do it. There is no equity in an idea. It must be converted into something tangible which people could create from.

Let me say this, Sir. You ridicule and put us down when we do things that are wrong. When we do things that are right for Barbadians...

Mr. PRESIDENT: You put us?

SENATOR N. A. LYNCH: The Opposition, Sir, not you, Sir. With respect, not you.

The Opposition fell down. They had the opportunity to put FURN in place. All these things they would have done mean absolutely nothing to me. It is what happens in reality. It is what is put in place that counts and this does not count.

Sir, we must seek to spread the involvement and the development of Barbados outside of the hands of legislators. It must be in the hands of all Barbadians. We need to create more ties with our own people. Locals may not understand the strategic context in which this relationship makes sense but I want to say that we as a Government, we as legislators, and this crosses party boundaries, need to tell the people in Barbados getting people at every function at this level to understand what is happening is significant and important and getting Barbadians to share. This is why this Charter must come to the House and Senate.

I will tell you, Sir, that many Barbadian locals are resistant to the concept of returning nationals coming into Barbados. They believe that it is an opportunity as well for some of them to take what is rightly due to them.

My neighbour is a returned national. This is a man who came home from England after working for many years there and he was very complimentary in every aspect of this. He says if something like this had existed before for him while he lived overseas, Barbados would have meant a lot more to him.

Sir, the broad signatories on paper do not translate into signatories in practice without significant capital and you have to put the things not only on paper but you have to bring them to the people to read and really make sense. This is about building bridges. This is about thinking outside the boundaries. There is this little puzzle where people put dots and tell you draw the lines and put up the dots together and everybody thinks you can only go beyond the lines that are there in the boxes but you solve the puzzle easily if you go outside the boundaries. These ideas and events that reshape these social institutions in Barbados are necessary for all Barbadians wherever they may be.

Sir, I am telling you this. For those of us who get up in there and in these places and ridicule Barbados and talk

about how heavily taxed it is, and talk about all the hindrances to coming back, I am recommending, I am also suggesting, and I am giving my services. I want to be Senator Bernstein's chauffeur when he decides to relocate his business to Brixton or Brooklyn. I would volunteer to drive him to the airport when he relocates his business elsewhere because these are the people who tell you how bad Barbados is, or who warn people about how bad Barbados is but, certainly, are the kind of people who are reaping the sweets of a nation which is supportive of business and business like his own. Sir, as Barbadians we do not need to be told over and over again how bad Barbados is. Whatever Government is in power, whether it is the DLP or the BLP.

Aside.

SENATOR N. A. LYNCH: Not NDP, "Not Dat Party", as long as we recognise that Barbadians have always been able to enjoy a certain standard of living and we have always been blessed with good leaders. We have always been blessed with good legislators at all levels and I am not dealing with Party here. I am dealing with Barbadians and the quality of life. All the international organisations have told us over and over about the quality of life which we enjoy in this country.

Sir, I lived in North America and I lived in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area of Brooklyn. I went to school in North America. I am telling you, Sir, that there are some areas of North America that cannot even think about enjoying the kind of quality of life we enjoy in this 166 square miles. I think it is something to be proud of and it is something to encourage people to come back to.

We should not bring debates here, Sir, that seek to pull this nation down but we need to offer constructive criticism and constructive ways of doing things to clean this nation up. If you have been given the opportunity of being in a legislature to give your own input, as far as I am concerned, especially in an independent capacity, I think what you need to do is to contribute in an independent capacity to how you can change things and seek to move this country forward and not only to criticize.

Sir, most of the boundaries that we set up for Barbadians are usually in our minds, the whole concept of insularity. I want to remind all those people who talk about keeping people out and not being able to recognise what things are, that the same boundaries that keep people out are the ones that keep people in, the ones that are inside that do not allow us to think outward and what we can do for our Barbados. Sir, I want to look at the future of Barbados within FURN and to be able to tap upon every single resource that we have available to us to make this country work. This is what FURN is about and this is

what the Barbados Labour Party is about. That is the difference, Sir, between the BLP and the DLP because you see, Sir, there was once a man who was the head of castrid. He said they asked him to come to tell leaders from all over the world what it is that made his company so significant and he said, Sir, you know what the difference is? The difference is brain. Because the equity in this brain matter here and the ability to come up with innovative and creative ideas and bring things to reality is the grey matter on which this country is built. Sir, that is the difference between us and them and I want to say this, that anytime I will walk a thousand miles behind the Barbados Labour Party, and you know why, Sir, we have proven that we can move this country that one of these days it will not be developing it will be developed. I am obliged to you, Sir.

4.50 p.m.

SENATOR J. A. WORKMAN: Mr. President, I just want to make a few brief comments concerning the Resolution before us this evening. The Resolution is in two parts, Mr. President. One is to welcome the creation of the Charter and the other part is to congratulate the Government on the creation of the Charter. I believe, Mr. President, that it is always easy for us to welcome a matter but to congratulate is another side of the coin. I just want to ask the question, why should we congratulate any Government of discharging its responsibilities. I would venture to say that congratulations are in order when in the discharge of those responsibilities a Government goes beyond the basics and is seen to be doing something which is visionary and constructive for the peoples whom they are there to govern and to guide.

As I look at this Resolution I am reminded of the Jews in exile when they were asked in their captivity, by their captors, to sing a song of Zion and they asked, how can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land. They went further, Mr. President, and they said words to the effect that should we forget our homeland, let my right hand lose its cunning. That is, let it be taken off so that my ability could not be used. Let my tongue be silenced in my mouth.

Aside.

SENATOR J. A. WORKMAN: Yes, that is in the scriptures. It is against this type of background, Mr. President, that I think we need to examine this whole question of returning nationals because it is certainly true of our country, Barbados, that for many years now many of our nationals have left these shores and put themselves into self-exile because they had a passion for self-development, a passion to do better than they were doing. A passion to seek an opportunity in another land where they knew nothing about it but they had a hope which was not present in Barbados and so historically we

have seen that many of our forefathers have gone to places like Panama, Curacao, Trinidad, the United States, they have gone to Great Britain, they have gone to the Virgin Islands, they have gone to Canada, all with that passion. The point I want to make is that in pursuit of that passion they placed themselves in self-exile and there in those strange lands they were being asked the same question and found it difficult and perhaps impossible to relate the culture of Barbados in the setting of the land of their adoption. Many of these have now gone to their graves and have left offspring who by the definition in this Charter are also returning nationals and who have the same passion and zeal for the country of their parents' birth.

These people, Mr. President, at this turn of the century are seeking more than ever to return to this rock Barbados, with the same passion, with the same zeal and to pour out that zeal and passion upon this rock for the development of the rock Barbados where their navel strings have been hewn. But alas, Mr. President, I believe that on return many of them will still ask the question, how can I sing the Lord's song in a strange land because many who have left here 30 and 40 years ago and are returning for good, having only returned for a short visit during that period of self-imposed exile will discover a new culture. Some will find it difficult to understand the unfortunate culture of "wukking up".

It is a fact, Mr. President, that many of those persons who are returning are finding it difficult to adjust to the new society which is Barbados. Some are in cultural shock when they understand the development which has taken place since they have left these shores and it does take a great effort to adjust.

Mr. President, it is good to see that Government has taken steps to take this tide in the affairs of returning nationals and to utilise it to lead on to fortune. Not just fortune for the returning nationals but fortune for this country in general and that is where the crux of the matter lies as to whether or not the Government should be congratulated. Therefore we do need to look at the Charter and see if there is any thing of worth which will cause us to congratulate the Government.

We welcome the Charter. When we look at the objectives of the Charter and look at the methods of achieving these objectives, Method D, is to develop programmes for investment opportunities aimed specifically at Barbadians living overseas and widening local investment opportunities available to returning nationals as well as overseas Barbadians. I would like to think, Mr. President, that herein lies the springboard and the whole vision of this Charter.

This Charter is not about concessions for bringing back in your motor-car and furniture. That is by the way.

The main objective for this Charter is the future development of our country where we are trying to tap the great resources of Barbadians who have put themselves out on a limb over the years and have dared to come back to their motherland and say I am prepared to work for the good of this country. Sir, we will find returning nationals in at least two categories, those of over 30 and 40 years who are coming back to retire. They may not be involved in active work but they are good libraries and we can use them. We can use their expertise. We can use their advice and in the vision that is embodied in Clause D of the methods of achieving the objectives, I believe that we will find that there is room for using these human libraries and their vast knowledge and expertise to develop the young people of our nation. But the other side, Mr. President, will be those who perhaps have gone and furthered their education, spent 4 or 5 years getting a degree and they have spent another 5 or 6 years slogging it out through the cold and snow but working and at the same time broadening their understanding of what it is to work. Because let us admit it that we here in Barbados do not understand what it means to work.

5.00 p.m.

Aside.

SENATOR J. A. WORKMAN: Yes, that is why teachers go on strike because they do not understand what it means to work. We here in Barbados have to remember that it is by the sweat of your brow that you eat bread. For too long, Mr. President, we have not pushed the aspect of working to earn. So we will have some of these returning nationals who will return as young able-bodied men and women and who will be prepared as professionals and entrepreneurs in business to put their skills at the disposal of our country. So this Government and every successive Government needs to enlarge on this vision. It needs to sell the vision. It needs to make every Tom, Dick and Harry, local and overseas, aware of opportunities but to make those opportunities explicitly known and to set out the broad based criteria for holding these opportunities and turning the opportunities into productivity. This is what I mean when I say that we as Barbadians do not know what it means to work. We as Barbadians know to go to work from 8 to 4 p.m. but many Barbadians do not know what it means that after you have left that desk at 8 o'clock at night, go home and you work until 4 o'clock in the morning...

Aside.

SENATOR J. A. WORKMAN: ...Not only correcting papers and not only producing people who have a certificate but producing foreign exchange, producing furniture and producing opportunities for jobs, producing the economic bases on which this country must go forward

into the new century. We need to look beyond these few years when the people are coming back to Barbados. This is forever beginning but never shall end. We should see this as a recurring decimal and if the Government and the people of this country will grasp that vision and not only grasp that vision but stop dreaming because as is said: "The young men will have visions and the old men will dream dreams, but alas there are too many old men in our country". We are still dreaming and we need to have the vision. Vision, as my brother would say, is reality. Vision is bringing the dream into reality and we need to do this. That is the difference between the old time ballad which you, Mr. President, and myself would have sung many times: "Dream, dream, dream. Whenever I need you, all I have to do is dream." That was fantasizing but the American - U.S. Dream Team, Basketball Team, when others are fantasizing over them, have the vision and they are being successful. This is what we need to do in this country. Dream but bring that dream into reality. It then becomes vision and, when it becomes reality, productivity will come and success will come to our nation.

Mr. President, I welcome this Charter and I believe that I have convinced myself that it will be in order for me not only to welcome the Charter but also to congratulate the Government on this Charter.

Certain remarks made by SENATOR Mrs. A. P. THOMPSON were asked to be struck from the record by Mr. PRESIDENT.

SENATOR Mrs. A. P. THOMPSON: Mr. President, the issue of returning nationals for me is more than an occasion to stand and shout. It reminds me so much of the days when I used to watch a number of my friends in the line in Queens Park waiting for the soup and the uniforms. I like to see when a Government has done something good for its people and they can see the effects of that good that the people themselves are left to feed back on that good. Therefore, I do not intend to stand this evening to congratulate the Government on this. I do not recall a Resolution brought to the House of Assembly congratulating the Government of Barbados which introduced state funded secondary education in this country which changed the whole face of Barbados. It is not necessary for a Government to congratulate itself whenever it is implementing measures for which its citizens are to benefit. I believe the reason they are put there in the first place is because the citizens anticipate that that Government will do things to enhance their livelihood. Therefore, nobody should expect me to speak in any congratulatory way. But I have a special connection to returning nationals. I am not here to debate this issue any detached or far-fetched way because I grew up in a home with a grandmother, mother, uncle, brother - not my grandfather because he had already left for Curacao and Aruba and he ended up in the oil fields of Trinidad and

has not returned to Barbados. He died in Trinidad so I know what it is like to grow up in a home in which the head of that family has sought residence in another man's country in order to improve the livelihood of his relatives.

Today as I speak in the Senate, I had an occasion only this morning to speak to my uncle who left Barbados in 1963 to work with the London Transport and I would like to share a little bit about that experience because for us in June, 1963 when my uncle left Barbados that was a watershed for my family. At that time I remember sitting with him with his English workbooks as he attempted to pass the test they had to do at the Evening Institute as they prepared themselves to go off to London to work with the London Transport. I used to sit with my uncle during the evening burning the candle lamp and I assisted him since he had not reached that level of education at the primary stage in preparation for his trip to the United Kingdom to work with the London Transport.

Mr. President, the first wrist watch that I wore on my hand was a gift from my uncle and it came to Barbados in a tin of powder because he left Barbados in June and I entered St. Michael in that same year September. That watch to me was a gift for having assisted him to achieve a great achievement. But I would like to relate to this Senate the words which accompanied that wrist watch in 1963. For me, a debate on returning nationals is not about how much money they are going to bring back and how many homes they can build. For me, a discussion on returning nationals is about the contribution of those Barbadians who made a number of sacrifices and who suffered at the hands of other people, the treatment that we would not even give to our dog in our home today in order to make sure that their relatives at home could be comfortable. In that letter in 1963, my uncle said to me that he was sorry he had to leave Barbados at the time that he left, but he recognized that he had to make a contribution to my family, a contribution which he could not make in Barbados. Unfortunately, he had to leave me at that time when he wanted to assist in my bringing up. He wanted to help father me, but he was hoping that by way of the little £2 money orders which came in on a regular basis my status could be improved, my physical, mental, emotional and other health would be enhanced. Therefore, for me this is an occasion of a lot more than talk about what a Government can do. Today my uncle is a member of the body which did a lot of the groundwork for the formation of this Facilitation Unit, a body called BOCA, Barbados Overseas Citizens' Association. My uncle is an executive member of that group and has helped to do a lot of the groundwork for the formation of this Unit. Therefore, I do not stand in here as anyone who is not aware of what is going on.

5.10 p.m.

If there is a group of persons for whom I would like to send out special thanks and congratulations, it must be

those groups of Barbadians resident in the United Kingdom who came here on a mission in 1991 seeking to find out how best they could get some unit formed within the Government of Barbados to facilitate their return. In 1978 Barbadian residents in London attempted at that time to get the Government of Barbados to facilitate them in a similar fashion and, as they relate, they were turned down flatly. I do not know which Government was in office at that time, Sir, but in 1978 that matter was documented, it is on record. So in 1992 this group of Barbadians went off to Jamaica and they studied the Facilitation Unit which the Government of Jamaica had set up for its returning nationals. I do not recall anything about a big lot of applause and pats on the chest or the back in Jamaica. I think any Government which recognises the importance of its citizens who reside in other countries and the importance of making sure they can resettle in the land of their birth should feel pleased that it is in a position to accommodate them.

One of my concerns, Mr. President, is that as we debate this matter I have not yet heard of a national plan for the resettlement of Barbadians. A debate on the resettlement of Barbadians for me is about something to do with our national planning. It is not something we can just deal with in an *ad hoc* fashion. There are many structures which we have to put in place in order to give our nationals overseas a genuine resettlement. I am not talking about coming back home and buying a house, I am talking about resettlement in comfort. We are asking these people, who have spent a number of years and who have now grown accustomed to that environment, some of them now feel at home, we are encouraging them to uproot and to come back. I have to speak about it. My whole family, my mother, sisters and brothers, five of them, reside in the United States and are all U.S. citizens, so I have a number of relatives who would want to return to Barbados and I know for them resettlement in Barbados is not about tax concessions. For them resettlement in Barbados is how are they going to be accepted by fellow Barbadians.

One of the reasons I object to the way in which this matter has been handled is because I think it has now set up those returning nationals where Barbadians who are here are attacking them. I do not know how many of you have been following the call-in programmes, but there is back and forth, this vicious cross-talk. We fool ourselves if we believe that they are necessarily politically motivated. We are creating envy in this society, because there are Barbadians who will say to you: "But I have been contributing for the last 40 or 45 years and why can't I get concessions too?" You have to understand this. They are all Barbadians.

There are not many people who have taken time out to study the importance of those remittances at that time.

There are not many Barbadians who recognise that the cumulative effect of those £2 made some significant contribution to the foreign reserves of Barbados over the years. All they are concerned about is what is happening today. Therefore, Mr. President, I believe we have quite a bit of work to do in this area. For me the Facilitation Unit is not complete unless it can bring psychological comfort to returning nationals. There is the belief in Barbados that people who have lived overseas for some time, especially in England, are not right up top, and Barbadians write-off Barbadians who have lived in London for a number of years as mad people. We want to fool ourselves that that is true. You hear it every day in this country. They are referred to as mad people. We need to find a way, there must be mechanisms in place for fellow Barbadians to actually work out, how can we accommodate, how can we help our fellow Barbadians to resettle in the land of their birth.

Aside.

SENATOR Mrs. A. P. THOMPSON: I do not want anybody to tell me what any Facilitation Unit is going to do or what is in the document. How many laws in Barbados are broken every day, and they are on the law books? What I am saying is that we have to ascertain, we have to make sure that after the Unit has been put in place, after it has all been recorded in this beautiful glossy document, that we follow through with it. I really do not like the slant of the debate. I really do not want to see returning nationals for their economic value only, and a lot of what I have heard over time is about that.

I listened to Senator Bernstein this afternoon and I heard all kinds of criticisms about what he has been saying, but there are some simple things which have to be done. I deal with returning nationals on a regular basis and I offer financial advice. As a matter of fact, it is because of the advice that I have been giving to returning nationals that I have been asked to sit on the Board of Directors of the Caribbean Development PLC, that is a society for the resettlement of Caribbean nationals. I have been asked to sit on that Board because I have been giving financial advice to a number of returning nationals of Barbados to assist in the proper repatriation of Barbadians who reside particularly in London.

Mr. President, there are a few things we need to understand. I think these individuals have grown accustomed to certain social services. They are leaving long-term health care benefits behind. I have not heard any appeal by members of the Government of Barbados for the insurance industry to explore and to make available as soon as possible long-term care insurance. Barbadians are living beyond age 90 and most medical plans the benefits stop much earlier than that. I know that the retirees themselves

have been lobbying for long-term care insurance, but since the Government has had the vision and the foresight to bring this, I think the Government should be out there lobbying and asking the insurance industry to make sure that this can be put in place as soon as possible.

Mr. President, we have problems in our health care system in Barbados. We are not even properly accommodating the residents of Barbados at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I am sure we have to make some plans in Barbados in our health care system to accommodate our Barbadians who are returning home, who under the British and the North American system are either on their Medicaid or Medicare or on the National Health Service in Britain and can go into a health institution and get top notch health care. This is why I am asking for a national plan which will take into account that eventually the population of Barbados will increase significantly.
5.20 p.m.

I would like to see all Barbadians who reside overseas return home but I would love to see them return to enjoy a quality of life which they deserve. I don't want them to have to come back here and have to be rubbing shoulders and competing unnecessarily for social services, health care and those types of benefits. I think it is high time that if you are making this a priority area in our national planning that we must put a national plan in place for them.

I don't know how it is going to fit in with the IDB agreement that land must go for its highest economic use because we are talking about housing now and in Barbados we have the difficulty at present in our distribution of land use policy as to how much land should go to agriculture and how much to go to housing, how much land to go to tourism. We have to find housing to accommodate our returning nationals who have not already bought homes here. We are talking about retirement villages. We need land space so I am one of the first people who would want to welcome my relatives, my dearest and closest relatives back home but I would like to make sure that as I welcome them back I can say to them they can come back and enjoy A and B.

As I said earlier, Sir, I do not intend to be a part of this debate to behave in any ostentatious fashion. A debate on Returning Nationals is about me. It is about my livelihood. It is about the woman that I have become because of the contribution of very close relatives who have gone overseas. Therefore, I am not talking about the experience of others but of the experience of myself. Talking about investments, there is a lot of talk about investments in Barbados but we are not educating our people for this. As a matter of fact, the returning

nationals are so much ahead of Barbadians in the area of investments. They don't have anything to learn from us. We should be bringing them in here to teach us because we are way behind in Barbados in the area of investments. They are way ahead of us. They are accustomed trading on the stock exchange and we are now trying to develop a stock exchange in Barbados. We are now talking about mutual funds and they know what it is like to be involved in mutual funds.

Their resettlement can only be a comfortable one if we go about with great despatch. A number of the people who are going to be responsible for putting these things in place they themselves have not actually participated in markets for trading and investment and they bandy this talk of investments all around and people are not ready. It is not even a part of our educational system. We don't even teach basic financial planning at the level of the Community College. Basic financial planning is about more than taking your income and working out what your expenses are. It is about determining what your short and medium and long-term financial goals are and working out what instruments you are going to use to achieve them. We don't teach that in our schools at the level of the Community College. I am talking about investments, Sir.

I would like to suggest that if we really want to make sure that our nationals can return here and enjoy the comfort which they deserve we have to get ourselves in readiness for them. There are a number of areas in which they are much further advanced than we are. We have to make sure that it is more than their money, because I think a lot of this debate is about how much money they are going to bring back home, how the foreign reserves are going to go up. It is about a lot more than that, Sir.

In terms of skills and utilising the skills, a lot of the returning nationals meet a hard time in Barbados as they attempt to rub shoulders in the workplace in Barbados. I think one of the problems they encounter has a lot to do with – I think I heard it said earlier this afternoon – what appears to be a faster pace. For them, we move too slowly. I deal with them on a daily basis and it seems as though it really gets to their nerves when they have to slow themselves down at times to cope with us. There is an attitudinal problem which has to be addressed.

It is all right to paint these glossy and glowing pictures. We need to deal with reality. There is an attitudinal problem. Barbadians who live here do not like to be told by another Barbadian who has an accent that we are doing something the wrong way or that there is a quicker way to go about it. What we need to understand is that that person as much as we believe we care about Barbados and its future that that individual feels the same

way about Barbados too and that the advice that person is giving is coming from the same caring for Barbados that we the Barbadians who reside here all the time have. We have this strange belief that because we leave Barbados and live in another country that we have suddenly lost all the interest and the caring and genuine concern that you should have for Barbados. I don't think we can fool ourselves about that, Sir.

Aside.

SENATOR Mrs. A. P. THOMPSON: I don't mind the bombardment. I know what I have to say and I am going to say it anyhow.

Therefore, Mr. President, I would like to say that the decision to incorporate several things which were already in place into a document is a good one. I would like to say, Sir, I heard this evening that the reduction in taxes on vehicles came under a caring Government as though this has happened for the first time. This is a matter which was communicated by the Government of Barbados since May 19, 1994. I believe this document was made a document of the Lower House – From the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance to the Comptroller of Customs – Waiver of Import Duty on Consumption Tax on Private Motor Vehicles imported by Barbadians who have returned home permanently.

That was the document which stated the removal of the previous condition of 3 years to benefit from a full waiver. That rescinded that 3-year condition. I heard this evening that it has happened for the first time. In an attempt to laud ourselves, I think that we must not attempt to remove from the record things which have already been placed there. As a matter of fact, sometime in 1995, one year after that document, a document from that same Ministry was sent to the Comptroller of Customs and it can be interpreted as a partial reversal of that particular measure which was put in place in the document of May 19, 1994.

5.30 p.m.

I really did not want to touch on it, but as I sat this evening and I listened, one got the impression, Sir, that everything that has come about here this evening that this is the first time, all about the Facilitation Unit and all of these concessions, that Barbadians have been seeing and feeling the effects of this for the first time in 1996. That is not true.

I have a sister-in-law who resided in England for 18 years, and who returned to Barbados about 10 years ago, a nurse. I was with her when she had her container cleared, and I know that she did not have to pay duties on all of her household effects that she brought into Barbados. I do not understand what I am hearing. She brought a container

of some of the best things to Barbados and she did not pay any duties. So I do not know why we want to give the impression that this is something new.

Mr. President, I really did not intend getting into this matter in any political fashion. As I said earlier, I really did not want to mix politics with this because I see this as a much deeper matter than partisan, BLP, DLP anything, but the facts must be made clear, Sir. The facts must be made clear and I intend to do so.

I am not going to stand in this Chamber, or sit, and hear others make believe that the Democratic Labour Party – as a matter of fact, the Immigration policy in Barbados was fought for, and fought for in a very difficult way against great resistance by the Democratic Labour Party. The records are there for all fellow Senators to check. Therefore...

Asides

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, please. Can we hear the Senator in silence, please?

Asides

SENATOR Mrs. A. P. THOMPSON: They really do not want to deal with facts, but everybody knows that there was a debate in Barbados about nationals going overseas. I heard it, not only from my side, but I listened to a man in Barbados that we call "a walking encyclopedia," on Friday, the evening this debate was conducted, in the yard of the House of Assembly. I heard him saying to a group of people – I did not ask Mr. President if I could call his name. I do not know if I can call his name.

I heard him talk about the Debate in Parliament, and I heard him talk about when Mr. Crawford was asking about getting Barbadians to go overseas and when Sir Grantley Adams asked whether you want all Tom, Dick and Harry to go. When Mr. Crawford replied that "Tom had gone already and he wanted Dick and Harry to go now." That did not come from a DLP man it came from one of your people.

Asides

SENATOR Mrs. A. P. THOMPSON: It came from "Eric Fly". I heard him say that in Parliament yard, and this matter is being debated in the House of Assembly. He said that you all do not have anything to beat your breast about, and then he told his children of what happened the day this was debated.

Therefore, Mr. President, I have no difficulty welcoming the decision by Government to put all these

measures into a neat and tidy document for Barbadians to read and know what they are entitled to as they return home. My difficulty comes with a Government asking me to congratulate it for doing what the people of Barbados put it there to do. Therefore I cannot congratulate the Government on the setting up of a Facilitation Unit, Sir.

I thank you.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I rise to associate myself with this Resolution which congratulates the Government for having initiative and acting resolutely to put something in place that will benefit a wide range of Barbadians, and will benefit this country.

In listening to this debate, I have seen people look at the half-full glass and deemed it to be half empty even when it is three-quarters full. It is remarkable that we can look at the same thing and see two completely different things.

We talk about the problems of employing people that come back to the country. If anything, I think that many of those that come back to this country will create employment for other Barbadians as well as themselves, because they will come back with new ideas, drive, and capital. They will come back with the understanding of the meaning of investment as has been so aptly stated by the last speaker.

We have to look at returning nationals in the broadest possible context. We hear some speakers focusing on retirees and we hear others talking about people coming back and looking for work, but returning nationals will be anywhere from 28-60 or more years old. They will be coming out of university, having got the best of work experience in a thriving hard environment, they will have learnt a disciplined work ethic, and, yes, we will find that there will be cultural differences because they will have to gear down to meet our lethargic pace at times. They will expect different standards of performance, but they will impact on our society and assist us in achieving some of those levels of performance.

Now, we have heard a lot about the cost factors of relocating to this society. Yes, there are cost differentials in many different things. It is going to cost more, but it costs more in any other island environment. Once, again, it was also pointed out that they will not have to heat a hoe or to a buy top coat ever again if they stayed here. If they travel, they could easily use the one they brought or borrow it from a family member, as I usually do when I travel.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: This whole thing will impact on the development of our economy. There will be a plethora of new economic and social activities that will expand job opportunities. The new telecommunications environment and the new technical environment, will allow people to live in Barbados and work the works and contact, and everything. So the returning nationals that come back here will not have left their contacts in isolation, but it would facilitate Barbadians to work in the development countries through telecommunications, and to develop exports, not just of tangible goods but of knowledge-based products and services.

I see a Barbados with an exciting and challenging future. A cheerful society embracing the future with confidence, not cowering in isolation, besieged behind the parapet of protectionism. That is the Barbados I see, and that is the Barbados that will welcome our returning nationals to help us develop that project.

I was a returning national. I left here when I was 17 years old and I came back when I was 31 years old. I left alone and I came back with a family of 5. I remember settling back into this society. I remember the cultural difficulties in doing so. I worked at a very rapid pace. I know what it is to work 30 days a month. I know what it is to work 14 hours a day. I really have not stopped and that is the reality.

I also remember coming back and not having the value of a booklet like this, not having the knowledge that I could come back with certain set parameters. I did not know what would be taxed and what would not be taxed. It was always left to the discretion of someone. It was also left to the ability of somebody to grease the wheels or to put in a word for you, or to help you out and as vast an extended family as I have, I did not want to have to depend on them because I had learned independence and I wanted to operate in a framework of certainty. This is what this document does for the hundreds of thousands of Barbadians that are overseas.

5.40 p.m.

Mr. President, I will tell you. When this document came out, I sat down and wrote a 10-page letter to my children. I enclosed this document with it. I have three children that live overseas, one in Montreal, one in San Francisco and one in Washington. One is an artist, one is a network administrator for computers and one is a software developer. I talked about Barbados that I saw in the future. I talked about the policies of Government. I talked about the opportunities they would have that I never had in my day because of technological development and because of the economic and social growth in this country. Like myself, they love this country and now they have a

document that can help them make a decision to come back to continue where they are. I can tell you two of them are coming back. They are coming back and both of them are planning to set up their own companies. They do not want to engage in the traditional economic activity that takes place in Barbados. They have their own ideas. They have their own concepts.

They have, in turn influenced two other young Barbadians to also consider coming back. Both of them are Barbados scholars. Both of them are involved in highly advanced scientific research in varied esoteric and sophisticated fields but they now feel that they may have the opportunity to come back and set up companies here that will cater to the needs of clients from Hong Kong to San Francisco, to London, Moscow and to Delhi. That is the scope of the role that we see.

This document, and this codification, is a valuable and very important aspect of attracting the human resources that this country so vitally needs for development and the human resources that know this country so well and feels deeply about it. I think the Minister of Foreign Affairs should be deeply congratulated for having the drive and perspective to create this document and to set up the FURN Unit which is a growing thing and which is not static. It is not carved in stone. It will add services. It will develop and we will go on down the road and improve on this product. This is the beginning but this is something that will change the face of Barbados.

Quite often when things happen that make fundamental change we do not recognise them but believe you me, Mr. President, I believe that this is going to bring about fundamental change in our society and fundamental change in our economy. It will return those valuable people that have the intellect, that love this country, that want to be part of this country's development and growth and want to see Barbados succeed. What we are doing is codifying the conditions under which they come back. We are facilitating them and we are saying that we know the readjustment period is not going to be smooth. It never is wherever you move to, and I have lived in a few different countries with vastly different cultural backgrounds and I know what it is to move around the world. This will help the many thousands of Barbadians who may want to return home now and in the future. It will set plans differently. People's perspectives will be different. They will now plan their lives in a different way.

Those young students who are now at university are interested in this FURN development because they know that after four to six years of university, or maybe eight, depending on the degree of qualification they take, that they can work in the country they are in to get the work experience and those additional skills that are

necessary with a plan to eventually come back home here and work in this environment, not work for anyone but work for themselves.

It is that creative thought that we need. It is that knowledge-based person that we need and the development of our economy and society. Remember, these people will contribute to our society in many different ways. We have already heard of some working in charitable organisations, working with the disadvantaged in our society but then you will have the musicians, artists and the free thinkers that will add value to our social development and our political development and our thought process.

Barbados will change. Mr. President, I have absolutely no hesitation whatsoever in congratulating the Minister of Foreign Affairs in developing the FURN Unit. I wish the FURN Unit well. I hope that it will develop and expand its activities as years come on.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. President, I feel constrained to speak on this important issue primarily because I know that these returning nationals especially those who went overseas in the 1950s and 1960s, have contributed tremendously to the development of our country. Almost every household was positively affected by the commitment of these Barbadians who went to work and live overseas. They basically went there because conditions here in our island could not assist them in fulfilling their ambitions either for themselves or for their families.

Many a boy has been educated as a result of the £1 a week because in those days, as you would know, the pound was about \$4.80 and one pound could almost feed a person for a week so that a lot of our people now who have reached high positions in Barbados can thank their uncle, father or whoever, who went overseas and underwent severe pressure in those lands. That was the real culture shock because a lot of them who went to England thought that England was like Barbados in a sense because we like to pride ourselves as being "Little England" only to experience events that would psychologically affect them for life, not only the weather but the conditions under which they were forced to live. They stuck it and in spite of the fact that in most cases they went and took jobs that the average Englishman did not want, yet they succeeded in that they saved their pennies. The vast majority of them bought homes and improved themselves. They did not go there to seek welfare but they went to work and improve themselves. I want to salute them. They have done our country proud. When those who were fortunate enough to go to England went there and experienced their hospitality, we can only be touched by the effort they have made in perpetuating the Barbadian way of life.

Sir, on a personal note. I studied in England in the mid 1970s and I was in contact with a lot of them. I was impressed with their spirit, that in spite of the difficulties they encountered, they were Barbadians to the core. All of them had this tremendous love for this country Barbados. A lot of them, Sir, struggled in those years and when things got better, when conditions improved, they said, I want to spend my last days in Barbados. But, Sir, they are not prepared to come down here and stand in the soup kitchen line because I found that remark, Sir, to be totally insulting because, Sir, they have sent money here and many of the houses that have been built in the developed areas were built by people living in London and New York and Montreal and such places. A lot of the houses built in Chancery Lane, Clermont, Kingsland and other areas are owned by people who live overseas. They built the houses here and rented them out for a few years to help with the repayment and so on, so that when they are ready to retire the house here is virtually theirs and they might even sell the property they have in England and finish paying off. 5.50 p.m.

I want to make it clear that they are not coming here, Sir, for handouts. What has happened in the past is that as the last speaker said, without a Charter they were at the mercy and at the whims and fancy of hardworking Customs Officers who are only doing their jobs. There is nothing to say, Sir, that a man bringing in 2 television sets, because in North America most people have two television sets. Some of them have more and there is no big mark up for second hand televisions, so they will either have to dump them or bring them with them. While one officer may count one television as household appliance the other one may relent and allow you to bring in both. So, Sir, a lot of them came here not knowing what to expect and what we have done is, we are removing the culture shock. When they come here they can stand up like men and women and say, this is my Passport, this is my identification card, I am a returning national and this booklet tells me I am entitled to bring in one couch, 3 television sets, and everything is written down here. No Customs Officer can say, but this is not household effects and you can say, if you look on page 3 you will see that I am entitled to bring in 2 chairs, matter settled.

The dignity of the person is maintained. You will not have to go and beg anybody. You can walk in with your chest up in the air and say, look, I am a returning national and I am entitled to this. I am entitled to that. That is what we are arguing about. So when he comes in he comes in feeling, I belong to this country. I can walk with my head high. And, Sir, one of the first persons the returning national meets is the Customs Officer, that is the first encounter he is going to have. Do not forget, Sir, they would have met hostility in the place where they went. Why should they return to their own land where their navel string is buried and not be allowed to return in

dignity especially as most of them already have houses here. That is why, Sir, I can support this Resolution wholeheartedly.

I believe in the dignity of the person. I do not believe that a person should be made to feel as though he is begging. He should not be made to feel as though he is getting anything less than he deserves. That is why, Sir, the Government sought to remove all the uncertainty and put a Charter in place.

Sir, I can understand the difficulty that Senator Thompson has. Sir, one can see that the mouth was speaking but the heart was not really in it. Sir, she would love to support the Resolution but the constraints were obvious. So Sir, I have great sympathy for her. Sir, I wish she would stand up and have the courage. I understand, Sir, that her Party has a habit of firing people under street lights so I can understand the care she has to take.

Sir, the interesting thing is that there are companies in Barbados who are catering to these returning nationals. Sir, you may remember there are insurance companies in Barbados who are now engaged on an ambitious housing project and only about a month or two ago they were in England and the permanent politician on the other side was with them. I do not know in what capacity but they were in England trying to convince Barbadian nationals in England to buy houses in that area somewhere near Queens College. I am told they plan a similar mission in New York. Sir, there are people here who are cashing in on what they consider is a good thing and Sir, it is very ironic that the Opposition is going to pour scorn on this but still seek to benefit from it in some way or another. Sir, that is another matter.

Sir, I want to say a word about the cars. The Charter says, Sir, that each person is entitled to one car and a family is entitled to two cars. That is stated, Sir, in the Charter and, Sir, in an earlier intervention on a point of order. Sir, I would know this because I am involved in the Ministry of Finance as you are well aware and it is extremely difficult for a racket to develop because I know that on one occasion even before this Charter came in, a person sought to beat the system. They came in here about 4 years ago and had a car under the whole system and they came back, I think it is last year, saying they want a car but the officers were very alert and it is on record. Sir, that person was lucky that we did not prosecute them. The point I am making, Sir, is that the system is in place where it would be extremely difficult for one person to benefit from this on more than one occasion. So, Sir, I do not think the Opposition should have any fear in this regard because when a person brings in a car obviously his name would be recorded somewhere, as a matter of fact it is going to be computerised. So it would be too difficult for someone to

beat the system in that way. I do not think we are opening ourselves to any racket. But, Sir, we know that people will try and we want to discourage them from trying because they will be found out.

Sir, the point was made that what we are giving them now on cars is what was there before. That is not true. Before they got partial relief from duties and taxes and they still had to pay about 40% of the estimated value of a car because, Sir, we know that cars in other countries, because of the lack of salt air look better. A car 5 years old in Britain looks 10 times better than a car which is 5 years old here because of the atmosphere and other climatic factors. So, Sir, Customs Officers may look at a car which looks a certain way and he puts, as he is mandated by law his own valuation on it. In spite of the fact that there was a partial relief of duties, people still did not know what to expect because the valuation of the vehicle was at the discretion of the Customs Officer. Not even the Ministry of Finance can tell the Customs Officer what to value the vehicle at. It is his discretion and his discretion alone. So while there were some concessions for returning nationals, one it was not complete and secondly it still was open for valuation by the authorities. Now what this Charter is doing is to remove all duties on cars. So it is not the same thing that was in vogue under the DLP. It is far different. Okay. I just want to clarify that particular point. It is a very important point especially for a retiree. A person coming here who is 60 or 65 years, he only wants one car because by the time the car gets old he will be around 70 to 80 and he should not be driving at that sort of age. Anyhow, I am generalizing, Sir. So one car might be enough for him to last him especially given that life expectancy is about 70 years.

6.00 p.m.

Sir, in commending this Charter, I am supporting this Resolution. We want to thank the nationals of Barbados for keeping the Barbados flag alive. A lot of the benefits we get from them are the tourists who come here because of the activities of Barbadian nationals in London, New York and Montreal who spread the word about Barbados and they come here and visit Barbados. A lot of the advertising is done by Barbadian nationals wherever they are. People know that they are from Barbados and it is not surprising that London is one of our biggest markets. So they have contributed and they are still contributing and this is not costing the Treasury anything. We are just facilitating them. You cannot lose what you never had. We never had duties in the first place. So we are not losing anything. We are just making life a little bit easier for them. We are thanking them for the great sacrifice they have made and that they are continuing to make on behalf of this country.

I am sure that Senator Thompson in her heart of hearts would love to associate herself with this

Resolution because it is timely and the Government ought to be congratulated. When we do wrong, we expect condemnation. When we do good, Sir, we expect praise and, if the Opposition thinks that we are patting ourselves on the backs, we plead guilty because we feel that we have done a good thing and even the very stones will cry out if we kept silent on this great matter.

Sir, I have no problem in supporting this Resolution and urge Government to make sure that the Facilitation Unit is given the proper staff and is always maintained in a proper way that it can be of assistance to these people that they richly deserve because they have worked for Barbados over the years. Thank you very much, Sir.

SENATOR N. P. WELCH: Sir, I rise to make my contribution to this debate and I want to state that I do not think that I need to make a case for returning Barbadian nationals. I think that any person who has lived in this country for the last 50 or so years would have recognized the number of ways in which they have made their contribution to the development of Barbados. Senator Thompson does not have a monopoly of experiences with those Barbadians who left Barbados some 40 or 50 years ago. I had an uncle recently deceased and he went to the Second World War and he had the opportunity after the war had ended to go to the United States and to be offered the opportunity to live there, raise a family and benefit from its education system. I am one who believes that charity begins at home. If the United States Government could have made such facilities available to Barbadians who sacrificed themselves in going to war to fight for a just cause, I do not see why we need to make a case for returning nationals.

Sir, I want to state a few instances because I know there is no documentation to prove the extent to which these people have contributed. But I know and we have heard in this Chamber today that they have contributed financially and at a time when the world was in recession and we really needed the dollars that were being sent home. I also remember well that a Christmas was not a Christmas when a parcel did not come from New York, Boston or London. But more than that, I know a lot of Barbadians benefited from a lot of educational materials such as books that were not available in Barbados at the time which were sent from relatives in London to this country to help with the development of education. I think those sort of efforts by those people must be lauded. But I also know within my time when the availability of space within the secondary system for a number of our children was such that a lot of them who were left here by their parents who had emigrated and could not get the benefit of free education were able to leave these shores and go to London, New York and so on and benefit from a good secondary education and some went beyond that. I also

remember that there were many people in Barbados who took the opportunity to go to London under the transport system and to use the opportunity to better themselves. They came back here as doctors and lawyers and other well qualified people. But they have also made a contribution to the development of this country by the fact that they have invested in housing in anticipation for the time when they will come back here and these houses have been made available to many Barbadians to rent. If that is not a significant contribution, I do not know what really is.

My estimation is that a lot of Europeans and North Americans have been introduced to rum and other indigenous products for which we earn considerable foreign exchange because of the fact that we had Barbadians living in these metropolitan areas. They introduced these people to these products and developed for us a market for such a product. The issue of them coming here every 3 or 4 years and buying large quantities of fish and other products to take home, they have contributed significantly to the economic activity in this country.

But one of the significant points that has to be made is that I have had the opportunity to visit London about 7 times and I have socialised with several of the returning nationals, people like Tony Garner I know personally and have had the benefit of his hospitality several times in London going to play cricket with their cricket club. These guys told us, at the Thanksgiving Service in St. George, about the racial insults that were hurled at them when they first went to London being equated with dogs. When he turned to the Prime Minister and said: "After God, Mr. Prime Minister, we must thank you for this legislation." Therefore, it makes me a bit sad to hear the comments coming from the other side saying that they did nothing because my understanding is that when that Government was approached in 1991 they said that it could not be done. They were more taken up in building Sherbourne, sending home people, and refusing to build houses. They were concerned with things that they should not have really been involved in. They should be interested in the development of people as this Party is. Last month at the end of Crop Over many Barbadians, particularly those from New York spent lots of money. I had a friend here from Miami who passed by me before he went back overseas to thank me what I had done for him and he had about 5 LPs of Crop Over music taking back with him. As a matter of fact, I never recognised that Barbados was still producing LPs, I thought everybody had gone to CDs – but he had about five or six LPs of local music. That is another contribution to the economy, by these expatriate Barbadians.

6.10 p.m.

I want to congratulate the Government for what they have done. I had some informal association with a company called Total Technologies, which is at

the forefront of computer technology in Barbados, and I know that they made contact with several organisations to locate Barbadians overseas who have a higher level of training and skill in this area, to bring them back here to contribute not just to the development of computer software but also to share their knowledge with other Barbadians so that they can move a step further in their knowledge of Computer Science.

Mr. President, the Government has also been extremely innovative when it put together this package, I recognised that Government in pursuance of a water conservation policy indicated that because of our scarce water resources houses built over 3 000 square feet of floor space would need to be equipped with water tanks and obviously with pumping mechanism to distribute this water, and have placed water tanks and water pumps under the category of equipment which can be brought in duty free by returning nationals.

At the very last page of this document I hold, I also see there are duty-free concessions for reasonable quantities of drapes and blinds. I have worked for the last 15 or 16 years in the area of the Flour Mill, I have no axe to grind if the Government did not allow the returning nationals to bring flour or flour products to Barbados duty-free. If other members feel that they might lose their market share because blinds and drapes are allowed to come into this country duty-free by returning nationals, I have no problem with that. If people want to protect their economic interest, it is up to them. But do you know what had me? I went outside to look around and had to pinch myself to find out if this is really the Barbados I knew, because I have been to London, I have travelled in my job, I have travelled on vacation and I know the hardships. I know in London you have a state tax, sales tax, in the little boroughs you have those additional taxes and you have to provide heating for six months of the year. I have seen many non-nationals come here and settle into the life in Barbados with such ease, and that nobody can convince me that a non-national could leave Europe or North America and come here and settle in and that Barbadians who went overseas and suffered all of these prejudices cannot come back and settle in as well as these non nationals who had no history of living here before. I don't share from that view. I can understand the offspring of Barbadians who had no upbringing in Barbados and who want to come here having those sorts of difficulties, but I see no problem at all with Barbadians who are accustomed to coming here.

I know there are some efforts being made to establish at Oistins... There is a two-storey building at the bottom of Oistin's hill which I know one national organisation is working on to set up a fishing museum and there are a lot of opportunities for these returning nationals to get involved even greater in national development.

Up to the present time my understanding is that slightly over \$1 million of taxes and duties have been waived under this Charter and about 80 to 85 nationals have returned to this country. I see that as insignificant when we consider the duty free concessions that were given to people whose navel strings we cannot even say have been buried in this country. I do not just see this whole issue of FURN and returning nationals as a local issue, I see it as a further recognition of the fact that the Caribbean in this emerging global economy must garner all the resources that we have in the region, whether we consider the region to be just here or those who live in the metropole. I say this because only about two months ago we had the privilege in this Chamber to pass legislation that came out of recommendations from the West India Commission to allow limited entry of certain classes of Caribbean citizens to move around the region and work without a work permit. We know the jockeys come already and the journalists come. I did not speak in that debate, but I am extremely happy and feel really pleased that a Trinidadian national could contribute in no insignificant way to the development of people like Leah Martindale and I look forward to the day when we will see the region as a whole, when Barbadian athletes can leave here and have six months in Jamaica learning with the Jamaicans what they do best, where perhaps Barbados can become the centre for swimming and coaches like Anil Roberts and the Cubans can come here and do for the rest of the Caribbean what Anil Roberts did for Leah Martindale.

This connects strongly with our garnering of our resources in Europe and in North America where we can set up facilities where Barbadians with skills can be registered at the Embassies and High Commissions overseas so that when consultancies need to be done in Barbados or in the region we can do what I think we ought to be doing, and that is, getting our own people involved in these things.

I know that one of the problems that Barbados and the Caribbean as a whole have experienced in recent times has been the matter of public transportation. When you go to London, the vast majority of people in middle management and upper management in the London Transport and the British Rail System are Barbadians, many of these persons live here now. I know about five or six of them that are here now. They have the opportunity to contribute and we have the opportunity also to learn from the experiences that these people have had in these countries.

At this late hour I do not think it is much more that I need to say at this point in time, but I want to really compliment the Minister, the Government and the civil servants who have brought this timely piece of legislation. I think no praise is too great for a Government who continues not to turn over things in their mind, because

we can stay here all day and decide we want to go down Broad Street and have a meal, but if we do not make the effort to move and get there we will never eat that meal. I want to thank this Government for taking the necessary steps for bringing this revolutionary approach in facilitating our people in returning to the country of their birth. It has my full support.

Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR D. T. GILL: Mr. President, I rise to support the Charter, but before getting into the meat of my short statement I would like just to put a couple of things in perspective.

I could not allow Senator Thompson to go away this evening without correcting her. I think I heard her at one time say she would like to get into writing at an early age and I would like to give her a title for her book. It would not be *How Long The Train's Been Gone*, but *How Long The Bus' Been Gone*. She has missed it. This has sought to make incarnate the dignity of those people returning home. I was privileged to work for a European company and whenever one of my bosses was here he would sit in the evening and watch the elderly folk on the beach walking and he was so impressed that he would always say: "David, your old folk enjoy life up to the last." We all know that their old people have to go into the shopping malls to warm up. This evening is living testimony and reminiscent of a fall evening in a temperate climate. It is drizzling. It is dark. The room is cold and each and every one of us wants to get home. 6.20 p.m.

You have spoken about the psychological state and this psychological state once you have good weather and warm sunshine is a lot easier on the rheumatic aches and pains. I leave that for the Honourable Senator, Registered Nurse, RN – not Returning National. She has returned – to discuss at length about those rheumatic pains which the old people so long as it is cold because she knows the anatomy and physiology of those elderly folks.

I am surprised to see that some of the Senators are scoffing at investment. Sir, longevity, as you know, necessitates a little tax relief, a little concession. Science is so highly developed that you have parents living into their 80s and 90s and if they come back to live another 20-25 years every cent that is saved will matter even if you give them a policy for the next 10 years. Savings investment I am speaking about *inter alia*.

Sir, if you have encouraged someone to come home and at the same time you are looking at their investments and their savings there is absolutely nothing wrong with

that. It is just a *quid pro quo*. What is the big deal, Senator Thompson? Sorry, Sir.

Hindsight is man's greatest nemesis. If this Barbados Labour Party were to set up a shoe factory and the reason why I use a shoe factory is because I have at home an old manifesto of 1961 to build a shoe factory. You will hear that we had thought about that. We had thought about what? Sir, if you do not have the drive, if you do not have the wherewithal to complete things which were conceptualised 20-30 years ago it is wasted. I cannot remember exactly what Senator Lynch said but it is tantamount to exactly what I said.

Then, Sir, Senator Bernstein was talking about food costs. As Senator Goddard quite rightly said, that is minimal when compared to heating and when compared with changing clothes for the various seasons. At that age, you do not eat as much, because there are certain maladies which step in. Heart attacks, obesity, hypertension. I remember clearly going down there years ago as a little boy to see my biggest brother go off to England. He was then a young customs clerk so he was checked through early and we came back and we sat and watched. I saw people huddled together with stoves and blankets, you name it. They had it bundled together. It was like refugees fleeing the country. If we can extend such facilities, set up a unit to welcome back home in their evening days and make them feel as being part and parcel of this Barbados and that is in some way trying to make the whole thing cheap then I agree with cheapness. If we are cheapening, let us continue to cheapen it.

I remember quite clearly at Christmas time you got a £1 or £5 which went to the Exhibition and now in the evening of these people's days you don't want to allow them to bring in their various household and other equipment free of duty? I remember, Sir, helping a cousin of mine resettle here and I was tired running from shed 1 to shed 2 to pay this and that, if you know somebody to fill out this document to get in this or that. Sir, it borders on the illogical when one cannot support or when one does not find favour with this document.

Senator P. S. BERNSTEIN: The Honourable Senator is misleading this House when he talks about not finding favour with the book and insinuating that other Senators in here are against duty free concessions. No one in here is against the duty free concessions.

Mr. PRESIDENT: No point of order.

Senator D. T. GILL: Absolutely none. Sir, this letter here from the Society for the Resettlement of Caribbean Nationals, abbreviated SRCN.

"SRCN acknowledges that the Government has been most generous with concessions towards

returning nationals. We would therefore appeal to you as a representative of all Barbadians, both at home and abroad to fully support the Bill on Returning Nationals.

Signed B. A. LARRIER"

Sir, what I would hope to see is that these folks who have returned – Barbadians are not ignorant people. They are not bringing all their money. They have been selling off their council houses putting aside some money. Mrs. Thatcher made that possible, Sir. They have been taking part of their pensions. They have been coming home and building 4-bedroom houses for as small a sum as \$40 000 and \$50 000. They employ what you call a boss carpenter and a couple labourers. They are not getting involved in all of these mortgages and they go back to England ever so often when there is cricket and draw down and they are backwards and forward. They have reached that age where they can live and where they are entitled to that kind of lifestyle, a decent lifestyle. God forbid, those who did not make it in their working days have to perish in the cold. Some of them don't have the wherewithal to come back.

So, Sir, it is against that background that I wholeheartedly support this and I am sure that it is evidenced now that some Senators are not doing their homework, because on page 2 of this document, and I am going to wind up on this, Sir, it says as far as the Facilitation Unit for Returning Nationals achieving the objectives, section (e) says:

"Maintains a skills bank both in Barbados and at overseas missions of overseas and returning nationals:"

Sir, I am much obliged.

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

The question was put and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. President, I rise to move the adjournment but just before I

do that I want to use the opportunity to give Honourable Senators some indication of the likely activity for the remainder of this particular month. The House of Assembly proposes to rise towards the end of this month and it is hoped that it will not go beyond Tuesday 20th. 6.30 p.m.

We are therefore attempting to round off our business as soon as possible thereafter. There will be no meeting called for next week Wednesday because of other commitments for that particular day. I am therefore proposing that we should meet on Friday, August 23. At which time, we will consider the Special Development Areas Bill, the Financial Institutions Bill, The Education (Amendment) Bill should have gone through by then, the Value Added Tax Bill should also have gone through, and any other matters which may arise.

Of course, if we have to meet subsequent to the 23rd we will, but I am just making the point that we are about to run our business down. It is proposed that the House of Assembly will rise for sometime around a 2 month period, subject to finalisation. I am just giving Honourable Senators that information so that Members may make appropriate plans in terms of their personal and professional pursuits.

The other point of information is that tea is served downstairs.

Asides

SENATOR The Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Members are free to partake there. I think that is all the housekeeping we have to do, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I beg to move that this Honourable Senate do now adjourn until Friday, August 23, 1996 at 11.00 a.m.

The question that the Senate do now adjourn until Friday, August 23, 1996 at 11.00 a.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to. Mr. PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly.
6.35 p.m.

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