
THE SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1999 – 2004

THE SENATE

Wednesday, December 19, 2001

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, on Wednesday, December 19, 2001, at 11.20 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour Senator Sir Fred GOLLOP, K.A. (President)

His Honour Senator C. L. BOLDEN, C.B.E., Q.C. (Deputy President)

Senator the Hon. J. X. WALCOTT, M.B., B.S. (Edin.), F.R.C.S., J.P. (Minister of Health)

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

Senator T. E. BARKER, B.A. (Hons.) M.A. (Econ.), J.P. (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Economic Development)

Senator P. C. GODDARD

Senator the Hon. Dame Patricia SYMMONDS, D.B.E., G.C.M., B.A. (Hons.) P.G.C.E., J.P.

Senator Miss J. C. ODLE

Senator J. E. D. WILLIAMS, B.Sc., M.B.A., J.P.

Senator D. D. MARSHALL, LL.B. (Hons.) L.E.C.

Senator D. L. HAYNES, S.C.M.

Senator K. D. SYMMONDS, B.A., LL.B.

Senator C. A. MASCOLL, B.Sc. (Econ.) (Hons.) M.A. (Public Finance)

Senator LeR. H. McCLEAN, B.Sc. (Hons.)

Senator C. LeR. TROTMAN

Senator Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON, B.A. (Hons.)

M.P.H. (Harvard) S.R.N.

Senator C. K. LAURIE, D.I.C.T.A. (S.T.), FBSTA

Senator Sir John Stanley GODDARD, K.A., B.Com., C.A., Hon. LL.D. (U.W.I.)

Senator B. R. COLLYMORE, C.M.G.

Senator the Rev. L. W. B. ROCK

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Senate is in session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. PRESIDENT: I wish to announce certain changes to the Standing Committees of the Senate.

As Honourable Senators would be aware, there have been some changes in the composition of the Senate in the course of the Parliamentary Session. Standing Order 62 provides *inter alia* that if a seat on any Committee becomes vacant, the Committee of Selection shall nominate another Senator and this nomination should be reported to the Senate. The Select Committee met earlier this morning and I have the honour to deliver the following report.

The following recommendations are made for appointment of the following Committees.

1. COMMITTEE OF SELECTION

Senator McClean to replace former Senator Mrs. Thomas-Mascoll.

2. MANAGEMENT COMMISSION OF PARLIAMENT

Senator J. E. D. Williams replaced former Senator Mrs. J. P. Alleyne.

It was noted that Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott is an *ex officio* member of the Management Commission of Parliament.

3. STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

Senator McClean replaces former Senator Mrs. C. S. Thomas-Mascoll.

4. HOUSE COMMITTEE

Senator Miss J.C. Odle replaces former Senator G. E. N. Brome.

5. COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott replaces former Senator G. S. Griffith.

Senator McClean replaces Senator Mrs. C. S. Thomas-Mascoll.

6. LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Senator K. D. Symmonds replaces former Senator Miss C. Y. Forde.

The Commission of Selection hereby submits its report and invites the concurrence of the Senate.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I am commanded to lay the following documents before the Honourable Senate.

1. Report of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund for the quarter ended September 30, 2001.
2. Report of the Social Investment Fund for the quarter ended September 30, 2001.
3. Annual Report of the National Assistance Board for the period 1998 - 1999.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I beg to move that Standing Order No. 45 (2) be suspended for the remainder of today's Sitting.

Sir, I understand that certain Bills on the Order Paper have not been read a first time and it is proposed that if there is no time for us to deal with them today, we plan to continue today's Sitting on Friday, December 21, 2001. We hope that the Telecommunications Bill and the Land Tax Bill can be completed before the end of this year.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I beg to move that the following Bills be read a first time:

1. The Telecommunications Bill, 2001.
2. The Land Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2001.

The question was put and agreed to.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 1 - TO MOVE THE PASSING OF A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION OF A PARCEL OF LAND SITUATED AT FREE HILL, BLACK ROCK, ST. MICHAEL

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, this Resolution pertains to the vesting of 657.6 square metres of Crown Lands at Free Hill, Black Rock, St. Michael to the National Housing Corporation for disposal by way to assist with its capital works programme.

Sir, the lands involved include a number of vacant lots, residual passes along the Adams, Barrow, Cummins Highway. Used properties and former public baths will be disposed of and the proceeds of the sale will be used by the National Housing Corporation for its capital works programme.

Lot 16 at Free Hill, Black Rock, is a triangular portion of land at the bottom of University Drive, which has been Crown Land since the construction of the road and which was residual from previous acquisitions.

In September 1980, several parcels of lands were acquired from private land owners at Free Hill, Black Rock for housing development. These lands were contiguous to the University Drive and Lot 16 was subsequently vested in the National Housing Corporation. However, this same lot was Crown Land since 1974 and was omitted from the vesting document.

The National Housing Corporation has advertised that it is unable to complete the development of the area because Lot 16 directly affects three lots to be subdivided at University Drive for sale to standing tenants.

This Paper seeks to correct the omission and enable the National Housing Corporation to continue its work. With these remarks, I beg that this Resolution do now pass.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to without division.

ORDER NO. 2 - TO MOVE THE PASSING OF A
RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE BORROWING OF
THE EQUIVALENT OF BARBADOS DOLLARS OF
US\$15 150 000 FROM THE INTERNATIONAL
BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND
DEVELOPMENT (IBRD) TO ASSIST
WITH THE FINANCING OF THE
BARBADOS HIV/AIDS PRE-
VENTION AND CONTROL
PROJECT

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, in initiating this discussion, I think what I need to point out is that this is one of the most significant debates in the history of this Chamber. This is not just an ordinary loan to be used for the infrastructure of Barbados. This loan deals with the future viability of Barbados as an ongoing society.

There may be implications for this country's survivability wrapped up in this loan of US\$15 150 000. The reality is that if the HIV/AIDS situation is not tackled from here in a more structured, coherent and comprehensive manner, the foundation of an accelerated programme which will achieve certain results and targets, then the future of Barbados could be in doubt. I am not being an alarmist nor am I indulging in any hyperbole.

Sir, when one looks around the rest of the world, *vis-a-vis* the HIV/AIDS situation, Barbados and the rest of the Caribbean are acknowledged to be part of an area, which is outside of South Sahara, Africa, that has the highest rate of HIV/AIDS infection in the world. This is a second place with which Barbados and the Caribbean cannot be comfortable. In the Olympics it might be considered a silver medal but it is one silver medal that we cannot afford to have and do not want. All of society has a bounded duty to seek to reject and turn its back on it with the upmost alacrity.

Unfortunately, with all that has been said about AIDS since it first erupted on the scene around 1984, the number of reported HIV cases continues to rise, particularly among the 15 to 49 age group in our population and especially so between the most economically active and productive age groups of 25 to 49. Therefore, this has serious implications to the long-term future of Barbados if it is allowed to go unchecked.

The implications are, based on the experience of countries in South Sahara, Africa where communities are known to have dissipated from the face of existence through HIV/AIDS; and the same thing can happen to Barbados.
11.25 a.m.

Sir, because of Barbados' good fortune over the years and also the continuous progress that we have made in the

various fields, along with the blessings that we have enjoyed, I know it is popular for persons to say, in the popular jargon, that God is a Bajan. Sir, I do not think that we can afford to rest on that myth and to feel that God alone will protect Barbados from all untoward events, no matter how dire the consequences will be. This is one event that we have to take the initiative and the forefront in protecting ourselves. Sir, if we do not get this programme into place with even more speed and comprehensiveness, the fact is that the teachers, nurses, engineers, doctors, lawyers and administrators; all upon which this society depends so much for its efficient functioning and progress, could very well be no more. It has happened elsewhere, Sir, and we should not think that we are any different from the rest of the world.

Sir, the figures show that the accumulative number of HIV/AIDS cases and deaths since December 1984 to March 2000 does not make for very good reading. Sir, the accumulative figures total some 2,448. The total number of reported HIV/AIDS cases is 1,383. The total number of deaths, 1,060. This represents a case fatality rate of 76.6 per cent. Sir, when one further analyses the chilling statistics, what comes out is that some 86 per cent of those with HIV/AIDS were heterosexual in practice and 8 per cent of those deaths would have arisen from perinatal transmission, 60 per cent from bisexual or homosexual activities. Sir, those are some of the chilling statistics and we do not take any comfort in them, therefore, we need to do whatever we can to change that situation as drastically and as quickly as possible.

Sir, I do not mean to have it go abroad for people to seek to believe that I am trying to establish that only since 1984 and particularly up to 2000 when certain initiatives were taken by the Prime Minister, are we making believe that the fight against HIV/AIDS started there, that nothing had been done about the HIV/AIDS situation in Barbados. As a matter of fact, we have a fairly impressive history of persons who have worked very hard since 1984 to tackle the problem of HIV/AIDS in a very meaningful manner. Therefore, I think it is important for us to acknowledge that we need to give due recognition to these persons while building on the foundation that they would have made, a foundation which has proved to be useful in Barbados because otherwise the relative successes that we have been able to record in some areas, *vis-a-vis* HIV/AIDS, could not have been possible but for these pioneers who have done their work and done good work. Therefore, I think it is important that we acknowledge that this is part of a continuing human activity and, therefore, we are not breaking any new ground. We are just seeking to build and accelerate on it.

Sir, since 2000, a number of things have been done to give this programme more teeth but I could not get into that unless I pointed out that the history of the fight against HIV/AIDS began with an approach in which the fight was centred mainly around the Ministry of Health. This has seen

the establishment of an HIV/AIDS Information Centre which was set up to oversee the coordination of the Ministry's activities *vis-a-vis* HIV/AIDS. In addition, there was also a National Advisory Commission on Aids (NACA) which was set up to:

- (a) function as an advisory body to Government on HIV/AIDS policy,
- (b) advocating and promoting the activities of all sectors and organisations in implementing HIV/AIDS management action,
- (c) creating a partnership to broaden the national response to HIV/AIDS,
- (d) mobilising resources to international support efforts,
- (e) to monitor and to be ultimately accountable to the public for the successful implementation of the plan.

Sir, in those early days, such sterling work was done by persons such as Professor Mickey Walrond, Dr. Timothy Roach, Dr. Carol Jacobs, *et cetera*. Therefore, we have to acknowledge them for their contributions and for laying a very secure foundation upon which we are seeking to build.

Sir, between 1994 and 1998, NACA moved on to another level when it committed itself to a full multi-sectoral programme designed to transfer ownership of the challenge of HIV/AIDS not so much to Government but to the individual citizen. In other words, the individual citizen must not sit back and indulge in whatever promiscuous or risky behaviour, but that it will be the Government's responsibility to look after their welfare from thereon to save them from themselves if need be. What NACA sought to do was to impress upon people that it was a question of the individual's behaviour and choices and, ultimately, persons were responsible for their own destiny in this regard. NACA took another step which sought to involve a wide cross-section of the community, stretching from primary school children, out of school youth, commercial sex workers, religious leaders, parents, and sexually active young persons.

In addition, great emphasis was placed in those early days on the inclusion of persons living with HIV/AIDS at every level of the programme, including their being represented on NACA. It was felt that the importance of this group was critical to the success of the programme. They had to be involved, to use their experience, to provide advice as "experts" so that things were not being handed down from on high to a group who was more intimately connected to the situation than anybody else and was therefore operating at the behest of others. In addition, there were other things done to spur the efforts, including the sensitization of the Cabinet

to the situation, the adequate documentation of projects, carefully researched programmes for Government sectors, especially Tourism and Transport and programmes targeting the group known as the homosexual community.

Sir, that is the background to the programme that was accelerated in the year 2000, when at a Subregional Conference on HIV/AIDS involving an array of donor agencies, the Prime Minister recognised that HIV/AIDS is no longer a health issue but was a developmental one and was therefore the concern and responsibility of the whole society, and he moved the programme into the Office of the Prime Minister as an attempt to give additional focus to bringing increased national priority to the issues; to strengthen the collaboration that had before existed among the various agencies and ministries so that across the societies and governments in general there will be greater accountability for the management of the disease. That, therefore formed the context of what is now the expanded programme on HIV/AIDS.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Deputy President will take the Chair at this time.

[Mr. Deputy President took the Chair].

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: This expanded response programme to HIV/AIDS, Sir, necessitated a new structure if it was going to have the teeth and the bite that it was designed to have. Sir, at the beginning, there were some very specific objectives which were established and enunciated for it. One such objective was to achieve a 50 per cent reduction in the mortality rate within the next three years and after that, a 50 per cent reduction in the prevalence rate over the next five years. These are impetuous goals but are not impossible goals; other societies in the Caribbean and further afield have achieved comparable or even higher rates of success. The Bahamas has done well. Thailand and Uganda have done well.

11.35 a.m.

Therefore, we believe that Barbadians are no different from other persons. As human beings they have the same motivation, drive, capacity to rise to the challenge of the occasion and they have as great a sense of responsibility. They are no more promiscuous, wild or irresponsible than anybody else. We feel that they have the inherent ability to respond to the challenge that could be positive if a specific framework is presented.

This new expanded response, Sir, initially involves some eight Government ministries, which as they were then in 2000: the Ministry of Health, the Office of the Attorney-General and the Ministries of Home Affairs, Labour, Sports and Public Sector Reform, Tourism, Education, Youth Affairs and Culture as it was then, the Civil Service and Social Transformation. Each ministry was designed to have

a committee or core group of persons with a responsibility of designing and implementing that sector's programme against HIV/AIDS.

Since the adjustment in portfolios following the September 2001 by-election, the new line up of ministries which were involved would read:

"The Ministry of Health, the Attorney General's Office, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport, the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, the Ministry of the Civil Service and Public Sector Reform and the Ministry of Social Transformation."

Those were eight key-line ministries or what we would call front-line ministries but since then, there were other groups formed in other ministries, such as the Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Physical Development and the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Affairs and various developments, the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, as a supplemental group which would also have their programme set up and running at the same time as these nine key-line ministries were conducting their programme.

Sir, apart from that, the Government moved beyond NACA to set up a National HIV/AIDS Commission which was set up in May 2001 and headed by Dr. Carol Jacobs who has brought to the job all the energy, experience and dedication that she had exhibited under NACA and other spheres to the job and she has been Chairman of that body. She was also appointed as special envoy for HIV/AIDS.

She is assisted, Sir, by some fifteen other Commissioners who represent a wide cross-section of the society. They range from the religious communities; what is popularly known as faith-based organisations, the private sector, the youth, the media, trade unions, non-governmental organisations, people living with HIV/AIDS and also the Director of the AIDS Management Team of the QEH and several other medical experts.

This Commission, Sir, has very specific objectives and responsibilities and I might just mention some of them so that the people would get a very clear appreciation of the role of the HIV/AIDS Commission. It has some very specific terms of reference:-

1. To advise the Government on HIV/AIDS, STDs or sexually transmitted diseases, STIs as they are known these days, sexually transmitted infection policy.

2. To advocate for the effective involvement of all sectors and organisations in implementing programmes and strategies.
3. To monitor the implementation of a strategic plan for 2000-2005 in all sectors of the society.
4. To create and strengthen partnerships for an expanded response among all sectors to mobilise resources both internationally and locally for the implementation of a national HIV/AIDS programme and to recommend appropriate research.

Like I said, it is headed by Dr. Carol Jacobs as Chairman and Special Envoy. Then, there is Dr. Timothy Roach, Director of the HIV/AIDS Management Team and Deputy Chairman and there are many people representing various activities, various sectors and various interests in the society.

This Commission, Sir, is responsible for the day to day management of a secretariat which is headed by a Director, Ms. Elise Jordan, a Deputy Director, Ms. Angela Davis, an Assistant Director, Mrs. Carmeta Douglin. They head a small group of people who provide technical support to oversee the daily management of the national programme.

I would also like to indicate, Sir, some of the specific responsibilities of the Director's Office;

1. To develop and coordinate the implementation of the programme through various ministries and partners in the private sector, NGOs and community groups.
2. To advise on budgetary allocations and report on the financial performance of ministries and partners in relation to HIV/AIDS.
3. To manage the distribution of funds from donor agencies across various sectors, ministries and NGOs.
4. To monitor and evaluate the performance and results of actions implemented by ministries and partners.
5. To follow up on initiatives taken by the Commission and prepare such reports and documentation in collaboration with ministries and partners that the Commission may require.
6. To advise the Inter-Ministerial Committee and the Commission on the formulation of national programmes and policies on HIV/AIDS management.

Sir, their major purpose is to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS and to ensure that persons living with HIV/AIDS are not disadvantaged and they can enjoy a good quality life in their condition.

Sir, I am pleased to say that since the Commission was set up in May 2001, they have done so much work in the past seven or eight months, that it is hard to believe they have only been in existence for such a short period of time.

This expanded programme, Sir, then is the work of the Commission supported by the Secretariat, mobilising a response which seeks to unite all persons in this HIV/AIDS effort.

The National HIV/AIDS Commission, Sir, is seeking to promote total collaboration among all partners, locally, regionally and internationally. They operate very closely with the Caribbean response to the matter and they are kept abreast of things in the international world and the regional movement as much as possible as developments occur.

Again, Sir, the work of the Commission has seen emphasis being placed on the involvement in the community of persons living with HIV/AIDS. They have been involved in every aspect of the expanded response. The members of the Commission act as resource persons, access and seek to sensitise persons primarily and initially in the Government sector in those eight key-line ministries and the ministries of the various factors relating to HIV/AIDS.

Sir, not only do they speak about the technical aspects of the programme and what it seeks to achieve, but it is also involved in the very important task of seeking to change people's attitudes to try to stigmatise the situation as it involves persons living with HIV/AIDS and to let the community know by interacting with them that there still remain persons who happen to have a condition. In the same way that persons who happen to have high blood pressure or hypertension as it is technically known, or diabetes or whatever condition and they are persons who still deserve to be treated with dignity, fairness and humanity, they have their needs and wants which must be met by the remainder of the society and all they are asking for is to be given a fair chance and to be treated with sensitivity.

The people from this Committee, Sir, have not only been involved locally in Barbados in its activities, but the Commission has sought to involve the people from the region, making sure that they participate in the conference on the Global Network of Positive Persons which was held in October this year in Trinidad and Tobago. This conference was sponsored by the Peter Moores Foundation of the Barbados National Trust through the donation of a sizable contribution to be rooted in the Foundation via the Commission. In addition to the conference, they also

participated in workshops and briefing sessions for persons who had attended that conference.

Sir, the question of donations, I thought I would seize the opportunity to say that not only has the expanded programme received good support from across Government, the trade union movements and other sectors of the society but it also has received promising and encouraging support from the private sector.

Sir, many people have made donations already to the work that is being undertaken. I mentioned the Peter Moores Foundation of the Barbados National Trust which had donated some \$27 200 to the Foundation, via the HIV/AIDS Commission.

There is also PriceSmart which has donated some \$20 000 again for the AIDS Foundation by way of the Commission. This is to be used to purchase nutritious supplements for the AIDS Food Bank and there have also been contributions for computer equipment from a company known as Illuminat and also from Fujitsu.
11.45 a.m.

In addition to that, in August on the anniversary of the Elroy Phillips Centre, the private sector in the person of Courts (Barbados) Limited responded to a call and at very short notice donated a very sizable fridge to the Centre. The Pine Hill Dairy also responded to a request and they now provide on a monthly basis a number of juices and other beverages that are very useful and very necessary to the maintenance of the physical well-being of those persons who occupy the HIV/AIDS Centre. That, Sir, illustrates that there is still a residue of goodwill out there in the community that can be called upon. The private sector responded very readily like I said and this ensures that they are not giving lip service to the programme but that they are prepared to make a contribution when called upon to do so.

Sir, Government has announced an expanded programme and has committed BDS\$100 million which is roughly US\$50 million over the next five years to this expanded prevention and control programme. We have done this out of our resources in order to make sure that we will not have to go cap in hand to any person in the regional or international community. We are prepared to pull ourselves up by our own strategy wherever possible but we also recognise that if the sizable response that is necessary is to be had, we, therefore, need to call upon other agencies to supplement this effort.

Sir, in order to facilitate and accelerate this multi-sectoral expanded response, the Government has secured a loan of US\$15.1 million from the World Bank. This loan was signed for in July of 2001 and it is scheduled to become effective in December of 2001. As a matter of fact, I am

pleased to say that we are well on the way to that loan becoming effective in December. We are meeting various deadlines. There are certain procedural matters. We have to be going through certain documentation that we have to provide to satisfy the World Bank that we are serious and that we are intent on achieving all that we set out to do.

This loan of US\$15.1 million also has an interesting context in the sense that it is known that Barbados has graduated from the World Bank and from having access to concessionary financing. Therefore, this loan by the World Bank is an acknowledgement of the work that has been done in the Barbados situation and they are willing, therefore, to add their resources and expertise to make sure that we achieve our objective.

In addition to that, this is the first loan of its kind in the world for the World Bank where treatment by anti-retroviral drugs is being financed as a public health issue. We know that the World Bank normally lends for infrastructural development so this loan will mark a new beginning for the World Bank. It also represents an acknowledgement and a response by the World Bank to the dire consequences of the AIDS situation as it faces the world. The fact, therefore, that Barbados has been chosen to be the first case in the new approach by the World Bank is a testimony to the work of Barbados in rising to the request of the World Bank and other agencies by providing proof and a programme that can stand scrutiny and that can meet certain international criteria.

As a matter of fact, when work for this loan was under foot and when it was presented to the World Bank, the officials were highly complimentary of Barbados not only as a country but of the Barbados public servants for the rapidity with which they were able to respond to the challenge to provide a programme that will meet certain stringent criteria. They were very impressed by the speed and also the content of the response of the programme. It was remarked that they had not known any other country to have responded so readily and with such a quality response at such a short period of time to a request.

Therefore, Sir, on this occasion, I want to thank those public sector workers at all levels who would have made their contribution to this effort. I think it is a recognition of their part apart from their customary professionalism which has stood Barbados well down through the years. This was a situation in which they had to respond at very short notice and at the highest quality and I am pleased to say that they rose to the occasion and passed with flying colours. Sir, that is the general context of this loan.

This loan has a number of specific objectives *vis-a-vis* the Barbados programme. The objective of this project is to assist the Government in reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS through the increase of programmes for the prevention, care

and control of the epidemic. I think it is important for us to stress prevention because we do not want to be seen in any way at all that by Government pledging over \$100 million of our resources over the next five years to the thrust and the effort of getting this loan and by the response of the World Bank that we are laying the ground work or creating scenarios where people feel that they can just, as Barbadians say, do as they like and that they have no responsibility for their behaviour. We still feel that the first line of defence is prevention through responsible behaviour because that is the best management because the only cure at this stage is prevention.

Therefore, our public education programme and our sensitization programme all stress prevention, abstinence, fidelity and behavioural modification as the first line of prevention. However, if for whatever reason through human frailty, given the powerful force that sex has always been in humankind's life and prevention is not obtained or has not been practised, we will have to go to the next level of care. We feel that we should not be moralising or be judgmental but that we have a responsibility to provide a framework, the means and the wherewithal where we can care for those persons who happen to be afflicted or infected with HIV/AIDS through the care and control of the epidemic by targeting the high risk groups in the population and by strengthening the institutional capacity of the various agencies to ensure that this programme is effective and sustainable over a long period of time.

We have to make sure that the Secretariat is a well-structured, well-functioned and well-peopled secretariat with all the requisite skills and built-in systems to ensure that we do not just start the programme but that once it has started that we can sustain it on an ongoing basis or an effective basis and that the resources that would have been pumped into it would not go to naught.

This project is divided into a number of segments or parts. Part 1 which would go to the cost of US\$5.7 million focusses on the prevention and control of the HIV/AIDS transmission up front. This involves the establishment of an HIV/AIDS coordination unit by each of the participating agencies that I have spoken about for the purposes of assisting Barbados in the preparation and implementation of the virtual action plans. There are other details in Part B which I do not have to mention here now but which I can come back to if requested.

11.55 a.m.

Part B, Sir, is being financed to the tune of US\$14.3 million and involves the diagnosis, treatment and care of people living with HIV/AIDS and is meant for the design and implementation of the programme on home care to HIV/AIDS patients which will include, among other things,

the provision of training to local staff on basic care, facilities and the counselling of relatives and said patients. While I have been speaking more specifically, putting emphasis on those persons who are infected with HIV/AIDS, I think it is also important to give recognition to persons who are affected by HIV/AIDS. In other words, the parents, friends, relatives and the colleagues of persons who are infected by AIDS who also feel the impact of the disease.

While HIV might be contracted as a result of individual behaviour it is essentially not an individual situation and individual disease. It has an impact on those around the persons who are affected by HIV/AIDS.

One of the very real issues and one of the very real and worrying manifestations of those who are affected is the fact that we have to look at not only the mothers and the fathers and the brothers and sisters and work colleagues of persons with HIV/AIDS but those young children who are orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS and who are left, through no fault of their own, to come into a world without mother or father and once they have been stigmatised as the offspring of persons who had HIV/AIDS that compounds their problems and makes their lives even more difficult. Therefore, that is a very real situation that we also have to factor into the equation and into how we programme ourselves for managing the prevention, control and care of persons with HIV/AIDS.

Part C, Sir, involves management and institutional strengthening and this is at a cost of US\$3.4 million. We will see the strengthening of the capacity of the Secretariat in complying with the responsibilities which it would have to carry out under the HIV/AIDS programme.

Sir, this programme has a number of important meanings for Barbados and there are a number of important things that will have to be undertaken in the programme and I would seek to give some insights into some of the progress that has been made so far. One of the things that we are seeking to do is that Government has announced that it is going to provide universal access to highly active anti-retroviral therapy.

This therapy has proven over the last five years to be very effective in the treatment of HIV/AIDS and the record has shown over the last five years that it is effective in the reduction of HIV related morbidity and mortality. We are seeking to bring this programme to Barbadians who happen to be affected by HIV/AIDS and make it available to them. Apart from the drug therapy that will be available, Government also is providing a certain infrastructural framework, a certain resource base that is very important to the furtherance of this programme and the support of this programme.

As a result, Sir, Government has been over the last few months working to provide a number of very important institutions and facilities. For example, Government has worked to provide a fully staffed and equipped walk-in clinic and a lab at the compound of Ladymeade. Much work has gone into it in providing these facilities, modern, well-equipped, up-to-date, well-laid out, very pleasant facilities for those who would have to do business there. Work is well advanced and by latest reports some days ago they are busy laying floor coverings and things of that nature. Sir, the infrastructural work has been readied largely through the work of the Ministry of Public Works and they are a very welcome, measured and noticeable improvement over what had existed there before.

Apart from that, Government would also be providing and work is afoot and we are looking at the provision of a drop-in centre and food bank for those persons who do not need just drug treatment but the wherewithal to sustain a comfortable high quality life thereafter and this drop-in centre and food bank – there is already a smaller version of a food bank which exists – we plan to expand this and upgrade it and we are looking at a building on the Ministry of Health compound. The former UNDP building is being looked at as a place to house this drop-in centre and food bank.

This is one of several buildings that are still available in the Ministry of Health Compound. I know at one time that there was some proposal or it was mooted that some building would be devoted to nurses, but the point I am making is that there are still other resources left there that are being used that will be used as part of a broader, more comprehensive development. There is a redevelopment programme being planned for that Ministry of Health compound and many of the buildings which unfortunately look now rather dilapidated and run down. It is not intended that they stay like that forever but there is a programme being formulated and a number of proposals are being put together for later consideration that will see a more meaningful development and much more use made of these facilities put to very good uses for the rest of the community.

There is also going to be a domiciliary care programme and there will be easier access to social services such as skills training because we recognise that with the anti-retroviral treatment people can live longer and live a better life, they still have a capacity to contribute to the productive development of the society and therefore we need to provide them with the requisite skills and training, access to facilities that will lend them money to start businesses *et cetera*.

We want to improve the total quality of life of the people in this community not just to make them live longer and more comfortable physically but we also have to

prepare them better psychologically and make them feel less marginalised, to put them wherever possible back into the mainstream of Barbadian society because, as I said, the society will need their skills and talents and the society is worse off if they are not available. Therefore we need to put them in that position to help further the advancement, growth and development of the society.

We are also working to make sure that there is recognition of individual human rights at the place of work so that people are not discriminated in their employment and other activities because of HIV/AIDS. There will be provision of documentation now of discrimination in any form and we will be ensuring the adherence to workplace policies where HIV/AIDS is concerned. As a matter of fact, two documents have already been adopted by the Ministry of Labour and enacted by the HIV/AIDS Commission. One is the ILO Code and Practice of HIV/AIDS and the World of Work and the other deals with AIDS in the Workplace and is a local production which has been produced by the Barbados Employers Confederation in conjunction with the Barbados Chamber of Commerce and Industry and also in association with the Barbados Small Business Association and the Barbados Manufacturers Association. This is an update to a report which was put out first in 1995 by the Barbados Employers Confederation. This is an updated version of it. This documentation represents part of the holistic approach that we are seeking to implement and provide for the rest of society. We are prepared to make it a document of the Senate.

The expanded programme on HIV/AIDS should be seen in the same way as universal access to anti-retrovirals which is Government's stated objective.

We do not intend that only those who are rich and can afford it should have access to the drug. One example of this is the well-known case of Magic Johnson who has been able to sustain the quality of his life because of his money and having access to the drug. We are seeking to do the same thing in the Barbadian context.
12.05 p.m.

I hope that it does not seem as though Government is paying more attention to HIV/AIDS to the detriment and negligence of other groups because the Government Drug Service provides medication free of cost to persons with chronic conditions like diabetes, hypertension and cancer. The same principle is at work here so it is not fair to say that Government is paying more attention to HIV/AIDS than to other illnesses because HIV/AIDS will make all the other diseases look like a picnic if it is not nipped in the bud early.

Sir, it is important to note that Government has set up the Chronic Disease Centre and a tremendous amount of research has gone into chronic diseases like diabetes and

hypertension and the related factors and any attempt to show that Government has suddenly woken up and is paying attention to HIV/AIDS to the neglect of other chronic diseases is not fair because the record does not support that.

Sir, I am happy to support this programme and to say that all of Barbados has united as one in the fight against HIV/AIDS. This bipartisan support which has garnered recognition and acceptance by the rest of the society is to be commended. Other countries become united as one, as in the case of the United States of America who can be said to be united as one in their military activity in Afghanistan and other countries unite as one when a common external enemy threatens.

I am happy to say that Barbados has united as one in the stance against HIV/AIDS. I am also pleased to commend the society in general for its broad-mindedness, sensitivity and tolerance in tackling this programme and to see that we are not consumed by passions of emotionalism, prejudices and hostility to persons who are suffering from this much dreaded disease. It is a tribute to the maturity of the Barbadian society and to good sense and behaviour. Whilst this is so, we cannot afford to be comfortable with that because there is a lot more that needs to be done. We have to ensure that from here on what is being done by Government, the private sector and the NGOs translates very readily into individual human behaviour.

Sir, it will call for certain modifications in behaviour and the exposing of certain well-accepted traditional ways of behaviour between the sexes because this is a fight that we are all in together.

Sir, other wars set out to take lives but this is a fight that attempts to save lives. We are not denying the sense of right and wrong in morality that should inform human behaviour and activity but we, as a country, should be able to look after lives by providing the wherewithal where people can look at their individual morality, behaviour and spirituality. We as a society cannot afford to pass judgement against each other, write off people or abandon them in any way at all. We have had great success with the programme and Barbados has been successful in a number of small but meaningful ways where HIV/AIDS is concerned.

For example, there is proud testimony to the work of Barbados' health sector, particularly those involved in the processing of blood at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Since 1984 we have had no reported cases of persons losing their lives because of infected blood. We know what has happened in France and other countries where people have lost their lives because of infected blood but no such case has obtained in Barbados yet. I know that it is popular to be

critical of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital but this is one manifestation of the good work that is going on at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and we have to be grateful for that.

We have also had success in the programme that was implemented in 1995 of giving pregnant mothers access to AZT and in those six years the rate of onward transmission from mother to child plummeted from 30 percent to 3 percent. South Africa is the most well-known example of the internal fighting that is going on with the most basic and straightforward facilities and treatment for HIV/AIDS and we have moved long beyond that stage but we have to undertake the fight in a coordinated and cohesive way for the rest of the Barbadian society.

In the months ahead as this work becomes operational and as other work of the Commission and Secretariat begin to bear fruit, we will see an intensified public education effort. We would have seen on television over the last three weeks a new advertisement that seeks to modify behaviour and to draw people's attention to the dangers of HIV/AIDS.

Sir, it is appropriate at this time as we approach the advent of Christmas that people are conscious of the fact that in their celebrations they should watch what they eat, drink, drive, their behaviour in general and pay attention to the effects of HIV/AIDS.

Sir, it, therefore, gives me great pleasure to request the Chamber to give its fullest support to this measure. I have no doubt that persons will respond to the challenge and all that it seeks to do.

I beg to move that this Resolution be read a second time.
12.15 p.m.

SENATOR C. LeR. TROTMAN: Mr. Acting President, I rise with the kind support of the Leader of the Other Side to support the Resolution before us, and to do so because as has been indicated earlier, this Resolution has very great significance for all of us in this country. I think that we would accept that AIDS is perhaps the most feared thing that would be on the lips or minds of anybody, except during this week. During this week the thing that would be most scary in the minds of anybody is the way by which statutory boards can cut off people's jobs and take people's livelihood away from them.

Asides.

SENATOR C. LeR. TROTMAN: I believe that in those circumstances, Mr. President, you would expect me to want to share with those who would speak to the issue, my concern for what is happening in this country in the area of

AIDS. I have been aware, because I have been in touch with many of my trade union colleagues in Africa, that the incidence is as high as two in every five persons in some instances. HIV/AIDS is no respecter of persons, so you would find that a number of well-placed civil servants, the teaching community in Zambia, have been significantly decimated by the contagion that is there.

Sir, we have to compliment the Barbados Government for focussing the battle under the Prime Minister's Office. Mr. President, that is not to say that the former Ministers who have worked on the subject before were not working assiduously and have not contributed significantly. I would like to compliment the previous Minister of Health. I would wish to take note of the fact that significant work was done by Brandford Taitt when he was Minister of Health. It was under his stewardship that significant work was done in bringing to the attention of the public the great dangers in this particular field and the need for national action. Sir, not only by the National Committee for the Prevention of AIDS (NCPA), but by every single member of the community. Significant work was done to sensitise the public and to make everyone at all levels of work and life understand the importance of becoming involved in the battle.

Mr. President, in that regard, I would wish to recognise the work done, not merely by the Minister of Health and other doctors ...

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Senator, please hold a moment. His Honour, Mr. President is re-entering the room.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Thank you. You may proceed Senator.

SENATOR C. LeR. TROTMAN: I would wish to recognise the work done, not only by Ministers and doctors, but the work done by other members of NCPA in the early days and the work done by clinical and support staff who have worked beyond their levels and beyond the call of duty. I think that we should appreciate those people who have been seeking to join in the effort to reduce and prevent the epidemic.

I wish, even though I must declare an interest, to laud the trade unions for the work done in sensitising the public to what has been done and what is to be done regarding the AIDS virus. Also, to laud those employers who are conscious of the importance of the effort that is being made and who have been willing to release workers by the scores to attend the trade union workshops and seminars which we have been having for years, and where we have been able to call upon the willing support of doctors and other medically trained persons, nurses, social workers and several other

persons who have been able to attack the subject from different angles, with a view to sensitising this country regarding what was before us.

The reality before us is that although we have made reference to the very high incidence of HIV/AIDS in Africa, and we are able to make reference to the Sub-Saharan situation, we must be careful not to do so from superciliousness. Sir, as the Leader of the Opposition said, the Caribbean has the highest incidence. I do not think that we should take Barbados out of the Caribbean. The point that I am making is that the Caribbean has the highest incidence and we need to concern ourselves regarding how we will treat this.

It is good that we are doing as much as we can but they are some who are concerned that we have a grave uphill task before us. The incidence is to be found, not older persons, but the higher incidence is being found in the younger nationals. Although we have not had a breakdown of the figures here this morning during the presentation, I think that we have been sufficiently aware as to recognise that persons between the ages of 16 to 25 are in the age range in which the incidence of HIV/AIDS is to be found.

I understand those who are older should take note because I have been hearing that persons over the age of 60 are now seeming to increase the incidence in this region.
12.25 p.m.

I do not know what the cause is, Mr. President, and I would not be privy to say that I know of any kind of drug that might be assisting in that exercise, although my Senate colleagues might have a theory. The fact that we have persons who are at that early age, 16 to 39, who are representing the highest incidence, has been a cause of very great concern for all of us but particularly for those of us in the trade union movement.

Sir, I would wish that it be recognised that in the same way that the mover of this Resolution spoke to a document prepared by the Barbados Employers Confederation (BEC) and by some other agencies, which should be complimented, that there was as well and before the BEC document in Barbados a document prepared by the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados (CTUSAB) in which the BEC was a partner and in which we had the good efforts of NACA in helping us to prepare a protocol which we have been able to pass on to employers and which the Government of Barbados has taken on board and is now using as part of its national programme, regarding the advice of how persons should treat those individuals suffering from HIV/AIDS.

Therefore, I merely wanted to put the record very clearly and to show that as many as ten years ago, we have been working on the subject and for one good reason, if no other, that the subject was one in which the WTO, UNICEF and several other United Nations agencies have been addressing and properly so, but they have been addressing them from their own areas of discipline. We, in the trade union movement, felt that given the ages involved there had to be the question addressed of HIV/AIDS and the world of work. For a long time it was not seen in those terms and I would wish to make you take note, Mr. President, if you will, that even very recently at the level of the ILO we had such a phenomenon. Those other international agencies to which I have referred were dealing with the subject but the ILO was not dealing with it. Therefore, we – that is to say your humble servant – were able to put forward the suggestion that we had to put forward the subject of HIV/AIDS and the world of work to the governing body of the ILO.

Sir, I was able to do this at the level of the workers' group. My colleagues in the workers' group recognised the value of that approach. They took it to the governing body of the ILO and suddenly the governments around the world recognise that a dimension which had not been properly seen at first now had to be taken on board because HIV/AIDS was not treated in relation to the world of work and was seen merely from the point of view of persons being ill in hospitals or ill at the point of your rendering assistance to school children, then we would have been losing the very important aspect of our development as a people, and we would be failing to recognise the great value which attaches to workers whether they are social, medical or tourism workers.

Mr. President, I would wish to say that once the ILO had embraced this particular subject that the HIV/AIDS prevention programme became the highest campaign project for the ILO and for country members of the ILO after the campaign for the eradication of the worse forms of child labour. Sir, I think that we should compliment those governments which are doing so. The United States has had some money that they were supposed to put down in the Caribbean for assisting this region in that particular department through the employers and trade union groups. Sir, we are still hopeful that we will be able to benefit from some of that so that we can assist the Government's efforts because ever so much effort is not too much in our wish and our desire to eradicate and eradicate as quickly as we can, this very great scourge that we have in this county.

Mr. President, if there is the concern about the levels of money we are talking about, and perhaps there is properly so a concern, we would have to recognise that I do not think that mankind has seen any other devastation working with the rapidity that we have had of this particular disease. Therefore, there has to be every effort made to work as

rapidly as possible in quick responses where we can have them. Of course, we have a major problem as you would appreciate. Sir, part of that problem has to do with, first of all, bringing some measure of relief to sufferers.

Sir, as a developing country, one of the problems that we have had to deal with has been the problem of the cost of drugs. I remember only very recently standing on the floor of the same governing body room of the ILO, I had to take very strong exception to the behaviour of some of the ambassadors of the industrialised countries of the world who felt that persons like ourselves, coming from developing countries, ought not to be speaking any word regarding the cost of drugs. Sir, we had to speak very strongly about the situation that there was in places like Namibia, Zambia and our own Carribean; and that one must not ever believe that the cost of drugs is something for other agencies like the WTO or any other esoteric bodies that relate to trade and the fixing of prices of drugs but at the level of institutions which deal with workers' concerns like the ILO; that drugs, the price of drugs and the value of cheap drugs would not be important for all of us including those in this country.

Sir, not all of our people will have the good fortune that Magic Johnson has been able to live by and to experience. It is really sad that we could find areas which would bring relief and yet find that many thousands of people in various parts of the world are unable to get that relief because it is not being allowed to reach down to the levels of the masses in those countries.

Mr. President, where this touches on the world of work, I think we have to be particularly concerned. Sir, we are concerned because the victims of HIV/AIDS in those age groups to which I referred represent the main workforce in any country. We go to work from age 16 in this part of the world and our most productive years as workers are between 16 and 60. Sir, significant numbers within this group are in the workforce and when they are at the same time the persons with the highest incidents of HIV/AIDS, then, Mr. President, one is faced with the recognition that what we are going to be confronted with in ten or fifteen years would be a situation where there will be very many countries that do not have any labour forces. Those persons who are supposed to sail the boats and to take the fish, as one Senator would tell me, would all be gone and those persons who would be doing tourism promotion will also be gone. In all fields of endeavour, we will have the problem where persons do not have to wait for a board to do it, because it would be dealt with naturally.

Asides.

SENATOR C. L. TROTMAN: Sir, therefore, rapid action is required. Mr. President, those victims are at the same time those persons who should mother and father our

children and if we have those persons between ages 16 and 45 representing the highest incidence, then again if you project that particular problem in ten to fifteen years down the road, we are likely to have a problem which presents itself in a manner that will have catastrophic proportions for all of us because there will be no persons to procreate the species.

12.35 p.m.

That is a very important factor to bear in mind when we think of the development of any country. One where there are persons left within this body, we have to understand that their problems are multiplied because that same age group between 16 and 45 is the group of persons, who by their labour have got to keep the pensioners alive and have to pay social security for the babies, the children, and pay for their education and the social charges and development of the rest of the world.

If you do not have the workforce therefore because the workforce is being decimated by this problem of HIV/AIDS, then the reality is that the country will become so terribly impoverished that the living standards which we were accustomed to will be lost to those generations that will follow us.

As it stands even now as we speak, there is a problem at the level of national insurance. This problem was not brought about by HIV/AIDS but by the fact that the old people in our community are living longer. Sir, because they are living longer, they are putting pressure on the national insurance and the social security benefits which we now have to the extent that sooner or later, unless we do something very significant about our social security system, we will have our national insurance scheme under significant threat.

It is the kind of problem which Barbados alone is not faced with, but the rest of the world is faced with the same problem and we now have a situation where about three persons are required to provide the pension for one retiree. Sir, that figure is dropping so that in another few years, it may be two persons providing the pension for one. Therefore, you would understand how much of his or her earnings will have to go into the provision of pensions.

Mr. President, at the same time that is happening, if the actual workers are being taken out of the workforce and are unable to work, or they are dying, then there cannot be any replenishment within the system. The society as a whole would be undergoing significant disadvantage and beating itself and destroying itself because of this incidence. The Government therefore is doing correctly by moving towards seeking to provide remedial measures. As to whether there will be enough and how far they will go, only time will tell.

I think as well, Mr. President, that this is a good time for us to recognise that we have to address society's attitude to persons who are suffering. We also have to realise that the original attitude was negative and improper and that it needs to be corrected now. Therefore, the effort which each of us has to be engaged in is making everyone within the society understand that none of us is exactly free from this particular scourge.

If we were to say that we were going back to our Maker in the same pristine condition sexually that we entered the world, it does not mean that we might not get infected by being given an injection or by having somebody who gets cut and splatters part of his or her contaminated blood or by any other means.

Asides.

SENATOR C. LeR. TROTMAN: There are other ways that persons could become infected, and the medical persons within the room might be able to give ideas as to how that would happen.

Sir, there is nobody who is exactly free or who can escape and I therefore like what Senator Murray said about the need for us to desist from the temptation to be moralistic and judgmental. What we have to concentrate on is the thought that I am grateful that I am not if we are not, because I do not think Bajans are too happy about being tested and even if you check today, I would imagine that the doctors among us would tell us that you might have to check next week again. We prefer just to wait and see and hope that by not checking, the evidence would be that we are free.

The point I am making here, Mr. President, is that we have to recognise that all of us might be in a position where we will need the help and support of others. Therefore, we have, Mr. President, not merely to provide this \$100 million that is being set aside for the next five years, not only to use this sum of money which is being voted this afternoon, US\$15.1 million, but we have to do some other very critical things. We have to endeavour to make sure that our efforts to bring drugs which would give relief and possibly turn some persons back into productive life are made available.

We have a further task available, Mr. President, of finding ways to reestablish dignity for the victims because part of the problems that we have in our society is the problem that comes from the persons being marginalised who suffer from one kind of ailment or another. Sometimes that social exclusion is given to persons who are not able to wear the same type of clothing as we might be able to or who lose their jobs. We are able from time to time, to come to grips with those but when the persons are those who suffer

from stigmatised illnesses like HIV/AIDS, then there must be even a greater effort to bring back dignity.

I know of the times where colleagues at work places have sought to get us to agree that somebody who was a victim would not be able to work alongside them anymore. We, in the labour movement have had the very great task of trying to educate workers at work places regarding the importance of treating everyone who has one difficulty or the other, not as though they are to be excluded from within the framework that they are in but rather, that they have to be embraced in one way or another within the broader framework of the society.

Work, I think, should be recognised as that one great actor or factor which brings dignity to the individual. You can give as much aid and as much assistance as you might like to somebody, but if you do not give that individual the chance to work, then you do not give that individual the chance to realise himself or herself. It is important that we are able to find work for those persons who get marginalised and who may not be able to practise at their previous tasks in the same way that they were doing before.

We have to recognise as well that although those persons may be ill, they are still persons in much the same way as the rest of us. The accommodation that we provide for those individuals should be acceptable, healthy and respectable. Sir, the hostels which there will be around the country and which there are in some places, have to be places where people will want to go and where visitors might be able to go without feeling that they are going to some second-class institution that is not being properly respected.

In short, the occasion must be taken to ensure that we manage to tie together the fabrics of our society, in such a way that we reduce those elements which have, over the past years, been left out, been marginalised, been socially excluded and have been treated as though they were not properly Barbadian. If this \$15 million now and the \$100 million over the next five years go towards that, Mr. President, then I say that we should be doing a good task in terms of making Barbados stand out as a place where we care one for the other.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 1.58 p.m. today.

The question that the Senate be now suspended until 1.58 p.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
12.45 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, we have all agreed that HIV/AIDS is a very serious problem facing the entire human race. In fact, I believe that had a disease of this kind showed up among the human race a few years ago perhaps there would be few if any human beings on this earth at present. The reason being that one way of eradicating any species is to have anything which affects the ability of that species to reproduce itself. Obviously, if you have a disease which is associated with the reproduction of that species there is the great possibility of eradicating the species.

In fact, I remember an experiment that I once had to study in biology where in order to get rid of a pest, the technique used was to capture the fittest males in the population and sterilise them and then release them in the wild again. They having made it, the next generation was seriously depleted. Obviously, if we have a disease of this nature it does run the risk of wiping out the entire human race had we not the technology which we have to deal with it.

As was mentioned by Senator Trotman, it is also serious from the point of view that it affects the most productive persons in the population. As a result of that, not only the workforce is being depleted but there are many countries now where those persons who make up the workforce are persons who have previously retired. The grandmothers and grandfathers as well as young children are the ones now who are working.

We are also having the added problem of a significant number of orphans being produced now as a result of this disease. Added to that, there is, in my view, an even greater problem of children who are born with the disease who start out with a serious disadvantage. We know that from the time we are born they say we begin to die but at least we know that given the normal train of events we have a life expectancy but someone who is born with AIDS is almost born with a death sentence hanging over his or her head already. This certainly is a very sad situation for children to be born into. This could all happen even in our society where a simple unguarded moment could be the thin line between a little pleasure and a lot of pain.

This is why I think we have to support fully the efforts which are being made by the various groups and organisations to heighten the awareness of the seriousness of this disease and how indeed we can prevent it, because it is one thing to talk about having the means of treating the disease but certainly we want to be able to prevent it wherever possible because it could rob this country or any

country for that matter of its valuable resources not only in terms of the cost of treatment but also in terms of the human capital that is lost and the human resources which would go to waste as a result of having this disease.

As I said, this is not a Resolution that one can oppose. As I have said from time to time, where we see it necessary to support the Government on any venture or in any way we will do so. However, I do caution them that this is not something that they should rely on too heavily because even though we support the Resolution there are still some things which we have to raise some questions about that we need to get clarification on.

Now, the Prime Minister saw it fit to take on certain responsibilities pertaining to the tackling of this very serious problem which we have. I think this was the first indication that Government was taking the problem of HIV/AIDS extremely seriously because obviously if the Prime Minister has decided to take it under his wings we do believe that he does take it as a very serious issue. Unfortunately, he has made a statement recently where he does not think the same about tourism by saying that he is not going to take on that because that can lead you into serious problems. So, Mr. President, we give this Resolution our support.

As I said earlier, the Prime Minister has taken on this responsibility. I do not know if this is a statement he was making to the then Minister of Health in terms of his confidence in him to handle these measures. So I believe that now that he has an eminent medical practitioner as his Minister of Health I believe that he should probably shift that responsibility back in full to the Ministry of Health so that the good doctor...

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, Please!

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: I am sure that the Minister of Health is quite capable of taking on this responsibility with the able assistance that he has through the Commission that has been appointed both in terms of the person heading that Commission and the director. I am sure that he will have the kind of assistance that is required in order to grapple with this very serious problem which we are faced with.

In my humble opinion, I think that the goals which have been set for a reduction of the mortality rate by 50 per cent in three years could be a bit ambitious given the fact that one does not necessarily know the true extent of the HIV infection in Barbados and the likelihood of full-blown AIDS because I do not think we have been able to investigate fully the incidence of HIV for many reasons. One of the reasons, as was mentioned earlier by the Minister in making the presentation, is that people are reluctant to be

tested and, therefore, it is very possible that persons could be going around with the infection not knowing it. I think that myth that as long as you are infected with the HIV/AIDS, one could easily tell because of some physical manifestation has now been blown wide open because it has been established that there are many people who are looking quite healthy and who are walking around with the HIV infection.

I also believe, Sir, that there is a link between poverty and the incidence of AIDS in the world. Most of the countries where AIDS has been most devastating are relatively poor countries. We have seen here in the Caribbean, for example, the incidence in Haiti and in the Sahara, Africa. One must, therefore, ask the question why is there such a relatively high incidence of AIDS in Barbados because certainly what we know as poverty in this country can in no way compare to the poverty that exist in some of these other countries. Therefore, there must be some other reason why the incidence of AIDS is apparently as high as it is in this country.

The Minister said earlier that Barbadians are no more promiscuous than people anywhere else in the world, but given the most recent statistics that were published recently about the sexual activity of boys as young as 12 years old, one must question whether or not that is true because certainly if there is this high level of sexual activity amongst boys as young as 12 years old there must be somebody that they are sexually active with. So it is either that there is also a high incidence of sexual activity amongst the girls of a similar age or that there are adults who are engaging in this activity with these young children.

Unfortunately, in the case of girls when we see the incidence we also note that there is a fairly high incidence of teenage pregnancy in Barbados which is higher than what it should be. In fact, if we get one case it is more than it should be. My concern, however, is that even though we complain about the incidence of teenage pregnancies, I do not hear of any men getting locked up. So we are having young teenaged girls becoming pregnant before the age of consent which amounts to statutory rape but nobody is getting jailed.
2.10 p.m.

You have young boys with the statistics showing a high level of sexual activity. What is happening to the society? This is why I say that if there is a link between poverty and the incidence of AIDS but yet we do not have that level of poverty we must examine some of the things that might be taking place in this society that we may be turning a blind eye to or some of the things that are taking place that in some cases parents themselves are aware of but are failing to deal with them. We have heard stories of young girls becoming pregnant and when the authorities seek to take action the mother receives a sum of money and nobody gives evidence.

In my view, it might seem harsh, but if I had my way, anytime a girl who is below the age of consent became pregnant she would be put into a special home, the child would be taken from her and the mother and father locked up until they say who she is pregnant for.

Aside.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: It is barbaric. I know that and that is why we can never solve problems because we always feel that if somebody commits murder we must be more sympathetic to that person than the family of the person who was killed.

As far as I am concerned, Sir, exposing young children to the possibility of a death sentence through the transmission of HIV/AIDS is worse than murder. I am saying that the parents have to be dealt with if you are going to deal with this problem. Whether it is barbaric or not, I would lock up the mother and father until they say who the child is pregnant for.

Aside.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: You have all the evidence. The pregnancy is the evidence. You might call it barbaric but tough situations require tough action.

I have no intention, Sir, of merely trying to appeal to persons' sensitivities in certain regards, if you have a problem you have to deal with it. If it is the only way to get it solved then that is the way you have to solve it. I am sure that after the first one got locked up the rest would take a different approach altogether. A lot of mothers who are now in their beds sleeping at night and fathers who are somewhere drinking and their young girl children are outside on the road, they would start paying closer attention to what is going on. It is all of this that is contributing to the high incidence of HIV/AIDS in this country.

Do not let us fool ourselves that we are no more promiscuous than anybody else. Our society is a very promiscuous society and everything that we do, whether advertising a car, you have to show how sex is related to the quality of that car. If you are advertising rum, the same thing. Cigarettes, even sports nowadays you have to involve in some way demonstrating that there is a pretty woman there so you should come and see. Whether it is worldwide or not, we are dealing with our society and we are dealing with a problem which we face and a small society such as ours of 260 000 is a very small population. It is only a big population because of the relatively small size of our country but that number of people could be wiped out in no time.

We have to ensure that we have the people who can continue to keep this society alive. Perhaps my feeling in this regard is that I know from a scientific point of view how dangerous this is to any population. I am saying that if we do not do something to arrest the spread of HIV and AIDS in this country we would be in a serious problem. If persons believe that what I have said before is barbaric I will tell you that perhaps you do not feel this is as barbaric as the alternative suggestion because those persons have said it already. I fully support the view that we need to have legislation on the Statute Books as early as possible to deal with people who knowingly transmit the HIV/AIDS because other countries have done it.

Only recently, a man was imprisoned in Australia for attempted murder for having unprotected sex knowing that he was infected. We have heard stories, Sir, of people who say that somebody gave it to me so I am going to give it to somebody. That is a view that is expressed. I have heard of cases of young women knowing that they are infected and have got pregnant. This is why I am happy that the Government has taken the steps it has taken so far with respect to providing the medication for persons infected with AIDS because in the past when only pregnant women were getting the required medication there were women who were going and getting pregnant because they knew that during the time of their pregnancy they would get the medication. Can you want anything more barbaric than that? That is another way of continuing the spread of this disease in this country.

We have to take the bull by the horns as far as I am concerned and do what is necessary, and people must stop being too gentle and what the Americans refer to as liberal, cry-babyish, in some of the things that they express, and deal with this situation as it is supposed to be dealt with.

I have heard some of the plans outlined by the Government in respect of providing necessary medication and the education programme being planned and I have also seen some flyers put out by various organisations and booklets but I still do not get the impression that the message has gone over effectively to the wider population in this country. I still believe that there are people out there who do not understand the seriousness of this disease. There is a district in St. Michael where over a period of two years you had about six people from that district dying, all having been infected with HIV and all of them were linked to one woman either directly or indirectly. I live in Barbados, Sir, and I am sure that all of us hear these things but the problem is that we like to turn a deaf ear when it suits us. We have to be realistic about this and I believe that we need to get the message out there more effectively. Every Barbadian should know and understand the seriousness of this disease and everyone should feel that they have a role to play in the control and if possible the eradication of this disease. Everyone should feel it is important to them and that they

have a role to play. We should not treat it like a developmental plan where it is within a confined group. Let us treat it the same way that people in other cultures treat these issues.

2.20 p.m.

If the country has an objective, every citizen should know what it is. Every citizen should know his role and what should be done in order to help the Government attain its objective. This is not for the Prime Minister, the Minister of Health or any individual but every Barbadian has to play a role because what happens to this society will affect each and every one of us. As Senator Trotman said, if we look at it in economic terms, who will pay the pensions of those of us retiring soon.

Sir, I am becoming more and more conscious of the fact that I will soon be a pensioner.

Asides.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Yes, I am very old. I am old enough to retire.

Mr. President, we have to look at this disease from every angle, from the economic side, the moral side and most important from the point of view of the survival of a race as a species because any disease that is linked to the reproduction of any organism is a very dangerous disease and can lead to the total eradication of that organism. We are no different from any other animal, the only difference is that we have intelligence to know what is happening and we have the ability to use the necessary technology and means to deal with it.

Sir, if this disease had taken place 100 years ago, we would not be here now. If tuberculosis and the plague were so devastating, could you imagine if this disease had shown up among the human race at a time like that when the means to deal with it was not available? This tells you that this is a serious disease, that we should take off the kid gloves and let the Government send out to Barbadians a clear strategy as to how to approach this disease.

Those persons who have the responsibility to deal with this matter have the ability to do so and they must be provided with all the necessary resources. This Bill will provide some of the resources in terms of finance but one of the greatest resources that we need to have is the full cooperation of every Barbadian because we need to deal with this disease at the root.

Mr. President, I have no difficulty in supporting the Resolution but I hope that something is done to heighten the awareness so that every Barbadian feels that he has a role to play. It is okay to have advertisements but perhaps if more

people who are affected by the disease could expose the public to their condition, it would certainly help.

I know of a case where someone actually told another person infected with the disease that he was acting as if he had the common cold and not as though it was a serious disease that could affect other people's lives. Perhaps if more of us could see what this disease does to the individual we would believe that it is actually something that could touch us because any person could end up being a casualty because there are so many ways in which the disease could be transmitted.

Mr. President, a lot of the myths have been dispelled and people now know that there are several other ways in which the disease can be transmitted, that it is not restricted to any particular group of people and, therefore, we are all potential casualties.

Mr. President, I give my support to the Bill and encourage the Government to do whatever possible to heighten the awareness of the people of this country.

SENATOR THE HON. DAME PATRICIA SYMMONDS: Mr. President, whenever I hear the words AIDS mentioned, I am reminded of a famous quotation from Donne, Meditation No. 17. He says:

"No man is an Island, entire of itself;
Every man is a piece of the Continent,
A part of the main;....
...any man's death diminishes me,
Because I am involved in Mankind;
And therefore never send to know
for whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for thee."

Mr. President, it is most distressing and alarming as has been pointed out that the largest proportion of deaths is between 30 and 40 years. I also understand that every three days someone dies of AIDS. Thus this scourge, as it has been called, is a matter of concern for all of us as has been already mentioned and there are people doing all they can to try to alleviate, if not cure the disease.

Sir, I think first of all that volunteers on the hotline deserve much praise for the part they are playing. I understand that 80 percent of them are women and perhaps more sustained publicity about the hotline might attract more volunteers. Mr. President, I also want at this stage to praise the head of the Commission for the able way in which she is heading it.

I wish to dwell mainly on young people in whom I am naturally interested as I understand that the majority of them

are not taking this terrible disease seriously. The reason for this is that at their age they tend to think they are invincible. If they are told that the disease will kill them before they are 30 years old, they will say that at 30 years you are old anyhow so it does not matter.

I think too that AIDS is a social problem. It is often regarded as only a health problem, but there are mainly social problems which contribute to the contracting of the disease. For instance in the United States of America when it was noted in California among homosexuals, because of discrimination the disease spread. Adolescents are natural risk takers. These risks are generally associated with drug taking and alcohol, and the behavioural results in low achievers. Sir, because narcotics are costly, sex is sometimes the means of obtaining money. Thus, risk taking behaviour among adolescents becomes a problem, because their consultative skills are not fully developed and so are their social skills because of immaturity.
2.30 p.m.

Mr. President, an adolescent's thinking is typically concrete, they think in a self-centred way. They do not think of the consequences of their action and they do not have sufficient skills to see how vulnerable they are. It is like a baby who will pull down water on itself because he likes to touch.

In addition to believing that it cannot happen to them, they believe that unless they feel sick, nothing is wrong with them. Moreover, some of them, I understand, are having multiple sexual partners. There is some discretion on the part of intelligent adolescents but it is hard for some of them to know what is right and wrong. Some of them have very little opportunity to learn healthy moral processes. This lack contributes, not only to risk taking, but to what is appropriate.

Mr. President, there is a cliché that prevention is better than cure. I heard our Leader mention prevention, although in this case, regrettably, there is no cure although the quality and length of life can be improved but education is important.

There is a tremendous gap in knowing that children take risk. I think that there are strategies for prevention when dealing with children and teaching them how to avoid the risks. For instance, health educators could work with teachers in teams. They could introduce certain topics and discuss them with nurses or health educators. That way, the subject could be introduced. There could be greater dialogue with parents, because some parents do not know how to discuss sex with children. Mr. President, some parents, because of their religious beliefs may be opposed to sex education and have reservations.

When I was teaching, I found that some parents do not know how to talk to their children about sex education because they are embarrassed, and many times they leave it up to the teachers to talk to the children. There are some teachers who are also embarrassed to talk to children about sex.

Mr. President, there are other approaches to teach children how to make decisions regarding their careers. There is peer counselling, and peer training resistance needs to be more effective. There are subjects such as literature which can help children understand why certain behaviour is important. Children in the primary schools are being exposed to family life education. I would go as far as to say that they are well-informed but they must be taught to take responsibility for their personal role.

The question of translating knowledge into behavioural change is important. There is a need to encourage young people to take the test for AIDS. I understand that they have not been targeted and I think that this is crucial and they should be encouraged to take the test. There has been a certain degree of advertising and publicity on AIDS and some people feel that scare tactics would do the trick but it does not seem to work. Sir, in fact, there have been adverse effects to that sort of approach.

Mr. President, our young people have to be helped to see the future. They have to be encouraged to ask questions such as, if I had sex what would be the consequence? Will it be a child? What about my self-esteem? What about the talk and gossip that may ensue between the partners and friends?

Sir, abstinence is a possible solution but it does not seem to be practical. There are a lot of clubs in the United States of America where some children take an oath of abstinence until marriage. Very often children do not realise that abstinence is a solution. Surveys were done which realised that abstinence is not practical and, perhaps, we will have to find a way of making abstinence look attractive. We also have to look at other preventions such as safer sex, committed relationships, films and programmes and pictures which they see.

Mr. President, this legislation is extremely important and it reminds us of the proud, outstanding, insightful record of the Barbados Labour Party in the area of social legislation. It is one which should have the complete and unreserved support of everyone in this Honourable Chamber. I have the greatest pleasure in giving it my total support.

Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR THE HON P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I rise to support this Resolution and to comment that none of us has the perfect solution. The development of

this programme was a most interesting one and I would say that we owe a debt of gratitude to the officials of the World Bank, UNAIDS and PAHO for the assistance that they gave us in the development of this programme.

Nevertheless, it was on the initiative of the Government of Barbados that we determined that we would have to enter into an enhanced HIV/AIDS programme centred in the Prime Minister's Office where he would have to coordinate the activities of several Ministries which had specific and defined roles in the development of a programme to reduce HIV infection in Barbados.

The programme is one that is multifaceted. It embodies expanded testing, counselling and treatment for those with HIV/AIDS. It also embodies an expanded education programme for many different segments of the society because education is needed in many different ways. It is needed to bring the message home to the sexually active about the dangers of HIV infection and an effort to reduce promiscuity in the society.

Education is also needed between businesses and employers who have to understand how to deal with people who work for them and become HIV positive. It is about dealing with HIV in the work place.
2.40 p.m.

Mr. President, it is also educating the general public to develop a humane culture of tolerance, in which we deal with those who are HIV/AIDS infected in a humane and positive manner to afford them the best possible quality of life as they go through the trauma of being infected with HIV/AIDS. As has been said, we have been talking about HIV/AIDS treatment in this Chamber but the treatment is not a cure. It is to mitigate the effects of HIV/AIDS infection, to prolong life and to enhance the quality of life for as long as possible. It is hoped that we might do so for as long a time as a cure or a vaccine may become available but those things are far off in the horizon and no one should bank on them to date. Sir, that message has to get across to the general public.

This programme is a long-term, long-ranged programme. It is something that has to be done day in and day out, week in and week out, year in and year out, and for the next several generations as far as we can see. It is something that we have to have constant commitment to. It is something that we need to put up front. It is a very difficult and challenging thing to do to get the attention of people in a sustained manner for a very long period of time but that is what the threat of HIV/AIDS infection demands of us today. We have seen HIV/AIDS as both public health and developmental issues. It is very clear because of the tremendous mortality and broad nature of the infected in societies around the globe that the HIV/AIDS infection has

been devastating to certain economies and can have the potential to be devastating to the economies of the Caribbean.

Mr. President, this brings me to a point where we are finally starting to recognise the importance of public health issues in economic development and somehow practitioners have seen a divide or segregation between those two entities. We have to understand that a productive workforce can only be as productive if it is healthy. We have to understand the relationship between a healthy society and a high IQ society. We have to understand the relationships of public health and the ability of individuals to learn and to develop cognitive skills. Therefore, the importance of public health cannot be over-stressed in today's day and age when we are talking about economic development.

Mr. President, I was shocked to have read an editorial comment in the Wall Street Journal within the past week which was written by a physician who could not understand the linkages between economic development on the one hand and poverty and public health on the other hand. This clearly is a divide that I cannot reconcile, therefore, when we speak about the HIV/AIDS programme I think we must see it in the context of our overall public health efforts and that this is probably the major challenge to our public health efforts but cannot be divorced from it. Therefore, Mr. President, the Ministry of Health becomes central in the areas of testing, treatment and counselling but it is recognised that there are other important aspects to this programme that reside in the Ministries of: Tourism, Finance, Home Affairs, Education, Labour and the Attorney-General's Office. Therefore, that is the reason for centralising this in the Prime Minister's Office to have trans-ministerial authority and also to show that it is the political leader of this country who has galvanised the country in this action against HIV/AIDS.

Those countries around the globe where the political leader, even the Prime Minister or the President, has picked up the challenge have been most successful in combatting the disease. That is the reality of today and I think that the Prime Minister is to be commended for seizing this challenge and championing this cause, not only in Barbados but in the Caribbean Basin. Hence, we have had the Caribbean Conference on HIV/AIDS, which was sponsored by the World Bank and UNAIDS and which led to the development of this programme.

At this point, Mr. President, I would also like to talk about the regional nature of the problem of HIV/AIDS. It is important that our programme develop both regional contacts and support for the development of the HIV/AIDS programme in the Caribbean. We have to recognise the nature of population movement in the Caribbean. We have to recognise that we have families who are spread across the

Caribbean. We have businesses that have businessmen and women travelling across the Caribbean and interacting with each other. Sir, part of this is going to involve sexual contact and we have to recognise that we have a mobile society. We have to recognise that if Barbados had the most perfect anti-HIV/AIDS programme, we will still not be successful if the rest of the Caribbean does not come along with this programme. Therefore, it is important that this HIV/AIDS programme is developed in the context of regional cooperation and not just be island-centred, so to speak.

Sir, all over the world, the epidemic of HIV/AIDS is having a profound impact, bringing out the best and the worst in people. It triggers the best when individual groups, governments, communities and individuals gather together in solidarity to combat HIV/AIDS. They combat the denials and offer support and care to people living with HIV/AIDS. It brings out the worst when individuals are stigmatised and ostracised by their loved ones, their families and their communities and when individuals are being discriminated against individually as well as institutionally.

2.50 p.m.

I would hope that we would see the best in this Barbadian community come to the fore. I think we have to treat this disease with sensitivity, understanding and compassion. I was shocked to hear the comments of Senator McClean where he would incarcerate people for sexual transgression.

This is not the time for the development of a Barbadian Taliban. This is a time for understanding, compassion and care, particularly at this time of Christmas when the man who was born two thousand years ago, brought a message of hope to this world.

Mr. President, this is a devastating disease. It is one that we must join together and combat with the greatest sensitivity, determination and compassion. I commend the work of the Commission that has been formed to guide this programme forward and I commend the Government for placing resources at their disposal.

This is a ground-breaking programme. We have heard from the Minister who introduced the Resolution that this is a unique world first programme which may show the way for communities around the globe to tackle the HIV/AIDS programme.

This programme, as I said at the beginning, is one in which none of us has the perfect answer but we will be learning from it and the rest of the world will be learning from it. How well we do this programme, will benefit not just Barbadians, not just people in the Caribbean, but all of mankind. Believe me, the eyes of the world are on Barbados and how this HIV/AIDS programme progresses.

It is not a job just for the Government. It is not a job just for one ministry or the other and it is not a job just for the Prime Minister. It is a job for each and every one of us. It is something that we must be committed to and it is something that, as I said earlier on, must be day in, day out and every day of our lives for the rest of our lives.

Mr. President, I am very pleased to support this loan which is a fixed spectrum loan, with principal repayments linked to actual disbursements. Its currency is in United States Dollars and it maintains a variable rate consisting of six months libor and a spread that would be fixed at the time of signing. Therefore, July 15, 2001 and every six months therefore, payment is due and the repayment maturity and each disbursed amount, will have a grace period of three years and a final maturity of 10.5 years.

Mr. President, the money is one thing but the technical support in the development of this programme has been invaluable. In this, Barbados has benefited significantly from the World Bank, UNAIDS, and the Pan American Health Organisation and will continue to do so through the period of this programme, which will outlive me and possibly most of us here in this Senate today.

With that, Mr. President, I support this Resolution wholeheartedly. Thank you.

SENATOR THE Rev. L. W. B. ROCK: Mr. President, during the past weeks, like most of us, I have been following very carefully, the response of world leaders to the terrible act of September 11, 2001. What has impressed me, has been the collective support of world leaders and the almost evangelical zeal with which they have responded to that situation.

Again and again, Sir, I have reflected and thought that if the same zeal, enthusiasm and commitment of world leaders could be extended to the alleviation of poverty across the world and if it could be extended to tackling diseases such as HIV/AIDS, then I have no doubt that victory would be accomplished.

HIV/AIDS is a terror. It is a terror that threatens the world and it is most heartening that in our small country of just 250 000 people, that we have taken the initiative which we have so far, in responding to this challenge. I, like others in this Chamber, would like to laud the efforts of the Government. I would like also to praise all those who are engaged in meeting this challenge which faces us. I do not think that our praise can be adequate for the commitment, devotion and all that is being done to do the best that we can in this situation.

Sir, in praising the efforts of those who are working to arrest this threat of HIV/AIDS, I think we should also

remember those families that have accepted the responsibility of caring for loved ones and the devotion, courage and all of the qualities which are demonstrated in the efforts they are making to support, to encourage and to communicate with those who have been affected by HIV/AIDS, and also the sense of love and care which they need in such situations and even more so, to reaffirm that they are human beings, they are persons created in the image and likeness of God and that they are persons that are loved by God. I think that this is very important.

Someone has said that there are many faces to AIDS. There is the face of the woman, the man, the unborn child, the boy, the girl, you name it and there is also of the common humanity which we share. I believe that in our consideration and reflection about this terror, the thought which should occupy the minds of each of us in this Chamber, and those outside of this Chamber is, "There but for the grace of God, go I."

I believe that if we look at those who are affected by HIV/AIDS in this way, we will find the compassion, care and love that we need to communicate to them and give them a sense of hope, belief and self esteem.
3.00 p.m.

I want in my contribution to support whatever educational efforts are being made because the dissemination of information must continue. I believe that one of the frustrations of those who are working in this area must come when with all that is being done by way of education there seems to be an attitude which suggests that it cannot happen to me.

I wonder, Sir, I am not sure, whether part of this attitude which we must face and examine carefully is not related to what I want to call a lack of purpose and meaning in life for many people. The institutions of the church, the family, the school and all those institutions that form and shape personality and character could have failed through the strategies and all that is employed in forming personalities and characters in communicating and transmitting the value and the meaning of life. I am not sure, I am merely suggesting that this is something that we need to look at.

How do we explain, with the high standard of education we have by way of transmitting the information, that somehow we still seem not to be reaching people with the message of the death threat which HIV/AIDS holds for them? That is why I feel that possibly it is the devaluation of life which is evident. Possibly it is that we have lost what is the meaning of life in that we have tended to define life very much in terms of the material things we have in life. Rather than defining life, we interpret who we are, our

responsibilities for ourselves and our responsibilities for others and the contribution which we are called to make in our society to enable one another to live a better quality and standard of life. Maybe this is an area which we need to explore and analyse as part of the whole educational thrust in this effort to combat HIV/AIDS.

I owe this to a priest whose works I examine and cherish, a man called Henri Nouwen, who has made the suggestion that there is a relatedness between the valuing of life and the loss of the sense of community. What he is suggesting is that AIDS is not related to the sense of loneliness which some people experience like the sense of meaninglessness which they experience and that the risk of death entering into relationships which are harmful and dangerous may be a cry for intimacy, communion and meaningfulness.

Again, I believe that this is something we need to pay some attention to because in our society the sort of support in terms of the extended family and the sort of community where there is an interdependence seems to be decreasing rather than to be increasing. Maybe there is that cry for somebody to love and to care and to give meaning and purpose to their lives even in the face of relationships that are potentially dangerous and life threatening which young people are prepared to engage in.

I want to suggest, as has been suggested in the presentation of this Resolution, that an area of research could be done, if it is not already being done, in the area of the sociological and the psychological factors that are influencing the attitudes of our people. In other words, what I am suggesting is in all of the research that is being done, there ought to be a societal examination to seek to discover what it is that is influencing the attitudes of both the young and the old who seem not to be responding to or to be aware of the potential threat that HIV/AIDS poses. Could it be that there is such a loss of self-esteem and respect that life has become less meaningful to people? I do not know what the answers are but I throw these thoughts into the discussion because I believe that our approach has to be holistic and has to be one which seeks to look at the particular issue in relation to everything else that is happening in the society because it is only when we do this that we may find some of the answers that we are searching for and be able to help to strengthen the efforts that are presently being made.

I want to lend my support to this Bill. I believe that a very important witness which this Chamber can make to the wider society is for every member here to give support to the Resolution as a collective witness to the society that we need each other and that it is only to the extent that we are all joined together with missionary zeal that we will be able to achieve the goals which are being set to prevent, to arrest and to eliminate this particular scourge from our society.

I commend the Government for the steps already made and for the efforts already implemented to sustain the programme. I commit myself personally to whatever I can do to help in this regard.

I thank you.
3.10 p.m.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, I believe that at the outset I should say that I would wish to speak very candidly to the Chamber during the course of this debate. For me, what this debate is about is that it turns heavily, above and beyond our efforts to fight HIV/AIDS, on the hard reality that within the Caribbean, within the ages of 15-35, and I have heard it being extended to 40 and in some instances to 45, Caribbean people have the unhappy position of being the holders of the position where we have the second highest incidence of AIDS outside of sub-Saharan Africa.

Sir, it impacts on me because I am the youngest member of this Chamber and, indeed, I fall within that age group of 15 to 35 and if my memory serves me correctly and I think it does I am the only member of this bi-cameral legislature of Barbados who falls within that age group. Therefore, I feel I also must speak on the behalf of a generation which is in real terms a generation that faces the threat of genocide because removed of all the niceties and the statistics, what we face is a future in a set of economies which are largely tourist driven in nature where, outside of sea, sun and sand and in one or two instances where there is a little bit of bauxite and a little bit of oil, we depend in large measure on our humanity as our principal and primary resource.

Senator Trotman has spoken, as has other Senators, at length about the economic implications and I would not attempt to cover that ground but the reality is that we face, my generation that is, having to battle with the obliteration of our human capital, the obliteration of our intellectual and social capital, the obliteration of prospects for a happy tomorrow. In a real sense, we are almost at the precipice of what has been called the Hobbesian state of existence where life is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. That is the situation which my generation faces, Sir.

It is against that background that I would want to say to this Honourable Chamber that I feel duty bound to applaud two developments which come out of the Resolution before the House. First of all, it is simply that, as has been said before, Barbados was graduated some six years ago from the World Bank and it is therefore useful and worthy of applause that the Government of Barbados has been able to be the first government, and Barbados the first country to be able to go back to the Bank and impact with such moral force as to be

able to secure, if this Resolution passes, access to funding for its social and humanitarian development purpose after graduation.

The second point is that the Prime Minister has taken the initiative of placing himself and his Office at the forefront of this battle against HIV/AIDS. Sir, we have as one example, the placement of the AIDS czar within the Office of the Prime Minister. It has been suggested from the Opposition Bench and I believe in a very tongue-in-cheek manner that the Office of the Prime Minister becomes too burdened and it takes on too much.

Sir, I think that we need to place certain things within the proper perspective and I intend so to do. It has happened also with culture. You hear the same things being said about culture. We are speaking about a situation, if I use the culture analogy, where culture in Barbados or culture in the Caribbean can no longer be seen in simplistic terms of a "wuk-up" and a "pooch-back", as the people would say. Sir, it is becoming intellectual property. It is becoming the need to understand that our people are an exceptionally talented people and out of that must come copyright and an understanding of copyright, an understanding of patenting of the developments that we have.

Equally, Sir, with regard to HIV/AIDS we have to understand that leadership is what this exercise is about. There is a column, Sir, written by your humble servant and I have to thank the *Nation* newspaper for that window of opportunity. It is entitled "Root of the Matter" and I would urge that members of the Opposition make it compulsory reading, those who do not already do so. Some months ago, Sir, I implored and exhorted leaders not only in the Caribbean but in the developing world to come to the recognition that South to South dialogue is essential if we are to impact on institutions such as the World Trade Organisation that would have us accept that anti-retroviral drugs should only be accessed by us in the developing world via the patented route of the big pharmaceutical companies.

My exhortation, Sir, falls along the similar lines of the Prime Minister's leadership because it is when leaders of the developing world associate the weight and the influence of their office, and I make the point to the Honourable Senators that the Office of the Prime Minister in the Caribbean country is in some ways in terms of weight and influence within that domicile greater than the Office of the President of the United States of America because of the reach of the Prime Minister within the domicile. When you collectively have that weight of leaders across the developing world impacting with moral force, then institutions such as the World Trade Organisation that would have us accept that we have nought to do but to throw our hands in the air and lie in a supine position before big powers like them may come to a Christian understanding of the urgency and the necessity

for us to try to be able to access anti-retroviral drugs of an equally effective nature but in a cheaper way so as to more meaningfully combat the scourge that threatens genocide for my generation.

Sir, I say in no uncertain terms that I believe the message that my generation would want to send is that in the same way that the World Trade Organisation finds it possible to make concessions to protect French culture and they find it possible to make concessions to protect European farmers and European farming, similarly they must find it possible to make concessions to protect African and Caribbean humanity. That is the message that my generation would want to send.

I would want also to say that for me part of the consideration that we must have in debating this Resolution is that we must come to terms with what I call the contradictions of dealing within our society with this matter and I would want to deal at some length with some of these contradictions. I give the Senate but one example. One of our members in a very praiseworthy and highly laudatory initiative took some years ago the challenge to a newspaper in this country on the basis of its offensive and lewd content. He must be congratulated, Sir, because the initiative was successful. Having taken that initiative, persons within the private sector were heard to hop on a bandwagon and, as a young man in Barbados, I heard persons of influence within the private sector agree with our member and his initiative but even as that success was felt on the newspaper stands in Barbados those same persons with an interest in similar businesses continued to sell competing material magazines, papers, publications of various forms and the question that comes out to the young person watching this is why is it wrong only for the goose but not wrong for the gander, why is there that contradiction.

We have another contradiction where we have, for example, access on our televisions and I would want to declare an interest because I sit on the board of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation. If the Chairman was here, Sir, he would tell you that I am one of those who is seen as being a little unorthodox in some of my suggestions but I find it difficult to accept, Sir, that we ask our young people to consume the garbage that is broadcast via HBO. 3.20 p.m.

Sir, you may not be aware of this but at prime time during the week our young people can access programmes like "Sex in the City", adult pictures which are essentially making light of multiple partnership relations, bisexual and homosexual relations and making light of the use or non-use of contraception.

I heard Honourable Senators whose hair has gone gray asked a very pertinent question and it befalls me to answer

it because my hair has not yet gone gray and perhaps I am more attuned to how persons of my generation are feeling. The question being asked is: Why do our young people behave the way they do or take this disease lightly?

Sir, young people do not believe that they are invincible. I genuinely believe they think that it is not a worthwhile message because we are saying, do as I say but not as I do. We have to understand that there is a reality in Barbados and across the world where abstinence is not easily practised.

When we read in the newspapers that twelve-year old boys have had their first sexual experience, we must not turn a blind eye as legislators to the fact that the same newspaper told us a few months ago that fifteen-year old girls were using anal intercourse as a form of contraception.

We have to confront as a society the reality that our young people are sexually active. We can approach them via education but it cannot be an education which speaks in terms of nameless, faceless, shapeless organs of the body which has no impact. We have to get serious and confront our young people with a form of sexual education which enlightens them to the reality that the neighbourhood paedophile is enlightening and inviting them to, which enlighten them to the reality that the Internet is inviting them to, that television and the cinema are inviting them to and that there is a thing called oral sex, anal sex and multiple forms of disease that can be spread.

Sir, I suspect that this will cause some eyebrows to raise but I think that as early as from primary school this happens because if at twelve years old you had your first sexual experience the chances are that it happened while you were at primary school. If at age fifteen years, you are saying you have practised anal sex as a form of contraception then essentially, as good-thinking responsible citizens and legislators we have to nip this in the bud. Sir, my view is that we have to get to our young people before the neighbourhood paedophile does or the corner store newsstand does.

Sir, I can only suggest that perhaps the time has come where we in Barbados appreciate that we cannot on one hand be a liberal and permissive society by night and then be the most conservative society by day. I also want to make the point that certain basics which we find in North America and other parts of the developed world, which we have frowned upon in this country for some strange reason, need to be implemented.

One that easily comes to my mind is the absence of a condom-dispensing machine in every public rest room

because the reality is that if our young people are sexually active, then above and beyond education, which I completely and wholeheartedly encourage and support, above and beyond moral instructions which I completely urge, we also have to involve them in the confrontation of some practical way of access to contraception.

Sir, it would be remiss of me not to raise a relevant issue of contraception at Her Majesty's Prisons. Sir, I am in support of the idea of the use of condoms at Her Majesty's Prisons but I want to speak to the question of the contradiction, this time in law. Sir, our sexual offences legislation in Barbados makes buggery an offence punishable by life imprisonment. Sir, as legislators we cannot be presumed to indulge in absurdity. We must be in a position to explain to our young people and if you are saying that you are going to dispense condoms, which is a useful thing, under what law are we doing this? Do we then not have to move with alacrity to bring our legislation into a form and fashion whereby we can do that effectively?

Equally, Sir, we would need to look at the prisons' rules because the automatic question would be, who will dispense the condoms, how many are going to be dispensed, how often are inmates going to get these condoms and how do you know when they have had enough condoms. Those are the questions that will be asked and those are the things on which our legislation is silent.

Sir, this a plaintive cry for a generation facing genocide and we must deal with this matter in a mature, responsible and swift fashion. Sir, while I am on the question of legislation, I want to make the point that the same Sexual Offences Act goes to great length to speak about suppression of brothels and suppressing the capacity of persons to earn a living off prostitution.

Sir, as Senator McClean said earlier, we live in Barbados and a visit to White Park Road or Pinfold Street tonight, not because the lawyer's offices are there because their doors are then shut and the lights are out but, Sir, there are often traffic jams on those roads at nights where persons are engaged in the business of making a living from selling their flesh in this country. Sir, the same thing will apply if you take a drive by the Garrison Savannah and go through Bush Hill at night.

Sir, the reality is that if we see these things happen even though there is legislation in place and the legislation is being honoured in the breach what then do we as legislators do? We have to speak to the well-being and the continued livelihood and existence of a society which is threatened by the scourge of HIV/AIDS.
3.30 p.m.

It would seem to me that we now have a crisis of conscience before the Parliament of Barbados. On one hand, we have to recognise what is taking place in this country, we have to recognise that all of those activities that I referred to continue to take place and will take place tonight and tomorrow night. Sir. At the other end of the coin, we have to decide what steps we will take to protect those commercial sex workers from infecting the rest of our society.

Sir, other societies have been sufficiently mature to say, we invite you in for mandatory health checks; but that cannot happen in Barbados, not under the legislation that currently exist. This is because the legislation suppresses the existence and we treat the suppression as though it is in effect taking place, when we know that when we leave here tonight and are driving to our respective homes, Honourable Senators will not stop, but will see these activities taking place.

Our young people are being asked to do the impossible. They are asked to pick sense from the messages which we are sending, when those messages are completely contradictory. I am very glad to hear part of Senator McClean's speech which referred to a novel and distinct form of caveman creeping into public life. I was afraid of that part, Sir. I was happy to hear the maturity of the Opposition. It may be under Senator Mascoll's new leadership.

Asides.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, I was glad to hear the level of maturity because it tells me that the time has come in Barbados when we may be able to sit down in a bipartisan manner and try to address some of these contradictions and to resolve them in a manner which is useful for the people of the country.

I want to touch on a matter above and beyond the commercial sex trade. There is a question which disturbs me, the professional privileges in this country. Doctors and lawyers enjoy a professional privilege. Recently, I had to deal with a matter of that nature before the court. If you come to me as an attorney, you can say certain things to me in confidence. The privilege is not mine. It is yours. If that privilege is to be waived, it can only be waived with your permission, the same thing applies in the case of a doctor.

However, if a spouse becomes affected with HIV/AIDS and he goes to the doctor and the doctor has made the diagnosis, the doctor is incapable under the privilege of informing the spouse. Therefore, one has to rely upon the goodwill of the spouse. The reality is, one cannot always rely upon the goodwill of the spouse. I know of one or two situations where persons have been so affected and have taken the option not to say anything either because of shame and embarrassment, uncertainty and fear or some other reason.

Mr. President, the same way that an insurance company can protect its financial interest and financial investment in insuring a person by receiving knowledge as to what the insured person's condition may be, then I believe that the spouse should also have that privilege.

Sir, this is my personal belief, Honourable Senators may disagree entirely. I believe that we need to recognise that spouses in Barbados take not only a financial risk but also an emotional and physical risk. I have heard the Honourable Minister of Physical Development making the point that the Offences Against the Persons Act is another piece of legislation we should look at. A person knowingly and willingly continuing to have sexual intercourse with another who is innocent and unsuspecting, that person who knowingly and willingly has the intercourse being infected by AIDS, he or she has left his partner with a death sentence.

Therefore, it is a form of violence done to the person and there should be some remedy in law to the victim. There should be some criminal punishment to the person who inflicts it that does not now exist in our legislation.

I made the point simply to say that I am deeply concerned that there are a number of issues which go above and beyond the initiatives that Government is taking now. I believe that these issues must be treated as fundamental companion issues to any initiatives that are taken in terms of a fight in a long-term campaign against HIV/AIDS in Barbados. The reason why I believe this, is because the message that is being sent is that there are too many contradictions within the system and we cannot get our young people on board, we cannot win the confidence of our society if one can point their finger to these numerous contradictions and no useful or satisfactory explanation can be offered. Sir, that would be tantamount to spitting in the sky and letting it fall in our faces.

I do not think that Parliament would be inclined to turn a blind eye to looking at some of these pieces of legislation. I do hope that a level of responsibility and maturity would make us come to the understanding that gone, hopefully forever, are the days when one is so conservative about the question of sexual intercourse and the possibilities that can flow from it, that one does not confront these issues. Our society needs to have an open and heartfelt discussion on the direction in which we are going and how best we can address some of these problems.

I am part of that age cohort. Fortunately, I am at the outer limit of the age cohort but I genuinely fear for those who are five and seven years old, because for them there are no roller coasters. They came into this world when the roller coaster had stopped and the party is over. Therefore, every

conceivable precaution has to be taken, whether it is a moral, educational or a legislative precaution taken to salvage that generation from the threat that it now faces.

I thank you, Sir.
3.40 p.m.

SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD: Mr. President, I have here an HIV/AIDS epidemic update dated December 2001. It is published jointly by UNAIDS and the World Health Organization and gives a global overview of the situation. I quote:

"Twenty years after the first medical evidence in Immune Deficiency Syndrome was recorded, AIDS has become the most devastating disease ever faced by humankind. Since the epidemic began, more than 60 million people have been infected with the virus. HIV/AIDS is now the leading cause of death in sub-Saharan Africa. Worldwide it is the fourth biggest killer ... At the end of 2001, an estimated 40 million people globally are living with HIV/AIDS.

In many parts of the developing world the majority of new infections occur in young adults with young women especially vulnerable. About one-third of those currently living with HIV/AIDS is between 15 and 24. Most of them do not know they carry the virus. Millions more know nothing or too little about HIV/AIDS to protect themselves against this disease..."

I think that brief overview highlights the seriousness of the situation globally. Research also indicates that 95 per cent of all HIV/AIDS cases are in the developing world and that 67 per cent of all cases are in sub-Saharan Africa.

Mr. President, I have some more statistics here but I will just concentrate globally. These statistics deal with the end of the year 2000.

"Infected persons with HIV/AIDS in the year 2000 are estimated to be 5.3 million. The number of persons living with HIV/AIDS at the end of 2000 is 36.1 million – approximately 4 million per year. HIV/AIDS deaths in the year 2000 are three million. Total number of HIV/AIDS deaths since the beginning of the epidemic is 21.8 million."

Sir, as is said, sub-Saharan Africa is by far the worst case. Adults and children living and affected with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa at the end of 2000 is 25.3 million, which translates into an adult prevalence rate of 8.8 per cent. That prevalence rate is defined this way: it is the portion of adults between 15 and 49 living with HIV/AIDS at the end of 2000, using 2000 population numbers. That index was

8.8 per cent. The next highest index is the Caribbean where there were 390,000 adults and children living with HIV/AIDS at the end of 2000 and the adult prevalence rate of 2.3 per cent which compares with the sub-Saharan Africa of 8.8 per cent. No other country exceeds 1 per cent. Sir, nothing to boast about but that is the reality.

Sir, this HIV/AIDS has been described, quite rightly, as a scourge. It is difficult to find anything in history with which to compare. Probably the closest would be the bubonic plague also known as the "black death". That plague broke out in the early 1330's in China. Fleas off rats transferred the disease to human. Traders from Europe picked it up in trading ports in China and it was brought back to Sicily (the Mediterranean basin) in 1347. Within a year, the disease had spread far north from Sicily and reached as far north as England. After five years, it was estimated that the disease had killed one-third of Europe's population at that time or 25 million people.

Sir, proportionately it was probably much worse than HIV/AIDS that we are debating today, but they did not have any medical knowledge or methods of treatment to deal with it. Sir, in that situation lies the lesson; we cannot take that lightly. I am proud to see that our Government here is taking it very seriously.

Sir, the Addendum to the Resolution says:

"The main objective to the project is to strengthen the national response in the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Barbados. The specific objectives are:

- (a) to increase the programme in the prevention of the epidemic targeted in particular to high-risk groups in the population,
- (b) to strengthen the institutional capacity of participating agencies to ensure the effectiveness and the sustainability of the project."

Mr. President, this is a societal problem and every component within the society has to be aware and to be alerted to its responsibility in dealing with this, but if I may narrow it down, there is the medical aspect where there is need for early diagnosis, treatment and proper care. Thus, the question of the management, institutional strengthening and the medical aspect cannot be handled in a vacuum. There has to be the management and the institutional strengthening to deal with the diagnosis, treatment and care.

Sir, the third key that I have narrowed it down to is that of education. Education, as has been said, is probably the key component: the facts have to be known. One cannot assume that they are known. The methods of transmission have to be

known, mainly through sexual transmission – homosexual or heterosexual, but there are other means of transmission, as has been stated here in the brief.

Sir, if we do not have the resources in this island to deal with it, resources like this can be found outside. One of those resources is the American Red Cross HIV/AIDS Programme for Youth (ACT SMART Programme). It is training trainers to go around within the society starting with young children. They are focussing very much on the youth. Youth is divided into three sections – ages 6 to 9, 10 to 13 and 14 to 17 and obviously the level of sophistication will change as the age group changes. Sir, it is done with the use of slides, games, lecturing, and to build the awareness and consciousness of the dangers of HIV/AIDS. Sir, this programme, as has been said, is appropriate for youth groups, clubs, day camps, school health classes, community centres, residential facilities.

I submit, Sir, the Government may want to pursue this but this is not the only source. We do not have to reinvent the wheel. Other more developed countries, having access to greater resources, have been experimenting and we can benefit from their learning experience. That is not to say that we cannot use our own insight and initiatives but it is such a serious problem that we cannot assume that we have all the answers. Therefore, I commend the Government on what they are doing. I encourage them to research further means of getting this programme accelerated because we cannot afford for it to fail.

I support the Resolution, Sir. I thank you.
3.50 p.m.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. President, it is clear that I will support the Resolution before the Chamber, and I want to compliment the Government for having been able to secure the funding which is necessary for this programme.

I do not want to cover grounds covered by other persons and many of the grounds raised by Senator Kerrie Symmonds are very valuable and I think those who are directing and administering the programme should read and take careful note of what has been said.

I want also to say, Sir, people say that God is a Bajan and I am more minded to accept that because while I want to compliment Senator Philip Goddard for his leadership of the Senate, his work in Government and his knowledge of many facets of life in this country, I must say it is even more praiseworthy now that the Minister of Health is a medical practitioner.

It is said that Ministers should not try to get involved in the day-to-day issues of their ministries. I would beg that this

Minister gets involved, particularly in the direction where we are going in dealing with this HIV/AIDS programme. I believe from his medical training, he would have greater ideas than the functionaries of Government of what is necessary, if we are to bring any sort of control to this devastating disease which has struck us.

The thing about HIV/AIDS is that nobody seems to know where it started or how it started. It was once said it was started with monkeys in Africa. They put all sorts of connotations into its existence and where it came from but nobody seems to be able to pin it down exactly. Therefore, researchers are moving all over the place trying to find something to at least control it.

I have had a look at some of the documentation dealing with the HIV/AIDS programme and it has been brought to my attention that there is not a chemical research component of that programme. I would wish the Leader of the Senate who is a medical doctor to take a careful look at that because I have been told – right or wrong because I am no doctor so I do not know – that the HIV/AIDS virus mutates and that there are different viruses in Cuba, in the United States and there might be different ones in Barbados. Therefore, the cocktail we may acquire from somewhere else might not deal effectively with our strain of the virus in Barbados so it is therefore absolutely necessary, in my view, that we bring on board chemical researchers who can tell whether or not we have the same virus or the same strain of virus as somewhere else. Otherwise, we might be spending money with all these anti-retroviral commodities which may not do what we expect them to do.

Nobody can doubt that it is the scourge which nobody thought about and nobody knew where it was going. According to my information, at its present rate, it is liable to wipe out one-third of our population, if we do not harness it quickly. The thing with Barbados is that we have set up a National Insurance Scheme in which contributions of one generation has to maintain those of the older generations. If this disease is now prevalent between the 14-year olds up to the 39-year olds, it means when you wipe out that band of people, there are not workers to make contribution to pay the older group of retired people who would have contributed to a scheme and now cannot get their pension, and that is where the danger lies.

Sir, that is why I compliment the Prime Minister who is Minister of Finance for taking it into his Ministry because he will have the financial headache to balance the Budget if and when he is around and this situation develops.

Sir, I think – and I have discussed this outside of the Chamber – we need to look at a very serious programme in our sexual education of our four or five year olds up to the nine year olds. We must have that programme in place now

and I will tell you something, I will beg the Commission, to bring one of the criminal lawyers on board the Commission who can tell them the stories that we know about in the courts. Then, they will begin to know the problem they have on their hands in dealing with the population and the age of sexual activities in this country.

Sir, they should be brought under the criminal lawyers. I can relate experiences I had over the last few years of girls under the age of 15 who were involved in sexual activities and they will not tell you who is involved. They go to court and they pretend that they are ignorant of everything and they frustrate prosecutors.

Last year, I had a revelation in a man who was charged with four counts of having sex with a girl under the age of 15 and three counts of bugging her and the mother stood up in the court room and said, "I do not know why your father is bringing her here and why he does not get out of the girl's business." Sir, a girl under the age of 15 and that is what the mother said. The girl came in court and told the magistrate that she had nothing to say but it is when the magistrate dismissed the case, what she told the boy on the way out.

Sir, these are the things that the HIV/AIDS Commission must find out and until you get into the real element of young people and what they are doing, I do not believe that you know where you are going. I have a suggestion. The Police Department gets a sum of money where detectives and investigating officers can pay informers. The HIV/AIDS Commission must adopt the same policy because you cannot sit down in a board-room and develop plans for HIV/AIDS without knowing what is happening in the community. You will have to get the boys and the girls on the block. We have a belief in Barbados and I have gone to several talks and lectures, *et cetera*, and I heard people say that we carried out a survey, we went in Eden Lodge and we talked to the fellows on the block and that you do not get any information that way but you get what you want to hear.

Sir, if you go into the Pine and you talk to the fellows on the block, you get what you want to hear. They are just as intelligent as you, and when you are gone, they say, "I tell them what they want to hear." You will have to get some of those people on the block into your confidence and pay them a fee to listen to the others around the corners and then come back and tell you what is being said. It is the only way you are going to know what is going on. Do not believe when you tell me that you carried out a survey and this is it.

I will tell you something else, Sir, part of the programme is to set up their walk-in clinic at Ladymeade. It will not work. I bet that it will not work and I will tell you why.
4.00 p.m.

In the 1970's and 1980's when the Barbados Labour Party said that they would build a mental clinic within the walls of the mental hospital, the researchers came back and said, "Yes, but outside on the streets the people told us that they were not going to go in there", that everybody would say that they are mad. So, the politicians took a decision to build a separate clinic outside not within the walls of the mental hospital.

Only last week, I had a case of a man who was in an accident. He was very badly injured and could scarcely hold his back upright. He went to a doctor but the insurance company insisted that he should go to a particular doctor, so he went. When the report came back...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Bolden, I hate to interrupt you, is this matter still before the courts?

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: No, no, Sir, I know better than that, Sir, with all due respect.

...in the report was, "My secretary watched him when he left the office, he sat down on a block and a lady picked him up, we now believe that he is injured". I say that for this reason. The day you have a walk-in clinic at Ladymeade you cannot stop anybody around that area from looking to see who is going in and then they will say, "Hey, I see John Brown went in the AIDS clinic, he got HIV", and nobody else will walk in. Check the record and you will see.

I was in England during the 1960's and they had a sexually transmitted disease clinic outside the walls of Hammersmith Hospital. I remember it well. It was opened on a Monday morning with a line of people but by the Wednesday nobody was there. Nobody is going to line up to do that. Bajans do not tell you when they are sick or what is wrong with them. Your best friend will die and if you go and ask his wife or his brother or sister what was wrong with him, they will say, "Oh, he had something." They do not tell you what. So do not tell me that you are going to have a walk-in clinic out there at Ladymeade and people are going to walk off the road into it.

I still believe what I have been saying in this Chamber for a long time. We have rats in abundance in Barbados but a system is maintained where part of the money is in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and part is in the Ministry of Health and we have a Vector Section to go out and put down rat poison. We cannot do anything with rat poison but feed it to the rats. So give it to the agricultural station and let the people collect free and set it.

So I will say the same thing about the anti-retroviral remedies for HIV/AIDS. Give it to the doctors and find some method of recording it, even if they have to pass legislation that the doctors have to provide you with information to

whom it has been given so that you can check whether it is being given for free or not and you will get more people walking in to the doctor getting treatment and coming back out than to have an open clinic asking people to walk in and let the public know that they have HIV/AIDS. That is my view and I will say that all the time.

Another point we have is this: Are there school teachers on the HIV/AIDS Commission? Because you have only got to talk to a couple of school teachers from certain schools in Barbados and when they tell you what is happening in their schools, you will begin to know what is the sexuality of our people and then you will begin to know where your disease is going to come from. These are things that are necessary. We must control it no matter what we say. We have to accept an orthodox means of getting down to the basis of this thing if we have to control it. There is no question of us setting up a commission that will stay above what is happening with thoughts of what is happening on the ground. We must know for sure what is happening on the ground with our people in order to cure it. There is no doubt about it.

I have read in the newspaper of people who are known to be HIV/AIDS positive who are turning up at the hospital pregnant, so they are obviously having unprotected sex. But did they tell the partner that they have the disease? Obviously not. So what is going to happen? That person will have the baby and will be back out on the road. I am not asking for us to go as drastic as some other countries have gone by isolating people, but we must reach a position that if a woman knows she is HIV positive and turns up at the hospital pregnant we have to be able to do something with her. You cannot send her back out on the street to come in again.

The next point is this. Senator Kerrie Symmonds raised the issue when he talked about Her Majesty's Prisons and raises a very difficult proposition. If you distribute condoms in the Prison you are saying you accept that homosexuality takes place within the Prison so you are issuing condoms for protection. That is the first thing that you are doing. That is the first point I am going to raise. The question you have to ask is how are you going to do it because the prison officers are already saying that they are not getting involved in that. But leaving out that aspect of it, if a man in Prison can be aided and abetted in committing homosexuality – buggery as I am told by the nurse – when he is released from Prison and he has already been infected in the Prison, what is going to happen when he gets home?

So we have several positions that we have to analyse carefully. We need careful analysis on all of this in order for us to understand how best we are going to tackle this because it must be tackled.

Less than two weeks ago, we had facing us, a march by the gay community. Now, what are we doing? What are we saying? We have to do something. We cannot...

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: On a point of order. Mr. President, I think the Honourable Senator is unwittingly misleading the Chamber when he said that there was a march by the gay community. It was a march by the United Gay and Lesbians Against AIDS in Barbados in conjunction with the HIV/AIDS Committee to commemorate World AIDS Day. These are two different things altogether.

4.10 p.m.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: United Gays and Lesbians Against AIDS.

I am not saying it is legal or illegal. All I am saying is that we have several problems which we need intensive investigation to know exactly how to handle the problem. We cannot sit down and make assumptions that we are right. These are problems we have because we must tackle the disease. We cannot let it flow. We must try and contain it where it is at the moment, if possible, because it affects the lifeblood of Barbados. It affects our economic development. It affects the manner of looking after our old people. Therefore, it is something that needs to be looked at carefully.

Last, but not least, I would like the Commission to talk to the police about what happens on the mini-buses and the ZR vehicles because if you talk particularly to the traffic policemen they will tell you the number of times you pass a bus and all the passengers are in two backseats and what is happening there among school children. How are we going to deal with the school children? We need to get at the parents to begin with. We must recognise and admit that we have numerous young mothers in Barbados and we have to ask ourselves did they receive the necessary training in order that they can train their young offspring. I think we must have a coordinated approach to AIDS so that at the end of the day we can say the money borrowed from the World Bank was a worthwhile loan and has done exactly what we were hoping it would do.

With that, Sir, I congratulate the Government on this Resolution.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Mr. President, I rise to make my contribution to this Resolution to borrow US\$15.1 million from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. What I would like to say up front is that about two decades ago I was one of the few foot soldiers in the fight against HIV/AIDS and I was here as Health Education Officer responsible for health education in Barbados. It is not only the doctors who should be

congratulated for the work they have done but also the nurses including Peggy Rickinson. I was Peggy Thompson at that time.

In fact, Mr. President, I would like to say that this AIDS booklet which was the first booklet was prepared by myself in collaboration with BAMP. It is a booklet on general information for doctors, dentists, nurses and paramedical personnel. Actually, I prepared it, but I was told that if my name appeared on the booklet the doctors would not read it and therefore it was better to put a publication of the Ministry of Health and the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners. This is the document here that I typed and prepared for the Ministry of Health in those days. It was published in 1985.

Mr. President, I really have vested interest in this Resolution. In fact, I will list a few of my interests:

1. As an active participant in the fight against HIV/AIDS since 1985;
2. The prevention as a primary determinant as opposed to cure;
3. A national health education unit to focus not only on HIV/AIDS but on all other communicable and so-called epidemics of chronic diseases, for example, like diabetes, hypertension;
4. The promotion not only of sensitizing and the awareness of victims and relatives with HIV/AIDS but we also need promotion and education.

Now that I have declared my interests, Mr. President, I would like to elaborate further. I welcome the comments by Senator Murray who said that he did acknowledge that HIV/AIDS needs a more structured, coherent manner, if not, the future of Barbados could be in serious trouble. In other words, they need a more structured and coherent programme. It is my view, humbly, that he has hit the nail on the head and I will tell you why.

Can you imagine that I am standing here saying that I was in the forefront in 1985 for the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and we are in the year 2001 and the Government of Barbados is rightly concerned that if something is not done immediately that our population will be decimated to the extent that we will not have a workforce to work and help contribute not only to economic development but also to the livelihood of our senior citizens? As you know, Mr. President, we have an aging population and not much is being said or done about that. That is another matter for another time.

Mr. President, what went wrong between 1985 and the year 2001? I have my views and I will tell this Chamber about my views. Other people might not agree with them but they are my views. The first time I heard about the first HIV case in Barbados I was at a seminar at the Caribbean Epidemiologist's Centre. As soon as I returned to Barbados I went to see the Chief Medical Officer and I said to him, "Dr. Shillingford, you have a problem on your hands. We have had our first case and we have in Barbados people with certain types of sexual preferences and Barbadians like to sweep everything under the carpet and pretend it does not exist." I said, "This is the time you need a health education unit in the Ministry of Health fully equipped and fully staffed in order to educate the population about the prevention of HIV/AIDS." I did tell him that if he did not do it he is going to lose half the population.

That is what I said in 1985. Since then, I have been lobbying for a health education unit in the Ministry of Health and when it became impossible to function I gave up the job and took a drop in salary and went back to nursing to teach nursing. From then on, I have been lobbying and am still lobbying for that health education unit. There is only one person. When it comes to education in our schools, primary, secondary and tertiary, people employ teachers to teach their children and you have to repeat things. It has to be consistent and sustained. When it comes to the secondary schools you have teachers there to give person to person education to have eye contact with the people to answer their concerns to talk to them, and in the university the same thing.
4.20 p.m.

Sir, when it comes to health education, people forget so we cannot put a few messages on the television and radio and think that the matter is fixed because this is what is happening with HIV/AIDS in this country. There is a lecture here and there for a week or so and then everybody forgets the next day but, as Senator Goddard said, it must be a sustained effort for 365 days a year.

Mr. President, the only way we can do that is to have foot soldiers who go and meet the people and educate them day after day and night after night.

Mr. President, as a health education officer I would go to the docks and talk to the longshoremen. I would also go to the schools and talk to the children and then go to the homes and talk to parents in the evening. When I was promoting the polio campaign, that is how it was done and the public health nurses were able to reduce communicable diseases in this country and the same should be done for HIV/AIDS. You cannot have a commission with one or two people or leave it to other Ministries to give a bit of education here and there because Mr. President, the Ministries have their own priority.

Mr. President, it is better to prevent people from getting HIV/AIDS and the main tool for that is education and more education. There is no point telling young people about abstinence because they will tell you that you are selfish and that you do not want them to enjoy sex. They tell you this bluntly so there is no point telling them about abstinence. We have to tell them about abstinence in nursery school, not when they are sexually active adults and they know how good it feels to have sexual intercourse. Also when they are young and their hormones are active they will not think about a condom because they do not walk with condoms in their pockets.

Mr. President, I do not have the answer to the problem but I can give some suggestions. There is no point making a booklet with only words to try to reach people. When I was a health officer, we made books with pictures so that people could look at the pictures first and then read the material. You are wasting your time printing leaflets because they will throw them away because we do not have a reading public as such. They will read about politics, murder and rape but they do not read about health matters and these are the people you want to get to.

Sir, the middle class will go and find out about HIV/AIDS but I am thinking about reaching the hard-core people out there who will say that somebody gave it to them and so they will give it to somebody else. Those are the kinds of people that we need foot soldiers to get to and we are not going to find them in any halls. You have to go into the rum shop and the fish market to meet them and you have to dress in your jeans, talk with them and befriend them or you will not get anywhere.

I am saying this because I do not want for us to borrow money to reduce the incidence of AIDS in three years and then nothing has happened. I feel bad standing in this august Chamber saying I was in the forefront in 1985 and now in 2001 we are now borrowing US\$15.1 million. Mr. President, that is a lot of money to borrow. I am not saying we should not borrow the money but we should be sewing up our programmes with this money not now starting from scratch. We are now doing what I was trying to do in 1985. I sincerely hope that we will learn from our mistakes and this will not happen again and that we will go forward with the HIV/AIDS programme.

Mr. President, as far as the walk-in clinic is concerned, I do not think people will go there. They might go there one or two times but people will peep to see who is there and they will not go back. We can have a walk-in clinic for family health matters so that everybody can go there including those with HIV/AIDS.

Mr. President, there is no point putting HIV/AIDS patients in a corner by themselves for people to stigmatise them. We do not know who has AIDS so everyone should be

treated in the same way. So, Government should not talk about a walk-in clinic for those people with AIDS. Sir, you are sending mixed messages. You cannot tell them that you do not know who has AIDS because unless you test them or the disease in the last stages, you do not know who has the virus. Everybody is a potential AIDS patient, so treat all of them the same way, because you do not know who has AIDS, it is no respecter of class or person.
4.30 p.m.

Therefore, if you want to send that message to the public, you need to have a walk-in clinic located all over the country where everyone can go for treatment. Senator Goddard mentioned that we should see the whole picture. We need to take a holistic approach to the prevention, control and treatment of HIV/AIDS and include it with their programmes.

I know that the World Bank has given the money for a specific purpose but this also happened in the days of Family Planning and we stuck other programmes onto it and dealt with it in total. If we know that we can only get money for HIV/AIDS, we have to look at the complications associated with AIDS. Sir, we need several walk-in clinics so that those persons infected can mix with other people and they can get the necessary treatment.

Sir, this brings me to the point that we need to send the message to the workplace. When people are HIV positive, they can continue to work and you should treat everybody in the workplace the same way. There are procedures in place for persons who get cut, whether they are HIV positive or not, the same thing applies with children at school. Sir, this is the only way that we can get away from the stigma of HIV/AIDS.

Mr. President, I visit the Elroy Phillips Centre on a regular basis and this is a Centre for HIV/AIDS patients. Patients behave in different ways when they are infected with the AIDS virus and you need to have trained staff to deal with these patients. You need a psychologist and nurse with a psychiatric background so that they can communicate with the health aides effectively.

Mr. President, we need a nurse who has a RMN to run the Elroy Phillips Centre. It is currently being run by a nursing assistant and the deputy is also a nursing assistant. We need qualified people to run that institution so that we can give the HIV/AIDS patients the level of care that they deserve.

Mr. President, most of my presentation was focussed on the need for health education. Senator Murray gave us a breakdown in his presentation this morning and in that presentation was \$5.7 million for prevention and control; \$14.3 million for diagnosis treatment and care and

\$3.4 million for management for institutional strengthening. I would like to see more money allocated to the preventive aspect of HIV/AIDS.

Sir, it makes economic sense to spend a substantial amount of money to prevent people from being affected with the disease rather than wait until they are affected then to spend a fortune for the treatment of the disease. I would like to see a review of the allocation of funds and allocate more money to the prevention of the disease. It is unfortunate that our health care system is not set up to plug HIV/AIDS into the polyclinics.

Sir, had we placed less emphasis on curative medicine and more on preventive medicine, we would have had a system in place where the public health nurses, who were trained in Jamaica, would go out into the community, interact and educate the people. What we have done with our health care system is to structure it in such a way so that the patients come to us rather than taking the services to the people. If our system was structured differently, all the Government would have to do is to plug HIV/AIDS into the system and then there would be no need for all these other structures, for example, the AIDS information Centre and the drug Centre.

I am happy that we have a doctor who is the Minister of Health and I hope that I can lobby with him and encourage him to take our health care system and make it more community oriented. Sir, this is not a difficult exercise. All you have to do is assign areas to public health nurses and give them a few nurses' assistants to work with them and make them prepare reports. The same way that schools are being equipped with computers, give the nurses some computers to record the profile of the patients. We can do it, Mr. President, it is not difficult. All you have to do is employ more nurses' assistants and health aides in the polyclinics and free up the public health nurses to go into the community to educate the people.

4.40 p.m.

Mr. President, it is happening all over the world and is not difficult. All they have to do is to select an area and give it to a public health official as his responsibility, while letting him know that he has to make a report. Sir, if the people there have HIV/AIDS then one has to look after them and teach them. Sir, you must also give these public health officials a few nurses to work with in order that they are able to do dressings, bathe patients or whatever is needed in the community.

Sir, as Government is planning to give each child a computer in the schools, let them give these public health officials a computer so that profiles can be put onto the computer and records made as they go around. That is what is happening and we can do it, Mr. President. It is quite easy

and would simply mean that what has to be done in the polyclinic would have to be done. Put one nursing assistant and health aide in the polyclinic and free up the public health nurses to go into the community and give the education that is needed. For example, education on diabetes, hypertension, lupus, HIV/AIDS, drugs, drug prevention and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs).

Mr. President, these things are not new. I have sat on Committees in the Ministry of Health when I was a Health Officer and we outlined plans for the running of those polyclinics. Take them out of the hands of the doctors and put them into the hands of administrators in order to free up the nurses. Sir, those plans are already in the Ministry of Health. Also, the plans for the Health Education Unit and all the job descriptions are in the Ministry of Education Unit. They know exactly what they had to do. Sir, had we managed to change our health care system and made it more community oriented, we would not have to be spending so much money setting systems on top of systems for HIV/AIDS. We could have used that money in other ways – research, drugs for the people, more education, et cetera. Sir, I sincerely hope that we will be able to go in that direction.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, you have two minutes in which to conclude your speech.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Thank you, Mr. President. Time has flown very quickly. I would like to say that I do support the Resolution but I do feel that I would like to see more money go towards the education; not only to the HIV/AIDS patients and their families, but also to every person in the community. Sir, I would like to see a start at the nursery schools, and not primary schools, in order to educate our people and, in those nursery schools, we need to have nurses to monitor those children and to pick up any condition that they might have. I thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Haynes.

SENATOR D. L. HAYNES: Mr. President, I rise to support the Resolution to approve the \$15.1 million from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development to assist in the financing of Barbados' HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Project.

Sir, as a professional cricketer who has toured numerous countries, I would hope that you would understand the temptations that were out there for all of us. Sir, one can say that we were quite lucky in the sense that we came at the right time.

At the present time, the problem that we have that one can see with our cricketers is not only the fact that they must be very concerned with the opposition, but also with the problems of HIV/AIDS because one would find that, as a

cricketer that one's fan club is great, especially with the females. Sir, when one looks at HIV/AIDS, as I was told by my doctor who was educating her son on the way to go about his life, she said to him "his first piece could be his last piece". That is how serious this disease is and if you would have followed the internet, there was a speech by the ex-president of the United States of America, Bill Clinton. Sir, when one hears Bill Clinton in a speech talking about HIV/AIDS, he went on to mention things such as forty million people are infected with HIV/AIDS, a figure predicted to jump to 100 million within five years; that the world could no longer treat HIV/AIDS as an issue primarily in Sub-Saharan Africa. He also said enough Africans and Americans had died and do we really have to wait for a few million Russians, Chinese and Indians to die? He said, "It is up to us to mobilise this..."

Sir, I am happy that the Government of Barbados, as led by the Prime Minister of Barbados, finds itself in the situation where it has taken the role of fighting this serious disease and we are not in a situation like in South Africa, where the Pretoria High Court said:

"Not only must the Government distribute the drug nevirapine to those women giving birth in public hospitals, but it must also institute a nationwide programme to reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Nearly one of every four pregnant mothers in South Africa has tested positive for the virus that causes AIDS. Some 200 HIV babies are born HIV-positive every day in South Africa and studies have shown that the drug nevirapine can reduce the transmission of the virus during labour by up to 50 per cent."

Sir, the Government was arguing that that drug remains unproven.

Mr. President, I am very happy that we are living in an island where the Government can see it fit to take serious measures for what is considered to be a very serious disease and I am very happy to be a part of that.

Mr. President, I want to go onto the issue of young people because I believe there are young people who are sexually active, and some of them are also very talented sportsmen and women in this island whose careers could be cut very short if they are not careful and take HIV/AIDS very seriously. As the report said, there are young persons between the ages of 16 and 35, with 180 males and 111 females who are infected with HIV/AIDS. I am saying that age group, if one looks at the West Indies Team at the moment, is the age group of the players who are trying to get us out of the rut. It is not only cricket, but in all sports in Barbados that we must take a very serious drive to letting the young people know that this is no myth, but one must be very

serious about this disease to realise that this is something that is going to kill us.

Mr. President, as Senator Rickinson said, the young people out there are so sexually active at the moment that this case must be fought by ways of prevention. Sir, even though one might want to talk about condoms, et cetera, we still need to educate our people about this disease. Sir, I feel that what we should do is not only take the education to the hospitals and the clinics, but also to the communities, the schools and also to the churches because it must be said that it is no myth, this is a serious disease.

4.50 p.m.

We have some very influential people in Barbados and we have some sportsmen and sportswomen in Barbados whom I feel could be the spokespersons for HIV/AIDS and we must use them. I think that when you look at television, you will see how people react to Michael Jordan's return in the basketball. We have Obadele Thompson who got the bronze medal and also other people of Barbados who could be the spokespersons for HIV/AIDS and we must use them.

We do not want to fall into the trap like the West Indies Cricket Board of having some very good, talented and knowledgeable people in the Caribbean and not use them to try to get us out of the rock in the cricket arena.

Asides.

SENATOR D. L. HAYNES: Mr. President, it is true that the basis for the message to get through to the people in Barbados about the seriousness of HIV/AIDS must be education. There were a lot of speakers today who talked about the attitude of the people who are willing to have sex, knowing that they have HIV/AIDS. I think that is very sad for people to make statements like, "Somebody gave it to me so they are going to give it to somebody."

Sir, when we look at September 11, 2001 and saw what happened with the Bin Laden followers, we thought they were heartless and demented. I want to put to you today, Mr. President, that a person who willfully spreads HIV/AIDS is also heartless and demented and cares nothing about innocent men and women and does not value their own life or the lives of others. They are just like suicide bombers. I am not going to go as far as to say what we should do with them but I believe that we need to have some sort of legislation where we can put these people in their places.

Mr. President, in conclusion, I want to say that I support this Bill I also want to say that I feel that the people of Barbados should understand the seriousness of HIV/AIDS.

I thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I rise without any hesitation to support this Resolution. Twenty years ago, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) was described for the first time. Since then, as we have heard from Senator Sir John Stanley Goddard, HIV/AIDS has been described as the most devastating disease known by mankind. Certainly, as I speak, there are approximately forty million people worldwide suffering from HIV/AIDS.

Sir, he did not mention the fact that over the past twenty years, approximately twenty million people have died from this disease. Sir, one-third of this forty million occurs in the 15 to 25 age group and I think we should bear in mind that of this number of people, the sad story is that most of them are not even aware that they have HIV/AIDS.

Sir, the statistics are even worse than that. Already in Africa this year, approximately 2.8 million people died from HIV/AIDS and in sub-Saharan Africa there are 28 million people with HIV/AIDS. Sir, because of the dire state in many of the African countries, the majority of these people will be dead within the next decade.

In our region there are approximately four hundred and fifty thousand people suffering from HIV/AIDS. In Barbados the first case was diagnosed in 1984 and, based on the statistics I saw this morning, we have in total about 2 400 cases since we started documenting figures in 1984. Of these, about 1 100 have died, giving us a number of cases of about 1 300 who are HIV/AIDS infected individuals.

When it is borne in mind that mandatory testing is not necessary in Barbados, we can easily say that this figure is about one-fifth of the true number of cases out there. We can safely say that we have about 6 000 to 7 000 people with HIV/AIDS in Barbados. It gets worse than that when we look at some of the statistics over the years. If I may itemise, in 1994, 174 cases were diagnosed. In 1995, 184 cases, in 1996, 189 cases, in 1997, 234 cases, in 1998, 218 cases, in 1999, 248 cases and in 2000, 267 cases. It has been gradually going up, not at the phenomenal rate that was predicted by Dr. Schlossberg but it has been steadily climbing.

Sir, HIV/AIDS is much more than just these grim statistics. If anyone here is familiar with HIV/AIDS patients, you will see the physical suffering the debilitation, the coughing to death, the watery diarrhea and blood, and dying, and the whole system of dealing with your relatives who are afraid to come near you because you are dying with HIV/AIDS. Sir, you know that you are dying from HIV/AIDS, you know that you are helpless, you know that you are suffering and everyone seems to be abandoning you; and that is what we have been mindful of. Of course, there are also the socio-economic factors where many of these

persons are abandoned and left with social problems once it has been known that they have HIV/AIDS; and the whole taboo in the society.

First Senator Rickinson talked about the prevention and education but in these circumstances it became patently obvious to the Government that the time had come for a more effective method of preventing and treating the disease. To this end, last September - I believe it was - a special Sub-Regional Conference on HIV/AIDS was convened in Barbados in conjunction with UNAIDS and the World Bank. Out of this meeting, it was recognised that there was need for commitment at the highest level of Government in dealing with this disease in this region.

At that meeting, our Prime Minister announced that he would be taking control of our National HIV/AIDS Programme and he would be taking the programme into his Office. I do not believe, as Senator McClean alluded to that it had anything to do with the performance or non-performance of the previous Minister of Health. The aim of this was to bring a national importance to this issue and to move the National HIV/AIDS Programme into strength and collaboration and to give a greater accountability to the management of the whole process in this country.

The goals, as mentioned earlier, are to reduce the mortality by 50 per cent in the next three years and to reduce the morbidity by 50 per cent in the next five years. I gathered some members have been saying that these are not really achievable targets. Certainly, in the United States in 1998, they reduced the mortality by 42 per cent after the introduction of highly active anti-retroviral agents. Sir, to say that it is not achievable, I do not believe that is necessarily true.

Certainly, in some of the African countries, Uganda for example, as was mentioned earlier, they have introduced this programme and have seen dramatic results. Sir, when the UN General Assembly held its special session on HIV/AIDS in June this year, which was convened to look at the same problems and national programmes for dealing with this epidemic, Barbados had already embarked on a programme and I think this is commendable.

As mentioned previously by Senator Murray, the programme involves several ministries and each of these ministries has its individual programme. It is felt that these ministries would function, interact and mesh like a series of concentric circles to deal with the whole problem of HIV/AIDS in the society.

In addition, the programme would see collaborative effort and a multi-sectoral approach involving Government,

international and regional agencies, the NGO's and also the private sector.

5.00 p.m.

Of special significance in this whole programme is the involvement of persons living with AIDS and these are going to be involved at different segments of this whole programme. This is vitally important. As Senator Rickinson said earlier, it has to do with a new assertiveness in these spheres if there are not to be hidden in corners. These people are coming out, they are vocal, they are talking about their experiences and they want to get involved in the entire programme.

To assist in this expanded HIV/AIDS programme the Government of Barbados sought financial assistance from the World Bank under the HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Adaptable Programme. After visits to our country and reviewing our programme, they approved the loan and Barbados then became the first country to access such a loan. The total project for initiation is US\$23.5 million and the World Bank is supplying a loan of \$15.1 million.

Our project can be divided into three sections. The first one deals with prevention and control of the transmission of HIV/AIDS. As we heard earlier, \$5.7 million has been allocated to this. The second one is the section dealing with diagnosis, treatment and care of AIDS patients and \$14.3 million has been assigned to this. The third section deals with the management and institutional strengthening to which \$3.4 million is assigned.

If I may speak a little about these three sections, the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS transmission will deal primarily with a rational education campaign which will seek to raise the awareness of all sectors of the community. In addition, we have identified behavioural changes and we paid special attention to the protection of the rights of those who are infected with HIV/AIDS which is very important. This programme also involves the use and distribution of condoms which comes under the prevention and control of sexually transmitted diseases. It also encompassed a reduction of mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS as alluded to by Senator Haynes earlier. Certainly, we in Barbados implemented a programme in 1995 where we have been giving AZT to pregnant mothers who are infected with the virus and we have seen a reduction in the transmission rate from 38 per cent when it was started to some 4 per cent now. This is even better than the United States of America and the United Kingdom. As a matter of fact, the United Kingdom only started their programme in 1998 to 1999. As we have heard, the South African patients had to take the Government to court to get access to these drugs but the Government is still determining that they are not effective.

Under the section diagnosis, treatment and care of people, I have to say that there were a number of issues which were mentioned which I have to elaborate on. Under

this section comes a fully staffed and equipped walk-in clinic as opposed to the drop-in clinic. The walk-in clinic is where the patients will come to have their reviews, to have examinations, have blood taken, have medication prescribed and be seen and treated as opposed to the drop-in clinic where they will go with their families and their friends and they will socialise.

The walk-in clinic will be at Ladymeade and the drop-in clinic will be at the old UNDP Building on the Ministry of Health compound. A food bank will also be located over there for those who are not working whose families have abandoned them and need to have food supplies and things like that.

In addition to Ladymeade again, there will be a fully equipped lab with facilities for monitoring CD4 count, doing viral load and also playing a part in the research into HIV/AIDS. There will be a domiciliary chair programme.

I take the suggestion of Senator Rickinson about the use of the public health nurses. We are embarking on training more nursing assistants early in the new year so that we can soon ease the load of the public health nurses so that they do not have to do dressings at the clinics but can be out in the community looking after and caring for these patients and others who have other chronic diseases.

The most important component of this programme is the provision of highly active anti-retroviral therapy for infected persons. This is very important and I know that some people have been querying the effectiveness of these agents. Senator Bolden alluded earlier to the fact of the different strains of HIV/AIDS virus and also the fact of resistance. As far as I know, there are two strains of the HIV/AIDS virus which were both identified in Africa. One is not very effective and not very dangerous and the other is the one all the world is bothered by which has a very high mortality rate.

Having to deal with the whole idea of resistance strains, it has been shown that this has to do with people who were not complying with their medication and who are not following the regime. Some of these drugs have complications and side effects and some people after they vomit or after they feel bad do not take the medication. In the West Indies there are a lot of cases of people who have relatives in North America who are HIV/AIDS positive who are getting a supply of the medication and are sending half of it to the West Indies, obviously not effectively treating themselves or the person they are sending them to and in these situations resistance develops.

These drugs are very important and have been in use for over five years. The efficacy is unquestionable I gather, apart from the Government of South Africa, which is insistent that they are toxic and that HIV is not caused by a

virus and a whole set of arguments. But in all places of Western Europe and North America where they are in use they have been highly effective and there has been a marked reduction in the mortality and morbidity rate due to HIV/AIDS. Certainly, we all know the story of Magic Johnson and throughout these countries there are people who have been living for 10 to 15 years with the virus. In normal life their viral loads are undetectable, their CD4 count is up in the 1 200 and they are living like normal people. These people are just taking their medication every day.

This brings me to a problem though of unequal access to these types of therapy as it affects primarily the African countries and the poorer countries, as Senator McClean alluded to. Obviously, those who can afford it, get it. So the rich people get access to these drugs and there is a decline in mortality but in the poorer countries there is no access to it so you get rising mortality. I think this is the area which Government is trying to address primarily hence the \$14.3 million allocated to this section as opposed to the \$5.7 million allocated to section (a) prevention and control.

These drugs added a cellular level. There are about 15 of them which have been ratified by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and they are given in various combinations which are commonly referred to as cocktails. They act as a cellular level to the first progressive immune deficiency that occurs in HIV/AIDS. Normally at this stage persons in Barbados who had to buy them would have been paying about \$1 600 a month for these drugs. At present, a number of patients have access to these drugs through the Barbados Drug Service where they are given the prescription and they are accessing these drugs free of charge at this point in time.

However, there are still some points that need to be ironed out regarding the dispensing process because some polyclinics do not want to honour them. We are presently negotiating with some of the pharmaceutical companies and manufacturers and we have had quite good success. At least two of them have reduced their prices by as much as 80 per cent and certainly we hope that we will benefit from the expanded access to the treatment initiative being negotiated by UNAIDS.

In addition, in Doha recently the TRIPPS Agreement on public health was ratified which was to facilitate the acquisition of even cheaper generic highly active anti-retroviral therapy (HART). We have heard recently that Guyana will soon be embarking on the full thing. In addition to the highly active anti-retroviral agents, we also must remember treatment of the opportunistic infections which occurred concomitantly with HIV/AIDS and in this we must remember tuberculosis which again as people survive longer with HIV/AIDS you get a recurrence of tuberculosis

occurring as an opportunistic infection and these matters have to be addressed.

There were a number of other issues such as the issue of the polyclinics. Certainly in the programme there is a plan for upgrading the eight polyclinics to deal with counselling. Certainly, patients will be able to take their prescriptions to these polyclinics and have access to the drugs. I know Senator Rickinson was asking about this earlier.
5.10 p.m.

The Government of Barbados is to be highly commended for taking this initiative at this point in time to stop the spread of this devastating disease with all its socio-economic problems. I think that we must stop arguing among ourselves as to how we are dealing with it, stop bickering about if it needs more education or more prevention. I think we need a combination of all of these factors and that this is certainly the right approach that the Government is taking in this regard.

At the end of the day, I would ask the question, what price can be placed on a human life and I certainly would want to ask members to reflect for a moment or two during this festive season on the number of people who are likely to die from HIV/AIDS before Christmas.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. President, I rise to support this Resolution, and it would be a fatal error for anyone at this stage not to give support to such an important piece of initiative on the part of Government.

I wish to suggest that we have, as best we can, to get the necessary information to make decisions on this very critical area of health. I say this, because I noted and I was hoping that someone would have mentioned to me what the actual and reported cases are. We were told that there are roughly 2 400 cases between 1984 and 2001 and that when you look at the actual amount it may be as high as 6 000 to 7 000. It is similar to what happens in the area of dengue fever when we report X amount but the actual amount may be substantially more than has been reported.

This is an area that has very far-reaching implications, not only for the social but for the economic circumstances in the country. We well understand that there are certain age cohorts that may be affected more than others, but I wish to submit at this stage that the evidence does not suggest that Barbadian society is any more promiscuous than it was twenty or twenty-five years ago. It has always been a promiscuous society.

Indeed, if you look at the evidence on birth rates you would see that we have, in fact, had a decline in the level of birth rates over the last 30-40 years in Barbados. Unless it is the case that the men are far less potent than they were

30 years ago and that they are scoring at a much lower rate it means, therefore, that with the reduction in the birth rate the logical conclusions of that may be that there has been some reduction in the activity that causes the delivery of a child. That is purely by way of inference, not that I agree with that, but I am saying that we cannot say that this society has all of a sudden become extremely promiscuous and that it has changed remarkably from the last 20-30 years.

That leads me to ask a couple of questions of those involved in this very important programme. Unless we can establish that something has changed dramatically in the behaviour of the society, then we are not going to be in a position to understand this new phenomenon. Therefore, we have to ensure that we conduct research to get us to appreciate what are the real causal factors in this particular major problem which we are confronted with called AIDS. You cannot presume that you understand a problem without having studied the problem. I honestly believe that in order to deal adequately with this major health concern that we have to look at lifestyle behaviour. All the drugs that you can bring can perhaps only sustain a life. The drugs you can bring may assist us in dealing with the problem but at the end of the day the real crux of the matter is how do we prevent this disease from spreading to the detriment of the society.

I am happy to note that the prediction of the foreign expert has not come to pass in Barbados and the evidence shows that while there has been some increase in the number of deaths caused from HIV/AIDS it has not been exponential as was determined at that time by the so-called foreign expert. I can tell you that it is one prediction that I am happy to see has not come to pass.

This really becomes one of how do we educate, how do we start to redefine and to reposition the young people in this country for a very difficult future. I speak as a father of two, a young girl who is now at the University of the West Indies and one who has just passed for a school in Barbados. The reason why I say it is difficult is because I fear the choices that my two daughters will have to make in the coming years. If I am permitted, which I hope I am, to extend that fear to my two step-children, it cannot be easy for young people to want to look ahead to a bright future and not be certain how they can make decisions in their interest only to discover that perhaps they made the most horrible decisions of their lives, and it could be fatal.

An individual who comes from a very respectable family who appears to have all the trappings of a bright future and who has been given the so-called leadership from the family unit that would make that person able to make the best decisions but might have made some wrong turn will not have the benefit of a second chance.

5.20 p.m.

They have made a wrong turn without having the benefit of a second chance because like it or not, as young men and women, we like to experiment and we are intrigued by how hot a fire, a piece of burning wood or a match can be. In spite of the apparent danger and being told by mummy and daddy, we are more than likely tempted to touch to find out whether the match is going to burn us. This is simply a part of the upbringing.

Unfortunately, at the age of fifteen, you cannot have the experience of a forty-year old and neither should you, or else life would not be worth living. If you can be a mature adult-like person at the age of fifteen, what is the purpose of living? There is no purpose, as far as I can see it, in not having a platform to make your errors and then be able to decide a little later on in life that you have gone there before and, therefore, this thing is not needed so that you learn from the past and the errors that have been made in life.

Sir, this is part of the journey of life. It cannot be a journey that is perfect because perfection is only found in ideal states and ideal states are theorised. Unfortunately, the greatest state that we aspire towards as human beings, the one of living forever and having everlasting life, while it might speak of the Almighty in very glowing terms, it still does not require us to be perfect to enter into the kingdom because perfection is a state that we must always be able to gravitate towards but we cannot achieve. In the absence of having it displayed before us, there would be nothing to gravitate towards so it is only a state to keep us in check but it cannot be accomplished here on earth.

Therefore, by nature we are imperfect beings. This imperfection leaves us to do all kinds of things and we make all kinds of errors but the only way in which you can begin to address those concerns, those stated objectives and those values, is if they are consistently reinforced and they must be reinforced by way of education.

Sir, if a person grows up in a household that practises the best form of conduct and the best moral values, there is an innate being that somehow decides to challenge the established norm and the established environment. It is as if the individual determines this without knowing what he is going to be in spite of the fact that he would be provided with an environment within which to operate. This is why it is possible for two individuals to have the same parents, be raised in the same household and become completely different human beings over time and go in completely different directions. There must be something in the person that you have to appeal to, that we are not ever able to identify from early because you do not know what the complete person is about so you can provide the environment but you will never know what the complete person would become.

Effectively, therefore, it is about teaching the individual through repetition because repetition is the key to learning. There are a few extreme cases but the norm requires repetition and if you want to query that, all you have to do is check yourself in terms of acquiring knowledge and you will appreciate how easy it is for you to remember a song or a poem as compared to something written in prose. It is the repetition of the verse or chorus that gives you the capacity to retain because it has a rhythm to it.

Mr. President, how does all this relate to this exercise here today. We have to find, as we were told earlier, the best way to communicate the dangers of HIV/AIDS because if you catch it, there is no hope that you can get the chance to correct it so we have to find the best way of communicating and reaching out.

I, therefore, have to agree wholeheartedly with Senator Rickinson that the only way it can be done is to go into the areas where it is prevalent. We know why this is so because there are some sociological factors that explain why certain people are more predisposed to the AIDS virus than other people.

Again, let us not make those assumptions because the financial resources are being made available to us now for us to do the appropriate research to identify the characteristics of individuals who happen to be suffering from this fatal disease. There is no other way to do it but to get out there, truly understand the persons who are suffering and the environments from which they come. This is the first and major requirement because decision-making can only be done effectively with information. Having a hunch about something is not the place in today's world because it is much too easy for us to acquire knowledge by way of scientific investigation for us to believe that we can sit around a table and assume that something exists in a particular form when, in actual fact, it may not be in that form so we have to move beyond that. This loan, therefore, is appropriate because it has far-reaching implications.

We heard earlier that the human resource of Barbados is its greatest resource and we know that. In fact, this country has benefited substantially from having in its tiny walls people of note and teams that were able to work effectively over the years to position Barbados most effectively within the economic and social landscape within the region.

The thing that is perhaps not recognised is that in today's world the educational requirements of Barbados are even more significant than there were in the 1960s and what has changed is the nature of the human resource that we need but it has not reduced the importance of the human resource.

We need to redefine the human resource which we have available to us in the light of the challenges that confront us economically and socially so that education is still now the single most important social need in this society. Sir, that is crucial because as we have recognised, we need to be highly productive as a people. Productivity is driven by managerial skills in the early stages, but productivity is also linked to knowledge, then you can use technology to produce.

5.30 p.m.

Sir, you can see in a society that is threatened by a disease like AIDS, the economic impact that it can have on our potential, not only to survive but to prosper. No one in their right mind can even begin to trivialise or misunderstand the importance of a programme of this nature, not at this stage either. We are talking about 15 or 20 years from now. We are not talking about the immediate impact because it is possible for us to continue to do what we are doing now and to keep the ship afloat, but with the uncertainty of the future, we have to guard against that uncertainty.

Sir, the unfortunate situation here is that without making a substantial attempt to address this problem now, we can truly not have a society in the next 20 to 25 years. That is the gravity of the problem that we are being confronted with. It is not just about today's Barbados but what Barbados would be in 20 to 25 years. Therefore, this raises the importance of this project that the Government is embarking on. I have a suspicion, as I usually do, that the Government looks forward to this US money to put in the coffers as reserves. That is part of the political dynamics.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: The capacity to want to put aside something for a rainy day is a major temptation of this Administration. Any access to funds that are not too expensive and can be put aside, creates its own temptation for this Administration based on the evidence.

Therefore, the prevention and control component, which is regarded as phase one, is going to require more education than phase two, the diagnosis treatment. I am saying that we need to sell the programme in its initial stages and sell it very effectively. It is possible, as was suggested earlier, that we can consider, notwithstanding the allegation that has been brought to us, putting further emphasis on the phase, the prevention and control phase of the programme, I do not think that is too difficult.

Sir, because we said that we are going to allocate \$5 million, it does not mean that a revisit of the separation of the funds cannot see the need to put greater emphasis on the rights and distribution of condoms, AZT and the like. It is possible to give some consideration to the need to get the

programme going in such an effective manner in the first stages and to sell it to the wider population that it may require us to allocate more resources to the first phase of the programme because we are looking to market the programme to the wider Barbadian public.

Sir on the question of diagnosis treatment care, staff, walk-in-clinic, food banks and training, these are important elements that you can consider selling. It is just a public relations exercise, selling to the wider Barbadian public and other participants in the programme in a way that brings to the public the importance of the programme beyond money.

Sir, it has to be sold in a way to make Barbadians understand that without it, the threat for the next 20 years is enormous. It must be sold in a way you can pester television, VOB to buy into this programme, 100 per cent Bajan.

Asides

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: It is possible that we can understand the need for nursing assistants.

There is another important dimension to the programme which is exceedingly critical, it is futuristic in nature. It has to do with understanding it within the wider context of CARICOM, within the wider context of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy and the free movement of labour and capital. We must get our Caribbean people to understand that they can, maybe over time, be able to get rights transferred from one Caribbean country to another by way of National Insurance if we are going to permit the free flow of labour.

It means that a St. Lucian or Trinidadian who might have been in the public service coming to Barbados could work under that provision. Then we might have to consider transferring similar kinds of rights to those individuals which can then have implications for the National Insurance Scheme. They are too complex to engage in at this time but I think that you understand that once you begin to permit the free flow of labour and capital under the new CARICOM arrangement, then you also have to look at harmonising tax policies and income tax. It is almost a total picture looking beyond the question of the free flow. Sir, there are so many different things that we have to consider. Sir, when you see this in its wider context, you will begin to understand the importance of such a programme.

The other thing is the screening of individuals. If you are going to be concerned about the health of the nation, then like hard goods, where you might hear of free trade, a country may decide to institute certain health standards or labelling standards that may prohibit the free flow of goods. In a similar case as it relates to the human being, you have to be more prudent about the person you are allowing to come over to visit in terms of health standards. How do you do

that? How do you institute a measure of the free flow of labour knowing that all individuals have rights? We have heard that discussion here today and it is part of the second phase of the programme, the rights of the individual notwithstanding the presence of AIDS.

How do you as a country decide that another Caribbean person, possibly with AIDS, should not be allowed to enter Barbados because of the presence of AIDS? It gives you a bigger consideration in terms of the question of rights and freedom. Sir, if you are so successful as a country that you get this programme working effectively, there is a greater temptation then for Caribbean people to want to come and enjoy the safer haven of Barbados. Sir, can you restrict them? The answer is no. Should you restrict them? The answer is ... so I do not know. Therefore, I am saying that once one starts to see the future for what it is, that we are going to become as one, then you must understand that people are going to drift towards the safer, more enduring, more sustainable environment and, therefore, Barbados becomes an even more attractive place to live for Caribbean people. Sir, do not discount that because whatever one can say, we cannot open up our doors to permit that free flow and then seek to impose restrictions on certain categories of persons either by way of health, education, *et cetera*. Therefore, as Barbadians, we have to be more open-minded about it.
5.40 p.m.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Mascoll, you have one minute.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, again I reiterate that I support this Resolution wholeheartedly while understanding its immediate importance, but I think I appreciate its future importance even more so than its immediate importance. Sir, I look forward to its successful implementation and I would hope that the personnel at the Ministry of Health – notwithstanding the fact that it happens to be a programme under the Prime Minister... It has to be executed predominately by the Ministry of Health and I would wish the Ministry every success in this regard. It is too vital a programme not for us to want to wish it well because, I must confess, I am particularly concerned, not only about the youth of Barbados, but about the youth which I happen to be part of, in terms of bringing them into this world. It is not going to be easy for them and I look forward to my offspring having as equal an opportunity to live and to enjoy life as I have had over the last 42 years. I thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Murray.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. President. Sir, in concluding this debate, first of all, I must commend all Honourable Members who have spoken for the high level of their contribution. I think there

were some provocative, stimulating, interesting and by no means boring, points made. There were also some interesting suggestions made, many of them worthy of consideration.

Sir, be that as it may, I still need to deal with a few points before I wind up this debate conclusively. First of all, I would like to complete the record by going on record and extending our heartfelt thanks to those persons who have voluntarily worked with the HIV/AIDS Programme, persons who have manned it over the years, especially those persons who have manned the hotlines. Last Sunday, I happened to be present at the Annual Award Ceremony at the AIDS Information Centre. There are persons there who have been doing sterling work for eleven straight years, which is the duration of the hotline. They are persons who do not occupy the glamorous and profile positions, but they are vital links between whatever we do and the community. They act as surrogate mothers, fathers, counsellors, priests, advisors, wet blankets, *et cetera*, and they are people whose emotion alone pay a tremendous price for us to be able to effectively manage the HIV/AIDS programme. I, therefore, want to commend them for all the work that they have done and to assure them of Government's continued support and appreciation for all their efforts.

Sir, along with that, I need to say that I am very appreciative of the fact that all Honourable Members recognise that unless what needs to be done is done well, soon and effectively, we are facing the very horrific prospect of a failed and non-viable Barbadian society. Sir, that alone, I think, should galvanise all and has worked in galvanising all who function in the society to appreciate the enormity and the importance of the task.

Sir, I want to say that coming out of the discussions today, I got the impression that some Members might feel that HIV/AIDS is still essentially a homosexual disease. I think it has long gone past that stage where, all over the world, most of the transmission is via heterosexual behaviour. There seems to be some lingering residues of homophobic tendencies in the Barbadian society where I would like to say that society is judged by the very quality of the governance of the society, by the manner of the treatment that is meted out to the minority; whether it be religious, sexual, or whatever. Therefore, I think that the way we treat homosexuals, either male or female, is going to be a measure of how we feel in a society about the guts, soul and innards of the society in general.

Sir, I would also like to say that when all is said and done, what is really needed is a veritable crusade; a crusade that galvanises all interest groups in the society. Sir, some people seem to think that abstinence is impossible, but I have had the chance to have been associated with some religious organisations in the churches and there have been young persons who have testified that abstinence is a way of life for

them. They have committed themselves years ago and that is what needs to be done. Therefore, we have to look at the combination of factors. I do not think that the whole society can say abstinence is difficult or impossible. Sure, it is difficult, but not impossible and when this point of view is probably projected and reinforced by some of the offerings we are seeing coming out of North America via videos, music videos, *et cetera*. Sir, if there are some persons in the society who can do it, that those persons are being reinforced by the morality which is caught up on our part of religion, I think that, apart from the general education programme, we need to undertake to revert and to try to re-instill some of the traditional values that have served us well in the past. Sir, some of those very traditional norms and values can be operated today. I feel that a society is like an organism. Whenever an organism is threatened, no matter how small – a lizard, a lion or whatever, it defends itself by reacting. Therefore, I feel that, given the spectre of the high-flying consequence of this disease, the Barbadian society is now in a position where it is seeking to defend itself, its longevity and its viability.

Sir, there has been much call for education. The Government, the Commission and the Secretariat all fully support the question of education, but I need to point out that, simultaneously, a number of things happened in the planning of the HIV/AIDS programme. While we were negotiating, planning for, and seeking to qualify to get disbursement to draw down on the loan a number of things were also taking place. There was a sensitization programme going on in the public service while, at the same time, there was the recruitment of staff and also staff which would also go into the planning. We are not indulging ourselves in the guesstimates or guesses, but surveys have been conducted and, therefore – Part C specifically points out the carrying out of a research programme on HIV/AIDS.

The Commission has also been dealing with certain persons who have a long and distinguished background in the area of research and, therefore, I can assure persons that while the educational programme might not be going full gallop, there is the recognition of the need for it and, therefore, we are on the verge of hiring staff. Sir, it was not felt that it would be wise to undertake a massive, well-driven, hard-sell campaign and then not to be able to deliver on the other aspects of the programme. Sir, I can assure persons that there is the issue of generally educating the society thus targeting specific groups and, therefore, there has been planning and discussion for plays and other devices. Sir, while the Commission is going to be coordinating the work in the Prime Minister's Office, there are other Ministries which are carrying out that work. The Ministry of Social Transformation, which has social development and the Ministry of Education. Therefore, these Ministries will be carrying out various things at the same time.

5.50 p.m.

Sir, many programmes have been in force but I can assure persons that the question of general education of the society, and targeting specific groups, for example, they have been planning discussions for promotion on radio and television. The Commission is going to be coordinating the work under the Prime Minister's Office but other ministries will also be carrying out active work.

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Transformation which have community development, will be operating in the society carrying out various programmes at the same time. The whole multi-sectoral approach is going to apply in that direction. There is no need for persons to fear that it is going to be constrained and dominated in a bureaucratic manner from the Prime Minister's Office.

The Prime Minister's Office is just the centrepiece, the focal point, the coordinating unit while the Ministries themselves are going to execute these programmes. Sir, I know that Senator Mascoll called for more resources for the programme but I need to point out to him that this loan really is an addition to the \$100 million that the Government has already promised and committed itself to providing over the next five years.

Sir, this loan will not be financing all there is to the programme. This is just a supplemental to what the Government itself is providing out of its own programme. Sir, I am happy to say that Barbados will be joining such countries like Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay which right now guarantee free access to anti-retroviral drugs to the community. This is a momentous step that Barbados will be taking when this comes into full swing.

Sir, I feel that the whole question of modification of behaviour that will be needed in this undertaking is the same behaviour where people are now being called upon to modify their sexual behaviour and to accept more responsibility for whatever activities they take. This is going to be the same, Sir, as what has happened with the introduction of seat belts. For my whole life, many Barbadians would have driven various vehicles without using seat belts and that was the norm. When the introduction of seat belts came about, it called for a certain modification of behaviour and an abandonment of an aged old, well accepted method of behaving in your vehicle.

There was an initial outcry but from all reports for most people seat belts have now become second nature to them. I suspect that with education and some well-structured programmes and with much research the Barbadian society will be able to control the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Like I said earlier, the same way that our societies have found it possible to modify the behaviour and to achieve

drastic reductions in the prevalent incidence of HIV/AIDS, we can do the same thing. I have no doubt that the Barbadian society will rise to this challenge as it has before. We have accepted that we should seek to eradicate poverty. We have accepted that we should seek to do so wherever possible. We have taken the eradication of ignorance and illiteracy as the norm. The same thing can happen here. You might still find one or two people falling through the cracks but we feel that we can modify to minimise HIV/AIDS but those persons who fall through the cracks and become HIV/AIDS positive will have the resources and the programmes as backup, because we want to offer hope to persons.

We want to say that those persons who, for other reasons have fallen victim to the disease are not automatically condemned to purgatory on earth. They are not hopeless, but they, through this very anti-retroviral programme, can be given a sound chance to lead productive lives for some considerable duration of time and that they themselves can regain some measure of respectability and acceptability in the society.

I believe that this would come in the process of time. I have seen sensitisation programmes where persons interact quite normally, quite casually as a matter of course and then when they would have discovered at the end of the day or sometime thereafter that person was HIV/AIDS positive, they are shocked but they would have realised that the person was no different from them. They were talking to them, touching them and interacting with them so what is the big deal. I hope that would become the norm for the Barbadian society and that we would be able to see this as just one more challenge that Barbados has successfully conquered over the last 300 years plus, from the time we became a settled island, Sir, we will be able to attribute the success that we have had in other areas and a measurable proportion of it would come this way, if only because if we do not do it, all the other successes will not matter.

Sir, with those few words, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be now suspended until 6.15 p.m. today.

The question that this Sitting be suspended until 6.15 p.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to, and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly. 6.00 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

ORDER NO. 3 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND SITUATE
AT REED STREET, ST. MICHAEL FOR THE
PUBLIC PURPOSE OF THE RELOCATION
OF THE SANITATION SERVICE
AUTHORITY CITY DEPOT

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, the Resolution before this Honourable Senate seeks permission to acquire 109.6 square metres and 141.2 square metres of land respectively at Reed Street, St. Michael for the relocation of the Sanitation Service Authority City Depot. In other words, we are going to be acquiring two parcels of land.

The Sanitation Service Authority Depot in Bridgetown was located at Temple Yard for over 20 years. Operations at that depot included the cleaning of Bridgetown through the use of push carts, drain cleaning and street cleaning. The depot at Temple Yard was temporarily relocated at the old St. Mary's School in 1999 after the building was condemned and all other activities in the area were removed.

In addition, the conditions at the old site had forced a work stoppage and as a result of that the Temple Yard depot was closed and operations were transferred to the old St. Mary's School. This goes back as far as 1987 when the Sanitation Service Authority sought to have this depot at Temple Yard removed and a number of sites were identified. These included the new Cheapside Market, Youth Town, an old burnt out building at Jordan's Lane, a site at lower Lightfoot Lane and Suttle Street and then this site at Reed Street. The subcommittee identified the area at Cheapside Market initially but Reed Street was ruled as the preferred site because of the proposed development of the Cheapside Market and the Bridgetown redevelopment. It was, therefore, agreed that the depot should be relocated to Watkins Alley which is adjacent to Reed Street and Cabinet has agreed to this.

The provision of the depot in the Bridgetown area is essential to the Sanitation Service Authority operations especially in light of the new proposed Bridgetown Development. Currently, as I said earlier, the Sanitation Service Authority provides street cleaning and drain cleaning services and 43 persons will be attached to this City Depot.

In its construction, there will be office facilities, recreational facilities, washing bays and accommodation for street cleaning machines. In addition, the old public conveniences in Watkins Alley and Reed Street will be

demolished and new ones will be placed in there for the use of the public.

With these few words, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, I want very briefly to associate myself with this Resolution. It is not, as Senator Mascoll would say, a question of constituencies but I think that it is really a question of what Government has been able to do and indicate and signal an intention to do via ameliorating a problem that exists in Barbados and has existed in Barbados for a considerable period of time which is to say specifically the problem of poor working conditions for some of our public servants. It is a very significant problem.

During recent times there has been a very clear effort to ameliorate certain working conditions of the public service. We have seen it insofar as the police are concerned in that certain conditions that they have worked under have been ameliorated. It has also happened in the Immigration Department and in a number of other government departments. This is a further example of that ongoing commitment to try to ameliorate those types of conditions. It is within my memory and I am sure it is within the memory of many members of this Chamber when staff strikes and poor conditions had led to the closure of that Reed Street Sanitation Service facility some years ago.

I would also want to make the point that there is an unfortunate tendency in Barbados to treat the tasks that those public servants are doing as menial tasks and, therefore, to treat them as though they can wait indefinitely for the kind of amelioration of conditions which they are now standing to benefit from. I am very pleased to see that the Ministry of Health has taken the opportunity to capitalise on this chance that it has so as to ensure that a state-of-the-art, refurbished plant will be there which will also carry with it recreational facilities and so on.

It, therefore, means that no longer can one be seen to be treating – I just say “seen” because that is a perception that has been put abroad – certain categories of public servants as less important than others and I commend Government for the Resolution.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Mr. President, I rise to support this Resolution because I am very glad to hear that the conditions of service of these workers are going to be improved by acquiring this land for providing the necessary facilities for these persons.

I would also like to see the street cleaning in Bridgetown improved because Bridgetown is dirty and some parts of it smells. I mentioned that before in here. I would like to see some sort of a shift system whereby street cleaning will not only be done about 5 o'clock in the morning but in the evening as well. If one drives through Bridgetown around 5 o'clock in the morning that is the time one will see them washing down the street and cleaning them. I would like to see the city streets being cleaned so that at all times they will look sanitary.

I would also like to see the Sanitation Service Authority which is responsible for the Bridgetown area distributing times of cleaning to the various sections within the city area so that people will know, okay, at 4 o'clock or 5 o'clock, this area will be cleaned or that area will be cleaned. With that I support this Resolution.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: 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. 5 – LAND TAX (AMENDMENT)
BILL, 2001

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, this Land Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2001 comes as a result of the financial statement made by the Minister of Finance on August 08, 2001, whereby I quote.

"Villas constitute an important component of our tourism product ... Persons who own villas and make them available for rental to visitors are contributing to the stock of available rooms for tourism purposes and should therefore benefit from some of the concessions available to hotels. However, villas involve less liquidity risk, less investment and fewer facilities than a hotel. It is therefore my intention to reduce the land tax payable on villas, which are registered with the Barbados Tourism Authority and committed to the tourism rental pool for at least nine months of the year. The rebate on the level of tax payable by villas will be equal to half of that applied to hotels, i.e., 25% of the tax payable. This concession will be effective from April 1, 2002."

Mr. President, we know that villas are a very important segment of the tourism market especially those catering to the up-market tourists. We have been hearing recently that Barbados caters to all areas in that market, the up-market tourists, the middle income tourists and some of the poorer ones. Certainly, over the years more and more British tourists have been staying at these villas with some of them paying as much as \$200 000 a week.

It is proposed that in order for the villas to qualify for such concessions they will have to have at least three bedrooms, be valued at no less than \$525 000, be managed by a company or a real estate agent and employ no less than three persons. In addition to that, they must be registered with the Barbados Tourism Authority and be available for the accommodation of guests for at least nine months in the year.

With these few words, I now beg that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR the Hon. J. X. WALCOTT, the Senate resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, His Honour Senator C. L. BOLDEN in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1-2 inclusive, were called and passed.

On the motion of SENATOR the Hon. J. X. WALCOTT, Mr. Chairman 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. J. X. WALCOTT, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Land Tax (Amendment) Act, 2001.
6.25 p.m.

ORDER NO. 6 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE
CROWN OF LAND AT BAY STREET,
ST. MICHAEL

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: This Resolution before the Senate seeks permission to acquire 2 804.1 square metres of land at Bay Street, St. Michael for recreational purposes. This land is on Lower Bay Street adjacent to the area of the London Bourne Towers, also known as the Pondside Development. Because of the convoluted nature of the city streets there is a high incidence of congestion in the area. This residential development within the City has become cramped and is in urgent need of redevelopment. In addition, there are no obvious recreational facilities for the residents in that area. It is felt that there was need to acquire this land for the provision of these facilities.

The towers which were constructed by the National Housing Corporation comprise six blocks with 44 units and include accommodation for a day-care centre, vendors and

other small businesses but absolutely no provision was made for outdoor recreation.

The Ministry considers that the existing density of the residential development in this urban area combined with the absence of outdoor recreational facilities would provide a recipe for negative social behaviour. The proposed recreational facilities will include two hard courts, changing facilities and a children's playing area. These facilities will serve as a means of providing social interaction among residents of the community.

The Attorney General has certified the Resolution in order and with these remarks I beg that this Resolution do now pass.

The question was put and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 7 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND AT
PIPERS AVENUE, CAVE HILL, ST. MICHAEL
FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, this Resolution seeks the approval of this Honourable Senate for the compulsory acquisition of 4 102.3 square metres of land at Pipers Avenue, Cave Hill, St. Michael for the purpose of housing development. A survey of the land was carried out and it is thought to be in a suitable area for the provision of housing development. Certainly, residents of that area and other parts of St. Michael have been crying out for areas to construct homes as indeed there is a housing shortage in these areas of St. Michael, as I am sure you are familiar with.

With these few words, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

The question was put and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 8 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
VESTING IN HOTELS AND RESORTS LIMITED
LAND AT DOVER, CHRIST CHURCH

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, the Resolution before the Honourable Senate pertains to the vesting of 5 711 square metres of Crown land at the site of the former Dover Convention Centre, St. Lawrence Gap, Christ Church in Hotels and Resorts Limited as Government equity.

This property is situated on the beach side of St. Lawrence Gap, one of the busiest areas of the South Coast. It is within six miles from Grantley Adams International Airport. The Dover area comprises a number of

properties used for hospitality purposes, for example, hotels, restaurants and other ancillary facilities. The Dover Convention site fronts to a white and sandy beach with good swimming since St. Lawrence Gap is a major tourist development area which detours off the main South Coast artery road as it follows the coastline.

This Resolution is proposing to seek Senate's approval for the vesting of this parcel of land adjacent to the former Dover Convention Centre in Hotels and Resorts Limited as Government equity.

With these few remarks, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, this Resolution is one for which we will have to query the real purpose. We can see that it is obviously for Hotels and Resorts Limited, but one has to question what is Hotels and Resorts Limited doing at this point in time. We would assume that the land is being vested in this company so that it can replace the Dover Convention Centre which was demolished some time ago and which Government for some reason or another has been unable to replace. This falls into the category of the same kind of destruction wrought on the tourism sector by the demolition of the Hilton Hotel.

Whereas we have seen the lack of progress with the Dover Convention Centre, we have seen some developments with respect to properties already in the hands of Hotels and Resorts Limited but, unfortunately, the public of Barbados is still not yet fully aware of the extent of Government's commitment or the extent of the capital which Government has injected into this organisation. In fact, one has to query whether or not the company, Hotels and Resorts Limited, is functioning in a manner which is to the benefit of the Barbadian economy. We have seen some questionable forms of development in that organisation in terms of some of the properties that it has acquired and one really has to question whether or not this is a company which is making any significant contribution to the development of tourism in this country and, indeed, whether or not it has not become a drain on the resources of this country.

One has also to question the kind of management that has been taking place in this company because we have seen that for some reason they have been unable to attract the private sector financing which was anticipated in the early days. We have to question what is really happening at Hotels and Resorts Limited more commonly known as the GEMS. Certainly, there seems to be nothing glittering about this organisation at this point in time.

Dover Convention Centre was demolished by the Government at a time when there were persons in the tourism sector who were suggesting that we needed more convention

facilities. Government in its wisdom demolished an existing facility in the same way as the Hilton was demolished without knowing exactly when or how they would replace this facility. One has to wonder how much money has been lost by this country because of these decisions which were untimely.
6.35 p.m.

It is unbelievable that we continue to make mistakes by destroying plants which are able to generate income without having the resources in place to replace them. When we are not doing that, we are constructing facilities which we cannot use as in the case of the Greenland Landfill.

Here we have a situation where the Government has not been able to complete these commitments and it has now fallen back on the facility which they claimed would have been a white elephant. They claimed it was the worse thing ever done by a Government of Barbados but it is now the only facility which can be used for holding conventions in Barbados. In fact, one of the first things the Government did when it took office in 1994 was to move the Ministry of Tourism into the very building that it claimed as all sorts of things, undesirable.

We have a situation where people criticised a building merely for political reasons. They complained that everything was wrong with it and now it is known and accepted as the saviour for the Barbados economy because it is the only facility that we can use for holding conventions or certain functions. Government has been making full use of the Sherbourne facility. In fact, I now hear that it is so successful that it has been a significant revenue earner and it has been doing extremely well.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, I am waiting for you to establish relevance to the Resolution.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I have already established relevance because the Dover site which is being vested now was a convention centre which was destroyed by the Government and they have had to resort to the use of the Sherbourne Centre which is another convention centre. I assume that when this property is utilised, it is going to be utilised for the construction of another convention centre.

We are looking at the importance of convention centres as a part of our tourism and, therefore, I think one cannot be separated from the other, given that they are both convention facilities. I just wanted to show the relation and the lack of sound planning on the part of Government. On the one hand, they have been destroying facilities without being able to replace them...

Asides.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Yes, if you are going to knock down something before you have the resources to replace it, it is wilful destruction.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber when he claims that Government has destroyed these properties. Obviously, Sir, if one is going to replace a property it must be demolished. In construction, demolition is much different from destruction. What is happening in the Democratic Labour Party now is self-destruction.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, we can play around with words as much as we want to but if you demolish a facility in order to replace it, one would expect that you would have all the resources in place or some clear plan as to how that facility is going to be replaced. However, if you destroy a facility without any idea as to how it will be replaced, one can only categorise it as a wanton act of destruction.

Sir, this is what happened to the Barbados Hilton and the Dover Convention Centre and, as a result, caused significant loss of revenue to this country because facilities were destroyed which could be earning money over the past two years. One cannot accept that they were in such a bad state because they were not condemned by engineers or the Ministry of Health and we could have waited until we had the necessary resources in place before that step was taken. Sir, Government must do better than this.

Sir, if that was not bad enough they have now been put in the hands of an organisation which has demonstrated its inability to manage properly what it already has, which buys derelict buildings for millions of dollars and after purchasing those buildings significant portions of those buildings, like the roof, disappears.

Sir, this is the kind of thing that is taking place in this country at this point in time. Sir, I hope that the Government would pay closer attention to the manner in which they undertake these kinds of projects and that they practise what they preach.

Government keeps telling us that tourism is important to us and we accept that but then Government turns around and treats the industry by making what appears to be willy-nilly decisions. One only has to think of the recent dismissal of key members in the same tourism sector. This is the pattern of Government's behaviour to date. We had the situation where every time a Minister of Tourism changes, there is a change in the direction of tourism. There was one Minister who felt that in order to get tourism going you needed to have a top-heavy organisation at the Barbados Tourism Authority so a star-studded administration was put in place which proved not to be what was required.

Then there was another Minister who continued in that particular trend but who also sought to stamp his authority on the industry in his own way to the dissatisfaction of the Prime Minister so he was also removed. Now we have another Minister...

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, on a point of order. Sir, I know this is your domain but it seems to me that the question of relevance must be an issue here. No Minister of Tourism can run Hotel and Resorts Limited so Senator McClean is simply killing time in my view.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, you have made a valid point of order. I have been very generous to Senator McClean because it is that time of the year. I have given him an opportunity to establish relevance and he has not done that so your intervention is timely. Senator McClean, please establish relevance now.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, we are dealing with a key sector in the economy which is tourism. Mr. President, the Hotels and Resorts Limited is concerned with tourism and if this Government is going to vest property in Hotels and Resorts Limited, it must be for the purpose of tourism. One cannot ignore the fact of the impact of Hotels and Resorts Limited and their action on the tourist sector. Therefore, the Minister of Tourism must play a key role in what is happening in that regard.
6.45 p.m.

Mr. PRESIDENT: You also attempted to deal with previous Ministers. I am not sure that is relevant.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Sir, I am dealing with the present Minister of Tourism who indicated, on his assumption of office, that he had taken over a very painful situation. It seems that he is continuing to feel the pain which he inherited. It seems that he is unable to get this vital sector working as it should be.

Mr. President, if one does not want to put the responsibility in the hands of the Minister of Tourism, one can easily put it in the hands of the Prime Minister because I am sure he would be a key person in the whole investment procedure for a company such as Hotels and Resorts Limited, a company which, unfortunately, one does not know the true extent of its operation since its records are not readily available. This is one organisation which the Government of the day cannot blame the previous Administration for. As soon as Government is caught off-guard and as soon as the deficiency in the way in which it functions is highlighted, the easiest defence is always to look back at a previous Administration and what was done then. This one falls squarely in the hands of the present Administration.

I must say that Government owes it to the people of this country at least to explain to us what is happening with respect to Hotels and Resorts Limited. There are many questions to be answered. We need to know exactly what is happening with the finances. We need to know why they have been unable to attract the private sector involvement that they claimed they would have been able to. What is the true extent of the equity that Government has put into it?

It is interesting to note that while we are apparently posturing and beating our chests and threatening Trinidad and Tobago, some of the money which has gone into the Hotels and Resorts Limited was borrowed from Trinidad and Tobago.

Asides.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Hotels and Resorts Limited is not an organisation that Government can boast of its efficiency. Therefore, one has to be wary of any venture and any resources which are going to be put at the disposal of this organisation. I think that until Government comes clean with the people of Barbados and lets us know exactly what is happening with Hotels and Resorts Limited, we would have to continue to question any further money which is going to be put in the hands of this organisation.

Mr. President, let us hear from Government, and I hope that when the Minister is winding up he would be able to shed some light on what is happening at Hotels and Resorts Limited and the money that Government has injected into this organisation throughout the years.

I thank you, Sir.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. President, at this late hour in the evening and after a long day, I would have thought that the Honourable Member would have spoken effectively and to the Resolution. I do not think that the Honourable Member understands what is happening here. What the Government is seeking to do is to enhance the value of Hotels and Resorts Limited. Instead of dealing with the Resolution, he moves to raise the question of the destruction of the Hilton and Dover Convention Centre. I think that it is about time that we set the record straight.

The Hilton was constructed under the Democratic Labour Party Government which has never accounted to the people for the cost of building the Hilton, because they burned down the project office when they were asked what was the cost.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: You can challenge me on that now.

Mr. PRESIDENT: No. Please address the Chair.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: The Hilton was opened in 1966 and the Hilton was built of the cheapest plywood that you could find anywhere in the world. After the hotel was falling down around the guests, they had to demolish the Hilton. It would have cost more to refurbish it than to demolish it.

Sir, I can tell you because I bought out all the lights from the entrance up to the first floor. Sir, you only had to touch the ceiling and it fell down because it was worm eaten. A young lady bought the structure that resembled a chattel house, from which they served food. I think that she gave \$9 000 in the bid on a Saturday morning and the following day when she touched it, the whole house fell down.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: On a point of order. I really do not want to interrupt. I do not think that it should go into the records that the DLP burned down any place. Sir, if there was arson committed, I think that somebody should have been charged for it. I do not think that the Honourable Member should be making that assumption.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I would hope that is what Senator Bolden meant. In any event you have responded to Senator Bolden and you can take us back to Dover.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: I am going to take you back to Dover because we are talking about enhancing the tourism product in Barbados. The Honourable Member talked about destroying, so somebody has to bring him back to the true course.

We must understand what was the Dover Convention Centre. The problem here is knowledge and history. The Dover Convention Centre was the old Cable and Wireless building which was exchanged between Cable and Wireless and the land that they own at Wildey. All that was happening with the building is that it was constantly being remodelled. Sir, after a time the building had to go. We could not do anything with the building. The Honourable Member does not want to show up the inefficiency of the Democratic Labour Party. The Barbados Labour Party has always been saddled with correcting the mistakes of the Democratic Labour Party.

The Honourable Member talked about Sherbourne Conference Centre. Sir, look at the top of Sherbourne, there is galvanise painted to imitate a third floor to hide it from the public.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Can we lift the standard a little bit, please.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: I must answer the Honourable Member who said that the Government is using Sherbourne as the greatest thing.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Senate. What he refers to as "galvanise painted" was done by the present Administration. When the Democratic Labour Party left office, there was an unfinished structure which the present Government, rather than completing the facility, put on some galvanise and painted it.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Sir, to hide the metal standing in the air, what was supposed to be a floor that leaks up to this day, left by the Democratic Labour Party, because it was started without any plans, any knowledge of what it should be, it shifted from day to day and it was never in the Budget. It cost over \$90 million which the economists said that it would never be able to pay for itself.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: It was supposed to be an examination Centre, a conference hall and all kinds of things and it still leaks up to this day. The Barbados Labour Party Government used its sense to masquerade it, make people believe that it is a completed building. It was left by the Honourable Member's Party and they have the nerve to say that we should put up a statue on the building to the memory of Lloyd Erskine Sandiford. 6.55 p.m.

Sir, the Resolution has worth, but it has to be looked at it in economic terms. It has to be looked at for the salvation of the tourism industry. There are some areas which I would like to touch but at the moment I cannot, for the reasons very much known to some Members here. Sir, the Hotels and Resorts Limited, in my view, must be a beacon for the small hotels in this country which is or were owned by small Barbadians in this society. Sir, if the Government of Barbados is persisting with Hotels and Resorts Limited, it shows its commitment to tourism in the lower echelon in this country.

The DLP will not tell us about Heywoods. The World Bank said that Barbados had no stake in tourism and should have a hotel where Barbadians were involved. When I went to the Government in 1976 we went and looked at Heywoods. Sir, we took a decision in Cabinet that we would not pursue it because it was not a reasonable venture. Sir, I

remember the World Bank saying that if we reject them we cannot return to borrow any more money for tourism. Sir, we carried it through and it was to be done with the various entities in there to be leased to Barbadians. Sir, Barbadians do not like leaseholds and effectively it had to be lumped into one project in order to get it off the ground. The DLP did not analyse what the people in Barbados wanted and they sold it for less than half of its original value. It is the only real estate that I have ever known that has lost in value. Everybody buys real estate and this accrues in value but for the DLP that real estate decreased by more than 50 per cent. Sir, when the DLP gets up to talk, they must remember the history of their party. Do not try to criticise the Barbados Labour Party for using ingenuity and intelligence in bringing this to fruition. You are talking foolishness. You are talking about Sherbourne Conference Centre. Why are you talking about Sherbourne Conference Centre?...

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, I would prefer that you did not say "foolishness". It is unparliamentary. You can say that you disagree with him or some other word.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: I withdraw that word. What I would say is that he speaks things that are untrue...

Mr. PRESIDENT: No, you cannot say that either. As you know from your long parliamentary experience that is a reflection of the character of the Honourable Member. I am asking you to withdraw it.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: I withdraw it and I do apologise, Sir, but I will say that he speaks to things that do not match up to history and to facts. Sir, I give my full support to this Resolution and I hope the Honourable Member will try to remember the history of his Party. Sir, they have a problem; there is so much confusion as to what is happening today, they cannot think back about yesterday, but I hope that they will get over that and let the record of Parliament show facts. Sir, when the historians start to analyse what is happening in this day, they are going to look at Hansard and will believe that what is recorded in Hansard is the truth. Sir, somebody must put it right ...

Aside.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Yes, and that was true. I thank you, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Sir John Stanley Goddard.

SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is not clear to me why the Government

wishes to vest the land at Dover in Hotels and Resorts Limited. Sir, I think it can only be for one or two reasons and I await the explanation.

The first one could be to strengthen the balance sheet of Hotels and Resorts Limited because being vested for equity... Therefore, the existence of a large valuable asset and the corresponding increase in the equity of the company. Sir, that does not inject any cash whatsoever in the company. What it does improve is its debt to an equity ratio, which any investor or financial analyst is interested in.

The second reason, Sir, could be to use that site for new hotel development. I do not think I can see how that is possible because about six weeks ago there were audited accounts of Hotels and Resorts Limited for the years 1998 and 1999 which were laid in the Honourable Chamber. Sir, speaking from memory, the loss for 1998 was approximately \$4.5 million. The loss for 1999 was approximately \$10.5 million, equally a loss of approximately \$15 million over two years. Sir, here we are at the end of 2001 and the audited Financial Statement for the Financial Year 2000 has yet to be laid. That could not have happened in the private sector.

Sir, having said that, I do not believe that there are resources within Hotels and Resorts Limited to finance any new acquisition or expansion. The company is undercapitalised, that means that they rely very heavily on borrowed funds. It has been involved in a very large capital expansion this year, which means that its expense would have increased tremendously. Sir, I am referring to the Savannah Hotel Development. Sir, it is a beautiful development and I am not being critical of it, but I believe that it calls for a lot of money. I understand, but I am not sure, that it cost approximately \$300 000 per room. Sir, when one is investing so heavily in something like that, one is incurring a tremendous expense, while there is no incoming revenue during that construction period. Therefore, Sir, I am very interested in seeing the audited Financial Statement for the year ended December 31, 2000. I anticipate that the loss would be considerably higher than what it was in both 1998 and 1999. Sir, I would like to have an explanation as to the reason. Is it to strengthen the balance sheet of the company or is it to use this property on which to construct a new facility for the company? I thank you, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Mascoll.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. President, I rise to contribute to the Resolution to acquire a piece of land. In this case, it is to acquire to make the balance sheet look better. The vesting is different; that is just a legal process and what I am interested in here, Mr. President, is the actual accounting effect. What is happening here is that the Government is transferring the land that the

Dover Convention Centre was on to Hotels and Resorts Limited and what would be more important for us in this Debate, which was not given, is the value of the land. Sir, it is, in fact, acquiring an asset and it is going to rest on the balance sheet of Hotels and Resorts Limited and this Senate should be given the privilege of knowing what is this additional contribution which the Government is making to this organisation.

7.05 p.m.

Already, the Government has invested well over \$100 million in the GEMS Project. It has guaranteed loans and has taken money from the proceeds of the Public Enterprise Fund and placed it in the coffers of Hotels and Resorts Limited/GEMS. Now, to further prompt this organisation, it is transferring a piece of land to become part of the assets of Hotels and Resorts Limited/GEMS. Sir, a very important piece of information has been left out of the debate, that is, what is the value of the asset being transferred.

Certainly, we have been made aware that in 1998, Hotels and Resorts Limited/GEMS suffered a loss of \$4.6 million. In 1999, the loss more than doubled to \$10.4 million and I think we are all well aware that the overall performance of tourism in Barbados declined in the year 2000. We have had a reduction in the revenues of Hotels and Resorts Limited/GEMS because as has been the complaint of small hoteliers in Barbados, this group has in fact been heavily discounting rates with such good properties, that it has become attractive to potential tourists and it has undermined the small hotel sector. Sir, rather than enhancing the performance of the small hotel sector in Barbados, this group has become a major problem for other small hoteliers because the properties are new or they have been recently refurbished. In fact, in many instances, the quality is almost the same as five star properties and they are selling for what you get in a two star hotel.

Therefore, you can understand that with rooms the calibre of the Savannah Hotel and the other refurbished Rainbow Hotel going to the market and competing with other small hoteliers, this really makes life particularly difficult for that small sector. What is unfortunate about this is that the Hotels and Resorts Limited/GEMS is supposed to be in control eventually of almost one thousand rooms, which would represent more than 40 per cent of the rooms for small hoteliers.

This cannot be fair. This initiative came out of the difficulties those small hotels suffered because of their inability to repay the Barbados Development Bank. We are all well aware that in the 1970s and to a lesser extent the 1980s, many persons got access to loans from the BDB and built properties of between 20 and 25 rooms, because that was the limit that defined the small hotel.

Unfortunately, in today's world and in any world, such a small property would still have to carry the cost of full-time

managers, accountants and financial controllers. It has been proven, over time that these entities turned out to be uneconomical in such a way, that it required of them to expand and to get out of the difficulties that they were experiencing, so they became victims of the overall Government policy eventually.

Now, the idea to bring these properties together under one umbrella was not a bad idea but it has not been taken to its logical conclusion. It would have been beneficial for these small properties to share management and accounting services across the board so as to reduce the overall costs and get economies of scale from having that kind of operation. Sir, even in terms of the purchase of commodities and all the other services, it would be easier and far more economical to have them spread across the board but this has not happened.

Sir, what we are seeing really is an attempt by the Government to prop up the individuals, to put a business in place that cannot earn its way and cannot ever become viable financially and it does not take much to understand that. We just had a recent comment about the expenditure on Sherbourne, whereas it appeared at the time to be too costly and it was considered then to be uneconomical.

Sir, it is remarkable that an entity that created such confusion and fuss is now the envy of not only Barbadians but perhaps people across the region. It has been recognised that while the premise might have been potentially flawed by those looking on, the outcome of that property is such that it is now seen as a very worthwhile effort that can be developed to its full extent; and that should not be any surprise to anyone.

It is quite possible to have a false premise that leads to a very true conclusion. Even if you considered the reasons for the Sherbourne Centre to be incorrect, time has shown that the persons can be vindicated. Therefore, ex-Prime Minister Sandiford may very well – one of these days – receive his due, with the appropriate name being placed on that outstanding building at Sherbourne.

Now, the question about the Almond Beach Hotel and how it was allowed to depreciate, is absolutely incorrect. Indeed, what happened there is that after the property was purchased by BS&T, it was then revalued. I think it was Paul Altman who then valued the property according to market value and by that simple revaluation, the land and property value increased by the tune of \$40 million. Sir, almost overnight, the asset base of Almond Beach Hotel skyrocketed because it was undervalued at the time.

Therefore, it is not correct to say that it was any depreciation in the land and property values. What happened is that the values were revalued...

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, that is quite possible.

Sir, given the accounting system in Barbados, it is not possible for you to simply revalue assets to reflect market value as willy-nilly. It is not possible to do that and indeed to do that would cost you more because then the depreciation would have to be based on the market value and not the historical value.

In some sense, you would gain from not revaluing the asset overnight so perhaps the then owners recognised that and said that if you revalued, then that becomes an additional cost to us.

Now the Almond Beach example can be extended to across the street. It is just like the persons across the street are now being in contact with an asset that has skyrocketed in value. Whereas, they might have had a home valued only at \$150 000, almost overnight it increased fourfold. This has happened all along the West Coast.

Then, in looking at this particular Resolution, one therefore has to ask the question, is the simple vesting of land in the Hotels and Resorts Limited/GEMS sufficient to cover or mask the underlying weaknesses in the accounts of the Hotels and Resorts Limited/GEMS and property? The truth is, it is fair to conclude that even this transfer of land to the balance sheet of Hotels and Resorts Limited/GEMS cannot mask the underlying weaknesses in this entity.

Furthermore, without the benefit of the up-to-date accounting, it is fear to conclude that the losses for the year 2000 would be greater than the year 1999 on the basis of everything.
7.15 p.m.

There has been increased cost without increased revenue. There has been discounting of prices as evident in the market. Therefore, we can anticipate that at December 31, 2000 the losses would have gone to as much as \$15 million. Now, if that is so, it means, therefore, that in the year 2001 when we have encountered even more difficulties in tourism – prior to September 11, there were more difficulties in tourism and then subsequent to September 11, the difficulties became even more astronomical. It, therefore, will mean that the losses in the year 2001 would be even more substantial than in 2000.

So if we sound the performance of GEMS over the last four years we would have had a \$5 million loss against that at the bottom, a \$20 million loss, then there

will be a \$15 million loss in 2000 and a \$20 million or \$25 million loss in the year 2001. It, therefore, means that we would have lost about \$45 million in the last four years as a result of the GEMS project.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: That cannot be guessing. It is very clear to deduce that in the presence of all the difficulties that we have encountered this year and last year that the performance of the GEMS can be no different from the overall performance of tourism, and by extension, therefore, we will expect to see when the accounts become available in the year 2012 that Hotels and Resorts Limited would have suffered even greater losses in these last two years.

Therefore, we can see from the overall performance of this Hotels and Resorts Limited that we would have lost the \$100 million that we initially invested and we would have made losses over the entire life of this operation and this could be anticipated as an error of judgement on the part of this Administration. That will be consistent though with the Greenland Landfill, Southern Meats, the Barbados Agricultural and Marketing Development Corporation (BAMDC) and a whole host of other wastage that we have seen over the last four to five years.

So there is a pattern of tax waste and borrowing on the part of this Administration and there has been substantial wastage best exemplified by the GEMS projects. This has been the epitome of mismanagement on the part of this Administration. The GEMS projects needs to be abandoned now so as to avoid further losses and perhaps embarrassment to the taxpayers of this country.

What we have seen recently though is a very important move by a particular foreign firm to acquire the lottery at the Barbados Cricket Association (BCA). While it may appear to be adjacent, it is in fact very much in tangent with the GEMS Project but the facts will be revealed sooner rather than later. There is an attempt by that same organisation to acquire the assets of this Hotels and Resorts Limited more or less as a mass because they are really interested in getting their hands on the lottery and then to extend that exercise beyond Barbados. This is also consistent with the decision by the ailing sixth largest airline in the United States of America US AIR to bring services to Barbados in the face of difficulty because there is a complete marriage of these events. They appear to be unrelated, they appear to be no correlation, they appear to be even spurious and negative correlations but the important thing to note is that when the investigation is done these events are all related and tied into one another.

We have already revealed the facts. This is similar to when we revealed the happenings at the Barbados Tourism Association (BTA) way back in March and we even...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Mascoll, you must not persist in irrelevancy.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. President, I am simply introducing lines of causation. I am demonstrating that there is, in fact, a relationship between these apparently unrelated events and perhaps time would reveal that there is a substantial relationship between them.

Now, let me, therefore, say that there is no way that we should misunderstand the intent of this Resolution. This Resolution has nothing to do with simply vesting land in Hotels and Resorts Limited. This Resolution has more to do with propping up the balance sheet of Hotels and Resorts Limited. It is a fact, Mr. President, that we should have been given the true value of this asset because that is perhaps the most critical part of it since it really is just a transfer from the Government effectively to Hotels and Resorts Limited. The most crucial part of the Resolution has been denied us, that is, the real value of the land that is being transferred to Hotels and Resorts Limited. In the absence of that, one is not able to pin down the true gravity of this problem at Hotels and Resorts Limited. It cannot be fully quantified. There is certainly no reason why the Government should be so willing to transfer or to vest lands in an entity that is obviously failing. There can be no good reason for it. If there is no attempt to build on the land why should you simply transfer or vest land in this entity. I can see no good reason for it except that it is another attempt to try to hide the lack of performance or under performance of Hotels and Resorts Limited.

On that note, Mr. President, I will end by saying that while we recently had the debate in here on bankruptcy and while this pool may enhance the assets of the Hotels and Resorts Limited and potentially increase the net worth, it does nothing to improve insolvency and it is quite possible that within the next six months depending on how the winter season goes that Hotels and Resorts Limited could be in a state of insolvency. It is quite possible for that to happen but it would depend largely on the performance of the upcoming winter season.

7.25 p.m.

Sooner rather than later the facts will be revealed to John Public that there is more danger at Hotels and Resorts Limited than we are seeing. Indeed, the clouds are much darker than they appear to be and the possibility of rain is far more present. We have been borrowing consistently for a rainy day so perhaps we will get the chance to utilise some of the borrowings for the rainy day sooner rather than later.

I end by saying that this is simply another exercise in camouflage, another exercise in trying to make something appear to be better than it actually is and it is an unfortunate thing because we are playing with the taxpayers' money once again.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, on a point of order. I must voice my personal objection to the terms Senator Mascoll just used in which he is seeking to imply that the Government of which I am a part is seeking to camouflage, cover up and indulge in some sort of subterfuge. Sir, that implies improper motives and implies that Government is not above board. I think he should withdraw those comments.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, I think perhaps you should rephrase that. I am sure you do not wish to convey an imputation of impropriety. If that was your intention, then I am asking you to withdraw it.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. President, I can agree with that. It is my intent to be relevant at all times and I will accept your ruling.

I will simply say that it is what it is, an attempt to improve the asset base of Hotels and Resorts Limited and it is doing it, to my mind, in a way that is not the most appropriate. It is an inappropriate way to be boosting the asset base of Hotels and Resorts Limited simply to make the equity ratios look better. Perhaps we are preparing for sale because this is the kind of thing you do when you are preparing to sell an asset, try to make the financial indicators look healthier than they may be in reality. Time will tell whether or not we are preparing to sell Hotels and Resorts Limited.

It is a very discomforting thing, having invested well over \$100 million to see this entity losing \$15 million in 1998-99 and the potential to lose \$25 million over the last few years giving us a grand total of \$150 million in wasted capital on a failing entity that will have no future in the affairs of Barbados' tourism. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I rise to support this Resolution and to point out that this property is being transferred to Hotels and Resorts Limited to strengthen the balance sheet in preparation for an equity partner who will be developing a hotel on that site. Therefore, there is a very sound reason, transparent and open, as to why this transfer is taking place and bringing an equity partner in to construct a building on that site.

In addition to this, Mr. President, some comments were made about the discounting of rooms at the Savannah Hotel. There is no discounting going on at Savannah Hotel. The current price of a room at Savannah Hotel is US\$210 to \$215 per person per night, which is probably one of the

highest on the South Coast. In fact, from my own personal knowledge it is one of the highest. There has been some enhancement of the room rate by adding free breakfasts which is something that most of the hotels have done in the face of the decline of tourism after the September 11 incident.

The fact is that there has been no discounting of the rooms and the room rates are going to US\$245 per person per night at the Savannah Hotel. They currently have an occupancy rate of 70 per cent and it is anticipated that their occupancy rate for the winter season will average between 85 per cent and 90 per cent. This is a very high average which is a significant contribution to the revenue earning of this hotel.

You have to recognise the fact that the hotel is open for functions. It has a considerable clientele that come to the restaurant and also go to functions throughout the Christmas season and the hotel is very heavily booked in this regard. The Horizon, the Silver Rock and the Time Out have relatively good rates of occupancy about 75 to 80 per cent and they are running the average room rates at the South Coast which run between \$74 and \$90 per person per night with no discounting taking place. The only one that is having some difficulty is Time Out which is on the St. Lawrence Gap and as we all know the construction there has caused a bit of a problem. However, it is anticipated that their occupancy will move from the existing 40 per cent to about 75 per cent to 80 per cent over the Christmas season. No one can anticipate what will happen along the St. Lawrence Gap area throughout the rest of this winter but I do suspect that most of that construction has been pretty well undertaken.

Mr. President, this transfer of property is sound, appropriate and it is normal business why of strengthening a balance sheet in preparation for an equity partner coming in to build a new property which will add to the hotel plant of the South Coast. The whole objective of the GEMS of Barbados has been to raise the standard and the quality of hotel rooms along that area. It has been successful in doing so and we will not see a rapid rate of return on the investment as indeed you will not see in many new hotel ventures.

However, I would like to put paid to the fact that the implied unfair competition by this discounting has not been the case and is not the case. With that, Mr. President, I support this Resolution.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. President, I want to join in commending this important Resolution to this Honourable Chamber. I am glad that Senator Mascoll spoke because for the first time he backed up what I and a lot of us have been saying that the price at which Heywoods Hotel

was sold was less than market price. We have it tonight from the President of the Democratic Labour Party who is also interim political leader that the Heywoods Hotel which was a property of the Crown and us all was sold for less than market price. That is a serious admission because when we talked about selling the family silver there was a hue and cry across the island but we have it now straight from the horse's mouth that the Heywoods Hotel was sold for much less than market value.

Sir, how could anybody in their right mind sell any piece of article without getting a proper valuation. It boggles the mind that a serious Government can sell a prime piece of real estate belonging to the people of Barbados for less than half of the market value. We are glad that we have it from the President of the Democratic Labour Party that was what they did.

I want to come back to Dover. The point was made that Dover was destroyed and at the same time Sherbourne was mentioned. They fail to realise one important fact that if Sherbourne is making any success in terms of use it is because there is one convention centre instead of two. Previously, you had Dover with a very low occupancy and Sherbourne with low occupancy so that the decision was taken and it was a sensible decision that since there was not enough business for both centres then the obvious thing to do was to operate one. The point about using Sherbourne shows the difference between this Barbados Labour Party Government and the Democratic Labour Party Government. We found an asset, we quarrelled about it but at the end of the day it was there and any sensible government would say we quarrelled about it and had differences about it but it belongs to the people of Barbados and must be used.
7.35 p.m.

Sir, Sherbourne belongs to the people of Barbados and the use of it was a sensible decision by Government. We have our differences about it but it is incumbent upon us as a Government to make the best possible use of what was already there.

Sir, we do not agree with the fact that in order to build you must destroy, we do not subscribe to that philosophy. We feel that if you have something it is incumbent upon us to use it and we have used Sherbourne but Sherbourne as it is, will hardly ever pay for itself because it was not built with its present use in mind so that when Senator Mascoll talks about putting up a statue we should make sure that it is an unfinished statue. The success that is being reaped there is because of the decision we made to close Dover Convention Centre and put the land at Dover to more productive use. This is what I call good governance.

Sir, this Resolution is important and timely. It will go a long way as GEMS has done to enhance the important

South Coast because the South Coast is very important to our tourism product and Government by their activity in the GEMS has added to the South Coast. The Savannah Hotel and Time Out have uplifted the South Coast and have been positive factors in the development of the South Coast.

Sir, I associate myself totally with this Resolution. It is well founded and well thought out and shows that we have a Government which is proactive and which thinks through its projects and come to the best solution.

Sir, thank you very much.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, I am delighted to be able to give my support to this Resolution, particularly after Senator Goddard has quite ably blown away all the smoke screens the Opposition Members sought to create about the viability and desirability of Hotels and Resorts Limited popularly known as GEMS.

Sir, from the very beginning the Democratic Labour Party could not understand the concept behind GEMS and ever since then they have been looking for any excuse whatsoever to knock it. This is just one more occasion that they are seeking to knock it.

Senator Bolden also cleared up the issue about the Hilton Hotel. Senator McClean spoke about how Barbados is threatening Trinidad and it pains me that on an occasion like this the Democratic Labour Party cannot support a legitimate, elected Government to represent the national interest and that they must be nitpicking at all times.

Sir, my final comment deals with Senator Mascoll who said that GEMS should be shut down to avoid any further losses. I understand why he is saying this, given the historical antipathy and animosity of the Democratic Labour Party to GEMS.

Sir, when one looks at the success that is made of the Savannah Hotel one must be impressed about the potential for the project and see the sense behind it.

[Certain remarks made by SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY were ordered expunged from the record by Mr. PRESIDENT]

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Sir, the Democratic Labour Party is an institution which has made a valuable contribution to Barbados in the past and no one who is interested in democracy in Barbados and is associated with a party would advocate the shutting down of that party in the same way that he sought to advocate the shutting down of GEMS.

Sir, I am pleased to support this measure.

Thank you.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

The question was put and agreed to.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Senate be suspended until 9.30 a.m. on Friday, December 21, 2001.

I want to remind Honourable Senators that this is a suspension and not an adjournment so we will start promptly at 9.30 a.m. and will discuss one Bill, the Telecommunications Bill, 2001.

The question that the SENATE be suspended until 9.30 a.m. on December 21, 2001, was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the SENATE accordingly.
7.45 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Senate is in session.

ORDER NO. 4 – TO MOVE THE SECOND READING OF THE TELECOMMUNI- CATIONS BILL, 2001

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, in February, 1999, the Government of Barbados entered into discussions with Cable & Wireless (BARTEL), Cable & Wireless (BET) concerning three specific matters:

1. The proposed amalgamation between Cable & Wireless (BARTEL) and Cable & Wireless (BET).
2. The proposed early termination of their domestic and international licences in Barbados.
3. The liberalization of the telecommunications industry in Barbados in a phased manner.

Mr. President, out of these discussions, a Memorandum of Understanding was developed between these two parties and, subsequently, this proposed new Telecommunications Bill was drafted and developed.

Sir, the existing Cap. 282(A) has outgrown its usefulness in this era and, certainly, if we are to look at reforming the telecommunications industry in Barbados, the time is now. The present Act was initiated in a time of a monopoly telecommunications environment and, certainly, if we are to go forward with reform and liberalization,

the time is now. Sir, for the successful liberalization of telecommunications, there must be a functional regulatory framework in place. I repeat, we must have a functional regulatory framework in place to provide for the transition to the competitive stage and also to manage it thereafter.

Certainly, as it now stands, the Act does not allow Barbados to fulfil or to achieve its objectives under the WTO/GATTs Agreement on basic telecommunications. Neither does it provide for the liberalisation, competitiveness, nor a fair level of transparency. Sir, obviously there is an urgent need for this new legislation if Barbados is to achieve its policy objectives of promoting the continued development of leading-edge, broad-band with high speed, low-cost telecommunication technology, to facilitate the development of all the economic successes, if Barbados is to be totally competitive in this era.

Mr. President, in 1996, in his foresight and wisdom, the Prime Minister had appointed a Technical Committee to advise on the formulation of a national tele-communications policy. The Committee has submitted a report which was endorsed by Government in 1997 and has set out a number of clear policy objectives. Among those mentioned are:

- a. Access to basic telecommunications service.
- b. Competitive telecommunications service.
- c. Provision of state-of-the-art technology that would facilitate services comparable to other developed countries.
- d. Make provision for continued investment with a reasonable rate of return.
- e. There should be provision for a more efficient and responsive regulatory environment in the industry.

Mr. President, in this new proposed state of affairs, it is figured that the Fair Trading Commission will be responsible for the economic regulation and issues related to consumer protection. The Minister involved will be responsible for formulating policies and administering the legislation, primarily to award licences and to look after the management of the country's radio spectrum.

On 16th October, 2001, the Government of Barbados executed this Memorandum of Understanding with Cable & Wireless to terminate their exclusive provision of telecommunication facilities on this island. It is expected that this will finally culminate on August 1, 2003. It should be noted at this time that Cable & Wireless (BARTEL) was granted its licence by the Government of Barbados on October 1, 1991 and was then given exclusive rights to be the national telephone carrier. Similarly, Cable & Wireless

(BARTEL) was given similar authority for the external communication on October 1, 1991. In other words, the Government that was in office at that time gave a 20-year licence to Cable & Wireless and gave them exclusive rights to both domestic and international telecommunication in this country. In addition, I add that it can be described that they basically sold out our birthright in this to Cable & Wireless Company. This licence was due to expire on 13th September, 2011, but will now, after these discussions, terminate on December 1, 2002, for Cable & Wireless (BARTEL) and August 1, 2003, for Cable & Wireless (BET).

Sir, the telecommunications industry has been transformed over the past 30 years with low costs, but with increased range of capabilities of services that can be provided. Technology has no respect for national boundaries and we must be in a position to respond to the global drive. Within our region, Jamaica has implemented liberalised telecommunications. Trinidad and Tobago has enacted telecommunications reform legislation and five OECS States have now implemented a phased liberalisation under ECTEL. These countries are: St. Lucia, Grenada, Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and St. Kitts and Nevis. Sir, they have basically put a regulatory framework in place to control telecommunication in these territories. Certainly, the Bahamas and Guyana are also implementing changes. The Dutch and French Islands have already done this as far back as 1998. Therefore, to some extent Barbados is, in fact, trailing and if we are to get on board, now is the time for us to change our legislation.

Mr. President, now I come to the Bill. The object of the Bill sets out:

- a. the establishment of a framework for authorising the ownership and operation of telecommunications networks;
- b. the provision of telecommunications services on a competitive basis allowing the widest possible access to those services at an affordable rate;
- c. the prevention of unfair competitive practice by carriers and service providers in the management of telecommunications under this Act, the Fair Trading Commission Act and the Utilities Regulation Act;
- d. the overall development of telecommunications in the interest of the sustainable development of Barbados, taking into account the introduction of advanced telecommunication technologies and increased range of services and the preservation of public interest and national security.

In all this, there is hope that preservation of national security and public interest will remain.

Sir, Part I provides various definitions of the various terms used in the Bill.

Part II deals with the exclusive rights of the Crown.

"Subject to this Act, the Crown reserves the exclusive rights to provide telecommunications services in Barbados."

Part III deals with regulators of the telecommunication sector.

"The Minister and the Fair Trading Commission shall have responsibility for the management and regulation of the telecommunications in Barbados."

9.45 a.m.

Part X deals with numbering for telecommunications carriers.

Part XI deals with the technical standards for telecommunications equipment and technicians. This section allows the Minister to prescribe certification standards for telecommunications equipment and technicians. Provision is also made for access to private property for the installation, operation and maintenance of licence equipment. This section also specifies the procedure for disposing of a privately owned apparatus and it places restrictions on the importations of certain apparatus. It allows for a carrier to disconnect from a public telecommunications network if that does not meet certified standards. It talks about the sale, lease, trade or importation of any telecommunication or radio communications equipment, without a dealer's licence and it says that this is prohibited. In addition, the Minister may restrict or prohibit the importation of specified apparatus or equipment into and for use in Barbados. Installation and the use of a satellite receiver and antennae must be in accordance with regulations.

Part XII deals with radio communications and this section provides the process for the granting of a radio communications licence.

Part XIII deals with compliance and this section empowers the Minister to issue a prohibition order where a person contravenes the provisions of the Act. Provision is made for inspectors to enter and search vehicles, ships, aircraft or premises where there is reasonable suspicion that persons are engaged in matters contrary to the Act, and it also provides for seizure of documents or extracts of documents or seizure of telecommunications or radio communications apparatus.

Part XIV deals with offences and penalties and this section establishes offences that are specific to telecommunications and identifies the penalties that can be imposed on conviction of such offences.

Part XV deals with construction work by carriers and this provides for carriers to carry out construction work in connection with the installation, operation and maintenance of licenced facilities.

Part XVI deals with the review of decisions and this section provides for a person affected by a decision made by the Minister under the Act, to seek reconsideration of the decision, or to appeal decisions made under the Act.

Part XVII is miscellaneous and this provides for various issues such as contracting between parties for telecommunication services, disclosure of information on documents, refusal to transmit private messages that may contravene the law or public morals.

Part XVIII deals with the transition of arrangements and this section, of course, will provide for the repeal of the Telecommunications Act, Cap. 282(A).

In addition to that, there are two Schedules to the Bill. The first one provides for the transitional arrangements and the licence to be granted under the Act. The second Schedule provides for the amendments to the Utilities Regulations Act and the Fair Trading Commission Act.

Sir, it is vital at this point in time that Barbados moves on to the whole process of telecommunications reform. The time is right, as I said. We seem to be lagging behind our CARICOM partners, and certainly globally, everyone is moving towards liberalisation of telecommunications.

Sir, it is imperative that we act now to change our legislation and to make provisions with the specific Act that can deal with all of the considerations. Certainly, if we are not to be left on the shore when the ship of international telecommunications sails in, I think it is time for us to act now and to change our legislation to facilitate this process.

With these words, I beg that this Bill be read a second time.

SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD: Mr. President, this is another very important piece of legislation and, Sir, I would like to highlight the objects and reasons of the legislation before us this morning.

The Bill makes provision for the management and regulation of telecommunications in Barbados to ensure, *inter alia*:

- a. The establishment of a framework for authorising the ownership and operation of telecommunications networks.
- b. The provision of telecommunication services on a competitive basis, allowing the widest possible access to those services at an affordable rate.

- c. The prevention of unfair competitive practices by carriers and service providers in the management of telecommunications under this Act, the Fair Trading Commission Act and the Utilities Regulation Act.
- d. The overall development of telecommunications in the interest of the sustainable development of Barbados, taking into account the introduction of advanced telecommunication technologies and an increased range of services and the preservation of public interest and national security.

The Bill clearly states, Sir, that the Minister shall have responsibility for the management and regulation of the Act. It also clearly states at Section 32 that the universal service policy of the Government of Barbados is aimed at ensuring that every resident and every business enterprise of Barbados has access to reliable, affordable telecommunication services throughout Barbados on an equitable basis.

I would like to say, Sir, that the Bill is very technical and I do not feel qualified to deal with any of the technical sections, but I want to deal with what I consider to be important and the social sections.

Section 6 provides for the Commission – and this refers to the Fair Trading Commission – which shall enforce the policies established by the Minister pursuant to this Act. The Commission shall exercise its regulatory functions in respect of telecommunications in accordance with this Act. It shall be responsible for the regulation of competition between all carriers and service providers in accordance with this Act to ensure that the interests of consumers are protected. The Commission shall establish and administer mechanisms for the regulation of prices in accordance with this Act and the Utilities Regulation Act.

In dealing with regulation, Sir, it is also important to recognise the importance of confidentiality, and Section 7 clearly states that the Minister shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that the information submitted to him, and every person concerned with the administration of this Act, in respect of licences and applicants for licences, granted under this Act, is treated confidentially, except insofar as disclosures are necessary for the administration of this Act.

Sir, the penalties provided in Section 93 and Section 94 are for any breaches of confidentiality; and that is the way it should be.

If I may now turn, Sir, to the setting of rates, which is Section 39. The Bill says that the Commission shall establish a mechanism for the setting of rates to be charged by a provider in accordance with the provisions of this Act, the Fair Trading Commission Act and the Utilities Regulation Act.

Sir, that is an important provision and I just hope that this mechanism which they are charged with establishing is less cumbersome and less costly than the Committee that has been established in the past, dealing with rates of public utilities.

In the past, Sir, it was both time consuming and very costly and inevitably, those costs are passed on to the consuming public. I hope this means that the whole mechanism will be much shorter and more in the public interest.

The final point I would like to make, Sir, is dealing with Section 81 which makes provision for dealing with annoying, threatening and offensive messages and I quote Section 81:

“A person who sends or publishes by means of telecommunications networks an annoying, offensive, threatening, obscene or abusive message to another person commits an offence and is liable on summary convictions to a fine of \$10 000 or to imprisonment for a term of 12 months.”

9.55 a.m.

Subsection 2 states:

“A person who subscribes to a telecommunications service who uses, causes or permits any person to use a telecommunications service network for the purpose of sending an annoying, offensive, threatening, obscene or abusive message to another person commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of \$10 000 or to imprisonment for a term of 12 months.”

I support that totally, Sir. It is important that standards be set high and be maintained and breaches are not allowed.

Sir, with those few comments, I support this Bill. I thank you.

SENATOR THE HON. Dame PATRICIA SYMMONDS: Mr. President, I wish to say a few words on the Fair Trading Commission (FTC). As has been stated, the Bill provides for rates to be set by this Commission. The Fair Trading Commission (FTC) has replaced the Public Utilities Board (PUB) and the intention now is to provide a more modernised system of regulation which the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) has already started to work on.

As the market becomes genuinely competitive in any particular sector one will move from the heavy-handed regulation to economy-wise regulation. The Fair Trading Commission (FTC) will ensure that there is fair competition. I understand that a draft Fair Competition Act as well as

draft consumer protection legislation are currently with the Attorney-General's Chambers and will be ready as soon as possible.

Mr. President, the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) is also empowered to set quality service standards which will be a new feature. Although the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) has not yet prescribed standards, it is interesting to note that the mere existence of legislative power has caused Cable & Wireless to start working on their quality of work.

Mr. President, in today's technological environment it is clear that a flat rate regime makes eminent sense and flat rates are replacing measured rates all over the world. There are 85 000 subscribers to residential phones, and socially and culturally we in Barbados are attuned to flat rates. It helps to establish a neighbourliness. If someone's car breaks down, there is no hesitation in allowing the person to use the phone. I think it helps too to alleviate loneliness, and elderly people who live alone can keep in touch with families and friends. Of course, I need not mention the importance of it in case of illness.

In terms of determining costs under the Utilities Regulation Act, the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) is entitled to take a number of things into consideration. For instance, the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) will have to look at whether service providers, and that includes Cable & Wireless, are using the most modern technology. Obviously, this use would have an impact on cost reduction which is being seen in other places around the world. I am sure that Senator Philip Goddard will elaborate on the question of modern technologies.

Senator Sir John Stanley Goddard has referred to the rate hearings which used to be lengthy and costly and sometimes excessively so. I say that because I sat on the Public Utilities Board (PUB) for quite a number of years and no one can deny that the hearings were costly and time-consuming.

The Fair Trading Commission (FTC) has now circulated for comment a set of procedural rules to govern the conduct of hearings by the Fair Trading Commission (FTC). This is in keeping with Government's policy on transparency and consultation.

This is a revolutionary Bill and it is one which I have much pleasure in supporting wholeheartedly.

Thank you, Mr. President. I am much obliged to you.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. President, this piece of legislation is exceedingly far-reaching and complicated. In spite of those two things, being far-reaching and complicated, it can only be evaluated on the basis of what it does to the cost of telecommunications in Barbados.

So, after all the complexities are removed from the legislation, the question will be, are we going to see a reduction in the cost of telecommunications. Now, although that is a simple question, the answers are exceedingly difficult.

I think we are all aware that once you move from a monopoly to a more liberal or competitive market that there are going to be implications for the cost of doing business and by extension the rates that are charged. There is a bigger complexity here that we need to evaluate and it has to do with the whole question of liberalisation not only in trade but in services. That, for me, introduces a major question as to how we in such a liberalised market would begin to assess the differences between the cost of services provided locally and services that are provided or had from overseas. Therefore, of the major distinctions which have plagued the rate hearings over the years, local and foreign rates would continue to be a major concern.

10.05 a.m.

In this new environment, Sir, it is going to be difficult to justify differential rates on the basis of domestic versus foreign service and that is because in this new global world we are supposed to be living in, there are several attempts being made to remove borders and barriers. One therefore has to ask the question if it is going to be difficult to differentiate between the domestic and the foreign rate, then in which direction do we move. Does the domestic rate move towards the foreign rate or would we get a situation in which the foreign rate comes towards the domestic rate?

If you can establish in this new global environment that there is going to be the removal of barriers and borders, as we are seeing in the introduction of a value added tax, in the removal of non-tariff barriers, then it is going to be very difficult to justify the extent of the differential rates between domestic and foreign telecommunications.

I think we are all aware that monopolist prices discriminate on the basis of the ability to separate markets and if the monopoly continues then there can be justification for the maintenance of discriminating prices because it is going to be hard to legislate away the differences between markets, and that is where the complexity comes because inasmuch as we are seeking to remove all the barriers and break down the borders, it would mean that technically we are seeking to treat domestic and foreign markets similarly.

Once a monopolist exists then there is theoretical justification for price discrimination. So you are having a counter situation which offers a major problem to this sector. On the one hand, the removal of barriers will make the two markets become more alike and, on the other hand, it is traditional that a monopolist is allowed to price discriminate once he can separate markets as would be the case.

With that out of the way, the question then becomes what do we mean by affordable rates and how do we establish fairness as reasonableness in the setting of rates. That is going to be exceedingly difficult to achieve in a market where you no longer have one provider. Once you liberate the market and you allow other providers to come into play, then you can understand that the work of the Fair Trading Commission becomes even more complicated because not only are you dealing with, say, Cable & Wireless or BET, however described, but all the other providers who under the law would have been allowed to establish telecommunication networks. You now have to consider their own circumstances, their own cost structures, their revenues, their price fixing and it is going to be exceedingly difficult for the Fair Trading Commission to organise a rating system that is fair and reasonable across the board. That complexity, I hope, would be noted because we all know that the existing "monopolist" is going to have severe advantages over any potential provider of telecommunications in Barbados.

Having said that, perhaps it is quite possible that new technology may make it easier for a small new provider to come into the market and potentially undermine "the existing monopolist". You can begin to see how complex this arrangement is going to be because technology itself is going to remove the overall existing lump sum investment that the monopolists would have required in the earlier times and reduce it so substantially that entry into the market now becomes far easier for a new provider. Again, you have now complicated this process of fairness and rate setting in Barbados. It is not as easy as it appears to be. Therefore, one could expect that the existing provider will do everything in its power to ensure that new competitors either do not enter or are removed as quickly as possible from the market but that is fair because that is what business is about. There is nobody who is going to invest in any market or operation and then feel good to allow all and sundry to enter and undermine their market share. Dollars have no colour, class or creed. People are in business to make profits and if they suspect that some other person can erode their profits they will do whatever it takes to deny them entry.

Notwithstanding the legislation that we are putting in place, it now becomes the question, are we going to be able to deny the existing provider dominance in the market? I cannot see how you can deny them dominance. In fact, when they remain dominant it then becomes a question of who leads the market so that despite the control that we are seeking to deny "the existing monopolist", while we can legislate against or seek to encourage higher levels of competition, there are many strategies that could be employed by such a player in a market to ensure control over the market. It is not anything new. It happens in oligopolistic market settings. In the oil business it happens every day where the bigger players determine and dictate. It happens

throughout the United States where the largest banks determine the lending and deposit rates simply because of their might and the power that they bring to the market.

I can see no different happening here in spite of our desire to open up the telecommunications sector in Barbados. What we have seen, in fact, is a very clever piece of strategy on the part of the single most important provider, which is downsizing in the earlier part of the year and before and then rightsizing in the latter part of the year, so that whenever you queried why should there be the kind of job losses in that operation you were told that at some later stage the same entity would be seeking to establish other smaller entities to provide service. They may call them something else or they may appear to be under some other name but certainly there is some degree of collusion, I would believe, and even if it is not collusion clearly defined it is going to be hard to ask a former worker who would have derived all kinds of expertise from a particular entity not to remain particularly loyal to that entity if only because he appreciates that his capacity to grow within the sector depends largely upon his connection with his former employer.

In terms of providing these services there is no one that can tell me that a former worker at that monopoly would not feel some degree of commitment to the established monopoly if he is convinced that in establishing a separate operation he can still derive certain degrees of benefit from having a friendly association with the monopoly.
10.15 a.m.

There has to be some degree of control being factored into this entire arrangement within the telecommunications sector. I am walking cautiously and delicately on this matter. When we look at the role that the Fair Trading Commission has to play we see that in setting a fair and reasonable rate there are other considerations like the rates being charged by competing service providers for supplying a similar utility service.

It, therefore, means that if technology allows new players entry into the market and these new players can provide the service at far less cost than the existing provider, then the Fair Trading Commission is compelled to look at the question of the cost that competing services appear to be providing. In short, it would be extremely possible for a similar service provider to come in and offer rates much lower than Cable & Wireless or BET and then you can anticipate that the Fair Trading Commission has a responsibility to look at the differences between the two rates and make a determination as to what is fair and reasonable. The market is not going to fully drive this process in spite of our intention to say that we are now freeing up the telecommunications sector.

Mr. President, standards are going to be exceedingly important because any time a commodity is priced, it has to

be in relation to the quality of the commodity and this is why we have to be careful when we attempt to look for cheaper alternatives to purchase because we may not get the necessary standard.

The Bill also talks about the return on the rate base. I have already said that the Fair Trading Commission is going to have a difficult time in determining whether to establish a return on the rate base that is across the sector as opposed to establishing a rate base for individual players within the sector. This is where the complexity will come because how are we going to be able to bring together the different providers, look at their revenue base and everything else to determine what the rate of return should be for the entire sector?

According to the legislation we also have a duty to look at the individual company's performance in determining the rate of return on the investment. This will create a difficulty for the question of rate hearing.

We are told that a simple measure like the rate of inflation should be used as a gauge in the consideration of rates. I have severe difficulty with that because I have difficulty with the existing way in which we calculate rate of inflation in Barbados. First of all, the index itself is in need of a complete overhaul because the index no longer represents an adequate basket of goods for the average Barbadian. I say that because I appreciate that in the aftermath of the value added tax where for the first time taxes were placed on services, the index, as defined now, has never considered putting real services into the index. Other Members would like to feel that I am simply being wicked but the truth is that if you look at the allocation of spending across households in the index, it made no real provision for the impact of services. Therefore, since 1997 it is easy to say that the rate of inflation in Barbados is not adequately representing an average basket of goods for the average household because we have not defined the index to capture services which have now become heavily taxed in Barbados. Sir, we all know it because the cosmetologists and their clients now pay all kinds of taxes for the services provided so we need, first of all, to revamp the index.

Sir, the work that has to be done first and foremost is a complete analysis of the rate hearings that have gone before. While we can say that the hearings will not be costly we cannot deny that the same issues raised in the past will now be raised at these hearings and would have to be considered by the Fair Trading Commission. They must be in a position to understand that the world does not begin at the first rate hearing of the Fair Trading Commission. There has to be some consideration of the historical reality of rate setting in Barbados so that we cannot now come and draft a completely new document for determining reasonableness and fairness in the setting of rates in Barbados.

Sir, that is another consideration and I hope that prior to the first hearing the Fair Trading Commission has to engage in, that it would appreciate the need to go back to the archives and understand the issues as they were battled over the last 20 or 25 years. It turned out in many instances to be a severe battle. We all respect the work of the late Wendell McClean in that regard and, therefore, let me record my appreciation for his work on behalf of the people of Barbados.

Mr. President, it gets even more complicated because in determining rate setting we are being told in the Fair Trading legislation which directly relates to the telecommunications legislation that the prospective increase in productivity by the service provider will be part of the consideration of the rate setting.

Sir, because this sector is technologically driven one can understand the volatility in productivity gain that could occur. Almost overnight there can be a transformation in the quality of technology to the extent that it has a severe impact on the cost of operations in telecommunications.

It is my belief, given what is happening in the world today, that technological improvement can translate into substantial cost reduction and the Fair Trading Commission must be in a position where it can truly evaluate prospective increase in productivity to be used in its consideration of rate settings. Do we really understand the gravity of this provision that you are asking the Fair Trading Commission (FTC), with its limited staff, to be in a position where it can look down the passage of time and anticipate what will happen in productivity among service providers, because it talks about prospective increases in productivity?
10.25 a.m.

Sir, we know how monopolies work. They engage in very healthy investments at a point in time, in the hope that it effects the overall cost over an extended period of time. Over the last few years, Cable & Wireless would have run fibroptic cable to increase their capacity to provide. That would have been a huge investment. Over time, the benefits would be seen in terms of reductions in average, therefore, reflected in profitability for that provider.

Mr. President, at the time that would have been happening, where you have technological changes, the other major component becomes your human capital. While technology may be driving down cost, you will have a countervailing increase in the cost of human capital. It complicates the ability of the FTC to be in a position to analyse prospective increases of productivity because they can come from many sources. In the short-term, productivity is a managerial concept where you can reorganise your labour and the way you do things, but in the medium to long-term, it is driven by technology. Therein lies the complexity for the FTC.

The point has to be made that we are hoping that the FTC would be in a position to say that there is a need for a reduction in the rates similar to its willingness or its belief that there should be an increase. This is where the crux of the matter comes. If we are going to establish a new telecommunications service, driven by technology, then its ultimate benefit to the economy must come in the form of reducing cost. It cannot be the case that this new area of activity could come into the economy and become a negative as opposed to a positive. There has to be a major consideration of the benefits that can be derived from expanding the telecommunications sector in Barbados.

If we are going to put all forms of legislation in place and it does not redound to the benefit of the economy or the people of the country, then it would have been a failed exercise.

I would hope that we are not just seeking to put legislation in place to be on the same line of trade as others within the region and beyond, but that we understand that there must be an ultimate objective of reducing the cost of doing business. Therein lies our major concern for a future Barbados.

We are here talking about competitiveness but competitiveness is an esoteric term that only has fortifiable value when you relate it to cost. It is being bandied about. You hear that the tourism sector needs to be more competitive but when you ask the question how do you determine that, no one is able to say by doing, X, Y or Z. You must be able to quantify competitiveness to make it a goal and an objective in managing any economy, furthermore a small open economy.

Sir, I move away from all the rhetoric and stepping into a situation and deriving public relations benefit, then pulling back without having put anything quantifiable in place. Over the last month, we entered into the arena. We stalled a particular bank from approaching a customer, then we say that we are providing hope. Two months later, there is absolutely nothing done to assist the individual. Therefore, the question is, are we simply putting structures in place without having defined the objectives or are we seeking to have a public relations contest?

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: The question is, are we going to be in a position to translate effectively the provisions contained in the legislation into something real and meaningful for the people and businesses of Barbados? That has to be the main question on the minds of those who introduced this kind of legislation.

Sir, it gets more complicated. If it is the case that other providers are going to come into the market, it means that

your capacity to regulate becomes more important, even though you are talking about deregulation. If other players are entering the market, then you have to ask the question, while they may be able to provide a service, are they going to be able to protect that service from pirating or other such use? It has happened in the provision of television services where a major part of your cost relates to how do you protect access without payment. Therefore, you have to put systems in place to prevent people from having access. The major part of the operation is to safeguard the integrity of the system. That is becoming increasingly important in telecommunications. The question of protecting the services that you are providing will become an issue for the future.
10.35 a.m.

Mr. President, we can have all kind of talk about systems that were and are being developed, but there is not anything in this world that is perfect. If one system is developed today, there can be a counter system because man would have developed that system. It is similar to the excessive concentration of diet to reduce fat. Every day there is a new diet, every day there is a new programme and similarly there is going to be the same internet technology. There is going to be some new invention, only to discover a year in the future that it is flawed. This is where it is going to happen because we are at the stage where we are still experimenting.

We cannot have a world without that kind of experimentation because it is only as a result of creating new things that we can advance, but we cannot believe that every time there is a new discovery that we have gone to the end of the world. Sir, no one can convince me, even though very bright people develop all kinds of technological gadgets, that they have been able to reach to the end of their capacity. Sir, no one should believe that with the provision of all kinds of services, they are isolated from pirating or from people's access by use of some other measure to destroy the integrity of a system that has been developed. This can be seen almost every day now, especially on the Internet. How do we safeguard ourselves? We have not reached that stage of complexity yet in Barbados because it is not yet a widespread problem. To date, less than 5 per cent of people in less developed countries have been introduced to the Internet, e-mail, cellular phones, *et cetera*. We think it is a big thing because some people are able to have access to them without looking to see whether or not they affect the wider body of people within the region and countries, but that is not the case at all.

Mr. President, the other thing that will now happen is that there is a five-year limit for new rates, so that the Fair Trading Commission must convene or inquire about rates every five years or less. They have a duty to come into the market to determine whether or not rates remain fair and reasonable. Sir, that introduces the overall question of cost

and administering these rate settings, because we have been told that a major problem with the Public Utilities Board was the extensive time it took to make decision on rates.

Sir, because we have established a Fair Trading Commission, do not expect that it is going to reduce the inquiries that will be made. The legislation sought, as best as it could, to limit individuals from being "nuisances" and therefore they now have to go through a different channel in order to make representation at the Public Utilities hearing, but it would not stop the extent of the discussions or the debate that one has to engage in, in order to have fairness or reasonableness, to see whether or not one is offered a fair rate of return on their investment, *et cetera*. In fact, I think I have demonstrated that in this new global environment the issues become even more complicated and are therefore going to require even more discussion. Sir, especially the first rate hearing of the Fair Trading Commission which would be extremely complex because you are now approaching new territory and new ground. Who is now going to be able to determine what the benchmark is? Who is going to make that determination in light of the influences in technology and these other things will have on the determination of rates in Barbados? It is not going to be an easy process for us in the future.

Sir, it means, therefore, that one cannot even query the Bill that is before us because it is, indeed, a very voluminous document where there is little or no precedence and therefore we would have had to look beyond the region to reach this stage. Sir, the question that one would have to ask is, who would have informed the making of the Bill? There is one simple answer to that, the persons who are most engaged and involved in the delivery of telecommunication services, because it would have been impossible to go beyond that group in formulating a Bill of this nature. Government had to seek some input from the existing monopoly, whether it was at the local, regional or international level, but no one can simply put together such a complex Bill without some consultation made by the existing players in the market. It is going to be hard for us to remove the monopolistic character of the market over the next five to ten years. It is not going to be easy for individuals to enter in spite of what the legislation provides because of the start-up capital that is required and the other complexities of knowledge required to enter this particular market, so that there is going to be a level of monopolistic behaviour within the market notwithstanding the presence of the legislation.

Mr. President, I have promised not to take my entire allocation of time during the Yuletide season because we have been forced to return to this August Chamber just prior to Christmas and, in the spirit, I do not wish to carry on as if it were another time in the year. Sir, I wish to end by saying that, yes, the legislation is necessary. Yes, we cannot be left behind, but notwithstanding all of that, we have to come to the practical realities of the implications of this legislation:

the question of the ownership as defined under the Object and Reasons of the Bill; the establishment of a framework for ownership and operation of telecommunications networks; the ownership under the capital requirement would not be widespread. I do not think we can expect it to be widespread. In terms of the operation, there is some degree of experience, the learning curve that the existing monopolist would have been in contact with for the last 40 to 50 years and nobody is now going to simply come into the market and undermine that company. So that, there would remain advantage in this new legislation, notwithstanding the intent.

The second object is the provision of telecommunications on a competitive basis allowing the widest possible access at affordable prices. Sir, we do not have some of the difficulties with the topography that other countries in the region have. Certainly, Dominica is extremely mountainous and very difficult to be able to carry these kinds of services all across the island and in very small and scattered communities because of the nature of the landscape. Barbados is fortunate from the point of view of its flatness, its accessibility in most parts and therefore it does not provide that disadvantage in providing telecommunications services.

Sir, that does not mean that we do not have to improve the quality of the service because, in recent times, it has become extremely difficult to stay on the Internet in Barbados. It has become almost annoying to utilise such a service and whenever you are seeking to do something, you are dropping out of the system. That cannot be a very comforting thing because it is hoped that technology improves productivity, but if technology becomes so annoying that it frustrates, then it actually reverses your desire to be productive. It increases your capacity to get out of the system and to stop using the computer and to look for other ways to find information, but it is not a fair thing to be happening. Therefore, I am hoping that the providers of such services will recognise that quality has to be the buzzword of whatever is required in terms of the provision of bandwidth. Upgrading technology has to be done because if it is not done, it will not allow the sector to become meaningful in the new Barbados. It becomes a nuisance rather than a benefit to the users.

Sir, the whole question of the prevention of unfair competitive practices by carriers and service providers has to be looked at. It is a major problem that will happen because there is a contradiction where one is seeking to open up the market to make it more competitive yet one still has to seek to regulate it in the interest of the consumer. Sir, that must in itself create a world of complexities because the world is about removing barriers which directs us toward being competitive but then, in the interest of seeking to guarantee accessibility by a wider cross section of the community, we still have to regulate. So that the whole talk

about deregulation is what it is – talk, because deregulation cannot be allowed if there is a social conscience and a concern for a wider cross section of people to have access. We can never have that perfect environment. It cannot happen in an imperfect world. Perfection cannot be pursued in a state of imperfection and that is why perfection in itself is just utopian – something that is defined for us but just will never be achieved and thank God, that is the only reason why we would be able to get to Heaven anyhow.
10.45 a.m.

Similarly, in an economic environment it is useless to speak about perfection. There has to be some degree of control by Governments and there has to be some degree of regulation because the market can never give you what you want in terms of giving a fair price and a fair rate of return. Then, there is the whole question of the future and that is, if we are going to be concentrating on services then telecommunication and technologies become exceedingly important for the future of Barbados.

Sir, we cannot fool ourselves that, given our current structure, we would have achieved our objectives by simply ignoring the need to restructure and reform the economy. We have not truly restructured. We have not embarked on a restructuring of the Barbados economy. We have not embarked on an emphasis on services. It has become a mere question of talk and there is nothing that I can see that has been done over the last seven years to show that we are moving towards a service oriented economy, and that has been a major shortcoming and failure of this particular Administration. They engage in the talk but they have not really provided the environment. The question therefore at the end of this is, would this legislation truly allow for fair rates to be charged and fair rates of returns to be derived by the providers in this sector?

I have difficulty because I think that the complexity involved in determining fair rates and returns would continue to be a major problem within the telecommunications sector of Barbados. I would say that it would not make sense for us to deny the need to have such legislation but, let it not be said that legislation alone would get us where we want to go in terms of justifying efficient allocation of our scarce resources in Barbados.

Mr. President, I thank you.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Mr. President, I am pleased that I can talk this early because I have several concerns about this Act. I am sure the experts on the Other Side would be able to allay my fears.

One gets the impression – I certainly got the impression when I heard about the Act, and when I read of the debate in the Lower House – that the legislation is

primarily about telecommunications in terms of telephone service providers and the problem we have with the widening of that market and so on. All of the debate so far has been primarily on this, but I have concerns about the radio communications which are covered in this Act.

Senator Symmonds said that the Government prides itself on consultation but when it comes to the radio side of this Act, I talked to members of the Barbados Citizens Band Radio Association, the Barbados Amateur Radio Association, the people who import and sell radio equipment, the people who install radio equipment and all of them assured me that they have never seen the Act, far less been consulted.

Sir, that is a rather upsetting idea because this Act gives the Government powers in relation to things that I think we have come to accept as our rights in Barbados, and to me it threatens some of the personal freedom of Barbadians.

I remember when I was a young boy, you had to get a licence for a radio receiver. The fee was approximately \$2 a year. The Government soon realised, as the number of radios increased, that this was a waste of time and money trying to collect this tax. Then, when television was introduced, we paid a television tax and that was eventually abandoned and people now enjoy the use of television without any licences.

Sir, this seems scary because the fines and penalties addressed in this Act seem to me to be aimed at huge corporations. There are items in this Act that should be literally interpreted. For example, if I have a pocket radio and somebody hits me and smashes this pocket radio, they can be fined \$10 000 or go to jail for three years!

Sir, we have something in the Act which talks about the National Spectrum Management Plan where you can pay a fee, which is not prescribed in the Act, to get hold of this management of the spectrum.

The radio spectrum varies from X-rays and microwaves right through to a very long list of waves. The Government, under this Act, has the right to regulate everything that uses any of these devices. I talked to some members of the Telecommunications Department of the Government and they said, "Yes, that is so and that is what we want. We want to regulate the whole spectrum."

Sir, you have your key and you go to open your car, from now on that has to be licensed. It works by radio and the Act says that has to be licensed.

In the United States of America's law, the FCC specifically puts aside certain frequencies that do not require licensing but this is not so under this Act. There are no exceptions but every single thing that works by radio. If you

have a microphone that you walk around with, it is a wireless microphone and it now comes under the Act and it has to be licensed.

Sir, there is a reference on page 13 of the Act, about the International Telecommunications Convention that Barbados acceded to in Nairobi in 1982. I asked to see a copy of this and I was surprised and somewhat upset to find that no such copy exists in Parliament. I was under the impression that any time that we sign a convention or a treaty that it would be laid in Parliament, so that parliamentarians could see what the Government is committing us to, but somehow or other it did not happen and there is no copy in Parliament.

Sir, under the definitions in the Act, radio telecommunications means everything including receivers. Now, I can understand the great need for transmissions: you have to control walkie-talkies that are used for business and you have to make sure that you have total control of that spectrum of the business and the frequencies used, particularly by the police, the Defence Force and so on.

Sir, what if my grandson has a little toy plastic walkie-talkie but it can travel the length of the room, does that now come under the Act and requires a licence?

Asides.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: The satellite receiver is an antenna. There is no definition to describe exactly what is a satellite receiver. You could have a dish but I could make a dish to receive CBC 900. The dish could be constructed and would be a huge dish because of the wavelength but theoretically I could do that, but once I have that, is that going to be called a satellite receiver if it has satellite capabilities?

10.50 a.m.

I understand right now that you have to pay a licence fee of \$500 a year for one of these dishes. I also understand that you even have to pay a fee for DirectTV with a small dish. In fact, I was surprised to hear from a government source that you actually have paid a tax for the remote control on your television and that when you buy a television that has a remote control that you have to pay more for it than if it does not have a remote control in view of the fact that it is included in an overall licence for that remote control. I hope the television we have here has that capability.

There are radio control toys that are becoming very popular. There is a club involved in radio control aeroplanes and radio control boats. I have seen people in the Careenage fooling around with these things. All of these things are now licensable.

Now, every telecommunications device, including a pocket radio, has to be inspected and declared at Customs and they have the right to hold it on the basis that it can be

taken and modified and on the basis that sometimes these radios come in and are said to be radio receivers because the Act gives them that right and the Government has intentions that they should hold it until they approve.

There are things called scanners which are used by various people and by the Press a lot to listen to the police. Do you know that every cellular call that you make is scannable? There are people there listening now...

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: On a point of order. The Honourable Senator is misleading the Senate in the fact that digital cellular calls are not scannable. Analog calls can be scanned and the cell phone companies have moved substantially to a digital environment.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: I am glad to hear that is so but I can tell you that I saw somebody using one of these phones the other day... In fact, somebody called me and said that they heard me talking to someone and I told them that I did not know that the person was on a cellular phone. This gentleman called me on his cellular phone, I was talking to him but I did not know that he was on his cellular phone. This person told me that they went into this lunch room and this guy has a scanner there and they were listening to my private conversation with this man.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: On a point of order. The Honourable Senator is unwittingly misleading the Chamber. Things that are scannable are what are known as analog which is the old-fashioned network. So the Honourable Senator probably has a very old-fashioned set. A digital set is not scannable. So what he should do is to upgrade his service.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Phillip Goddard has already made the point which has been allowed as a point of order. Proceed, Senator.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Sir John raised the question of messages that are obscene and so on, but the Act also includes annoying messages and the fine for this is \$10 000 or 12 months in jail. I find it a little mind-boggling for someone to tell me that if I phone my favourite politician and annoy him that I could be fined \$10 000 or be sent to jail for 12 months. So who is going to decide on what is annoying and what is not. I find this a little too wide and I would rather see it a little better.

It even goes further in that if you subscribe to a service and that service is used for the purposes of being obscene or annoying to anyone, you as a subscriber are also liable. I find this totally mind-boggling that you have no knowledge of what is going on but you can still be liable. Is it your responsibility to ask the person to whom you are subscribing for a service to guarantee that there will be no annoying messages? This sort of restricts people.

Now, in section 82(1) it said "a person who knowingly intercepts or copies some material that is coming out". Now, does this include the copying of videos? If you do a video tape of something that is on television, is this going to be illegal? If you do an audio tape of something that is on radio, is this going to be illegal?

Asides.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Ah, but you see, intellectual property would say that if you are going to use this or sell it or something. So if you are just going to copy it, is the act of copying then an offence? This is not normally so anywhere else in the world. Normally you may copy but you may not use. You may use it for your own personal use.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, please do not be distracted by the Asides. Please address the Chair.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: In section 82 (2) it says that paragraph does not apply to the Royal Barbados Police Force. Now, the Government also has a monitoring station established at Gun Hill which monitors and receives and presumably acts when they find some illegal stuff is going on. I am sure that everybody knows that all the radio substations in Barbados are monitored at Gun Hill and they act on it but this here does not recognise that they exist and only gives the Royal Barbados Police Force the right to eavesdrop on conversations. This monitoring station has been in existence for the last 20 years as far as I know. This is nothing new, so people should know all about it.

Mr. President, the whole point of this thing is that I do not think anybody has addressed the real concerns of people using the radio spectrum in Barbados in our day-to-day business. So just how far is the Government going to implement this thing? Are they really going to prosecute kids with toys that do not have a licence? Where are they going with this thing? They have the power here to do anything. We do not have these activities set aside as part of the spectrum that is normally set aside in other countries. In Barbados the spectrum is total. I would assume that a microwave oven gives off microwaves even though it does not go anywhere, nevertheless the Act says clearly anything that gives off any kind of radio emission is licensable. So I think if they try to implement that the bureaucracy would be mind-boggling.

I thank you.

SENATOR J. E. D. WILLIAMS: Mr. President, I rise to give this Bill my fullest support, particularly by the fact that telecommunications is the thing that drives almost every economic sector or, I may say, all economic sectors in this country.

Before I get into the debate, I just need to speak quickly to a few points which were raised by Senator Laurie and also a few points and comments which were raised by Senator Mascoll. There is absolutely no intention in terms of spectrum management to deny people like the citizen bands and radio amateurs. The Act is pretty clear. It speaks to the promotion of the economic and orderly use of the spectrum for the operation of telecommunications. Section 40(b)(1) goes on to talk about recovering the cost incurred in the management of the spectrum. This is addressing the issue of telecommunications. The economic value to this has to do with those frequencies and that part of the spectrum that supports telecommunications.

11.05 a.m.

For example, when Government eventually issues a licence to another provider to offer a mobile service, that new entrant would have to be issued frequencies in which to operate. If an individual wants to use satellite communication as a means of connecting, transmitting and receiving information data, you have to use satellite frequency. That is where the economic value is. It is in the form of telecommunications. To talk about a little key to the car and somebody out there using some little walkie-talkie, is basically to trivialise the issue that we are dealing with and I wish that Senator Laurie had started as...

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Mr. President, on a point of order, I am just repeating what I was told by the Government's telecommunications engineer. These are the facts.

SENATOR J. E. D. WILLIAMS: Mr. President, I know that the Government has telecommunications engineers in a unit that people really understand and I really would not comment on the last intervention made by Senator Laurie, but I would say that I wish he had started how Senator Mascoll had started. Senator Mascoll began by saying that the legislation is complicated and far-reaching and his level of difficulty took him from ten to quarter to eleven before he took up the Bill and he finished at five minutes to eleven.

I wish that Senator Laurie had started the same way because we are dealing with a serious piece of legislation before this Chamber today. Senator Mascoll is absolutely correct that it is a very technical document and quite frankly not even people like myself are capable of dealing with it one hundred per cent, but I know I can deal with it more so than most.

The fact of the matter is that the telecommunication industry has gone through a revolution, particularly over the last 30 to 40 years. As a consequence, the regulatory regimes and the sorts of older technologies on which the regulatory

process has hinged make the present legislation that we have obsolete. It means therefore that we have to get legislation that can permit us to be able to satisfy our obligations under things like WTO and GATT.

Those agreements all stress the fact that promoting liberalisation competition and encouraging a measure of transparency in telecommunications, both in terms of domestic, regional and international services are clearly the objectives. The process towards the development of a regime that is appropriate to regulate telecommunications, the sector itself, requires careful planning and the approach must be one that is orderly, focussed and it has, to my mind, to be purposeful in the way that a government or any entity should have gone about it. Those three elements, the fact that it should be orderly, focussed and purposeful are something that we should give this Government credit for. This document before us has gone through a long process where we have seen the setting up of a technical committee.

Senator Mascoll in his contribution talked about the fact that the document itself might have had an input from the local operator. The technical committee that was set up was a committee that had persons across-the-board to advise Government in terms of what kind of policies ought to be formulated in terms of improving our existing telecommunications legislation. Clearly, you would try to seek to have input from everybody who understands the industry.

I am certain, for example, that if Senator Mascoll had sat down with people involved with the industry and gone through the Bill, his contribution today might have been different. Therefore I believe that if a government is going to formulate legislation then it is incumbent upon the government to ensure that it has the input of all the people who can help it formulate that policy so that at the end of the day it is relevant to our circumstances.

The first report came out in 1997 and the objectives of that report spoke to access to basic telephone service under universal service obligation. Let me say that what we do not want is a case where when you move to competition, some entity says that it is only going to offer this or that service but not the whole suite of services because you could have overnight a situation where some key services in Barbados are no longer provided. If you are going to come up with legislation, the question of universal services has to be addressed and it has been addressed in the legislation or in the Bill before us.

The second and important element coming out of the 1997 report dealt with creating competitive telecommunications prices. Senator Mascoll spent most of his time seeking to talk around the role of the Fair Trading Commission and whether or not it is capable of setting prices effectively across-the-board and so on. What I would say to

Senator Mascoll is that if you look at most of the OECD countries, at the last count I think there were some 24 out of the 29 that had gone through the process of full liberalisation; some of them have even gone to the extent that they do not need to be regulated. As a matter of fact, the role of the regulator has diminished almost entirely and people can come into the marketplace and set up operations provided they follow certain requirements laid down without having to go through a whole process of being licensed and the prices regulated.

I want to say to Senator Mascoll that eventually, and I am not quite sure when we are going to reach that point where the role of the regulator would have diminished to that degree, but the fact remains that once you create a system that supports competition, and the Fair Trading Commission in its role ensures that competition is fair competition, we will move to a point where the role and the difficulty that Senator Mascoll alluded to would no longer be there because market forces will take over. That was the second objective coming out of the report.
11.15 a.m.

There should be utilisation of state-of-the-art technology that facilitates services comparable to those in developing economies. This is part of the objective in the revamping of our legislation and moving towards a process of liberalisation.

A key objective is continued investment with a reasonable rate of return and an equitable basis on which new entrants may be provided services thus promoting competition and allowing market forces to drive prices. This would assist in regulating the market.

Mr. President, I alluded to the experience of the OECD countries. In every instance where I was able to gather information there is a clear showing that when the telecommunications sector is opened up, liberalised and becomes competitive, the overall revenue coming from the industry tends to go up. In the case of the OECD countries, between 1995 and 1999 their revenues went up by 60 percent and that is where most of the liberalisation took place for those countries. Of course, it also had a concomitant impact on GDP in those countries.

There was also tremendous digitalisation of the networks and we saw further improvement and increase in the cable television industry. This, of course, underscores the linkage between telecommunications and things like broadcasting and information technology.

If the OECD countries and other countries which moved toward liberalising telecommunications have been able to benefit from better prices and better quality of service, there is nothing to suggest that it will not happen in our case, because for us to reach this stage, we needed to take the decision to have a body that could properly

regulate prices, and Government has made sure that the Fair Trading Commission was set up in a way that it benefited from the best possible advice at the time. We also had a Committee set up in 1996 and then, to my mind, what we needed to move the process along would be to have the sort of legislation that we have before us today.

Mr. President, most of the countries who went through this experience pointed to a number of things that must take place if there is going to be competition and if we are not to experience the difficulties that Senator Mascoll alluded to.

For example in the United Kingdom, new entrants coming into the market had to use British Telecom networks and, therefore, any new entrants coming into the market in Barbados will have to use the network of the present incumbent. Therefore, inter-connectivity will be integral and important.

The method used to determine inter-connectivity charges will also have to be determined even if we use a method based on historical cost, but whatever the methodology, one has to look at how we arrive at charges for inter-connectivity. Sir, the fact of the matter is that there must be a regime to support operators coming into the business and being supported via the dominant carrier.

There must also be a clear service level agreement so that a new entrant will clearly understand what to expect. Also, the terms and conditions of what the dominant carrier is going to provide will clearly have to be spelt out.

Mr. President, in terms of the legislation, the interconnection terms must be non-discriminatory. There must be a situation where what you are going to offer a new entrant must be as good as what you use for yourself. It must also be judged against any non-affiliate service provider or similar facilities thus provided and it must be provided in a timely fashion. This is important because as Senator Mascoll correctly said, if one does not regulate the sector properly, a dominant carrier could frustrate the efforts of a new entrant and, therefore, timeliness is very important. When a new entrant asks to be provided with a new service, he must be provided with a good price, a good quality and in a timely fashion in order to make sure that new entrant is not frustrated.

The carrier must also provide interconnection to his network on such reasonable terms and conditions as the interconnecting parties agree through negotiations. The offer sets out the terms and conditions upon which the licence carriers will be permitted to interconnect with the telecommunications network of the carrier who offers them a service. The terms include a description of the services to be provided, the terms of payment and the location of interconnecting points. Sir, this can become a very

contentious matter, based on the experience of others who have gone through this because as a provider of service you will be required to set up a network and operate in the most efficient way in terms of your own equipment.

11.25 a.m.

Therefore, the legislation before us seeks to facilitate competition, to promote a regime of cost-oriented prices and to offer an entrant an interconnect price that is cost-oriented. I want to put a stake in the ground at this point. If interconnect prices are to be cost-oriented, the charges by the dominant carrier must also be cost-oriented.

Mr. President, I am saying that the experience of most countries has been that they have taken a long time to move from prices that one can say are not market driven prices, to one where prices approach cost. We, as a country want to have it both ways. We want to make sure that the prices we pay for services are fair, reasonable and as low as possible, and at the same time be in a position to be able to offer new people coming into the market, prices that will allow them to be competitive. Sir, at the same time we do not want to deal with the hard facts recognising that we have to move from where we are to a point where there is no longer subsidisation in the sector.

We have the international sector presently subsidising the national sector. For example, people are saying that they want to maintain fixed rates. There is no problem in maintaining fixed rates. However, a regime of cost-oriented prices will simply say, what does it cost to provide that local service? Whatever the cost is plus a reasonable rate of return will determine what is the cost of providing the services. The cost of providing the service plus a reasonable rate of return will equal the price that you pay for it.

However, we are saying that we want to maintain a flat rate in Barbados and that we do not want to move to a situation where you have measured rates. Mr. President, my understanding is that the cost of maintaining a flat rate, if it is charged at the true rate of providing that service, could be anywhere in excess of \$70 a month. It is clear that there has to be a balance in trying to promote competition in the industry and at the same time the social cost in any decision that you take. It is a delicate balance.

Sir, it is not by chance, for example, that countries would have a phased process to liberalisation. Sir, one can make the decision overnight and say that we want to become fully liberalised and open up the market tomorrow, but that would mean that the prices that you charge would have to be prices that relate to how much it cost you to provide those services. To that extent, one would therefore imagine that the cost of services would go up astronomically, there must be a phased process to it.

We cannot be talking about cost oriented prices, we cannot be talking about wanting more competitors to come into the market and to allow them to operate in the most cost-effective way and do not recognise what the implications are. Mr. President, for example, if you are going to expect incumbents who are mandated with commitments in terms of interconnecting because they have a responsibility hereafter to interconnect, I think that we have to deal with the issue in full. I think that we need to understand that we have to look at it holistically.

The role of the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) is very important because it has to ensure that the subscriber charges, while they move towards cost-oriented prices as quickly as possible, are done in a way that does not create social hardship.

We are hoping in the short term that there will be competition within the cellular market. The role of the regulator in this area is going to be particularly important. The regulator must ensure that there is a follow-through on the conditions that are set by the incumbent and the new person entering the market. The Government has to monitor compliance and make sure that they enforce decisions.

I want to move to the area of the funding of universal service. One of the key objectives coming out of the report of 1997 was the fact that Government wanted to make sure that there was universal service in Barbados. That in itself would ensure that basic telecommunications services were available. For example, pay phones are reasonably accessible across Barbados; there is access to emergency numbers, free of charge, and providing appropriate telecommunications equipment for the disabled persons.

Mr. President, if you are going to ask any operator to meet this as an obligation, not everyone coming into the market would want to provide the whole suite of services to the public. Therefore, it is necessary to have a fund established to ensure that those who provide these services are so recompensed at the end of the day. The universal service obligation operator may receive funding for the net cost of meeting such services. Those operators can be funded in one or two ways:

- (a) The establishment of a fund to which all operators contribute and from which the universal service operator is reimbursed,
- (b) The adding of a supplementary charge for interconnection fee.

11.35 a.m.

Therefore, it is for the Ministry and the Government to determine which one they consider more appropriate. The experience of other countries has shown that the fund is preferred since it prevents distortions in terms of

interconnection and it tends to be more transparent and allows the designation of another operator, instead of the incumbent, to provide personal service in particular areas. Accounting preparation, however, ensures that the possibility of cross-subsidization is prevented.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Williams, you have one minute in which to conclude your speech.

SENATOR J. E. D. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I think if there is one message that I would leave with this Honourable Chamber it would be this:

All of this, to my mind, can only happen if we have a telecommunications unit that is properly resourced, properly managed and is able to monitor what is going on out there.

Sir, I have not even spoken about spectrum management and that is one that concerns me. Sir, presently you will find that people do all kinds of things to get around the system and an incumbent has a responsibility, when it is a monopoly, to ensure that he is able to detect these sorts of things because it is basically set in its own licence. What is happening now is that this now falls to Government, which has a responsibility to take the role from an incumbent and ensure that it is able to police the system to ensure that, at the end of the day, revenues that are due to Government are, indeed, made possible.

I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Marshall.

SENATOR D. D. MARSHALL: Thank you very much, Mr. President. In my short contribution to this debate I would want to draw attention to a few of the issues that exist generally in telecommunications, and not going into the legislation itself. I would think it important to remind Members of this Honourable Senate that the area of telecommunications is a very rapidly growing industry, notwithstanding, of course, that the telephone has been around for almost 100 years, and one would imagine that after 100 years there would be some evidence of a plateau, but that has not been the case in telecommunications.

Sir, we recognise that it is growing, fast paced, rapidly evolving when we consider that the legislation we have, as we speak, was enacted in 1991, just 10 years ago. So that, within the space of one very short decade, it has become necessary for us to completely revamp and revive the legislative structures which govern our telecommunications sector. That is not an issue of foresight. In fact, this revision and revamping was the artwork of the former Government. The Bill before this Honourable Senate has, in its objects and reasons statement, the following:

1. This Bill is to make provision for the management and regulation of telecommunications in Barbados to ensure the provision of telecommunications services on a competitive basis allowing the widest possible access to these services at an affordable rate,
2. The prevention of unfair competitive practices by carriers and service providers,
3. The overall development of telecommunications in the interest of the sustainable development of Barbados taking into account the introduction of advanced telecommunications technologies and an increased range of services.

Mr. President, perhaps the most common thing that comes to mind when we talk about liberalisation of the telecommunications sector is cheaper rates. Perhaps it is human nature that our focus should primarily be the immediate impact on our pockets. Be that as it may, I believe it is important to draw the Honourable Senate's attention to the fact that cheaper rates, though perhaps the most immediate benefit, certainly is not the most important of the benefits that we would realise from the liberalization of our telecommunications sector. Cheaper rates are important, yes, but we have to realise that our telecommunications sector has gone long past what people used to call the POTS – Plain Old Telephone Service.

Sir, the other effects of this liberalising of the telecommunications sector will be such things as positing Barbados as a leading player in the technology. It will also have a very positive impact on our GDP. There will be benefits to local investors, significant increase in Government's revenues can be expected and also increased employment and training opportunities for local residents. Those benefits are, perhaps, the long-term benefits which will secure our future as a thriving economy and not simply the immediate benefit of cheaper telephone rates.

I would like to indicate at the outset that the liberalisation of telecommunications is not just an issue of cheaper rates. We also have obligations under the WTO, and therefore it has been important for us to liberalise. Sir, I feel it important to make the point that CARICOM needs to put the issue of telecommunication on its agenda in a meaningful way. This issue of liberalising so as to meet the requirement of the WTO will essentially mean that there will be more foreign players in our telecommunications sector. There will be more foreign players applying for licences and these are issues when one starts to talk about cross-border trade in telecommunications, *et cetera*, which will almost inevitably give rise to trade disputes.

Small countries like Barbados, Grenada, Dominica and all the other countries in the Caribbean are not necessarily

well positioned to handle international trade disputes. We know what has happened in the Caribbean in relation to such things as bananas. We have to recognise that in the WTO companies do not make claims; the WTO is not a civil court, Governments do. Therefore, companies must rely on their governments to make a charge in the WTO on their behalf. Now, we have to recognise that in the area of telecommunications in the Caribbean countries, individually, they are not well equipped to face or to make those kinds of challenges. Therefore, if we intend to become a successful player, both individually as a country and as a region, in the area of cross-border telecommunications and international trade, we have to ensure that our Governments collectively have the skills to mount a successful challenge or to defend a challenge to the steps that we may take. I, therefore, would like to reiterate that call for CARICOM to put the issue of telecommunications firmly on its agenda.

One of the most interesting things about liberalisation of telecommunication is the role of the mobile telephone. The most frequent debates these days on mobile telephone is how unsafe it is because persons are driving while talking with the phone in their hands which is likely to cause accidents. Then, of course, there was the recent scare of increased risk of cancer. Today, over 300 million people in the world own mobile telephones, that is, more people owning mobile telephones than owning personal computers. Anyone who is even slightly technologically oriented will recognise the impact of this. There are more people who own mobile phones in Barbados than own personal computers, therefore we have to recognise that with this proliferation in the growth of mobile phone in that sector of our population that opportunities of new kinds develop. It is estimated by the year 2003, there will be one billion users of mobile telephones and that will be the point when mobile telephones will be as common as television sets.

11.45 a.m.

At that time, as well, it is expected that the value of goods and services transacted over mobile networks, will have reached US\$13 billion, approximately 7 per cent of all e-commerce transactions.

Telecommunications therefore is a sunrise industry with many different players coming in. It has typically enjoyed a very high rate of growth and it has been traditionally the largest industry in any developed country. It will be interesting to note that the largest company listed on the London Stock Exchange is the mobile telephone company, Vodophone. In fact, Vodophone is the largest telephone company in the world, even larger than its predecessors, British Telecom and Cable & Wireless.

There have been many forces at work causing all countries to consider liberalisation of the telecommunications network. Technology has resulted in

some things like call-back facilities which result in cheaper rates and so on and so will the networks which are viable alternatives to fixed line services. Commercial users have also put a lot of pressure on telephony and also economic competitiveness. Barbados recognises that in order for us to be competitive and position ourselves as a global player our telecommunications infrastructure must be cutting edged. Sir, the basic point is that liberalisation of telecommunications goes far beyond cheaper telephone rates for the domestic consumer.

There are many advantages too, to liberalisation, particularly in tourism. We have to recognise that tourism has changed in many ways and the changing face of the tourists that come to Barbados is important. As we travelled in the Caribbean over the last few years, we have been making increased calls for the ability to roam.

Six months ago if you went to St. Lucia you would have heard that you had to go to the Cable & Wireless office and make your telephone call. These are now things of the past. How much more would it be an important feature for a European or a North American travelling to Barbados to have a seamless use of his mobile telephone. Sir, these are factors that are coming in and making changes to the landscape.

I am firmly of the view that as liberalisation takes place, we are able to bring newer commodities to the market. The competition will cause players to start having more user friendly offerings and therefore position us as a tourist destination that is able to cater to many of their needs. One only has to think of the proliferation of CNN in hotel rooms, purely because tourists want to keep in touch. The principle is exactly the same when it comes to the use of mobile technology.

Barbados is responding relatively quickly but we have to recognise that this is one race where we are somewhat behind. There are other people in the region who have liberalised markets in telephony. This is not a race that you can afford to give anybody an especially great deal domestically.

I am firmly of the view that our deregulated telephone systems will also provide significant opportunities for economic enfranchisement of Barbadians. I was quite pleased to notice recently that, even in preparation for liberalisation, Cable & Wireless/BARTEL has actually started to out source some of its services to companies set up by former employees.

This is expected to happen because as competition increases, companies will start focussing on their core strengths. Companies will, if possible, get out of having to deal with installations, repairs, this, that and the other and that will therefore provide many opportunities for

Barbadians to get into this very powerful, very lucrative sector.

The key business opportunities, in my view, would include maintenance and operation of the actual infrastructure, providing of enabling systems, enhanced payment systems, content providers and so on, as mobile telephones increasingly allow us to access things like the Internet.

Sir, I would like to mention two final things and one might be of interest to the Members of this Senate. More and more mobile telephones are being used as payment mechanisms. In the Isle of Man you can now buy a Coke from a coke dispenser without putting in any money. You are able simply to dial in a number on your mobile telephone and you will be billed for the coke that you took out of the dispenser when you get your telephone bill.

The point is that telephones have gone beyond simple communications devices. No longer are telephones just things that you pick up and call your relatives and friends to wish them a merry Christmas. They are becoming an integral part of how we interface with people and businesses on a day-to-day basis.

I believe that the passing of this Bill will mark a watershed in Barbados' development. The opportunities for enfranchisement do not just rest with the small man as we say. Sir, because it is a lucrative industry, I would personally like to encourage Barbadian entities to pay for some of the licences that might be available and try to get in there to ensure that some of the profits remain in Barbados.

Finally, Mr. President, I would like to mention one aspect of the legislation which amuses me and it is in many ways similar to the amusing comment by Senator Laurie about annoying politicians. One of the concerns that I know many Barbadians have problems with from time to time is the question of crank calls. In the former Telecommunications Act, there was absolutely no legislative prohibition against crank calls. This is particularly sensitive to me because, in my early years of practising law, many people would come and say, "I am getting these crank calls, what can I do?"

BARTEL at that time would say that there is nothing much that they can do. There is no framework in place and it was a fairly constant source of embarrassment to say to somebody that really they will just have to put up with it or change their telephone number.

Perhaps the section in the Act which talked about annoying telephone calls was intended to remedy that breach. I was a little amused when I noted that it talked about any person who uses the telephone system to transmit annoying or offensive messages. It occurred to me that very

often one of the most common crank calls is when people call you repeatedly and when you answer the phone, they put the phone down in your ears. There could not be any legal definition which equates to a message, so at some point in time when the opportunity arises for an amendment to this legislation, I would like to encourage that we do not limit crank calls just to those people who actually abuse you or annoy you by speaking to you on the phone, but to those people who also annoy you by not speaking.

Asides.

SENATOR D. D. MARSHALL: Sir, with the last comment of my learned colleague in the Senate, Senator McClean, Mr. President, I support this legislation and look forward to a new lease on life to the Barbados economy, through the many advantages that will come as a result of telecommunications and only to reiterate that we cannot think of it only in terms of cheaper telephone rates. There is a lot more at stake and far many more benefits than a reduction in our monthly telephone bills.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 12.10 p.m.

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 12.10 p.m. was put and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Senate accordingly.
11.55 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, there are a few matters with respect to this legislation which I have serious concerns about but before I embark on them, I will deal with the legislation itself.

I would like to address a point that was raised by the Honourable Minister in his presentation. I heard him made reference to a previous Administration selling the birthright of this country when they entered into some arrangement with Cable & Wireless. What I would like to say with respect to that is that time and circumstances change and everything happens in due time. A few things happened before their time. In fact, we have heard persons suffering because they were before their time but when things happen in the normal process of time we expect to see things happening. So perhaps this is now the time for this legislation because I do not think there were any countries in the Caribbean, in fact, not only in this region but as far as Hong Kong where Cable & Wireless operate business that you did not have the same kind of arrangement as we have in Barbados where it tends

to have a monopoly on telecommunications. So that is nothing new with respect to Barbados.

However, if we are going to talk about the selling of birthright, then we will have to deal with several other issues which do not fall within the ambit of this debate because we will have to talk about things like the lack of drugs to the Barbados Drug Service because we are endangering the birthright of Barbadians when we do not provide them with certain basic necessities; but we will not get into that, and I am sure that you would not allow me to go down that road. So, I will caution the Honourable Leader of the Senate not to allow those who have been around a little longer than him to warp his thinking in this regard.

Mr. President, one of the main concerns I have with respect to this legislation is the power given to the Minister. Now, you cannot blow hot and cold if you want to achieve anything because the best you will end up with is being lukewarm. On the one hand, Government is pushing the notion that we need to liberalise and, therefore, we need to allow for free and fair competition but at the same time they have a mechanism in place which, in my view, runs the risk of stifling that free and fair competition. For example, Under section 12 to grant a licence there are some very questionable points which come up there. It says:

"In determining whether to grant a licence under this Part, the Minister should consider:

(a) whether an applicant

(i) is a person of fit and proper character.

I do not know, Sir, what yardstick would be used by a particular Minister to determine who has a fit and proper character. In my view that seems to be rather subjective. Also, if he;

(ii) is, or is affiliated with an undischarged bankrupt.

Now, I do not know what "affiliated with" in this regard might mean, whether you are a business partner or whether you just happen to be a third cousin or whether you just happen to have a drink together. What does "affiliated with" mean? You see these points might seem insignificant to persons but I always say that I like to think of a worse-case scenario. Maybe one is quite happy with the competence and the integrity of the Minister who has responsibility at this time but who knows what may happen in the future if you have someone who maybe is not as competent nor has the same level of integrity as the present Minister.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: On a point of order. The Honourable Senator has obviously not

read the Bill because in Part I which deals basically with interpretations, it said:

"Affiliate", in relation to a company means an affiliated body corporate within the meaning of section 440 of the Companies Act".

So obviously you are talking of "affiliate" in a company context.

Mr. PRESIDENT: That is no point of order, please proceed, Senator.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: The point I am making is that one must always pay attention to things like this because when we are dealing with matters like this it is open to interpretation. Therefore, we must ensure that our legislation is not left open to interpretation because this section states that the Minister has power to determine whether a licence is granted or not to an applicant who is affiliated with an undischarged bankrupt or with a person whose licence has been revoked.

Under section 17 subsection 2 it states that:

- (2) Where the Minister has reasonable grounds for not renewing a licence under subsection (1), he shall inform the licensee by written notice as soon as practicable of his intention not to renew the licence".

Mr. President, as I said, where the Minister has reasonable grounds for not renewing a licence under subsection (1) he should inform the licensee by written notice as soon as practicable. As I said, Sir, when you are talking about large sums of money being invested and the person undertaking the enormous commitments he cannot leave it to a person in such a subjective manner to determine whether that licence can be renewed. There should be a reasonable time frame set out by law under which the Minister would have to give that notice rather than leaving it so wide open.

Again, when we look at the modification of a licence, under section 18(1) subsection 2, it says that:

"The Minister may modify a licence without the consent of the licensee where the Minister is of the view that the modification is necessary for reasons of public interest; but where he does so, the Minister shall advise the affected parties by written notice at least two days prior to modification".

Again, Sir, how are you going to give somebody two days written notice that you are going to modify the conditions of the licence where you are dealing with such an enormous matter?

Sir, I believe that the powers of the Minister appeared to be too wide and subject to very subjective judgment. So I think this is something which we need to guard against because we cannot be saying on the one hand that we want to liberalise a sector but yet we are going to have these kinds of things in force. I believe then that rather than having all of these powers in the hands of a Minister that there should be an independent impartial body that is responsible for matters mentioned under this Bill rather than putting it in the hands of a Minister. In the same way that we have a Fair Trading Commission (FTC) to deal with the other aspects in terms of the operation, rate hearings and what not, I believe that the decision as to whether a licence is granted or not or the matters relating to licences should not fall under the control of a Minister but there should be an independent body which would not come under any undue influence, that is, a body that is set up with a given life span that will bridge any change in Government for example and one that is not subject to being removed because a Government is changed or because a Minister is changed. We need to have something like the Fair Trading Commission. We need an independent, impartial body to deal with this.
12.20 p.m.

Sir, we have a situation where one person can apply for a licence and based on this Bill the Minister could determine that person is not eligible for a licence. Another person with the same circumstances could apply for a licence and the Minister could use the same judgment to give that person a licence. I believe that discretion in the hands of one person could be okay but we have to consider the worse case scenario.

Aside.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: If persons are listening, they would have heard a few minutes ago where I pointed out that we needed an impartial body to deal with this matter rather than giving such wide and subjective powers to a Minister.

I also heard that in this Bill and with the conditions for liberalisation, there was no use troubling Cable & Wireless...

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, I hate to interrupt the Honourable Member in full flight, and fanciful flight at that, but the Honourable Member is seeking to portray the discretion given to the Minister under this Act as leaving it vulnerable to someone being a tyrant or dictator or being arbitrary, high-handed, one-sided and partisan in his activities. To show that this is not the intent of the Bill, section 19(2) says:

"Where the Minister has reasonable grounds for believing that a licence granted under this Act ought to be suspended or revoked, the Minister shall, before suspending or revoking the licence, give the licensee

60 days notice in writing of intention to do so, specifying the grounds on which he proposes to suspend or revoke the licence; and shall give the licensee an opportunity

- a to make written submission in respect of these grounds;
- b to remedy the breach of the licence or a term or condition of the licence; or
- c to submit to the Minister, within 30 days of the receipt of the notice or such longer time as the Minister may specify a written statement of objections to the suspension or revocation of the licence which the Minister shall take into account before making his decision."

Sir, it shows that there is provision.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, that is a speech. You will have an opportunity to speak a little later on. Senator McClean, please continue.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, after all that is done, then the Minister makes a decision. The Minister gives you the opportunity to say why he should not revoke it and then the Minister makes the decision. So it still leads back to the Minister.

Sir, it has been reported that the Government did not enter into any deal with Cable & Wireless. In fact, I heard one person refer to it as saying that there was no deal in any smoke-filled backroom and that this is a matter that has been done with the greatest of transparency. We are led to believe, Sir, that Cable & Wireless out of the kindness of its heart has agreed to the shortening of the time in which it enjoyed a monopoly in Barbados. This certainly cannot be the Cable & Wireless with which all of us are familiar. I am sure that Senator Williams in his speech alluded to the heart of the matter as to why we have gone this route at this point in time and why Cable & Wireless is so willing to shorten the time of its monopoly.

The Green Paper on Telecommunications addresses a number of issues and basically this legislation is based on what was in that Green Paper. It is putting into law many of the issues that arose in that Green Paper, a Green Paper in which Cable & Wireless as the incumbent had a significant input. Are we to believe, Sir, that Cable & Wireless would have done things out of charity? I have never heard of a Cable & Wireless as a charitable organisation. Why should it be so charitable to Barbados and nobody else? Perhaps there was no deal struck in a smoke-filled backroom but perhaps the terms were informally spoken of over a drink in a hotel room in London. One never knows.

I do not believe that Cable & Wireless is giving us something for nothing. I think that at the heart of this the issue raised by Senator Williams...

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, on a point of order. I was hoping to be able to ignore a comment that the Honourable Member just made when he talked about perhaps a deal was struck over a drink in London. Sir, this Telecommunications Act is a measure which had the assent of the Cabinet of which I am part, and I want most strenuously to object to any insinuation that I would be part of any such underhand activity.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Could you set the record straight? Perhaps the Clerk can help me. Did he say that?

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: If that is what you said, that was not my understanding, I am asking you to withdraw those words, Senator.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I withdraw whatever they want me to withdraw.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am asking you to withdraw the offending words.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, the reason why I said so is that I do not know what are the offending words.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have not had the opportunity to check the records. I am asking therefore that you withdraw the offending words.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I withdraw the offending words.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Please, proceed.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: We are now sure that this was not a deal struck in any smoke-filled room nor over a drink in London nor anywhere else. At the heart of the matter is the issue of rate balancing. That is what this whole thing is about because Cable & Wireless has been saying for some time that the overseas calls have been subsidising the local calls and that people have been paying less than the true economic cost because they have been subsidising it with the overseas calls.

Sir, I think there are some issues that we need to address if we are going to go down this line. How did Cable & Wireless arrive at what it sees as the local cost? What are the provisions that it included in arriving at that local cost? If it can afford to subsidise the local calls with the overseas calls it is because probably it was receiving much lower than

it should have received for the overseas calls for a long time. This is borne out by the fact that the FCC has unilaterally reduced the rate that Cable & Wireless was charging, the component that Cable & Wireless was being paid for calls between Barbados and the United States of America.

12.30 p.m.

Sir, Cable & Wireless was receiving \$3.60 for overseas calls. Out of that \$3.60, one dollar was going to the United States, another dollar was going to the various subsidiaries of Cable & Wireless that had anything to do with the call, making a total of two dollars but somewhere along the line Cable & Wireless was still getting \$3.60 so perhaps all along Cable & Wireless were getting more money than it should get for the overseas call and, therefore, could afford to subsidise local calls.

Sir, even now that the FCC has made the ruling with respect to US\$0.50 that Barbados should pay, in truth and in fact, Barbados only pays a penny out of that money. Under the arrangements for developing countries certain considerations are given and they are not required to pay the full cost. Barbados falls in that category but Cable & Wireless pays less than the US\$0.50 when it is time to pay.

Mr. President, all along Cable & Wireless has been living well. I heard that Cable & Wireless has spent a lot of money in Barbados over the past three to five years in terms of development. The question is, what was the money spent on and how much of it contributed to development in the Barbados economy because Cable & Wireless can say that it spent money in Barbados when in fact it was spent outside of Barbados.

For example, when Cable & Wireless bought a second switch which was supposed to ease the load so that we would get fewer instances of "all circuits are busy", they bought this second switch which was supposed to work in tandem with the existing switch so that the load would be accommodated, but the two switches were never synchronised because they were not compatible.

Mr. President, when Cable & Wireless talks about spending all of this money it must tell the people of Barbados what the money is being spent on and how effective the spending of that money was in terms of improving the telecommunications in Barbados. Also, at the beginning of the year, Cable & Wireless went into downsizing and then it decided it would re-employ persons but I would like the Government to pay closer attention to some of the things this company is doing in Barbados.

Sir, the trade unions must be aware of what this company is doing and I am sure they will address the issue in due course. There is an issue where Cable & Wireless is putting in place systems which can circumvent certain labour relations practices in this country. It is setting up customer

service centres throughout the Caribbean so that when you call the operator in Barbados it is very possible that the call is being answered in Trinidad, Jamaica or Dominica. The idea being that if the workers in Barbados should ever take industrial action that Cable & Wireless will not have to close.

Mr. President, Cable & Wireless said it employed 150 at a centre which was recently set up but 60 of those people were already working, so only 90 people were employed and a significant number of them were not Barbadians. It has also brought in persons from St. Lucia and Dominica who can answer the phone in creole when a Dominican or St. Lucian calls for operator assistance, so all the people employed in this centre are not Barbadians.

Sir, Government needs to examine what Cable & Wireless is doing here because Cable & Wireless is not going to give the Barbados Government something for nothing. Therefore, when persons speak in glowing terms of this company and say that a previous Government sold off its birthright, they better be careful that someone is not only selling their birthright now, but they are also digging up the umbilical cord from where it is buried.

Sir, we also have to examine the components that make up the local rate. The road is being laid for Cable & Wireless to get metered rates which will lead to an increase in rates being paid by the consumer in Barbados. Cable & Wireless is moving in that direction and are being ably assisted by the measures being put in place here.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, you have one minute more.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Thank you, Sir. Another matter I would like to address is Cable & Wireless being the wholesaler and retailer too. For example, Cable & Wireless sells lines to internet service providers but it also provides an internet service. When there are new cellular companies, they will have to rely on Cable & Wireless but Cable & Wireless will also have a cellular company. Interestingly enough, Sir, when Cable & Wireless was complaining about the call-back service that people were trying to introduce in Barbados it was making most of its money in Hong Kong doing the same thing – using the call-back services.

Also, Sir, there is the matter of the rates being charged where the minutes are rounded off. If you talk for two minutes and three seconds, you have to pay for three minutes.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, your minutes have expired.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Sir, I thank you but I hope we will pay close attention to what this company is doing and address it accordingly.
12.40 p.m.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: Mr. President, I rise to make a few comments in this debate because it is a significant part of the future development of Barbados. The Bill speaks, specifically among other things, of making provision for the overall development of telecommunications in the interest of the sustainable development of Barbados, taking into account the introduction of telecommunication technology and an increased rate of services, the preservation of public interest and national security. Mr. President, against that background, I will position my comments.

This Bill seeks to make provision for other players in the telecommunications area to be on a footing where they can offer services to persons in Barbados. One of the main things that this will bring is competition. We are aware that in Barbados though the company dealing with telecommunications has given good service over the years, the time has come when in Barbados several areas need to have competition in order to ensure that the public gets a better deal. The consumers of Barbados have choices so that they can make the choices that work best for them in whichever interest they may have. I am fully supportive of this particular legislation. I am all for ensuring that the consumers of this country have a say in the choices they would wish to make.

In addition to that, the issue of technology and a better deal for Barbados is significantly improved in our island and would be seen as a more favourable destination for companies in need of telecom services and favourable rates generally.

This Bill, like the Green Paper on Telecommunications, is exceedingly vast and I would not attempt to go into detail. I would say that it outlines the various positions that one can take and the various benefits that could accrue to Barbados, particularly, the purse of Barbados.

Sir, in opening up the telecommunications sector, companies have to make application and they would have to meet certain criteria. This would make for additional revenue to Barbados' purse to do other things to supplement the work of the ongoing support services. The sale or the registration of these licences, whatever language we choose to use, would be entirely beneficial to Barbados.

The Senator that spoke before wanted to raise the issue of the credibility of an individual. If you are going to start pointing fingers at persons whom the people of this country elected to manage the affairs in a serious manner, and imputing what would seem to me...

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: On a point of order. I have not pointed my finger at anyone. I was specifically saying that we do not know what will happen in the future. That is the point that I was making. Therefore, I would not

want the Senator to imply that I am pointing my finger at the present Minister or anybody at this time.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: Mr. President, at one time or another any individual may have the responsibility and I would not like to think that we deter creditable, able-bodied people from offering themselves in this society to be managers of the people's business, because they are pilloried in advance as seeking to look for personal gain. I think that when we make statements we should not appear to be pointing fingers for purely partisan reasons.

Mr. President, the further broadening of this capability, particularly if it is tied in with the EduTech programme that this Government is proud to initiate is being put on the table to ensure that our young minds in this country have an opportunity for intellectual advancement in this area, particularly if this telecommunications area is linked with the EduTech programme and the e-commerce. Over the next five to eight years perhaps we can see Barbados becoming a giant in the area of opportunities, including the area of opportunities for state-of-the-art with respect to technology.

Sir, with young minds, and perhaps some old minds too, having had the benefit of the education through the EduTech programme, this will position Barbados not only as a provider for services and access but also in terms of individuals.

We make the point that our greatest resource is our human resource. This Barbados Labour Party Government is seeking to ensure that every Barbadian has an opportunity by way of that EduTech programme, if they are in school now, to ensure that they too are competitive. If we in this society fail to look at the competitive nature, even of our service industry, we are doomed for failure in this wide global world.

Sir, one of the downsides would be that in the company that presently is the sole provider of these telecommunications services, there would be some measure of streamlining. I believe this has been evidenced in two different ways. Sir, that is the nature of business and I do not believe that any organisation would want to seek to disadvantage individuals who have offered service. We have to cross our T's and dot our I's to make sure that all the things we do are transparent.

I believe that the existing company, Cable & Wireless, may have to do some streamlining; it may do so fairly. The trade union in Barbados, being the dynamic force that it is, will not be asleep on the job where advantage may seem to be taken of individuals.

This piece of legislation is well timed. I look forward to its implementation. I look forward to Barbados as a destination which can be on the lips of individuals as the

place to want to come and do business in because of our very experienced and developed telecommunication sector. Also to ensure that, with respect to the Fair Trading Commission and utilities regulation, the consumers in Barbados are in the best position to benefit from that.

I want to comment with respect to the cellular phones in this country. In the past, cellular phones were seen as a luxury item. I was also of the opinion that you do not need a cellular phone because Barbados is a small place. My mother is 75 years and she still drives. My mother may drive at night and should anything happen to her and she has no access to her children. Heaven knows what may happen. It is against that background that we provided her with a cellular phone, which she uses very rarely but has, should the need arise.

I also recognise that with telephone calls from a cellular the number called is responsible for both the incoming and outgoing calls and you are getting a lot of wrong numbers. People are dialling the wrong digit and it is going to reflect on the individual's bill. I look forward to the time when the change is made to ensure that the calling party pays and not the person receiving the telephone call.

I want to give my support to one of the proposals of moving from a flat rate to doing a mixed billing type of scenario, as is evidenced in other destinations where you pay a flat rate for any number of calls. I believe that you must never take away a choice from the people in this country.

Sir, even though we reflect that the telephone in Barbados is a social implement, for many of those who may not have the ability to travel around Barbados, they let their fingers do the walking. I do not see any change in the rate vastly affecting this. I will say that we must in Barbados be more conscious of the valuable time that we spend on the phone and be careful with the language that we would want to use and speak on the telephone. I do not see even the senior citizen who uses the telephone as a method of communication being disadvantaged. This is a Government that would never do anything to disadvantage particularly the pensioners in Barbados. It is evidenced in other ways where we have assisted them in terms of increased pensions and free transportation. I see this provision as one where with this Administration, Barbadians will benefit and those who abuse the situation will then have to pay for it.

Mr. President, against that background I give my support to this legislation and commend it to other Senators.

I thank you.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: Mr. President, this legislation is very complex. The Green Paper that was published is the first step in informing people about what was intended but we moved from a Green Paper to draft legislation and that is unusual. The purpose of a Green Paper

is to facilitate discussion. Subsequent to a Green Paper it is normal to prepare a White Paper which outlines the specific legislative proposals that are going to be made.

I say this because in the First Schedule of this legislation, reference is made to a Memorandum of Understanding agreed upon with Cable & Wireless and the Government. I think that if reference is made there, it might have been appropriate to include that Memorandum of Understanding as a Schedule to the Bill. It would be naive for any of us to think that Cable & Wireless would be giving up what was 10 years of its licence for nothing, and I think that the average citizen would want to know what are the real decisions made by reference to the Memorandum of Understanding.

I believe that the legislation is giving a division of labour between the Minister responsible for the subject and the Fair Trading Commission. That is not as well defined as one would like. I think that there is going to be room for conflict and confusion. I hope that this does not turn out to be so, but if it does, there will be a quick way of preventing it from being so.

The legislation imposes on the Minister a significant amount of authority and he requires the institution to guide and advise him in carrying out the necessary inquiries. You cannot wait until you are passing the legislation and proclaiming to start getting that institution in place.

It is my view that the present Telecommunication Unit is inadequate for the purpose and that a number of persons should have been trained or be in training long before the legislation takes effect. I believe that there is reference in the Green Paper to technical assistance, which the Government was expecting to get. Technical assistance without proper counterparting is a waste of time. Therefore you would have to rely on technical assistance for a long time if you do not prepare yourself for the takeover.

This is high level work. Electronic engineering, law *et cetera*. I think that it is not sufficient to have a machinery, such as what we have now, with inadequate administrative as well as technical staff. Therefore, I would hope that before this legislation is proclaimed and put into effect, there will be an urgent move to have some of the staff in place. Sir, throughout the draft Bill, the Minister has certain functions. He has to publish a national spectrum plan and a national numbering plan. He has to have the certification of standards. He has to prescribe apparatus. He has to issue prohibition orders and he even exercises some kind of judicial function.

12.50 p.m.

Sir, I think with that plate the Minister will have to rely on outside assistance. Sir, it is my understanding that the Barbados Government has not been attending ITU

meetings. Sir, can you imagine we are talking about the technological changes taking place in the world and a programme such as ITU, where one can learn so much while interacting with persons who could be of greater assistance later, Barbados does not pay attention to? Sir, it is not only in the area of ITU that this has been happening. I believe that it has happened with ICAO. It frightens me, as one who for some time has had the responsibility for negotiating contracts and loans, *et cetera*, with international lending agencies. The value of travelling to Washington to talk to the World Bank or the Inter-American Development Bank cannot be evaluated in terms of cost. Sir, if the draft legislation refers to the ITU and to conventions, we should have persons who are now authorities in the same way as we did in relation to the Universal Postal Union, where we have produced experts that have served and are serving the region in that area. I, therefore, have great reservation about the competence to cope with this legislation for a long time. Sir, I refer back to my earlier point about the FTC and the Minister.

Sir, the Minister has a function which could impact upon the authority of the FTC in that 26(1) says:

"A dominant carrier shall file with the Commission a Reference Interconnection Offer (also referred to in this Act as an "IRO") that sets out the terms and conditions upon which other licensed carriers will be permitted to interconnect with the interconnection provider's public telecommunications network."

It seems to me that the Minister could issue a licence, but that this fact comes after the licence has been issued. I am not sure there is not room for conflict there. Similarly at 39(3):

"Subject to this Act, the Minister shall at such time as is specified under this Act, and after consultation with the Commission require that the Commission use an incentive-based rate settings mechanism to establish the rates to be charged by a provider."

Now, Sir, he is, I think giving instruction to the FTC in that context. Sir, there is a situation in Barbados where the FTC does not fall under this Minister, but under another. I think there is serious room for conflict and if the Minister responsible for telecommunication is also the Minister responsible for economic matters, there is good merit in making him responsible to the FTC. This is probably an aberration but, personality apart, I think it is a logical prospect.

Sir, 33(3):

"The Minister may, after consultation with the Commission and the universal service carrier, modify in writing the universal service obligation referred to in section 33(1)"

Sir, consultation does not mean that one has to agree; it simply means that one consults and if the FTC is not agreeable to what the Minister is doing, what happens thereafter?

Sir, Clause 35(1) relates to the question of access deficit charges.

"The Commission shall prescribe a charge to be known as "an access deficit charge" to be paid by all carriers and service providers interconnecting to the service."

Sir, I presume that charge will be paid to the Commission.

36(1): Universal Service Fund.

"There is hereby established a fund to be known as a Universal Service Fund, the resources of which comprise such amounts as may be collected under the authority of this Act from all carriers and service providers for the purpose of funding the universal service."

36(2):

"The Universal Service Fund shall be administered by a person designated by the Minister in accordance with regulations made for the purpose by the Minister."

1.00 p.m.

Sir, that now imposes on the Government the responsibility to have regulations ready. I think that there is another reference in the draft Bill regarding regulations and I do not see how this in itself can function without the preparation and promulgation of the appropriate regulations.

I do not know the hurry there has been to get this Bill on the Statute Book, but consumer protection is as important as anything else and as part of the functions of the FTC. Until the appropriate legislation has been promulgated, I wonder if there is not a feeling abroad that the consumer is the last one in the line of stakeholders to be recognised.

I would hope that it is not long before we will be seeing consumers' protection legislation in the Chamber. Sir, in reading the draft Bill, I am not satisfied that there is adequate provision for consumer protection.

The other point I want to make has to do with the fines. The fines under this draft Bill are draconian. They are so draconian that a person who knowingly allows his premises or premises for which he is responsible to be used for this purpose could be fined \$250 000. I am not sure but I know that in law, the Judge does not have to make the fine as much as \$250 000. It is up to \$250 000 but that is a frightening prospect. Maybe that is the intention.

The point is that the whole transition timetable has to be published and one wants to be sure that it is not published in five or ten years and that this transition that we are talking about is going to be done as soon as possible. With those responsibilities imposed on the Minister, I think we are far behind in getting the sort of unit that he requires, both administrative and technical.

The Inspectors should be in training. They have a police function in this draft Bill and that is very serious. Not many other public officers can fully carry out police functions in doing their job and we are probably leading into a conflict with the population if we do not handle this very carefully.

I have no objection to the draft legislation. I think that telecommunication has been changing so rapidly that it would probably be outdated by the time it is proclaimed. The whole area of telecommunication and technology generally has been expanding at a rate that nobody could keep up with it.

I remember being in London in 1985 and saw a demonstration of the telefax which was considered a miracle. Nobody even uses them now particularly. I also remember having been told that in the last 20 years of the last century there had been more astounding developments in the area of technology than at any stage in human history.

Therefore, with that pace we are now witnessing, we cannot wait back. We must get legislation on the books and then get people to do what has to be done. I warn that if we do not hurry up on this, we may not be doing much to be in the twenty-first Century in terms of modern technology.

Sir, as I said before, I have no general objection to the legislation and I will support the Bill.

SENATOR P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, in rising to support the passing of this Telecommunications Bill, I believe we must both understand the reasons for liberalisation of the telecommunications system and the context in which that liberalisation is taking place. There is no aspect of our national infrastructure that is more important to our social and economic development, than our telecommunications infrastructure.

In fact, if I may borrow a comment made by the Chairman of BARTEL some years ago, it is the basic infrastructure of all infrastructures. It is this new digital age and the age of information that underpins most if not all business activity, and is an indispensable facet of our social intercourse.

While people have been focussing on business, I think we have to look at the human aspect of our communications. The defining factor that separates Barbados from any other

location is our respect for the rule of law and continuity of Government from one Administration to the other. It is in that vein that this Government has acted to bring forward the liberalisation of telecommunications from the iron-bound strait-jacket of the Sandiford Administration which bound this country to a monopoly agreement that was to end in the year 2011.

Particularly, Mr. President, at the time of rapid technological innovation, it will be recalled that this Government in its Manifesto in 1994, committed itself to telecommunications liberalisation. The granting of a monopoly licence for 20 years in the 1990s is an act that passeth all understanding. It was an act of desperation during a period of self-inflicted, economic crisis and it is something that we have paid for over the past 10 years.

How have we paid, Mr. President? We have not only paid in terms of high cost of telecommunications and for the services rendered but more importantly, we have paid in terms of the lack of introduction of new technology to these systems. In fact, that is probably one of the most damaging aspects of monopoly activity.

The lack of aggressive investment in new telecommunications technology has led us to some real problems in this country. More cruelly, this lack of investment has stymied the opportunities of our brightest young people and it has also hindered the reverse migration of some of our better students that have gone abroad.

Earlier, Mr. President, one of the Senators on the Other Side made the comment that we have done nothing to develop the service industry in Barbados. Nothing could be further from the truth. At least 65 per cent to 70 per cent of the economy of Barbados is a service economy. Recent statistics will indicate that in the international business sector alone, 40 per cent of the corporate tax paid is by the international business sector. That will show a remarkable growth in the financial services and other services in this country.

One of the characteristics of a monopoly is that it responds slowly to technological change. It does so to maximise its investment in existing plants and equipment. 1.10 p.m.

Many investors in developing countries have focussed on getting secondary and tertiary returns on their capital investment. In fact, even an investment on equipment that has been abandoned. The Caribbean is littered with examples of this. At times when technological obsolescence occurs with increasing speed the monopolist falls further and further behind and along with it our country falls further behind.

In the past, telecommunication has been synonymous with voice. Most of us here in this Chamber have been

relating the issue of telecommunication with voice activity. The term has now come to include one-way image and video as well as text and data services and it is in this context in which this Bill must be seen. It must also be seen in the context of the history of the telecommunication industry. It started as an unregulated monopoly more than a century ago and it entered a period of fierce competition and then moved to a period of regulated monopoly. Now, we are entering a period of deregulation and a controlled entry into competition.

Today, when the most advanced technology is available everywhere at virtually the same time, we can no longer subscribe to the nose-to-tail, linear method of introducing new technology. We also have to understand what is happening in the new economy in terms of cost of computation and communication and the convergence of these technologies.

If I may first turn to computation and the introduction of microprocessors in 1971. Almost from the outset they experienced steep inverse pricing. This was the result of what came to be known as Moore's Law that computer chips are halving in price or doubling in power every 18 months. This has caused a massive reduction in the cost of computational power. Indeed, the economist Robert Gordon has estimated that the inflation-adjusted price of computing power dropped to about 19.8 per cent each year between 1951 and 1984 and that it has dropped between 25 and 30 per cent per year since then. This means that today the price of a unit of computing power is 1/100,000 of its price in 1951. In other words, the cost of a \$100 000 worth of computing power in 1951 is worth \$1 today.

Recent estimates of IBM and Intel engineers indicate that the pace of change is now exceeding that of Moore's Law which is an 18-month time frame and that has now been reduced to a 12-month time frame for the next five to ten years. So it shows a continued decrease in computer power and this has direct relationship to telecommunications.

The reduction in cost of computational power, a reduction of 99.999 per cent does not mean however that while computation costs are approaching zero, computer cost is dropping to zero. In fact, I think you will notice that each succeeding generation of new personal computers costs about \$3 000. Therefore, the Apple machine that I brought in 1978 for \$3 000 and which had 128K of memory and 128 floppy disks sells for the same thing in today's dollars. The same \$3 000 will buy you a 2-Giga Hertz machine with massive memory, 40 gigs of ram and tremendous speed. Therefore, the cost of the computer might be level but the price of computing is dropping rapidly.

Francis Cairncross in her book "The Death of Distance" details the drop in the price of a three-minute call

placed from London to New York in 1990 in US dollars from \$250 a minute to less than a \$1. In fact, it is estimated that the cost factors in delivering long distance calls have fallen by about 25 per cent per annum, and note I say cost factors and not charges.

Telecommunications has its own productivity law which is the equivalent to the computation of Moore's Law. It is Gilder's Law that forecast that bandwidth will triple each year over the next 10 to 12 years. This, coupled with the decrease in computation costs, means that the transmission rates will approach zero following an asymptotic curve.

In the mid 1990's it was estimated that the capital cost of constructing one transatlantic voice path was around \$1 000. That translates to one hundredth of a cent per minute of use over the lifetime of the cable. Of course, there are other costs of switching and last mile connections but the ITU in 1995 put the average cost of a call in this same time frame at \$0.25 per minute. To date we have seen little evidence of this efficiency being passed on to the consumer.

But this Bill is not just about the price of a phone call. It is about the cost of bandwidth and the access to broadband capacity for business and consumers alike. It is about making the most of that hurricane of a revolution, the worldwide web and the Internet. If we are to give our artists, our researchers, business innovators and young people the opportunity to maximise their potential, we must ensure that they have access to appropriate bandwidth. If we are to benefit from all that is good from the reverse migration of our best brains we must create an environment of technological excellence that is equal or better than anywhere else on earth; and we can do that here in Barbados.

Now, let me just come to bandwidth and what it means. We hear about the need for increasing bandwidth. Bandwidth is roughly defined by the amount of information that you can transmit over a specific period of time usually defined as one second. We are all familiar with the fact that you have 28 000 bits per second or 56 000 dips per second which is the dial-up speed of the Internet – old and slow. Let me give you an example of why that is slow.

Recently, I downloaded a software package which was 600 Meg of information and on the 56K bandwidth or 56 000 bits per second bandwidth that took approximately three days to do running at 24 hours a day given the drop outs and the interruptions and so on and so forth to which Senator McClean earlier alluded. This just shows what the modern-day demand for the transmission rate of information is.

It is no longer about sending a load of text to somebody or about sending a copy of a newspaper article to someone. It is about dealing in massive bits of information which can either be software, video or high quality photograph or it could be X-ray or MRIs for medical purposes. This means

that the Internet is now being used for many transactions other than just text transmissions. Therefore, we need to have access to higher levels of bandwidth within the community to maximise the efficiency of our use of the Internet. Prime Minister Blair has stated that it is his Government's prime concern to make sure that there is adequate bandwidth available to the consumers and the people of Great Britain. That also is our concern and that also is why this Bill is before us, to bring competitive forces to force the monopolist to meet that competition demand for bandwidth.

1.20 p.m.

There are systems today that offer one gigabyte per second and obviously there is a differential in cost for value received. You will find that these systems are largely wireless systems and by wireless I am not just limiting it to the concept of radio waves or radio transmissions, but there is also the transmission through laser beams so that you can have a major device at the top of the Central Bank transmitting information to Government Headquarters or to any one of the banks situated around Bridgetown at a rate in excess of one gigabyte per second, secure and reliable, with a reliability rate in excess of 99.999 per cent.

What does all this mean to the average Barbadian? Practically every job function will be affected by the Internet and the telecommunications network supporting it. Workers will both provide and access information directly related to job functions as a routine part of the work day. Fishermen with global positioning systems can improve their navigation and be directed accurately to fish and they can report their catch, time of docking and consummate the sale of their catch before they even reach land. Farmers connected to the new radar system which is to be installed can observe cells of rain in real time to plan their activities in the field. They can access technical information and the projected availability of crops before planting. Distributors can automatically link to cash registers to replenish inventory as it is sold. Physicians can consult with experts anywhere on the globe to verify diagnosis. Students can check their timetables and we can all visit the General Post Office's website today to obtain information on postal rates and services offered by the Post Office. That is here and now at our post office.

The devices that we would use to communicate in future will be multi-functional and wireless. It is in this area of wireless communication that the explosion of services would take place. Innovation will be the key to success and competition is the best way to maximise the use of technology. It has been a proven recipe in the field of computing and thus far competition has brought huge benefits to those countries that have implemented deregulation.

It is a process that has no perfect solution and, in fact, the United States has gone back to the drawing board several

times to improve upon their deregulation process and they still have not got it right. In Europe, we have seen a different style of deregulation and they also have their problems. What works in one location may not work in another. However, Government has had exhaustive consultations and inputs from a wide range of experts and consumers in the development of the MOU with Cable & Wireless and in drafting this legislation. All things considered, I believe that this Bill will introduce competitive forces into the telecommunications field in Barbados with minimal disruption and to maximum effect.

I also believe the policies followed by Government should be aimed at providing the best technical communications solution at the minimal cost to maximise development of business activity, innovation and meaningful job creation. The stimulation and expansion of the economy should yield much more revenue than the maximisation of revenue through the use of spectrum or by direct fees and taxation of telecommunications provided.

I believe that we should ensure that we have the minimal cost of telecommunications systems that will support the growth of the economy. In other words, we have demonstrated that we understand that the inputs to production should not be taxed to maintain a competitive edge. We have done that in the removal of duties and the lowering of taxes and we will continue to do so.

Telecommunication is and will continue to be one of the most vital inputs to every aspect of our productive sectors. I hope this fact will be taken into consideration when we address the issue of cost of spectrum and taxation of the industry. Indeed, there is a very good argument for us to accede to the information technology agreement of WTO that would exempt a wide range of technology inputs from import duties.

Finally, as Cable & Wireless has sought to protect its monopoly over the years, it has focussed on throwing up barriers against all comers, protecting its turf and maximising its profits from the existing infrastructure. It has not until recently focussed on maximising the use of its network. The barriers to new entrants have also served as the walls that have imprisoned us. This Bill will start the process of demolishing those walls, bring new entrants into the marketplace and create an environment in which the network utilisation will be encouraged to its fullest. It will unshackle our new business class from the bonds of protectionism.

Opportunities will flourish from meaningful local investment in the development of new telecommunications companies that will offer a wide range of services. The passing of this Bill will truly be a ground-breaking event ushering in a new phase of our economic development. It is far-reaching and will impact positively on each and every

one of us. The Minister is to be congratulated for the work that he and his Ministry have done and the draftsmen are to be wholeheartedly commended for the excellent work that they have done in grappling with this very complex and technical subject.

Mr. President, in the context of this Bill, we need to understand that there is a change of how telecommunication network systems work. Until recently, most of the intelligence of the networks resided within the network itself. Therefore, there was a high cost in network operations. Today, we are seeing a reduction of the intelligence inside the network and the intelligence of the network system in moving to the periphery of the network system. This is essentially what has turned the telecommunications industry on its ear.

1.30 p.m.

We have seen how dramatic cost reductions have taken place in the delivery of telecommunications products. Essentially, the delivery of telecommunications bits of information has dropped to almost zero for all practical purposes and over the next few years we are going to see an explosion of bandwidths that is going to take us from the current fibreoptic capacity and push different frequencies through the fibre up to factors of 10, 20 and 150. This means with today's technology that we can push frequencies up to 120 factors through a single strand of fibre.

In the laboratory we are seeing efficiency improvements of factors of up to 1000 and 2000 with a theoretical maximum improvement of up to 5000.

Mr. President, if the cost today has dropped so astronomically, we can only anticipate what they would be like tomorrow. This means that we have to understand that the cost of telecommunications has almost come to the point where it is at zero and the costs that we pay are for future investment and rebuilding systems which I understand take up about 40 percent of the cost of most telecommunications companies.

Mr. President, I have no doubt that there will be significant competitors entering into the marketplace. Certainly, at the heart of this Bill is the consideration of all of our consumers in this country.

Mr. President, it probably is not generally recognised, but 76 percent of domestic telephones in Barbados make at least one long distance call per month for an extended period of time, so when we are looking at telecommunications cost to the public we have to look at all costs, not just the flat but also the long distance rate. Therefore, you will see that we already had the effect of reducing the long distance rate by bringing a reduced telecommunications cost to the vast majority of domestic users. Mr. President, you can see that

this process is already benefiting the vast majority of Barbadians. Mr. President, I have no doubt that we will be able to move with alacrity in implementing the provisions of this legislation.

I take the comments made by Senator Collymore and others about the need for strengthening the Ministry of Telecommunications. The Minister himself has made some comments on that and recognises that fact. We have to recognise that we have access to international consultants and expertise which we can bring on board in a rapid and effective manner. In fact, much of the consultation done on this Bill was done by international experts who were not part and parcel of Cable & Wireless and who were completely divorced from Cable & Wireless.

There was also significant dialogue between the Ministry of Commerce, the Attorney General's office and the telecommunications sector. Once again, I think that we owe a significant debt of gratitude to the draftsmen who correctly interpreted Government's policy and very carefully drafted this Bill which will give it the teeth and strength to implement a meaningful and useful deregulation of the telecommunications industry and put Barbados squarely into the 21st Century. Sir, this Bill is to be commended.

Mr. President, I support the Bill.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Perhaps I should explain that I have not objected to the Senator who just sat down refreshing his memory by total reference to his notes. Before calling on Senator Rickinson I am bound to make the observation that the Senate has never been quieter. Is it that Honourable Senators are a little late for lunch?

1.40 p.m.

Mr. President, I rise to make my contribution to the Telecommunications Act, 2001. Like the previous speaker, Senator Goddard, I believe that telecommunication is one of the most important assets that any Government could have in their possession. I also feel that it could become a liability if it is not used correctly. Telecommunication is invading all aspects of our daily lives. Therefore, we need to take note about any changes in the area of telecommunication. I was uncomfortable when Cable & Wireless was given a 20-year extension, although I am not a politician.

Mr. President, I want to say that although I do not think that we should be discussing mainly telephones, I want to speak on the cost of the telephone, which is included in telecommunication. We have an ageing population and many of our elderly people rely on the telephone. It is the only frontline to their security and safety. Some means will have to be arrived at, whether by subsidisation by the Government, to keep the cost of the phone at a minimum rate, at least for the elderly and certain sections of the population.

I get the impression that if one wants to keep a flat rate, it would be exorbitant.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: I want to comment on the cellular cards. You can buy a card overseas for \$30 and it can last you for a year. Here in Barbados when you buy a card for \$30, even though the card has not been used, after a month it expires, there is a built in obsolescence. I do not think that is fair to the consumer. I think that is a rip-off. I think that the Fair Trading Commission would have to look at that.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Mr. President, I want to look at Objective (d) :

“the overall development of telecommunications in the interest of the sustainable development of Barbados...”

I would like to suggest that we amend that to read:

“the overall development of telecommunications in the interest of sustainable socioeconomic development of Barbados.”

In my opinion this would strengthen that objective.

I am not trying to rewrite this legislation. I think that the draftspersons and the other professionals would do a better job than I can. It is my intention to show that this Telecommunications Act could play a major role in the sustainable socio-economic development of Barbados.

Sir, how do I think this can be accomplished? I will attempt to develop a concept for a forward looking Telecommunications Act, 2001. This Act would address the establishment of a Barbados Telecommunication Commission that is independent of the Fair Trading Commission. Senators McClean and Collymore made reference to another body that is needed. The concept that I have in mind will call for a rationalisation of this Act, as it is tabled at the moment.

I know people will argue that Objectives B and C deal with price and competition and it is related to social development. The type of socio-economic development that I am referring to is one that is beneficial to the productive sectors of the economy. Sir, tourism, offshore banks and the financial sector come to mind.

Mr. President, the Fair Trading Commission would still be the regulatory body for the Barbados Telecommunication Commission that I proposed. The proposed Barbados Telecommunication Commission will look at the

arrangement of the Telecommunications Bill, Parts 1 to 18 and the appropriate sections could be used for the Barbados Telecommunication Commission. I would like to see other features added to this provision in the form of the personal.

The role of the Minister is all-pervasive and covers a wide spectrum which was dealt with by Senators McClean and Collymore. I think that we need to address the Minister's role and responsibilities because he seems to be doing too many things under this legislation.

Mr. President, we can look at the Canadian model when it comes to fair trading and telecommunications regulation. For example, there is the Combined and Telecommunications Regulation which is the parallel to our Fair Trading Commission and there is the Canadian Radio and Television Commission which will be parallel to the Barbados Telecommunications Commission that I am proposing. These two Canadian bodies have had a long history and have served the Canadian society well.

Sir, in supporting this Act, I hope that when the time comes for a review and amendments, that they would take some of the ideas that I put forward and look at these two pieces of Canadian legislation and see if we can improve our telecommunications legislation.

I fully support this Bill.
1.50 p.m.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Murray.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. President. Sir, I want to start off by seeking to disabuse the minds of Senators Rickinson and Laurie of any indication or assumption, or if there is any nefarious or ulterior underhand motive aback of Government's intention re this legislation of persons...

SENATOR Mrs P. E. RICKINSON: On a point of order, Mr. President. In none of my presentations did I allude to anything being nefarious, *et cetera*, and I am asking for that to be withdrawn from my name.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am not sure that Senator Murray was referring to Senator Rickinson.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Sir, if Senator Rickinson is unhappy, I will withdraw it. This is Christmas and, therefore, I am very generous.

Mr. PRESIDENT: To the extent that that may be interpreted as a reference to Senator Rickinson, I am asking you to withdraw it, Senator Murray.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Gladly, Sir.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: He has also used my name. Would you please do likewise, thank you.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Sir, the point that I am making is that there is no attempt on Government's part to control the minds of citizens, as Senator Rickinson has said. Do you remember saying that?

Mr. PRESIDENT: Please address the Chair, Senator.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Sir, there was no attempt on Government's part through this legislation to control citizens, to be their big brother, to control the thoughts, moods or actions of citizens. On the other hand, if Senator Laurie had taken the time to read the legislation he would have seen that a lot of his fears are... I presume that he has neither read it properly nor fully. If he had, he would have seen that a lot of the fears that he had manifested by listening to and going on what persons have told him, rather than reading for himself, are not there. Sir, if we turn to page 52 of the Bill:

57.1 "A person who holds radio communications apparatus for his own private use and in respect of which he holds the appropriate licence, may sell or otherwise dispose of that apparatus to any other person in Barbados without being a licensed dealer."

57.2 "A person who sells or otherwise disposes of radio communications apparatus pursuant to subsection (1) must, unless the apparatus is a sound broadcast receiver, within 14 days of the disposition, notify the Minister of that sale or disposition in writing stating;

- (a) the name and address of the person to whom the radio communications apparatus has been sold or otherwise disposed of;
- (b) the description of the apparatus.

Sir, then at section 60:

- (1) "No person shall,
 - a. establish, maintain, or operate a radio station for the purpose of providing service for commercial purposes;
 - b. establish, maintain or operate a station for wireless communications on board any ship, aircraft of any other vessel registered in Barbados;
 - c. for commercial purposes, establish, maintain or operate a radio station not being a station referred to in paragraph (b), or to

provide a radio communication service not being,

- (i) an amateur or experimental broadcasting service,
 - (ii) a meteorological or radio navigation service, or
 - (iii) an amateur or experimental radio communication service;
- d. establish, maintain, keep or use apparatus of any kind that generates and emits radio waves whether or not the apparatus is for radio communications; or
 - e. keep or use any radio receiving apparatus other than a sound broadcast receiver without obtaining a licence for the purpose."

The point is, Sir, this legislation speaks of services and operations and not individuals. Therefore, if Senator Laurie had been told that it was applicable to a person having a particular device or apparatus, it really speaks to service providers and not to individuals.

Sir, I just thought that I should set the record straight in that regard. Sir, Senator Laurie has also tried to make a great to-do of the funds that are mentioned, but as Senator Collymore had pointed out, where these funds are mentioned they are seen as the uppermost limits and that does not mean that is the fund that will be, must be, or shall be imposed, but are maximum levels to which the legislation goes. That, Sir, will help to sort out some of the talk that this legislation is intended in anyway to deprive people of their liberties; of seeking to impose funds that will drive them into penury. Therefore, the intentions of this legislation are all in keeping with the Manifesto...

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Mr. President, I think that we are getting a little confused here. At section 60, the legislation very clearly said "no persons shall..." and the definition for "person" includes an individual. Therefore for him to say that persons are not going to look at individuals, but at big companies, is definitely misleading.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Sir, I do not want to drag out this thing anymore, we can argue about that all day.

Sir, Government's intention behind this legislation was spelled out in our 1994 Manifesto, as alluded to by Senator P. C. Goddard where, at page 14 it states:

"Cheap and reliable telecommunications services are essential not only for social intercourse but especially for economic development.

We will prepare a study of the telecommunications industry and the needs of Barbados over the next decade. We will negotiate with local service providers to ensure access to state-of-the-art technologies at international competitive prices."

Sir, this is what we are seeking to do in much the same way as we had a similar principle which applies to the energy sector where we are seeking to make people benefit from lower world prices and to make them as affordable, given the input that energy has into the general economy.

In our 1999 Manifesto, Sir, speaking on energy, we said this:

"An expanding and increasingly sophisticated Barbadian economy requires safe, reliable, environmentally friendly energy products. The goal of our policy is to supply energy to Barbadians at an affordable price, to promote measures for the efficient use of energy and to increase the use of renewable energy in our energy mix."

Mr. President, in other words, as we want to make energy as affordable as possible to Barbadians by, as frequently as possible, giving prices reductions in gasoline, *et cetera*, we want to do the equivalent in the telecommunication sector by making them more affordable and easily accessible to Barbadians. Sir, that is all there is to it; no less and no more and, therefore, I want to assure persons that this is intended for the benefit of the Barbadian society.

Sir, let me put it in a broader context. Sir, more than 50 years ago, there was a man called Marshall McLuhan who talked about "the medium is the message" and "the global village". This Telecommunications Bill is all part of the process that has brought about the realization of the global village to this end.

Sir, I think it was Senator Collymore who had alluded to the phenomenal rapidity with which the technology has changed and has mushroomed in the last 50 years that, at the moment, nobody knows where it will end. There are no limits nor borders to man's ingenuity or man's inventiveness and this Bill will help to put Barbados in the position where it can take advantage of whatever developments there are that come about for the economic and social development of the society that Senator Rickinson, quite rightly, is so concerned about.

We know, Sir, that communication is both vital to humans' social existence and to their activities in every sphere. The technology has served, broadened and enhanced communications as well as telecommunications of all sorts. I feel that one of the reasons why Barbadians are so concerned about the cost of the telephone altogether, is the

fact that Barbados has had a long association and a love relationship with telephones. Some eight or ten years after the telephone had been invented Barbados had telephones. I think that is an incredible achievement for a small island even in those days and that the Barbadian society has appreciated the importance of telecommunication as it was known then in that limited sphere.

Sir, the whole growth of the telecommunication industry and the changes that have taken place have now made the distinction that used to be made – for example between broadcasting and telecommunication – non-existent through a process of what the experts call "convergence", so that one technology impacted on the other when in the past there was a clear distinction between broadcasting and telecommunication. Now the two of them are virtually the same. Sir, this therefore would have a tremendous amount of implication to humans' behaviour or communication, development, *et cetera*. Sir, this Telecommunications Bill has come as part of a process whereby there has been frequent, ample and lots of communications and discussions between the various parties.

Sir, reference was made to a Memorandum of Understanding. To my knowledge and from what I recall, this Memorandum of Understanding is not a secret document, but has been made available to parties who have expressed an interest in it and from what I have been told, has been made a document of the House. Sir, my understanding is that the Memorandum of Understanding is a document of the Chamber.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Sir, to the best of my knowledge, there is no Memorandum of Understanding that is a document of this Chamber.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I am not sure what the position is. I would have to get that information from the Clerks.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Sir, my understanding is that the Memorandum of Understanding has been made a document of Parliament.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I think, Senator, we have to be clear, we are speaking of the Senate. It is either a document of the Senate or it is not. As far as this is concerned, we are not too concerned with any other place. If it has or has not been laid, you just need to say to the best of your information, but I do not think we need to get into this too much. Please proceed.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I made a careful check and it has been laid.
2.00 p.m.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Clerk has advised me that it has not been laid in the Senate but it is something that can be done at any stage.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Sir, I am not intending to mislead the Senate. I was following the information that was given to me and I respect the correction that you have made.

The point is, Sir, this has not been any attempt to work a fast one on anybody. The point is that the Democratic Labour Party does not want to accept the fact that we have taken this whole process beyond the sordid mess in which they had left it in 1991.

Sir, we have now been able to bring this whole process to the point where we have sought to reverse the giving away of certain valuable assets, which had been acquired by this Barbados Labour Party Government when it was in office. We all know the history and it went that way. The point is that they do not want to accept that it was their behaviour which put them in that position. Sir, anything that is associated with improving must look wrong to them because they do not have an appreciation of it.

This Telecommunications Bill, Sir, will, I believe, have some tremendous benefits for the Barbadian society, benefits which nobody else can quantify, from which nobody exactly knows what we can specifically obtain. The point is, Sir, that we have made ourselves ready like we have done in other areas of activity in Barbados that whatever the opportunity that comes around, Barbados would be in a position to take it.

I hope, Sir, that the institutions which will support this Bill, the Fair Trading Commission, the other incoming institutions and the consumers' protection legislation will work towards the benefit of Barbados and that this process will come to the realisation that we stand to benefit and the society stands to benefit in every capacity from a Bill which is long overdue.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I should explain for the benefit of Senators that the Clerk has now confirmed that the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Barbados and Cable & Wireless/BET Limited was laid in this Chamber on 9th November 2001. Therefore, let the record show that it has been laid.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I think we have had a very full and exhausting debate on this Bill. I want to thank all Honourable Senators who contributed but I just want to make one or two comments.

First of all, the Memorandum of Understanding was in fact laid on the 9th of November 2001 in this Chamber as Senator Murray alluded to earlier.

There were some other comments, one from Senator Mascoll in particular, who expects to see a reduction in the rates. I also note his concern about the dominance, and the possibility of the continued dominance of Cable & Wireless/BET Limited and I am very pleased that he is concerned about this dominance.

In addition, he spoke about the need to develop strict regulation of their telecommunications affairs and this is one of the ideas of this new legislation that we are trying to enact.

I note also that Senator Collymore raised some very interesting concerns. I do appreciate them and certainly the Bill might not necessarily be perfect, but you do understand the urgency of having the legislation passed and certainly there might be a need for some amendments in the future.

Senator McClean also made some interesting input in his concerns about the ministerial discretion or lack of discretion, depending on which Minister is in the seat as opposed to the future. I just want to remind him of the Administration of Justice Act which addresses these concerns.

Finally, there was some contention about deals not being signed, dealt with or formulated and I want to concur with him that there was no deal in any hotel room, in any smoky room, over any drink, or no imposition from on high. It was just like it was done in 1991. It was a well thought out and sound Government decision to have this new Bill introduced.

With those few words, I beg 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. J. X. WALCOTT, Mr. PRESIDENT left the Chair and the Senate went into Committee on the Bill, SENATOR THE HON. DAME PATRICIA SYMMONDS in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

MADAM CHAIRMAN: The Senate is now in Committee.

Parts 1 to 6 inclusive were called and passed.

Part 7 was called.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Madam Chairman, in Part 7, Clauses 35 and 36 which are included in this Part, I have a little concern where it says:

“35.(1) The Commission shall prescribe a charge to be known as “an access deficit charge” to be paid by all carriers and service providers interconnecting to the service.”

I am concerned, Madam Chairman, that under this section, there is no provision to whom these charges will be paid, whether it would be paid to the provider of the service or whether it will be paid into the Consolidated Fund. I am sure that there should be some regulation accompanying this legislation which states specifically how a matter such as this will be dealt with. I am also concerned that we do not have the regulations which would accompany this legislation which would state specifically to whom these funds would be paid.

2.10 p.m.

In both these clauses we have seen again the responsibility falling to the Minister. For example, in section 36 (1):

“There is hereby established a fund to be known as a Universal Service Fund,...

Asides.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Quiet please! Yes, continue Senator McClean.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: “...the resources of which comprise such amounts as may be collected under the authority of this Act from all carriers and service providers for the purpose of funding universal service”.

I would like to propose Madam Chairman that the legislation cannot be properly passed without the accompanying regulations which will state specifically whom these funds will indicate.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Senator McClean, you have expressed your concern but you have not proposed an amendment so unless you are proposing an amendment we will go on to take the vote on it.

Asides.

Parts 7 to 18 inclusive, were called and passed.

The First Schedule was called and passed.

The Second Schedule was called and passed.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT, MADAM CHAIRMAN 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. J. X. WALCOTT, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Telecommunications Act, 2001.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: That concludes our business for the day and also this year as we will not be meeting again until next year.

Sir, on behalf of my fellow Senators I want to thank you for your diligence, your guidance and indeed your patience over the past year as you presided over the affairs of this Honourable Chamber. Also on their behalf and on my own behalf I want to wish you and your family all God's best wishes and all God's blessings for the Christmas season and the New Year.

I also want to thank the staff of Parliament, the parliamentary clerks, the stenographers, the other clerical staff and certainly the technician from CBC for their diligence and for going beyond the call of duty and the long hours in being here with us. I also want to thank the caterers downstairs who I know must be wondering what is happening to us up here today and for feeding us over the past year. I must not forget the police and the security guards for providing a sense of security in the environs of Parliament in spite of the other detractors who managed to get in from time to time. I really want to thank them all and to wish them God's blessings for this entire season.

Finally on my behalf, to my fellow Senators, I want to say that the past two months have been a new experience for me. I certainly appreciate your warmth, your assistance and your guidance sometimes and I certainly wish you all and your families all the best for the coming season, and indeed I look forward to being in here with you and interacting with you in the coming year.

I thank you.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate do now adjourn *sine die*.
2.20 p.m.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: On behalf of Senators on the Opposition Side, I would like to say it has been a very productive session and certainly we would like to wish all Members, Independents as well as those on the Other Side, a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and to say once again that a special mention and praise is to be given to the President of the Senate for conducting the affairs of the Senate in a most admirable way. To the staff

of Parliament, we are once again appreciative of the work that is being done and the new addition to the Senate to give us a voice in the public, a wonderful new innovation, especially for those of us who have aspirations way beyond the Senate politically.

We would like to wish the entire staff of Parliament a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year and look forward to the new session in the new year. Thank you.

SENATOR C. LeR. TROTMAN: Mr. President, we have been hearing much about this side and then that side and I think we have to recognise that either there is no side or that there is a third side, the side of the Independents. I believe that the Independents would agree that speaking on the Motion for the Adjournment we would want to use the occasion as have the Government Benches and the Opposition Benches done to express our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for the very suave and at the same time the very mature and deliberate judgmental manner in which you have conducted the affairs of this Honourable Senate.

Sir, we would wish to express the wish that your family and yourself would enjoy all the yuletide blessings that there will be and that you will have good health in the coming year. For the Members of the Government Benches, I hope that you will be able to derive some benefit from the star that goes before the wise men to Bethlehem and that Christmas Star will lighten your way and assist some of your colleagues and especially members of your statutory boards when they deal with the matters of the heart and the welfare and the good will of humble citizens in the country, and that particularly where it comes to the matter of service as with the Barbados Tourism Authority that there would be an appreciation that human values at Christmas time especially should never be made to look secondary to any other consideration within the framework of governance within this country.

For the Members of the Democratic Labour Party, I would hope that at this time where there is new hope and a promise of a better world to come that there will be fostered within the very bowels of that institution a greater spirit for rejuvenation and a re-energizing under united leadership. Perhaps then they may be able to have some additional persons who are on the verge of reconsidering their political future.

Sir, I would like as the others have done to wish as well all of those helpers to the Parliament, the various people who make this possible, my greatest wishes and those of my

colleagues on the Independent Benches and they have been named before by my colleagues and I do not need to rename them but wish them all the best and wish them good health in the coming year. I do not wish them great wealth because I gather that is the particular privilege and prerogative of the new executive groupings which are going into the \$300 000 a year rate of earnings and we want to be careful not to all aspire to that because there must be a level beyond which the country is unable to pay and we would not wish to see new dream teams establishing themselves within the parameters of our shores. So we would wish, Mr. President, that the Christ of Christmas would breathe into our new hearts a feeling of greater humanity and a greater willingness to be kind and generous to all and that the new year of 2002 will hold blessings for all of us on all Sides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: This is the eighth occasion on which I have had the privilege at the end of a year to preside in this Honourable Chamber. The Motion for the Adjournment is of course in parliamentary terms one of the occasions when parliamentarians are permitted to range widely, provided they do not go on for too long. Honourable Senators, certainly the Honourable Leader of the Senate, Senator Mascoll and Senator Trotman, I sense that they spoke on behalf of other Senators. I should like to thank them and you most sincerely for your kind remarks. One tries one's best in this Chair. I would like to extend to you and to your families my good wishes for a blessed and merry Christmas and for a bright and prosperous and productive 2002.

I should like to extend those good wishes to the Clerks at the Table, the other members of staff, the Press, the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force and all those who assist us in the work we do. We were hoping to have risen somewhat earlier and I think particularly of the staff of Parliament. I think this has been perhaps certainly the longest pre-lunch session that I can recall. Maybe it is a record in the annals of our recent Parliament. I do not know but I should like to say that the staff responded as usual splendidly and we would like to thank them, and when we rise in a few moments there should be no encumbrance in the way of their enjoying their festivities.

With those words, I will put the motion which is already before us that this Senate do now adjourn *sine die*.

The question was put and agreed to, and Mr. PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate sine die.
2.30 p.m.

CONTENTS

MINUTES

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Wednesday, December 19, 2001 at 11.15 a.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR
THE PRESIDENT

Mr. PRESIDENT 1

PAPERS

Senator the Hon. J. X. WALCOTT 2

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE
BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Senator the Hon. J. X. WALCOTT 2

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Senator the Hon. J. X. WALCOTT 2

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 1 – RESOLUTION THAT PARLIAMENT APPROVE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE CROWN LANDS (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CAP. 225, THE VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION OF THE PARCEL OF LAND SITUATE AT FREE HILL, BLACK ROCK IN THE PARISH OF SAINT MICHAEL AND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN THE SCHEDULE 2

Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, 2.

ORDER NO. 2 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE BORROWING OF THE EQUIVALENT IN BARBADOS DOLLARS OF THE SUM OF US\$15 150 000 FROM THE INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT FOR THE PURPOSE SPECIFIED IN THIS RESOLUTION 3

Senator the Hon. G. S. H. Murray, 3, 38; Senator C. LeR. Trotman, 10, 12; Senator LeR. H. McClean, 14; Senator the Hon. Dame Patricia Symmonds, 17; Senator P. C. Goddard, 18; Senator the Rev. L. W. B. Rock, 20; Senator K. D. Symmonds, 21; Senator Sir John Stanley

Goddard, 25; His Honour Senator C. L. Bolden, 26; Senator Mrs. P. E. Rickinson, 28; Senator D. L. Haynes, 31; Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, 33; Senator C. A. Mascoll, 35.

ORDER NO. 3 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN OF THE PARCELS OF LAND SITUATE AT REED STREET IN THE PARISH OF SAINT MICHAEL AND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN THE SCHEDULE HERETO FOR THE PUBLIC PURPOSE OF THE RELOCATION OF THE SANITATION SERVICE AUTHORITY CITY DEPOT 41

Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, 41; Senator K. D. Symmonds, 41; Senator Mrs. P. E. Rickinson, 41.

ORDER NO. 5 – LAND TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2001 42

Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, 42.

ORDER NO. 6 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN OF THE PARCELS OF LAND SITUATE AT BAY STREET IN THE PARISH OF SAINT MICHAEL 42

Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, 42.

ORDER NO. 7 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE BY THE CROWN OF THE PARCEL OF LAND SITUATE AT PIPERS AVENUE, CAVE HILL IN THE PARISH OF SAINT MICHAEL AND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN THE SCHEDULE HERETO FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT 43

Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, 43.

ORDER NO. 8 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING IN HOTELS AND RESORTS LIMITED OF THE PARCEL OF LAND SITUATE AT DOVER IN THE PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH 43

Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, 43; Senator LeR. H. McClean, 43; His Honour Senator C. L. Bolden, 45; Senator Sir John Stanley Goddard, 47; Senator C. A. Mascoll, 47; Senator P. C. Goddard, 50; Senator T. E. Barker, 51; Senator the Hon. G. S. H. Murray, 52.

PUBLIC BUSINESS (resumed)

ORDER NO. 4 – TELECOMMUNICATIONS BILL,
2001 52

Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, 52, 83; Senator Sir John Stanley Goddard, 54; Senator the Hon. Dame Patricia Symmonds, 55; Senator C. A. Mascoll, 56; Senator C. K. Laurie, 61; Senator J. E. D. Williams, 63; Senator D. D. Marshall, 66; Senator LeR. H. McClean, 69, 84; Senator Miss J. C. Odle, 73; Senator B. R. Collymore, 74; Senator P. C. Goddard, 76; Mr. President, 79, 83; Senator Mrs. P. E. Rickinson, 80; Senator the Hon. G. S. H. Murray, 81, 83.

SUSPENSIONS 13, 40, 52, 69

ADJOURNMENT 84

Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, 84; Senator C. A. Mascoll, 84; Senator C. LeR. Trotman, 85; Mr. President, 85.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

BARKER, Senator T. E.
BOLDEN, His Honour Senator C. L.
COLLYMORE, Senator B. R.
GODDARD, Senator Sir John Stanley
GODDARD, Senator P. C.
GOLLOP, His Honour Senator Sir Fred
HAYNES, Senator D. L.
LAURIE, Senator C. K.
MARSHALL, Senator D. D.
MASCOLL, Senator C. A.
McCLEAN, Senator LeR. H.
MURRAY, Senator the Hon. G. S. H.
ODLE, Senator Miss J. C.
RICKINSON, Senator Mrs. P. E.
ROCK, Senator the Rev. L. W. B.
SYMMONDS, Senator K. D.
SYMMONDS, Senator the Hon. Dame Patricia
TROTMAN, Senator C. LeR.
WALCOTT, Senator the Hon. J. X.
WILLIAMS, Senator J. E. D.