
THE SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1999 – 2004

THE SENATE

Wednesday, August 28, 2002

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Wednesday, 28th August, 2002, at 11.15 a.m.

PRESENT

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

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

Senator the Hon. J. X. WALCOTT, FRCS (Edin.), J.P. (Minister of Health) (Leader of the Senate)

Senator the Hon. G. S. H. MURRAY, B.A. (Hons.), J.P. (Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office and the Civil Service)

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

Senator P. C. GODDARD

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

Senator Miss J. C. ODLE, J.P.

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

Senator C. LeR. TROTMAN, M.A.

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., G.C.M., B.Com., F.C.A., Hon. LL.D. (U.W.I.)

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

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

Senator K. D. SYMMONDS, LL.B.

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

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

Prayers were led by Rev. Errington Massiah

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Senate is in session.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

QUESTION NO. 8

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Thank you, Mr. President. Sir my questions are:

1. Is the Honourable Minister aware of such reports that Barbadian teachers are being recruited to work outside of Barbados?
2. If the Minister is aware of such reports, could the Minister inform this Honourable Senate whether the said reports are true and, if so, provide relevant information on
 - (a) the number of teachers who have resigned from the Public Service over the past year,
 - (b) what steps, if any, are being taken by the Government to mitigate the adverse impact on the education system in this island, occasioned by any loss of teachers?

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, 28 teachers have resigned from the Public Service over the past year while, at present, teacher training is ongoing.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 3 – A RESOLUTION TO NOTE AND APPROVE PROTOCOL FOUR FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP, 2001– 2004

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, in moving the passing of this Resolution to

approve Protocol Four for the implementation of a Social Partnership, 2001 – 2004, it is a distinct pleasure to me.

Mr. President, prior to 1993, I think it would be fair to say that, for the Barbadian public at large, the term “protocol” seems to be mostly associated with procedures, etiquette and forms of behaviour, particularly at official functions.

Sir, as a result of the economic crisis of the early 1990s, the use of the term has now come to basically mean rules governing the industrial relation and code of behaviour between Government, the unions and the private sector. Sir, along with the popularisation of the term “protocol” has now come into common usage the term ‘social partners’ which refers to the Barbados industrial and economic framework, namely Government, the private sector and the unions.

Sir, I think the term, “out of evil, cometh good” could be an apt description in the sense that out of a set of unfortunate circumstances has emerged a phenomenon which has worked to the good and to the well-being of all Barbadians.

Therefore, while the economic crisis has forced us into an indigenous and uncomfortable position, it has created a climate that was able to forge a very useful mechanism that has come about in the form of this, and the associated activities in the successive protocols that have been in place since 1993.

Sir, this should not be taken to mean that prior to 1993, there has not been any history of social dialogue between the three major stakeholders. On the contrary, from the 1940s and 1950s, there has always been a direct and frequent contact between these three representatives in the early days, revolving around the operation of what is known as the Wages Council, the oldest tripartite institution in Barbados.

This new path has been charted out of a number of circumstances in the economy. The basic call of the 1990 to 1991 crisis actually rested on the absence of appreciable levels of foreign exchange, occasioned by a number of coinciding factors, the principal ones being: a failure of the productive sectors to earn what was expected, along with a large fiscal deficit which had become unmanageable.

Sir, the first Protocol ran from 1993 to 1995. While there might be a difference of popular opinion over the call of the crisis, there could be no dispute that Barbados has not become a better place because of those Protocols. It is generally accepted across the Barbadian society that the Protocols have been the objects of much comment, admiration and positive evaluation from countries across the world, both large and small. In fact, people refer to Barbados as the model of social compact.

Sir, I do remember attending conferences in Malaysia and in South Africa where frequent references were made regarding good governance and good functioning of societies and, in this regard, Barbados was held up as an object of admiration and commendation. I must say that I felt very proud as a Barbadian to hear of Barbados’ performances and its achievements being commended in such a manner.

Sir, as inevitable and in a democracy in keeping with traditions, there have been a number of criticisms of the protocols largely now that they have served a purpose. There are some persons who, in their overly simplistic manner, have been referring to the Protocols as being anti-worker and inimical to the best interest of Barbados.

Sir, I think that attitude that has emerged has been done so largely because there are some persons who would wish others to think that the Protocols are meant to replace collective bargaining or wages agreements between employers and employees’ representatives. The purpose of these Protocols is to create an environment for the better management of the industrial relations and the relationships in the Barbadian society.

Sir, when I hear those criticisms, particularly when they come from the mouths of the DLP, even though the Protocols had been initiated under their watch, it reminds me of when I was younger and we were playing cricket where, if the ball and bat were owned by one individual and that individual was bowled out, that individual would take up the bat and ball and go home. Now that the Democratic Labour Party is no longer in government, it would seem to me that persons would want to show that the Protocols have outlived their usefulness, have no relevance and are working to the detriment of the Barbadian society.

Mr. President, if one could make a summation of the benefits of the Protocols, one of the obvious benefits would be the fact that with the emergence of the Protocols, the economic and industrial benefits that would be brought to the country and the political and social stability, that through this all, there has been created the beginnings of a climate of civility that has been in danger of disappearing from the Barbadian scenes where the relationships between the Social Partners are concerned.

Therefore, speaking as one who has had some degree of association with the Protocols since 1995, and as one who is a member of the Subcommittee of the Social Partners, there has been bred an attitude of cooperation, understanding and broad-mindedness, where the best interests of Barbados are always put at the forefront. It is a pleasing experience to be in the company of others who are very vocal “enemies” but once they enter into the fora of either the Subcommittee of the Social Partnership, they are of a different mentality or attitude that obtains, where persons speak frankly and honestly.

Sir, I hope that out of the emergence of the Protocol, apart from what it would have contributed to the industrial relation in Barbados, the rest of the society could come around to adopting some of these approaches where interrelationships are concerned.

Sir, I do not think that persons could be fair in saying there is no need for the Protocols, neither have they benefitted Barbados though these Protocols were fashioned in the crucible of crisis. It does not make sense that we should dispense with them, then seek to recreate them whenever another crisis comes up because crises will emerge from time to time, given the dynamic nature of how human affairs operate.

Sir, I think we are seeking to contribute to the social and political well-being and its security and, therefore, we should not take them for granted only because they work well. Sir, because of the fact that the crisis of 1991 has passed and we have survived and overcame that one and are moving on, there have been other crises that have emerged and the Social Partnership that is bound up with the social call which have worked well in making their contribution to the resolution of these issues. It has also contributed to a further development of that intangible but very necessary factor which is known as social capital.

Sir, as we consider for debate some of the previous Protocols, the first one was the tripartite partnership between the Government and the private sector had agreed, basically on the broad principles of governing an incomes policy as part of the broad strategy that would lead to the sustainable economic development of Barbados, whilst recognising the need to reverse the erosion of the country's competitiveness which we have reached, through a co-ordination and resolute action on the part of the Social Partners.

Sir, the Incomes Policy that was involved, revolved around a number of principles, one being a commitment to maintain the exchange rate of the Barbados dollar to the United States dollar, which was a crucial element in our economic well-being; the expansion of the economy through competitiveness and the promotion of access to employment; a reduction in the incidents of social dislocation caused by the incidents of high unemployment. There is no doubt that the first Protocol has laid the groundwork for what was to follow.

There was an understanding and a determination on the part of the Social Partners, which has been extended through education and training to the wider society that there was a need for us to increase and improve productivity, improve efficiency, reduce wastage, thereby enhancing the overall national performance so that we could be in a better position to attract investment and create a further expansion of employment opportunities.

Sir, the achievements of these objectives were largely set out on the part of everyone that there should be the establishment of a framework which would protect workers' security of employment and reduce labour disputes. Sir, despite the few shortcomings that had emerged – because with human affairs there is never a perfect document – it was said that it had served its purpose and that Barbados had achieved its objectives.

Then came the negotiation for Protocol Two which took place in a changing environment. The economy was on the mend, there was a new Government in place which came into being against a background of the Opposition making it clear while in Opposition and speaking in relation to the cause, that neither the contents nor the nature of the first protocol was in any way offensive to the BLP. There were a number of changes which were over and above the first Protocol. One of the most significant changes was that we had moved from a stage of a wage freeze to wage restraint, which was an important step forward.

Secondly, there was a decision that there was a clear need for certain administrative procedures to be put in place – the formation of the subcommittee of the Social Partnership – which would be the first link of consultation regarding all aspects of the implementation of this Protocol.

This Subcommittee has performed an outstanding duty. It provides an initial outlet for the venting or bringing of issues of other persons. The issues come not only in an adversarial manner from employee against employer, whether Government or the private sector, but as a matter of national importance. The information is shared, views exchanged and very often major disturbances within the society are avoided.

Sir, I wish at some point in time that we might be able to enumerate how many issues that had been safely stanch and controlled because of the intervention or existence of the Subcommittee, thus saving Barbados from further dislocation, widespread turmoil and confusion.

The establishment of the Subcommittee then meant that Barbados was emerging as a place where the citizenry at large was prepared to cooperate in the interest of the ongoing development of the society.
11.35 a.m.

It took us along the way where we moved toward the implementation of Protocol Three which focussed on the building of a sustainable social and economic partnership. This Protocol moved beyond concerns about the economy and addressed issues about globalization. We focussed on our national well-being in the context of the domestic economy and paid close attention to what was emerging in the rest of the world through the new issue of globalisation. Sir, it was recognised that there was even a more pressing need for the Social Partners to coalesce more frequently to come up with a deliberate effort to fashion a national policy

for the development of the country in the long-term in the context of globalisation.

One of the main differences between Protocol Three and its predecessors was that while it retained all the essential points, it emphasised the social responsibility of partners through the maintenance of a stable industrial relations climate, the reduction of social disparities through increased employment and the consolidation of social dialogue through tripartite consultation.

Sir, Protocol Four was signed on May 1, 2002 but discussions on this Protocol began in August 2001 when the Subcommittee of the Social Partners met to formulate Protocol Four.

The main objectives of Protocol Four were seen as being able to reposition the Barbados economy by the year 2005 through protection, consolidation and advancement of Barbados' best economic interests in the regional, hemispheric and global economic environment.

Another major objective was the reduction of the social disparities through those protections which are inherent in an acknowledgment of the right to decent work, freely chosen, and the provision of opportunities for access to increased employment.

Another objective was the national commitment to increased competitiveness through improved productivity and efficiency in the workplace.

As a result of the review of the Subcommittee of the Social Partners, and input of the various partners, there were a number of additions and changes to the formulation of this new document.

The new document now has sections devoted to the whole question of globalisation, human resource development, health in the workplace, including the important issue of HIV/AIDS and other life threatening illnesses, the accountability of persons in partnership and public information. Sir, one can see that the visions of those formulating these Protocols have been broadened to deal with issues to make us better prepared to deal with the rest of the world.

Sir, the Protocol to this point has had a limited distribution because the Ministry has circulated 1000 copies of the Protocols to Parliament, Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Departments, the National Union of Public Workers, the Barbados Hotel Tourism Association, the Small Business Association, the Barbados Agricultural Society, the Barbados Employers Confederation, the Barbados Manufacturers' Association, CTUSAB, Boards of Management of Secondary Schools and the Barbados Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

In addition they have been distributed to regional and international organisations with offices in Barbados as well as to Barbados Embassies and High Commissions abroad in various parts of the world. Copies were also released to the media in general because we felt that as wide as possible circulation was necessary so that people would have this information at their fingertips and, therefore, could not claim they do not know of the existence and provisions of the Protocol.

Sir, I would be the first to admit that more needs to be done in the dissemination of information of Protocol Four and, therefore, it has been placed on the Internet because it deals with public information. Sir, paragraph 13.1 deals with Public Information and it says:

"The Subcommittee of the Social Partners shall be charged with the responsibility of giving the widest possible publicity and circulation of copies of this Protocol."

Paragraph 13.2 says that:

"The Subcommittee of the Social Partners shall also be required to ensure that the public is informed on a regular basis of the outcome of its deliberations. The Partners agree that at least twice per year a full media presentation will be made in a joint session when the public will be made aware of the work done in the review period, and of how that work impacts on the ordering and development of the country."

Sir, this is an inherent concern in Protocol Four and at a recent meeting of the Subcommittee last Friday, this question was addressed and there was the recognition that other methods have to be found to make sure that information is more readily available to the public. When the Subcommittee meets, there should be a press release on a monthly basis that would give the public an insight into the issues that emerged at the Subcommittee at the Social Partners level.

This would help to create familiarity with the existence and work of the Subcommittee and Social Partners, and it would be clear that the Subcommittee is not an institution that pops up at crisis time, that it has an ongoing life of its own and works daily to ensure that Barbados' interests are protected, that it does its job of seeking to minimize, curtail, correct and amend issues before they become full-blown crises. Sir, I am sure the Subcommittee will work on this in future. Protocol Four is a comprehensive and wide-ranging document and people will be impressed with the wide range of issues and level of thinking that permeates the document.

It starts with a "Statement of Intent" at paragraph 1.2:

"The Social Partners regard this Protocol as an instrument of policy to achieve industrial harmony and as a means to confront the challenges of globalisation and the demands of the information age with a view to improving the competitiveness of the economy as part of the future social development of Barbados."

It goes on to speak of its major objectives and at paragraph 3:15 says that:

"The Social Partners support the continued reform of the Public Service into a modern and efficient organisation which is independent, impartial and accountable, and whose administrative policies promote innovation, initiative, and an acceleration in the making of decisions, and, in general, provide working conditions which are conducive to increased productivity and greater job satisfaction."

It also looks at the whole question of employment, human resource development and is a progressive and sensitive document in that it looks at persons with disabilities. It states quite clearly at paragraph 5.6 that:

"The Social Partners agree that there should be no discrimination in employment against persons with disabilities, or who may become disabled during the course of their employment, and pledge to play their part in ensuring that such persons enjoy their rights and are aware of the initiatives which enable them to secure or retain their employment."

The Protocol deals with Child Labour, an issue which might not be prevalent in Barbadian society, but one of which we have to be aware given the fact that we import goods which may be a result of the disreputable practice of child labour.

The Protocol also deals with Industrial Relations ranging from the Termination of Employment, General Provisions where employment is concerned, Sub-Contracting, Economic Redundancy, Collective Agreements, Job Enhancements, Technological Changes and also looks at the Domestic Economy.

Sir, the Social Partners state in Protocol Four as regards to Collective Bargaining that:

"The Social Partners agree that nothing in the foregoing shall be construed to violate the terms of existing collective agreements or to effect the collective bargaining process."

It is quite clear that there is a determination and intent that the Protocols will not supplant and replace the collective

bargaining process which is the bedrock of industrial relations in Barbadian society.

The Protocol looks at Prices Policy, Incomes Policy, Tax Regime, Productivity, Poverty Eradication and Crime. It says at paragraph 7.18 that:

"The Social Partners therefore fully support those policies and measures which seek to minimise the incidence of crime in Barbados."

The Protocol talks about Social Dialogue and addresses the question of the widening of the Social Partnership and it says at paragraph 8.2 that:

"The Social Partners undertake to use such opportunities as may present themselves to effect the deepening and widening of the Social Partnership including, where appropriate, the formal involvement of accredited non-governmental organisations in its dialogue."

It is not seeking to be a closed shop or an elitist organisation but in the widest possible sense to be inclusive from time to time, where appropriate, involving other participants in the wider Barbadian society in its activities.

There are commitments from the Employer's Representative, the Workers's Representatives and Government, and it also deals with the whole question of accountability and Implementation of the Protocol.

Sir, one of the most important inclusions is that of Appendix I which deals with the Policy on HIV/AIDS and Other Life Threatening Illnesses in the Workplace. It says:

"The Social Partners recognising that an unchecked expansion of the population suffering from HIV/AIDS and other life threatening illnesses will be reflected increasingly in the workplace."

They have included five pages dealing with HIV/AIDS and other life threatening illnesses in the workplace. It calls for ongoing public information to help combat this disease and recommend that there should be a Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and other life threatening illnesses in the workplace.

It calls for the following:

- "treat all employees with HIV/AIDS and other life threatening illnesses with respect and dignity;
- balance business needs with compassion to enable such persons to work productively while their health allows.

- to guarantee confidentiality when such persons seek counselling;
- take reasonable precautions to protect information regarding their health records;
- provide and maintain an open, informed, healthy and safe working environment for all employees.”

Sir, it deals with the question of Hiring and the Right to work with HIV/AIDS and other life threatening illnesses.

It states that:

“The employer shall not require employees to be tested or to produce evidence of recent testing for HIV/AIDS and other life threatening illnesses as a requirement for continued employment.

The employer shall not include on any application forms or ask at any interview for initial employment or promotion any question seeking information on whether applicants have HIV/AIDS and other life threatening illnesses or whether applicants have recently undergone testing for HIV/AIDS and other life threatening illness, or whether applicants are prepared to undergo testing for HIV/AIDS and other life threatening illness as a prior requirement for employment.”

It deals with the question of “Desire to Work”.
11.55 a.m.

It says that:

“The employer shall, wherever possible, on a case by case basis, facilitate those employees with HIV/AIDS or any other life threatening illnesses who desire to continuing work.

The employee shall reserve the right to be satisfied, if necessary, through a fitness evaluation that continuing attendance at work of employees affected by HIV/AIDS or any other life threatening illness will not impair their ability to perform their duties in a safe and reliable manner, notwithstanding any expressed desire by such persons to continue at work.”

Evaluation of fitness to work says:

“The employer may, if having been informed by any employee of his contraction of HIV/AIDS or any other life threatening illness, arrange for a fitness evaluation by a registered medical practitioner mutually agreeable to both parties, provided always that such an evaluation is necessitated and satisfactory work resulting from inappropriate, mental or physical behaviour caused by

HIV/AIDS or any other life threatening illness of which the employer has been informed.”

The employer, if initiating discussion on the holding of a fitness evaluation shall:

“Pledge to ensure that the result of any medical evacuation will be confidential and will be discussed only with the employee involved.”

Discrimination –

“The employer undertakes not to discriminate against any employee with HIV/AIDS or any other life threatening illness, and to protect their entitlements in the workplace with respect to job applications, hiring, upgrading, advancement, promotion, discharge, discipline, lay-offs, privileges of employment, compensation, training or other terms and conditions of employment.”

Reasonable Accommodation –

“The employer undertakes, wherever possible and feasible, to facilitate any employee with HIV/AIDS or any other life threatening illness with word modifications to allow the employee to perform his job for as long as possible, such individually determined modifications to include

- flexible hours
- greater frequency of breaks
- time off for the medical treatment
- job restructuring or job transfer
- job sharing.”

Sir, there is a very humane and broad-minded approach adopted in this section relating to HIV/AIDS and other life threatening illnesses.

Sir, I suspect that if this becomes part of the work culture across the Barbadian workforce, it will go a long way, at least minimising and at best eliminating the question of discrimination, stigmatisation and marginalisation such as the issues that now confront the Barbadian society where HIV/AIDS is concerned.

Sir, Government, some non-governmental organisations and the private sector have begun to play their part. Government has made the retro viral drug for HIV/AIDS free of cost, and a reference unit is provided where infected persons can be treated and counselled. Sir, various Ministries are conducting extensive activities to stem the flow of HIV/AIDS.

The private sector, churches and other faith-based organisations have held consultations where they agreed on an approach to HIV/AIDS. The last major hurdle, to my mind, apart from getting people to modify their behaviour and practise safer sex, is how we treat our fellow man who we believe or are infected with HIV/AIDS.

Sir, we hope that this aspect of the Protocol will help create the climate to modify Barbadians' attitudes toward persons living with HIV/AIDS so that they are treated the same way as persons who have other chronic illnesses, such as hypertension, diabetes and cancer. There should be no discrimination against persons with chronic illnesses in this society. Mr. President, I know that it is a tall order but I think that the Barbadian society has the capacity to achieve this objective and this is not beyond us to do so.

Sir, I think that the Protocols One, Two, Three and Four have been able, to my mind, to help change the outlook of persons towards industrial relations in Barbados. It might not be a perfect situation because from time to time we still have persons who would seek to step outside of the restraints, conditions and rules governing the Protocols.

I think that the groundwork has been laid for the emergence of a substantial culture of understanding, tolerance and maturity that, not only strengthen the relationship between the Social Partners, but create cooperation, trust, understanding and credibility about the integrity of the process of collective bargaining and the management of industrial relations in Barbados.

Sir, the major contributors to this change in attitude, outlook and change in climate would be the question of sharing of information between the partners. There was a time when the way the company was performing was considered to be top secret and information of the company was not meant to be shared with the workers or the workers' representatives. Sir, that day is now past and there is ready sharing of information at all levels of industrial relations.

I think this has been a spin-off benefit that has emerged out of the establishment and the honouring of the Social Partnership. We believe that the continuation of the Protocols of the Social Partnership can only inure to the benefit of Barbados and one of the real tests will lie in its implementation.

There is no doubt that industrial relations in Barbados are more self-regulated where there is a code of understanding and behaviour that is spreading across the Barbadian society as a result of the Protocol. Those who respect it and honour it would feel settled in doing so. They govern themselves.

There is no industrial relations court or compulsion. This is a Partnership where all three partners have voluntarily entered and voluntarism is still an important hallmark and ingredient, not only in the Barbadian industrial climate but in the Barbadian society in general. Therefore, I think that we in Barbados can continue to be proud of the benefits that have emerged from the Protocols.

While all the benefits and true contribution to the fundamental and bedrock of the Barbadian society might not be immediately discernable, and might have to be better analysed by historians during this period of our lives, I think it is fair to say that Barbadians feel more settled and assured of themselves, the industrial relations climate in the society and what impact it can have on the society and the economy. They know that there is a Protocol, particularly Protocol Four which goes to 2004, that governs the management and behaviour of this aspect of Barbadian life. Sir, there is a more civilised and sophisticated approach to the management of their affairs.

Sir, I am sure that I can expect similar regard and approval for this Resolution from my colleagues who, as Barbadians, would want only the best for the Barbadian society and will appreciate the benefits that are inherent in this Protocol.

I, therefore, beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, as we are aware, we cannot make a law to deal with every issue in every human failing or every set of relations that can exist between people. Therefore, I believe that the attempt at the various Protocols basically set out the rules of engagements for the parties concerned, now known as the Social Partners.

Sir, the Honourable Minister made the point in his presentation that out of evil sometimes comes good. We are all aware of the economic difficulties this country faced in the 1991/1992 period, where the attempts of the restructuring of the economy measured the sale of Government's assets, the 8 per cent reduction of salaries of the public servants and the First Protocol, which was then referred to as the Prices and Incomes Policy.

Sir, the action that was taken was to stabilise the economy, the society, to ensure that all of the engines of growth were firing also to give some prospects of long-term growth. In my view, the attempts at restructuring during that period were largely successful because we were able to enjoy eight years of continuous growth of the economy and the private sector was able to register significant levels of profit over the period as well. Generally, we have seen some development in the economy.

Sir, the question is, what have we done with the benefits which were derived from that restructuring process? That is why persons may raise questions about the need for another Protocol. I am not raising any questions regarding that because there must be some rules by which we will function, rules which will give the details under which we could engage in certain activities.

Unfortunately, we have noticed that the private sector has expanded in terms of new buildings, bigger cars for executives and more lavished lifestyles for some of the persons at the top of the executive ladder. However, the question is, what about the other party involved? Sir, Government has benefitted by being able to keep the economy on a growth path and the private sector had big profits. The question is, what benefits have accrued to the workers, the other party to the Social Partnership?

It is true that we have seen some measure of increased job security because over the period of growth there has been a reduction in the unemployment rate. We have seen Government changing the status of casual workers and many of them are now appointed to the public service. We have also seen a phenomenal increase in the cost of living in some areas. We have not seen any significant reduction in the cost of utilities which would be of significant importance to the workers of this country.

I do not think that the provision, when we look at the Statement of Intent of the Protocol where it says that: "To establish through low inflation and equilibrium between prices and incomes..." – I do not believe that even though, statically, we can say that there has not been a high rate of inflation, the point remains that there are goods and services which the ordinary Barbadian has to access and those goods and services are still beyond the reach of many people. When we look at the overall situation, it may appear to be not of high inflation but there are those areas which affect the ordinary man and which have significantly high prices. Therefore, we would need to address those areas.

Sir, having been able to register continuous growth over the past eight years, the Government was able to build on those restructures that were made and the sacrifice that was made by the workers of the country. Sir, in the present situation where we are experiencing a downturn in the economy, I believe this is an indication that we have not done all that is necessary to benefit from the restructuring programme that we have gone through. We are again in the trough, in terms of our economy, where we are experiencing problems in ten-year cycles. Sir, we will recall that we had problems in the years 1971-1972, 1981-1982, 1991-1992 and 2001-2002.

Sir, it seems as though that we have not yet dealt with the fundamental problems which can help us to weather the adversities from the external forces.
12.15 p.m.

Sir, even the large economies will go through recessionary periods. I am not suggesting that we could do better than those large economies that have to face these problems from time to time. Sir, I believe we still have to put ourselves in the position where we do not feel the immediate impact of every situation that might arise. That is not the kind of economy we seem to be building.

Sir, I would like to take a look at section 1.4 of the Statement of Intent of the Protocol:

"The Social Partners accept that the success of the private sector is an important element in the continued economic growth of Barbados and agree to the development of such strategies as would strengthen the potential for expansion by the entire private sector."

In my view, whereas one would agree that the success of the private sector is important, that success merely cannot be seen in terms of the success of businesses only, but that too the workers who actually fuel the success of that business must be seen as directly benefitting from that success.

There was a time when workers' participation was very much counted and where persons had suggested that workers should share in the profits of companies. Sir, there are persons who feel that when something like that is mentioned, that people want to go back to the old socialist days, that it is merely left-wing rhetoric that one is spouting. Basically, one is almost seen as a demon when making such suggestions.

Sir, I believe any business that succeeds could only do so if the workers involved in that business are prepared to be committed and are prepared to give their all in the advancement of the country. We must move away from the accepted capitalist principles that the only things that are important are capital and machines, that the worker is merely a dispensable entity that could be engaged whenever necessary and discarded when not needed. In fact, it is fortunate that even today as we speak, the Barbados Workers' Union seems to be sounding a word of warning to some employers in this country.

I hope that when Senator Trotman makes his contribution, he would deal with those matters that affect the workers directly. Sir, we must be concerned that while businesses are enjoying the profits, all is well but at the first sign of a problem, the first act is to discard the workers. We know this happens in a situation where the total payroll of the ordinary worker might be less than that of those persons who operate the two top positions of the business.

Sir, but we do not get a situation where management would say that they would reduce their own salaries and benefits to the benefit of the other workers. That is unheard

of for, as far as management is concerned, one cannot subject management to such indignity, though it is all right for them to discard of a large number of workers.

Sir, given the fact that workers of this country have been prepared to enter into this agreement and have agreed to be a partner in drawing up these rules of engagement, it should not be necessary in this climate that if one is going to spend so much time producing a document such as this, that now the workers' representatives should be faced with having to deal with employers who would want to disregard, not only what is in this Protocol, but also the basic principles governing collective bargaining and workers' representation. Sir, the experts and those who are directly charged with the responsibility of looking after the welfare of the workers would be in a better position to put that case.

Sir, throughout the Document, there is reference to "a private sector". As I read it, I cannot help but believe the private sector is seen as a particular set of people, that "private sector" means big business and does not appear to mean all those persons who are involved in business activities that are outside of Government.

Sir, the private sector does not concern itself with developmental policies and one cannot reasonably expect the private sector of Barbados to put a lot of emphasis on development, *per se*, even though there are other places where the private sector puts a considerable amount of money back into the society, either through research and development or by funding various projects which could be of benefit to the society. Some of it is happening in Barbados but, in my view, not enough and, therefore, Government has a role to play in the development of the country.

Sir, I make this point because the current trend seems to be one in which there is an attempt to ensure that there is as little Government as possible. In fact, when one looks at the World Trade Organisation's document with respect to globalisation, and at the policies annunciated by the IMF and the World Bank, the emphasis is on reducing government and relegating the responsibility to merely one of providing security in the environment in which the private sector could function.

Sir, if we go along with such policies, certainly the broad masses in Third World or in developed countries such as ours would be left to survive in a trend we are now seeing being pushed by these international agencies, which seem to be reinforcing that principle of the survival of the fittest.

I noticed the President of South Africa has called for an end to that world order which they believe to be the survival of the fittest. Certainly it would mean that countries such as ours would always be on the margin of poverty if we

are to continue along that road. Therefore, Government has a significant role, not only in terms of providing security but also economically.

Sir, the Prime Minister recently made the point that it was Government who had originally built the Hilton Hotel because, at that time, there was no one in the private sector who was prepared to take that chance. Tourism was not yet seen as a viable entity. It was merely seen as the occasional visit of a tourist ship from abroad and there would be a grand occasion when a few tourists land on the island.

Government, at the time, felt that by expanding the airport in order to accommodate large aircrafts, building the Hilton Hotel, along with the basic infrastructure for the development of a tourism industry and having done that, the private sector then fell in and the industry has grown to what we have today.

Similarly, in order to develop tourism in the north of the island, we had the Heywoods Project being developed. Again, because of Government's initiative not because of the private sector, saw this as a viable entity. Perhaps it was not because the private sector was not in a position to take the initiative. Maybe it was because some of those persons in the private sector who could have done better, could not have seen far enough ahead, or did not have enough confidence in the people of this country to believe they could have participated in such economic activity.

Sir, even now that lack of confidence in the ability of the people is shown by the number of advertisements that we are seeing for a number of persons who are wanted for top positions, yet every year we boast of producing a number of Barbadian scholars. Recently we have had persons at the Polytechnic who have been amongst the top students in the world in their particular field, yet after being an independent country since 1966, we are still being seen as not having the capacity or the skills to fill certain positions, positions which Barbadians go to other countries and fill. There are Barbadians who are holding top positions outside of Barbados but in Barbados, these persons are never seen as being good enough to do the same jobs they are doing in other countries.

Mr. President, why is there this kind of mentality? One does not expect these Protocols to address issues that would be necessary which relate to a person's thinking. Only recently, I heard a gentleman speaking about a foreign bank in this country which still operates like that way in which the plantation system operates. The top two persons are imported, who then delegate a local person the responsibility of controlling the others.

Mr. President, when we are speaking about the private sector, I would hope that we could get beyond merely

speaking of those businesses which now occupy the top tier in terms of our economic development.

Sir, at 3.6, the Document refers to small and micro-enterprises. This is why I said that when speaking of the private sector, it seems as though there is the private sector and then the small businesses and do not include the small and micro-businesses within the private sector. It seems as though they are an outside entity.

Sir, as the Document says:

“The Social Partners also recognise the integral role of small and micro enterprises in the productive sectors of the economy and their potential to contribute to increased levels of investment and employment. They further agree, given the peculiarity of circumstance due to their size and vulnerability, that special attention will be paid to this category within the productive sectors.”

Mr. President, there are other places in the world where these small businesses contribute in the largest way or provide the highest levels of employment.

Sir, what is seen as small businesses in the United States, employ more persons than the big businesses and, collectively make as great a contribution to the economy of the United States than the big businesses. Sir, when we speak of small business in this country, it is almost as putting a stain on your business, “small” means that it is not a legitimate business because of its size.

Sir, I want to make the point that there are too many activities in which small businesses in this country are involved, that are being encroached upon by bigger businesses that have the resources to push these smaller businesses out. There is the situation where some young enterprising people in this country have been able to start up projects that have the potential to make money. We then get other people who have the resources but not the ability to see the value of such a project, seeking to buy these persons out. Sir, if these young enterprising persons cannot be bought out, those people with the money then find a way to force them out.

Sir, I am also concerned that there is a large enterprise in this country that has a machine which is used for digging wells. This enterprise is running out the smaller persons who have spent their money in buying compressors to dig wells. Sir, to a large extent, many of these smaller persons rely on well contracts from Government and are now faced with the risk of being forced out of operation by this larger enterprise. I have no difficulty with people having modern equipment, but I think it is the responsibility of the Government to do what this Document says.

Sir, in looking at 10.8(g):

“ensure that in the award of its contracts due consideration is given to small business enterprises so that there is a wider distribution of economic activity and the consequential broadening of the base of the social partnership.”

I think that is an essential point that has to be made. It is essential that wherever possible, Government should seek to ensure that the distribution of economic activities is broadened.

12.35 p.m.

Sir, because a company is able to buy a piece of equipment for \$0.5 million and wipe out all small businesses in the island, should we justify that by saying that they are able to do the job cheaper? This brings us back to the old socialist thinking where we only think of the “bottom line” and of doing it at the cheapest cost regardless of the social consequences.

The company that has that piece of equipment for digging wells should not be allowed to compete against small persons who have invested their money to buy compressors and who rely on getting contracts from the Government. Sir, if paragraph 10.8 (g) of this Protocol means anything, then small people should not have to compete on an uneven playing field.

Paragraph 13. 7 lists four points about what will be done for small enterprises, but what is significantly omitted is access to money. Government has set up some funds and enterprises for small businesses to access money but I maintain that to a large extent, many of these enterprises only allow people to start “Mickey Mouse” businesses which cannot afford them a decent standard of living. Sir, we give people the opportunity to be educated and trained but, at the end of the day, there is no money to start a business or someone may start a business but cannot get a salary from it because the atmosphere which presently exists in Barbados makes it difficult to access money.

Sir, if a person wants to buy a car for \$70 000, he can borrow it from any bank but, if he wants to borrow that same \$70 000 to start a business, many reasons will be given to him why the business will fail and, at some point in time, he will see someone else doing the same type of business he intended to do.

Nowadays people try to make a small business cutting lawns but then people with fancy equipment move in, calling themselves “lawn doctors” and this puts the small man in serious trouble again. Sir, if anything is to be done about micro-enterprises, we have to go beyond these four points of the Protocol and establish a clear environment in which these businesses can access the necessary funds as well as

persons with the expertise to give them guidance to develop to the stage where these businesses can become profitable entities.

Paragraph 3.10 (c) of the Protocol says:

“a sound agricultural policy including the reform of the sugar industry, which provides among other things for a national food security plan.”

Sir, this is something that more than meets the eye because recently an American official complained about protection of the agricultural sector in Barbados. This issue is also being debated in the conference in South Africa where under-developed countries are expressing concern that American farmers are being heavily subsidised in order to produce wheat and other products at a cheaper cost than what can be done in Third World countries yet they are saying the Governments of Third World countries cannot subsidise their countries even though American farmers are being subsidised and can then dump their produce in Third World countries who would then be solely dependent on America.

Sir, not only do the Americans subsidise their farms but, under the new globalised economy, they can go into Third World countries and take out a patent on any product which they desire. For example, recently, the Americans went into the Himalayas, took out a patent on a variety of rice which was grown there for years and told these people that they no longer have the right to cultivate this rice which they have grown for their entire life.

Sir, we are in a new environment, but we are not preparing ourselves to deal with this new climate. We speak about it a lot but we need to do more towards having a sound agricultural policy. At the same time, a Minister of Government subscribes to the idea put forward by the international agencies that land resources must be used for the best economic value. Sir, the best economic value for land is not agriculture because it does not give the best return in Barbados at this time.

Sir, we will see a rapid increase in the rate at which land is taken out of agriculture. We are down to one factory in the sugar industry and the historical trend has been that every time a sugar factory is closed, a significant amount of land goes out of sugar cane cultivation.

Also, when small farmers came out of sugar cane cultivation, there was a significant drop in the level of sugar production in this country because every time a factory is closed, it becomes more difficult for small farmers to get their sugar cane to the factory and, as a result, more land goes out of cultivation.

Sir, with the closure of Buckeley Factory, we will get a further decline in sugar cane production, therefore, we can expect more land to follow the idea that land will be used for the best economic value. The question is, what will become of food security? Someone said that if a rice boat on its way to Barbados should sink, the whole country will die of starvation because we do not have the means to feed ourselves for any extended period and if we continue in this manner, the situation will certainly get worse.

Sir, I hope that every clause in the Protocol is based on a strong belief that what is said in it is possible, it will be done and that every attempt is made to ensure that what we say in this Protocol will happen.

Sir, paragraph 3.11 says:

“The Social Partners agree that in such an environment the private sector must be the main engine of growth in the economy.”

Sir, I get worried when we believe that the private sector in Barbados, as we know it, will be the main engine of growth. If we believe this, then we are putting ourselves at the mercy of a set of people who do not have the general welfare of the broad masses of people of this country at heart. We will be putting ourselves in the hands of people who are solely motivated by profit because these people are not satisfied to make a profit but they feel they must always make a big profit.

Sir, Cable & Wireless cannot be considered a “hand-to-mouth” company because they make more money than any other Cable & Wireless in any other part of the world yet, with all their resources, they want to layoff more workers. Whenever companies reorganise or restructure their operations, workers are the first to be laid off.

Barbados Shipping and Trading recorded the highest profits ever last year but, at the same time, a small group of workers, former workers of the Pine Hill Dairy responsible for the vending machine operations went out of business because they owed the bank \$60 000 but the son of the Chairman of Barbados Shipping and Trading now runs the vending machine operations at Pine Hill Dairy. Barbados Shipping and Trading also formed their own advertising entity because they were not satisfied to give this advertising business to anyone else.

We talk about broadening the economic base but is it truly happening in Barbados? The fact remains that people who are charged with looking after the welfare of the masses, not only politicians, but those who have the power of the pen, those who work in the various professions and who can make a difference if they allow their voices to be

heard, are silent because to speak out, they will not receive business from these enterprises. Therefore, they send everyone else down the drain to ensure they get some goodies from these larger enterprises.

Sir, I hope when they do this, they are prepared to take the money earned, build bigger guard-walls, buy more Dobermans or pit bulls and spend that money on other forms of protections because we will be creating a set of people who are seem to be economically comfortable, but a significant number of people will not be comfortable because we would have sown the seeds of social unrest.

Sir, we must reduce the greed and avarice that exist in this country, recognise that the pie is not getting any bigger and that one group of persons cannot continue to grab more of the pie without expecting persons to be deprived and react in some form or other.

Sir, I am not making excuses for anyone to do anything foolish but we must be conscious of the fact that we need to build a more just and equitable society wherever possible.

Paragraph 3.12 says:

“The Social Partners agree to work together to develop coordinated national approaches to initiatives launched by the multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and others.”

Sir, maybe I am naive when I make this statement but I believe that a small country like ours cannot afford to go into any competition with these international agencies and leave behind half of the population. This is precisely what we are doing because in all of this we do not see all of the political parties involved in formulating these policies. If we believe that any single political party has all the resources to deal with these international agencies, we are making a sad mistake.

12.55 p.m.

I believe that when we are dealing with agencies like OECD, the Opposition should have been taken into confidence by the Government, and when we develop policies to deal with these agencies, the Government can go forward with the assurance that this is the position that would be taken by the other political Parties in the country as well. They can also go forward with confidence knowing that it is a position of all Barbadians and they do not have to fear that we might go along this line now but somebody might come later and change what we have done.

Sir, there are some issues on which one must take the position as Barbadians, not as the Barbados Labour Party or the Democratic Labour Party. Whereas, some of us might believe that this is something that is not obtainable, we have to start thinking along these lines before it is too late. The IMF knows what the World Bank plans to do and *vice versa* and they also know what the World Trade Organisation (WTO) will do because the WTO and the OECD are creatures of the IMF and the World Bank.

Sir, when you think that you have won a battle with one agency, you have only escaped a skirmish because around the corner there is another battle for you. Mr. President, before you can complete the first hurdle, the agencies have things in place to deal with you at the next juncture.

Sir, if we believe that we can continue to set aside a significant portion of our resources and deal with these issues without suffering the adverse consequences, we are making a serious mistake. There is a point at which we must decide that we are Barbadians first and foremost and that the petty politics that divide us from time to time must be set aside if we are going to be dealing with major issues.

Asides.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Sir, Item 5.6 deals with the disabilities. I believe that much of what is said here does not go very far in terms of concrete proposals to deal with people with disabilities.

Sir, under item 5.8 (c) it says:

“The identification of training schemes which can be provided to enhance the skills of the disabled and thus improve their prospects for employment.”

Sir, what does that say? When we talk about people with disabilities, we are always referring to helping them to acquire a skill. We talk about helping some disabled persons to acquire skills in order to be able to cane chairs or do a little work somewhere. They are never seen as people who can make a significant contribution to the economy. We have relegated the disabled in this country to that category.

Sir, there are several disabled people in this country who can make a significant contribution to the development of this economy. What are the opportunities for the disabled after the primary stage of education for disabled people in this country? We have a few who are gaining an education but most of them have to pay for that education.

I am saying that it is wrong and unjust in a society where we are saying that there is free education at the

primary, secondary and tertiary stages. There is a category of people who need more help than others. Those persons who need the help find themselves in a position where they are unable to access that free secondary education which we say is provided for all Barbadians.

I think that it is discrimination and it is an infringement of their constitutional rights to have that education which is available to everyone else. If the Government is not in a position to provide the institutions which can provide post-primary education for all of the disabled persons who can take advantage of it, then they should provide significant subsidies to those persons with disabilities so that they do not have to battle with the cost and inconvenience to their families in order to provide the basic day-to-day necessities. In addition, the families have to look for money to spend on their education. Sir, this is one of the first things that we need to address if we are going to talk about doing anything for disabled people.

Mr. President, we have two blind students who attend secondary school in this country who do not have the basic equipment which would help them to take full advantage of the education opportunities.

Asides.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Sir, I hope that the private sector will make a greater contribution to providing for the disabled community in this country.

Sir, Appendix I deals exclusively with HIV/AIDS but only mentioned other life threatening illnesses. We have more people in this country who are likely to die from diabetes and hypertension than those who are likely to die from HIV/AIDS.

Asides.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Sir, I am saying that we need to pay greater attention to the fact that many people in this country are losing their limbs, eyesight and lives because of diabetes, hypertension and obesity. These are diseases that would cause us to change our lifestyles. Sir, with a heightened programme of awareness, I hope that we would spend more time and resources and let people be aware that these things will be dealt with and we will show greater concern for the problems that they face.

Sir, Item 10.6 refers to Government employees. I hope that Government would pay attention to the situation where persons are acting in senior positions for protracted periods and when the time comes for those persons to be appointed in those positions, they are being overlooked.

Sir, there is no reason why a person should be acting in a position for five years. However, if a person can act in that position, then he should be appointed. I think that we should pay attention to things like these and the matters that are addressed in the Protocol would not remain fancy words on a fancy document but more effort would be made to make them a reality.

I thank you, Sir.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I beg that this Sitting be now suspended until 2.15 p.m.

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 2.15 p.m. today was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly. 1.15 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR P. C. GODDARD: Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to start by emphasising that Protocol Four, the Document we are looking at today, was not written by the private sector alone. I make that point in view of the comments that were made by the previous Speaker.

Protocol Four is a result of extensive negotiations between Government, the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados (CTUSAB) and the business community, under the umbrella of the Barbados Private Sector Agency which consists of: the Barbados Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), the Barbados Manufacturers Association (BMA), the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association (BHTA), the Barbados Agricultural Society (BAS), the Barbados Employers Confederation (BEC) and the Small Business Association (SBA).

Therefore, in case the impression was given that this was a document that was prepared by the private sector, I want to make it very clear that the three partners all had extensive inputs into its preparation.

Sir, I think we need to go further back to bring us into a fuller understanding and appreciation of how this came about. Let us cast our minds back to the early 1990s when the economy was in turmoil. The Government was operating on a very high fiscal deficit, while Foreign Exchange Reserves were almost depleted. There were two massive and peaceful public demonstrations and the Government had to call on the International Monetary Fund while Barbados had to engage in a structural adjustment programme.

In that year of turmoil, the Government, the trade union movement and the business community came together and recognised that we were all Barbadians and had to put the interest of Barbados first. Everyone recognised that they had to put sectoral interests down the line in the order of priority and that could have only been done when there was mutual respect and trust. Mr. President, thankfully, that existed and out of that came the first Protocol in 1993.

I was privileged to be involved in the first three Protocols and I want to pay tribute publicly to Senator LeRoy Trotman who has been involved in all four. It was not easy for me as head of the Private Sector Agency. I had received more criticisms from within the agency than from the outside. I am sure it was not easy for the Prime Minister and I am sure that he would have gotten criticisms within the Government.

Sir, may I remind you the first Protocol started in 1993 under a DLP Administration and was continued when there was a change of Government. I am quite sure that Senator Trotman, as head of CTUSAB would have gotten more than his share of criticisms from within the trade union movement but I have always felt that his position was always the most difficult of the three.

Mr. President, it is a very comprehensive document, as Senator Murray has outlined, in his opening remarks. Its preamble deals with globalisation, employment, industrial relations environment, the domestic economy, social dialogue, commitments by individual partners, administrative procedures and implementation of the Protocol.

Mr. President, at section 12.1:

“Meetings of the Social Partners in furtherance of the terms and conditions of this Protocol shall be held under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister.”

Sir, the preparation and the signing of the document are at a very important stage but unless there is constant monitoring, we all know that nothing happens.

12.2: “Such meetings shall be held on a quarterly or three-monthly basis, except where the nature of business requires more frequent meetings.”

Sir, then we move to 10.2:

“The Social Partners agree to initiate a comprehensive programme to inform the public of Barbados of the underlying purpose and rationale behind the Social Compact, to explain the scope of its operations, and to solicit such supportive actions at the enterprise level as will contribute to its success.”

Mr. President, how is that done? It is explained in section 13.1:

“The Subcommittee of the Social Partners shall be charged with the responsibility of giving the widest possible publicity and circulation of copies of this Protocol.”

Section 13.2:

“The Subcommittee of the Social Partners shall also be required to ensure that the public is informed on a regular basis of the outcome of its deliberations. The Partners agree that at least twice per year a full media presentation will be made in a joint session when the public will be made aware of the work done in the review period, and of how that work impacts on the ordering and development of the country.”

Sir, in other words, the Protocol puts mechanisms in place where the Social Partners will meet quarterly and where a Subcommittee of the Social Partners will meet monthly to deal with matters that would come up over a period of time. Those matters could never be fully anticipated and the Protocol does not attempt to anticipate them.

The Protocol, I would like to describe, is a strategic plan, a plan of statements and intentions and not an action plan. Therefore, if one is looking for what remedies that would be applied, do not look for it in the Protocol. It is not there and was never intended to be there.

Mr. President, finally, coming to the implementation of the Protocol. Sir, persons must be judged by performance and not by promises and this is set out in section 14.1:

“The Social Partners recognise that the manner in which the Protocol is implemented is of fundamental importance. The Social Partners accept and agree that the implementation of all aspects of this Protocol will be undertaken in a manner that fully acknowledges the spirit into which it has been entered and which honours the principles of transparency and objectivity. They, therefore, reaffirm their commitment to the principles of voluntarism in industrial relations, and to those practices and conventions which have developed over the years as a result of the application of those principles.”

Sir, in my opinion, what gives all protocols worth is that while they have been signed and noted in Parliament, there are no penalties outlined in them. That is why the question of the spirit of the Protocol is so important that there must be the continuity of that mutual trust and respect between partners which is so important, and, Mr. President, it has worked.

The first Protocol was signed in 1993. This is now 2002. It is expected that the first Protocol has evolved and

has improved. In my opinion, this Protocol should transcend partisan politics. It has become, I believe, a part of our culture and while there might be disagreements on certain sections - and that is normal – thinking has gone into it and what has been achieved should never be politicised.

Mr. President, successive Protocols have served Barbados well. During my time as head of the Private Sector, I have been asked to speak on it, which on different occasions I have done so, here in Barbados, Grenada, St. Kitts and in Jamaica. Sir, trade unionists, business persons and Government officials are amazed that we have been able to accomplish this in this island. My advice has always been, do not ever try to copy it, study it and see if it could be adapted to suit one's circumstances because circumstances would differ from country to country.

Sir, I am very pleased to have been associated with this over the years and I do think that it still has a long way to go within Barbados. I thank you.

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

Mr. PRESIDENT left the Chair and Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT took the Chair.

SENATOR J. E. D. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy President, I rise on this occasion to speak to Protocol Four, having been a practitioner in industrial relations and human resource management from the inception of Protocol One.

I, at that time, had the responsibility in part, of ensuring the implementation of Protocol One as it impacted on the organisation of which I was part. I distinctly remember we had to develop productivity schemes that were applicable in measuring and in determining the level of productivity with the organisation.

While dealing with the issue of productivity and seeing the importance of ensuring that we continue focussing on productivity in order to gain a competitive advantage, one of the things that saddens me – and I believe in part Senator McClean might have attributed to it this morning – is the fact that from the early 1990s, we saw the implementation of productivity schemes as being important and being critical at the time where some companies went so far as to implement such schemes.

For whatever reason, it now seems as though those things are no longer important and, to be honest, I believe we ought to ensure that productivity schemes form part and parcel of the process of the increase in salaries, et cetera. It will make all the difference, particularly during difficult times. It is true to say that those schemes have served us well

then and were the reasons why we were able to come through that difficult period.

Mr. Deputy President, if one is unable to measure where one is and what one has achieved, then it is difficult for one to know where one could make a difference. In the early 1990s, I distinctly recalled spending long hours with the employees' representatives in fashioning a scheme that allows each staff member to understand how that person could impact and could make a difference to the overall profitability of the company.

At the time, all that was required was a sense of openness and transparency with respect to companies because if there must be a meaningful measure with respect to productivity, there must be openness and the desire on the part of everyone, both companies and *et al*, to share information. It is only when employees are made to understand what makes up the company's cost components, that they would then be able to make a difference.

Mr. Deputy President, it is incumbent for the National Productivity Council to continue doing the job it has been doing in ensuring that companies could embrace the concept of such schemes. Sir, the either fortunate or unfortunate happening in the early 1990s was that, in the first Protocol, the only way employees could get increases in wages, was through either productivity payments or profit sharing. I am not an advocate for profit sharing because, at the end of the day, one does not have to expend too much but in relation to productivity, targets must be set, achieved and/or exceeded, which could cause that individual to try to produce more.

Sir, much has been said about the reason for Protocol One but what we now have before us is the fact that there is an increasing recognition by Governments and Social Partners within the Caribbean region, the need for them to put aside whatever prevailing struggles and adversarial relationships that might exist in favour of a social partnership.

Sir, our particular arrangement in Barbados has been subject to assessment evaluation by institutions like the International Labour Organisation and while there is nothing that would ever reach the stage of utopia, certainly it is one that has served us well and one that is held up as a good example for other countries to follow.

It is interesting to note that countries in the region like Jamaica are now at the final stages of implementing something which is similar to what we now have. The success of these tripartite arrangements require the support of the workforce and this is why the importance of productivity schemes is being stressed so much. It will only happen effectively if there is trust, commitment and

cooperation by everyone, both the workers, the employers and the union representatives.
2.35 p.m.

It is interesting to note that Protocol Four was developed and put together by all three sides of the Partnership. Sir, this document was not written by the employers, Government or the trade unions but is the final result of input from all three sides of the partnership who came to the conclusion that this is what is needed to take us forward so that we continue to see further growth and development within the economy. Therefore, social dialogue is an indispensable mechanism to sustain social and economic development.

Mr. Deputy President, Protocol Four deals with Barbados repositioning itself by the year 2005. We are being called upon to compete against the larger players in the world and we can only do that if the society as a whole decides to work together. Therefore, all hands must clap if, at the end, we are to be successful in this effort.

I am happy to see social disparity included in Protocol Four and that we are beginning to focus on the right to decent work and opportunities for access to employment.

Sir, it is true that we have to make sure that the private sector continues to be the engine of growth. It is also true that the private sector must make profit but companies cannot continue to believe that profit is the only indicator to be used and that they should continue to make extraordinary profits but, at the same time, reduce staff. It is difficult to understand the kind of argument that would be advanced because, before staff is reduced, companies have to go before the Social Partnership and put their cases.

Some companies say that revenues are declining and that profit is either stagnant or declining but when none of these things are the case, I begin to get worried in a small country like Barbados. Sir, this is a situation we have to monitor carefully because companies must understand that they have a responsibility to this country.

I know that Protocol Four speaks to establishing a Secretariat and I believe this is vital and important. We have to look at the question of implementation and, at the same, time provide the type of feedback to the Social Partners where a lot of these issues can be addressed when they are seen on the horizon.

The area that is vital and important is the question of the measurement of productivity and being able to arrive at indicators that would allow us to judge ourselves against other countries in the rest of the world. Hence, we need to come up with occupational wages and labour costs as well as human resource development indicators because at every

step of the way we must be able to judge ourselves against regional and international countries.

Sir, I must compliment the work of the National Productivity Council as they have been doing a tremendous job in this regard. It is fair to say that they could do with some more resources but there are some constraints which have to do with the lack of corporate will to implement and sustain some of the productivity-based schemes to which I alluded as well as the sustainability of middle management in the whole process.

One challenge is to ensure that all persons within the public service and private sector understand and appreciate the relevance and importance of measuring productivity in all areas. Therefore, productivity measurement schemes as well as employee appraisal schemes are *sine qua non* in this process.

I am concerned that there is reluctance on the part of people to implement employee appraisal schemes and there have been many debates with respect to appraisal schemes for teachers and other categories. I hope that these difficulties can be resolved and that this will be implemented fully in the shortest possible time. This does not only hold true for teachers but must also happen across the entire public service and private sector because only then can we be in a position to know where improvements can be made in the public or private sector.

Sir, the Council must continue to train people in productivity measurement and organisational planning. It must also continue to develop a private sector and public service that is driven by results, quality, efficiency and effectiveness. The Council has challenged itself that by the year 2005 it would have implemented productivity measurement schemes in 80 per cent of all departments across the public service and this is commendable.

However, I want to say that the Council's work is made more difficult because of lack of information at the national level and also because of the reluctance of some companies to collect and forward the requisite data on which the productivity indices are developed. Sir, we can only judge ourselves against the rest of the world if the Council is provided with the sort of information on which those determinations can be made and this remains a challenge for the National Productivity Council.

It is a fact that some employers feel they were not party to the development of the Protocol and, therefore, it does not apply to them and this is to be regretted because the Protocols are for everyone. We have been able to determine the benefits of the Protocol and countries in the region are moving in the direction of developing their own Protocols. Sir, the ILO commended us for this Protocol and I urge all employers to get on board.

The works of the National Productivity Council with respect to the role it plays with the Protocol has seen the Council assisting 56 companies across the various sectors over the last five years in developing a number of productivity schemes and by the end of 2001 have assisted 50 per cent of the banking institutions with these schemes. The credit unions have also embraced the concept and 60 per cent of the major players in the insurance sector have schemes in place as well.

It is estimated that over 20 000 persons have benefitted from productivity payments and over the next three years it is expected that this figure will increase by 20 per cent. Sir, people are beginning to understand the benefit of productivity schemes and the difference it can make in terms of companies.

Mr. Deputy President, I simply want to say that in Barbados we are fortunate to have the private sector, the employees' representatives and Government agreeing to a Protocol that will see Barbados continuing to develop and grow. I want, like Senator Sir John Stanley Goddard, to extend congratulations to Senator Trotman for the role he has played throughout the process from Protocol One to Protocol Four. I also know the role that Senator Sir John Stanley Goddard played in the first three Protocols and I extend congratulations to him as well.

Sir, I fully support the Resolution and I am obliged to you.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Mr. Deputy President, I want to touch on a bit of history and go back to pre-1991 when some of us saw the writing on the wall. Unfortunately, it was an election year and the then Government said we never had it so good while we, the agriculturists, were saying that the economy was on the brink of collapse.

After elections, Government admitted that the economy was in deep trouble. The IMF said that devaluation was the answer to the problem but we felt that devaluation was not the way and that the best thing to do was to export the IMF out of Barbados.

We then managed to persuade the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Maurice King, that the foreign exchange position had to be looked at immediately. I have to give him great credit because he was able to shepherd it through Cabinet and the Foreign Exchange Committee was formed with representatives from the various unions and the private sector and they met to deal with the foreign exchange earnings.

Sir, I remembered the hotel sector complaining that the Ministry of Tourism was not doing things to earn foreign

exchange and the Minister said he did not have to listen to us and wanted to walk out of the meeting held to discuss the matter. The Chairman then enquired of the Minister how much foreign exchange the Ministry was earning and the Minister could not answer so the Chairman advised him to listen since we were the persons who could earn the foreign exchange for the country and that the Minister should facilitate us in earning that foreign exchange.

Sir, the Minister, who was a fairly aggressive person sat down and we had a very frank discussion on the problems concerning foreign exchange so this showed the need for a private sector agency which did not exist in those days.

I was trying to form the private sector agency but it was not easy as there were many disagreements about it and Sir John Stanley Goddard and Senator Trotman were able to use their experience to form one body so that we could have discussions.

Sir, we take the Social Partnership for granted but 10 years ago this partnership was unheard of. We must thank Sir John Stanley Goddard, Senator Leroy Trotman and Maurice King for saving the nation.

I thank you.
2.55 p.m.

SENATOR Dame PATRICIA SYMMONDS: Mr. Deputy President, I reread this Protocol last night I was more impressed than the first time when I read it. Sometimes when you read a document for the second time you have second thoughts about it or you begin to change your opinion about certain things. The more I read this document the more and more impressed I was. The more impressive, practical and insightful I found this document to be.

I have been made to understand that persons who believe that the Protocol is a panacea for all present ills are mistaken and I think that point has been made. The Protocol has value, but one can only see that value translated into reality if the people who are to implement it do so. That is one of the things I want to emphasise.

Sir, the Protocol deals with abstracts. There is a need for everyone involved to see that it is implemented. Sir, for what I can see, it is attempting to resolve conflicts before they start and concentrate on what binds them together rather than on sectoral interest.

Sir, even though two words have been mentioned by all previous speakers, I feel impelled to say them again. I do not think that they can be stressed too often that it is integrity and trust that are binding the Social Partners together.

Therefore, the Protocol can be frustrated and even derailed if persons are indifferent, incompetent or apathetic. If there is a lack of understanding of what is happening, public education is vital.

Sir, some people wrongly believe that automatically all problems will be solved or there will not be any problems. It does not mean that there will not be tension or disagreements. It provides a means by which tension can take place in a transparent manner and it allows all parties to hammer out any differences without loss of respect. Again, respect is, perhaps, the essence of the Creed of the Barbados Workers Union, if I may be so bold to say that because that is something that has always impressed me and which I have heard high-ranking officers of the unions say. Sir, it provides an avenue for dialogue and although I am no longer a driver I can still admire cars and this analogy that cars are improving all the time.

Sir, the Protocol recognises the deficiencies of the previous ones, as we have been told. They are doing good work but it seems to me that it would be better if they had more help from a secretarial point of view. A research officer is also necessary to see that matters are followed through. There are matters that are in harmony. Sir, not every matter is contentious. I think the Protocol recognises that there is a need for a Secretariat and I think that it should be a priority if they wish to get ahead and achieve their major objectives. Sir, the sooner there is a Secretariat, the better the interests of the Social Partners will be served.

Mr. Deputy President, I looked at some of the major objectives and I was struck by one which said:

“Ensure that the Public Service is staffed by persons of integrity who are highly trained, well motivated, and whose commitment to duty is in the best traditions of the Public Service of Barbados.”

Sir, poet Woodruff, in his old duty, personifies duty and describes her as the stern daughter of the voice of God. He goes on to describe her as a light to guide, a road to check the urging and reprove. If you look in a dictionary, you will see “duty” defined as a moral or legal obligation. Sir, you cannot be committed, you have to be committed to something. We look at those in the past, who took home work, worked long hours, when necessary and put duty before personal pleasures. Mr. Deputy President, this is something I think that we still need to learn as a people.

Mr. Deputy President, I remember as a Guide when I took the oath, “To do my duty to God and the King,” as it was then. I think we need more of that today.

Sir, I look at the commitment to voluntarism which is the principle of relying on voluntary action rather than

compulsion. I did philosophy when I was at the university and philosophically it is the doctrine that the will is fundamental or a dominant factor in the individual or the universe. I think that is something that needs to be emphasised with workers, whether in the public or private sector, that one does what one has to do because it is the right thing and not because you are compelled to do so. In a way, it is linked with discipline.

Sir, regarding the physical and mentally challenged, I do not think that it needs any more elaborating. I think that it speaks for itself and it is an important point.

I would like to refer to the Stock Market. Mr. Deputy President, at the meeting of the Council for Finance and Planning in September 2001, it was recommended that the Council agree that there should be linkage of all existing and future domestic stock exchanges through harmonised procedures and trading facilities, with arrangements for cross-border listing and trading. I see this is one of the principal objectives, and it is linked with globalisation. The Social Partners agreed that they should ensure the growth and harmonisation of the local and regional stock markets. I hope that is something to which attention will be paid.

Mr. Deputy President, I wish to congratulate Senator Trotman and all the other Social Partners who have done so much to see that Barbados continues to develop and prosper so that we can, with confidence and support, be sure that we will not regress to where we were in 1991.

Sir, with those few words, I wish to say that I fully support this Resolution.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy President.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. Deputy President, I want to associate myself with the previous remarks and add my wholehearted support to this Resolution. I want to state that I was once a President of a union and I am very proud to say that.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, the unions are now in the forefront of decision making in this country. While there was always a close relationship between successive Governments, especially after adult suffrage, we never had a formal arrangement when important national decisions are being made. Unions take their place at the head table. Sir, it is not tokenism. It symbolises the coming of age.

Mr. Deputy President, for a long time the unions fought for the workers and it is recognised that their fight is our fight and we are in this together. While we recognise historical and other differences, in the final analysis we are

fighting on the same side. Sir, much of the social, economic and political progress we have made over the years has been a direct result of the partnership between government and labour and, recently, business and labour.

Sir, there is no wonder that this partnership is seen as a model for other countries to follow. We in this country cannot afford any battle between labour and capital. Sir, it means that we recognise that what is at stake is more tremendous. The enemy that we face is not an eternal enemy but we are facing globalisation as a people. Mr. Deputy President, there is a company here in Barbados, in a monopoly situation, making record profits every year and in the face of increasing profits where one would have thought that labour was safe, we see the threats of more layoffs in a situation where there are increased profits. Sir, we are happy that there was an immediate and sure response from all the parties involved that this sort of thing must not happen in Barbados. Sir, our social stability, of which we are proud, is at stake.

I want to reiterate the point that as we face the international economy together, especially small states, we have to make sure that the social apparatus is working well so that we can face globalisation together.

Sir, the efforts of the late Sir Hugh Springer, Sir Grantley Adams and Sir Frank Walcott, founders of the trade unions, have not gone in vain. They would not have recognised that 60 years after, the organisation that they have founded, would have seen such important players in our social and economic life. At that time when the forces against them were so severe, they persevered and built institutions which have stood the test of time.

Sir, we also note that the second generation leaders of the union have carried on the mantle and have ensured that the progress made in the 1950s and 1960s are not frittered away but, as national institutions, labour stands tall.

I want to issue a word of caution. The present leadership of the union must start preparing for the future to ensure that we have committed young people who see the value of a strong vibrant organisation and take an example, noting that the fight has not ended. Sir, the fact that we have this agreement between labour and Government does not mean that the fight for the worker has ended. It may have taken a different form but it is a fight, nonetheless, and we still need people to come forward and identify with the workers and their cause and in an organised way advance the cause of the worker. A technological revolution is unfolding before us and the place of the worker must be consolidated in the scheme of things.

I am glad that the unions see themselves not only as organisations who flex their muscles and threatening strike

on occasions but they see themselves as the partners in national development. Unions must be there to ensure that policies are made which would prevent the kinds of fractures we see that have hampered development in other countries.

I am happy that in Barbados we have a tradition where the unions have achieved a lot for their membership because of the sensible arrangement they have made and the linkages that they have forged. Mr. Deputy President, the global threat requires that the unity between labour capital and Government continues into the future.
3.15 p.m.

Now we have heard a lot of things about the contract. People are saying that it has kept down wages, but there is no evidence that this is so. In any case, we recognise that wages are not the “be-all” and “end-all” of trade unions. There are other important matters. There is the question of the work environment. The question of safety is important and some will argue that is even more important. These are issues that must always be at the forefront of national activity and national debate.

Sir, the whole idea of maintaining employment levels must be at the forefront. That is why when there was the crisis of September 11 last year the response by the Government was immediate and decisive that we will get through this crisis without sacrificing a single job in the public service. That was a commitment built on the trust of the people. The Prime Minister could only say that because he knew that he had a labour movement and capital movement had an arrangement where they could sit down and reason things out. If we had a hostile agreement between labour and capital, we would not have been able to get through the crisis.

Only yesterday I noted that all the forecasts have pointed to the fact that we are on the way to recovery. In spite of what the Opposition might say, all the indications are that we may have seen the worse of the crisis. Independent Senators are highlighting the fact that this Government has done positive things. The thing is that we prepare for a famine in the days of plenty.

Sir, we have done that with the help of labour and capital to make the correct decisions and we are about to ride out a crisis which has wrecked tremendous havoc on our neighbours. We note the conditions of the OECS countries and other countries in our region. I want to suggest, Mr. Deputy President, that one of the reasons we were able to come out of this crisis was because of the relationships we have forged over the years between the partners in the development process. We want to ensure that this continues.

Sir, it hurts when the same people who forged this agreement nine years ago are now openly criticising and

having all sorts of things to say about the agreement in spite of the fact that they were the ones who almost killed the patient in the first place. They now want to repudiate that which may help this country. I found this to be hypocritical in the extreme. On reflection, I think they should recognise that it is not in their interest to be criticising the Protocol, something which they helped to father.

Sir, a lot can be said but the Protocol has worked for Barbados. As I said before, we need to continue to have dialogue and we need to continue the emphasis on labour, especially because there are always more workers than there are owners of capital. We have to ensure that labour is maintained in its rightful place in the forefront of national decision-making. To do otherwise is to invite trouble. We have come too far to fritter away all the benefits on the altar of expediency.

With those few words, Sir, I want to commend Protocol Four of the Social Partnership to this Honourable Chamber and I would urge everyone to positively respond to this Resolution.

I thank you.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The President was called away to a Management Commission meeting and I am, therefore, going to ask Senator Symmonds to assume the Chair while I make my contribution to this Resolution.

SENATOR Dame PATRICIA SYMMONDS took the Chair.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Madam President, I want to thank you for facilitating me at this time which gives me an opportunity to make my contribution to what is a very worthwhile document which is, I believe, the lifeblood of us in this country. I want to congratulate all of those who sat together and worked to bring this document into existence as Protocol Four.

I have listened to the comments of Senator Sir Stanley Goddard and, as he said, it was not easy for him to represent the employers as he had more criticism from within than without. Similarly, I would believe that Senator Trotman would have gone through the same problems with his organisations in order to bring before us what can be termed a binding solution to dispute and, therefore, produce a document which can guide us through the future.

Madam, I have looked at the document and I have made several notes. I heard Senator McClean, and I am happy to say that I accepted what he said, because I have always said that despite the fact we belong to different political parties there comes a time when we have to look at our role in defending Barbados and not defending a political

party. Whatever we say or do, it should be for the good of the general population of this country.

I want to thank the proponents of this Document for realising that small business has a place to play in every country and in every community. As Senator Goddard has said, he had his difficulties and I can say that my experience as an attorney-at-law brings me face-to-face with many of the difficulties which Senator Goddard has met and which Senator Trotman meets daily.

When we look at page 6 of the Document under "Globalisation", section 3(5) is rather interesting. It states:

"The Social Partners recognise the contribution of the reproductive sectors of the economy – broadly identified as tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, financial and other services – to be continued and sustained growth of the economy."

I want to say it is time that we have a positive stand as to the linking of tourism and agriculture. I have been a former Minister of Agriculture and I tried my best to link the two together. This is why from time to time I will have to refer to Sir Stanley Goddard's statement. There are persons in our community who see only themselves and their personal gain and not the good that can come from an organisation. I have to say that I remember Miss Glenora Simmons who was at the BAS who openly said that the BAS should never cooperate with the Ministry of Agriculture or the Government.

I think that there is need for the two things to make the Protocol work. I think that Government should move swiftly to bring a Monopolies Act into operation, because there are several predators out there who only wait to see a small business and how it is doing and they use all kinds of devious methods, not only to frustrate but to add to their big ones. It is time that a Monopolies Act be brought into existence to control the predatory nature of those kinds of people with whom I understand Sir Stanley Goddard had problems.

The next thing I want to see is that Protocol Four and future Protocols be given the status of an Act of Parliament. I know that today in the United Kingdom the courts are accepting trade union agreements in cases which come before the court where it can be shown there were trade union agreements between the employer and employees' union and those terms of the agreement are accepted in the courts.

I think we should have a court that we can complain to when the Protocol is broken and let those parties be dealt with in the court. It will bring an example to others that you cannot ask the tripartite committee to sit down and formulate a document which is agreed upon and then breach the very terms of the agreement.

I would like to say that small businesses need a lot of nurturing. They are what they are, small businesses, and you can equate them to a new born baby. They need assistance and guidance. It can only take place if we make this document a legal document which is enforceable by one of the tripartite commissioners anytime they see that there is a breach.

Senator McClean spoke about financing small businesses. What he said is true. When a small business needs a loan, I have often said in my office that you have to know your great grandmother, where she was born, you have to get her birth certificate and you need everything to carry in to the bankers to get a loan. Sometimes you still do not have enough. Therefore, the Government must, in my view, look at the micro enterprise facility. I believe we should take input from the various small businesses.

I do not believe in just saying there is the Small Business Association because they have their problems as well. Government voted a lot of money to that institution and I do not know if a cent has been spent yet because of the problems from those at the top. It is time we begin to have one-to-one discussions with persons and find out what is needed.

We need a little more Government intervention between the small business and the financial institutions for the disbursement of funds. I think that Government itself must look at the Ministry of Agriculture. I heard the Prime Minister say that he is going to revamp the Ministry of Agriculture and I think the quicker the better.

We are in a global economy. By year 2004 we cannot protect business in any country. We have to look at how the Americans operate *vis-a-vis* small countries. For a long time I have said, and I think research will show that these small tropical islands still have a way of making a living and that is by producing exotic crops that are needed in the big countries which they cannot produce.

What do you find? You go to the Ministry of Agriculture and there is a long list of things that are not allowed to be imported. You go to the Animal Section and there is a long list of things that you cannot bring into Barbados and, worse of all, you go to the Pine and apply for an import permit to bring something from Trinidad or wherever, and you will hear that you cannot bring it.

Now we are talking about a united West Indies, we are talking about a single court and we are talking about a single economy. You will hear that one gentleman up in the Pine does not accept certificates of Trinidad from the vets in Trinidad or Guyana as though they were not trained in a veterinarian institution. In other words, your word is good

but other people's words are no good. When you sign a paper, it is good but when they sign a paper it is not good.

Now how can we put into effect a document that seeks to pull us together, to move us through the Caribbean and into the world scene when our prejudices are being exhibited in our own society? That is something we have to look at. The Protocol Four, as one person has said, is based on promises. We now have to make commitments to those of the promises.

We look at the next sector – Tourism. I have called for this over and over again.
3.35 p.m.

Mr. Deputy President, a number of countries in the United States are now showing how fatuitous those figures were with people believing them.

I ask the Government to carry out an investigation into the returns from the all-inclusive hotels and tell us what percentage of the money that is being made ever comes to Barbados. When this is done, then one would understand the fatuitous nature of the all-inclusive hotels.

Sir, we talk about preserving jobs for Barbadians. I will ask them to set up a registration procedure and tell us how many of those tour guides who are working in Barbados are actually Barbadians. This is what the Protocol is about. Let us take the promises and reduce them to action, then we would know where we are going.

Sir, we need to earn foreign currency in Barbados. I recall while being Minister of Agriculture and having had the task of rescuing Bath Plantation from the hands of those to whom it had been given by the DLP. When I said we were going to plant sugar cane, I was told that sugar cane would not make any money. Sir, how many people in Barbados could understand that Barbados produces no more than three items per every house that is built. We produce sand, labour and cement; everything else has to be imported.

Mr. Deputy President, whenever we transact any purchase, the trading currency is either the United States dollar, the Deutch Mark or the Japanese Yen. Sir, we need to earn foreign currency and we have to look at those enterprises which are able, with some degree of help, to earn foreign currency. In the small enterprises, the relationship that exists between management/ownership and the worker is far different from that relationship between a large enterprise and its workers. Sir, that is what has been seen from the utterances that have been made quite recently with the single monopoly in Barbados controlling a vital part of our economy.

Sir Stanley Goddard has said that the Protocol does not provide any remedies. I am suggesting that we should

begin to look at how we are going to remedy any breaches of this Document. It is a very vital Document and one that we should all try to adhere to. We have been able to get through hard times because of the three entities giving up something in order to come together to save an entire country. I think we would be failing if we allow those who claim that they did not contribute to this Document, to do things which would wreck the confidence and the trust which is embedded in these pages and which everyone of us would hope to see goes through the length of its life and would follow into others.

Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. President, I thank you for taking the Chair and I hope that this would be a guiding light, not only to us in Barbados but all over the world. It only shows what small countries like Barbados could do on the world scene. This is why I ask that we go one step further and make it a document upon which trade union representatives, the employers and Government could rest their case when they have to defend their interest or the interest of whom they are representing for breaches of this Document.

I thank you.

SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD: Mr. President, I rise to associate myself with what has been said about the history of the series of Protocols for the Social Partnership of Barbados and to recognise that it has been a most outstanding social experiment that has yielded much good for Barbados.

Mr. President, as we have spoken about the difficult times we have been through, I beg to postulate that the difficult times we will go through are going to be ones where we have to manage change and I know that one of the issues in Protocol Four is the issue of change.

Mr. President, we have to recognise that we cannot have our cake and eat it too, that the management of change is probably going to be the most daunting task that the Social Partners will have to address over the next decade. This Protocol puts in place a series of procedures and mechanisms which would be essential in the management of this change.

The whole world is faced with remarkable, scientific breakthroughs and rapid technological innovations which have impacted on not only the way in which we do business but the way in which societies communicate and the changing values of money and information.

It has been said that the currency of the 21st Century would be information rather than money. We have seen how the tremendous importance of land in the 18th and

19th Centuries has been transformed to the importance of manufacturing industries and large corporations. We are now entering into an era where information is going to be key and there is going to be tremendous disruption within major corporations and small businesses.

There would be changes in the method of work and from where people work. More and more we would find that people would work from home or in cross-border environments. In other words, many people may work anywhere in the Globe but live in Barbados, while people from other parts of the Globe might live overseas but work in Barbados. We would see this becoming more and more prevalent as time goes on and as technologies, communication devices and communications systems improve.

Mr. President, Protocol Four is but a step in the social revolution that is taking place in Barbados. It has clearly been built on the basis of goodwill, integrity and transparency. If those hallmarks are kept before all of us who are participating in this exercise, it could do nothing but succeed. However, we have to guard against becoming too rigid in the application of these Protocols.

We must recognise that these Protocols are a living thing. It is something that is evolving and developing as we progress and so is the world of work and the world of play. Therefore, I think these Protocols need to be used in a way that they could breathe and live and be not too constrained by codifying and rigid thought processes that see these things as being cast in stone.

Mr. President, I think how we apply these Protocols and how we develop them into a further generation of protocols, or even in how we may term it or involve other partners in the society, would also be something that would evolve over a period of time.

Sir, this Document has been a significant improvement on the ones that preceded it and clearly, this has been as a result of the experience we have had. I would like to join others in recognising that we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to those who have set us on that path during the early years of the last decade.

However, I want to talk about the future, the need for change and for that change to be one that considers the integrity of the family unit, the workplace and the need for us to create mechanisms whereby workers who would lose their jobs – because jobs would become redundant – there is need to have a retraining and an opportunity for those displaced workers to move onto other fields of endeavours. In so doing, we also need to consider the integrity of the family unit so that it stays together.

Sir, in large countries these problems are not noted in the society. There is also tremendous mobility of labour, with families living thousands of miles apart from each other. That situation does not obtain in Barbados and we have to recognise that in a small society we need to have safety nets and social mechanisms that would allow the transition from one working environment to another.

Sir, Government cannot do this alone and it has to have a tripartite effort to construct these mechanisms and to operationalise them. There must be a partnership between Government, the labour union movement and the business community at all levels.

Mr. President, I think these Protocols are moving us in that direction. It is very clear that many persons around the world are watching this experiment with tremendous interest. I think we would not be doing the rest of the world a service if we did not make sure that this succeeds.

Mr. President, I strongly support this Resolution and look forward to the operation of Protocol Four over the coming days.

I thank you very much.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: Mr. President, I rise to give my support to this Resolution before us. Sir, I am very pleased to be at a place and a time in Barbados' development where we could boast of a relationship such as a Social Partnership. I think Barbados is perhaps one of the only islands in the region that could boast of such a relationship which, I believe, has redounded to the growth of Barbados in its broadest sense.

Mr. President, nowadays the relationship is such that it is no longer a "see them" situation. I recall very vaguely a time when the labour movement was one almost to be feared by those in the private sector. Now I get the sense that the trade union movement, though I believe one of the strongest forces within the context of a nation, is moving in a reasonable manner, all the while ensuring that workers' rights are being maintained in an equitable fashion but that the relationship between the private sector and Government is moving with a certain degree of synergy.

I believe the workers' movement is one that is here to stay and should always be here. I recognise that success by and large should be due to the sterling stewardship of the leaders of these entities. I would wish and hope that in the years ahead, the sort of non-partisan manner in dealing with affairs such as this continues in a vein which redounds to the benefit of all.

Sir, I want briefly to touch on a number of the items in the Document that is before us. I want to look first at the item contained in paragraph 3 of the Preamble:

"Further recognising that the success of any sustained social and economic progress in Barbados will depend to a considerable extent upon their on-going individual and collective commitment to a philosophy of governance which is characterised by participatory democracy and the subjugation of their sectoral interests to the national good."

Mr. President, against that background, I wish to first speak to the section which speaks to persons with disabilities.

Section 5.8:

"The Social Partners also agree to work closely with agencies and organisations for the disabled and to assist, in particular, with the following:

3. the collation of a national database of the full extent and types of the disabilities, respective skills, formal education, training and job experience of the disabled;
4. the identification of suitable opportunities for employment;
5. the identification of training schemes which can be provided to enhance the skills of the disabled and thus improve their prospects of employment."

Mr. President, I believe it is important that in recognising the disabled in our society, we must pay some attention to the caregivers of these persons with disabilities. Sir, very often persons are unable to contribute meaningfully to their families in financial ways because of the time spent in giving care to the disabled; for example, transporting children with disabilities to the various schools and learning centres. Therefore, the condition upon which that transport takes place means there is very little time for the caregiver to do any meaningful job.

Sir, under this tripartite arrangement, I would wish to see the day come in Barbados when employers, the private sector and trade unions, could recognise that if an individual has care of a person with a disability, then that person is not necessarily going to be able to give the same normal eight-hour work day, not under the usual construct of 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. or 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Those entities need also to address the question of flexi-time because if a caregiver cannot meaningfully contribute in a financial way, it then means that family would become somewhat fragmented.

3.55 p.m.

I would wish to see the day come in Barbados when employers, under the tripartite arrangement, recognise that if individuals have to take care of persons with disabilities they may not be able to give the same 8-hour work day under the construct of the usual 8.00 to 4.00 or 9.00 to 5.00 working day which is currently popular in Barbados and flexi-time should be put in place to accommodate these persons so that their families are not fragmented. Sir, I wish that employers would make provision for caregivers of persons with disabilities.

I also want to laud the efforts of the Disabilities Unit in Government and urge that contributions are made to them from agencies in recognition of the work they do because our disability's population is growing because of modern day illnesses in Barbados which are making people blind and leaving them with strokes. It speaks to a lifestyle but the scourge of HIV/AIDS also renders people disabled in many ways.

I look forward to the Disabilities Unit receiving support under the consideration of a tripartite arrangement so that they can grow from strength to strength and continue to offer a broader base of service than they are currently offering.

Sir, I want to touch on the Social Dialogue on page 29 paragraph 8.1:

"The Social Partners undertake to use such opportunities as may present themselves to effect the deepening and widening of the Social Partnership including, where appropriate, the formal involvement of accredited non-governmental organisations in its dialogue."

Sir, I am happy to see this because for a country to be sustainable, we have to rely on input from NGOs and community-based groups so this is certainly one aspect that I laud and look forward to.

Sir, the Welfare Department annually gives support to the Business and Professional Women's Club to assist women, but the difficulty is the tight constraint on resources which renders them unable to expand their advertising efforts so that participants can readily come and be engaged in the two-week annual exercise.

Women are the greater percentage of the unemployed in Barbados and if they can make use of this, it will make them more employable because very often women find themselves without the necessary skills to make them employable. Sir, we have to eradicate this at the soonest possible opportunity.

Sir, I would like the tripartite arrangement to assist the Welfare Department along with the NGO community to create a better opportunity for growth in that regard.

Sir, I believe that spirit of voluntarism in Barbados needs to be expanded. Barbadians must see themselves as beneficial to the process of voluntarism and I want to urge Barbadians to get involved in agencies and non-governmental organisations that in the long run will redound to the benefit of Barbados as a whole.

Mr. President, I thank you.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: Mr. President, I recognise that the Protocol is only a declaration of intention which in itself has no binding authority as its binding authority lies in the area of public opinion.

I am heartened by the provision in the Protocol for public education at page 38 and unless the public is kept informed on the effectiveness and the progress of the declaration in the Protocol, it would have lost much of its value even if many of the things said in the Protocol are achieved.

I, therefore, look forward to the beginning of a public education programme that will address this matter.

Sir, another matter of special interest to me is the involvement of non-governmental organisations. I do not believe that the new buzz phrase "civil society" that has developed in the international and regional forums has any special connotation because "civil society" is no different from other things that we refer to as "civil".

There is recognition that the myriad of organisations which exist in the country has a right to be involved in a coordinated way because the difficulty with NGOs is that they are not well coordinated. I believe that Government in particular and a coordinating body could assist in giving advice and guidance to some of these organisations.

The CARICOM Secretariat is pushing this idea of "civil society" and has given a special Protocol which, in my opinion, is not the right way to go about governing these non-governmental organisations because if someone imposes from "on high", it will have less chance and possibility of being successful. Within the context of Protocol Four help should be given to these organisations to put them in a position where they can be seriously considered within the next Protocol and I hope this is given attention soon.

Sir, we cannot ignore the fact that knowledge and information have an impact on the total existence of people in the society. We also need to pay attention to the special interest groups which make their contribution in sundry ways and bring them on board so that they can understand what progress and efforts are being made in areas like the environment and the economy. There are also the newer

financial institutions like the credit unions which should be part and parcel of all these new developments.

Another matter that interests me very much is the proposal for share ownership and employee ownership. I hope this is not just a matter of words, that it is demonstrated in practice and that someone will take the lead in developing that sort of mechanism.

Sir, small business development is also mentioned but small business operations as an important aspect of the economic activity is not new. Many of us remember the peasant farmers, the village butcher and thousands of small shopkeepers who made their contribution by employing people. The change in direction of the merchandising system adopted over the last 25 years saw the demise of those sort of small businesses.

Sir, small business is the way to go in the newer economy but it cannot happen in the old way because the use of technology will have to be applied. I want to see this developed as a special window of the Protocol and I also want something to be done within the next three years to indicate the direction small businesses should go in.

Sir, 62 per cent of the output in the United States of America comes from small businesses which belong to cooperatives so that if you are a farmer you will know where to get your fertilizer because you are part of a marketed strategy. This is the sort of development which we have to encourage.

At the end of the last World War, 23 per cent of employment in the United States of America was in agriculture. Today it is 2.5 per cent of employment but it not only feeds the entire United States of America but most of the world. It was the direction of small businesses which have caused them in less than 50 years to be able to achieve this special distinction.

The programme of small business development has to start with providing the necessary training for people in the area of small business and creating a window of concessionary financing to these small businesses.

Sir, I did not see much reference to the environment but this is probably the greatest threat to our existence on this planet, the harmful effect of our activities and our way of living in the environment and this will be a challenge for the authorities.

I see the role of the Government as that of a great facilitator in all of this because the Government has exclusive responsibility for ensuring that citizens and business operations are done in a safe environment.

Sir, if the Government continues to be the greatest provider of employment, its efforts in other directions will be stymied and handicapped because Government employment is a tremendous output on its own finances and cannot be redressed in the present circumstances unless the increase in productivity by employees is such to make up for this great expenditure. I am afraid that a lot of what the Protocol envisages from the Government will not be achieved in circumstances where Government continues to be seen as the biggest employer in the society.

Sir, I have no difficulty with the Protocol, but it has no teeth by itself and I look forward to the implementation of the public education and information programme referred to, as a means of reaching people so that they can see the value of the Protocol because many people speak disparagingly about Protocols because they see them as documents put together to help big people and Government.

I look forward to the public education programme being entered up with vigor for the immediate future.

I thank you.
4.15 p.m.

SENATOR C. L. TROTMAN: Mr. President, I wanted to hear what some of my other colleagues would say on the subject. In rising to speak to this Resolution, I would wish to take time out to thank those persons who were kind enough to say some pleasant things about the trade union leaders who were involved in the exercise from the outset and particularly about me. At the same time, I took note of some of the naughty boys who publicly were reminded of their role in the exercise. Later on I would wish to make some comments in that regard.

Sir, it is very important for us to recall that the First Protocol was signed on August 24, 1993 and one of the signatures which formed half of the Government, at that time, was Lloyd Erskine Sandiford, now Sir Lloyd. When I look at the names representing the employers' group, I see the name of John Stanley Goddard, now Sir John, who played a very significant role throughout this exercise and whom I still laud wherever I go and I speak about the association, which there was, before there was the formality of the Protocol. Sir, we had bipartite discussions long ago and if time permits, I may be able to refer to some of them.

Mr. President, on the side of the workers I see the name of Patrick Frost, who worked very closely with me and to whom I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude for the remarkable work he did then and continues to do. He does a lot of the legwork and the finer points in the exercise because we are not like the employers who have the capacity to engage attorneys, or like the Government who is able to call

on different government departments for legal assistance, as they did with Sandra Richards when we were working on the First Protocol. I have to rely on Patrick Frost as my attorney, boy Friday and everything else. I was pleased that the Government was good enough to honour him, though the medal was a little below our expectations.

Sir John and Sir Lloyd may remember that when we had completed the signature of this First Protocol, there were several people in Barbados and some in Parliament who ridiculed us.

I recall that the current representative for St. Joseph was most unkind on the Floor of Parliament in reference to this, but he was not alone because the entire Barbados Labour Party "pooh-poohed" the work that we had done. It might not be on high moral grounds to criticise the Democratic Labour Party for now, in its own time, failing to understand the significant value of the various Protocols.

Sir, it has been unfortunate that politicians saw political mileage ahead of the national advantage which was to be derived. I now hear and accept humbly the Government's position that this has been the most important social activity which worked towards saving, stabilising and the development of the country. I am pleased that these comments have been said in here again today and constantly being repeated.

My regret is that they are not equally well said by the other political Parties and that they do not together take credit for helping the employers' bodies and the trade unions to effect what, in essence, is a framework that is not taunted around the world but is celebrated around the world and sometimes spoken around the world with some degree of jealousy; because people are still in wonderment at how a small country like ours is able to come together and work towards an arrangement which positions us to deal with our issues, national and international, in a manner where we are able to see the IMF and the World Bank as institutions to be removed from our shores and to see them as a common enemy and we will be able, within our capacity, to develop a methodology to deal with our problems, the same way that the regional Governments are doing, under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister Arthur, in devising a way to deal with the problems of the OECS countries.

Sir, I think that is very significant and it gives me the opportunity to suggest to Senator Bolden that I do not agree with him when he speaks to a legalistic framework. I understand very well what he tries to say and I understand the basis for his wishing to put that forward. Indeed, some part of myself wishes to reach out to it but the reality is, the value of this instrument, the thing that makes it stand out around the world, from Malaysia, USA, Canada and the southern most part of South America, the amazing thing

about it has been the voluntaristic nature of the instrument, the fact that the Government, employers and trade unions for their part have been willing to come together without legal or coercive measures and commit themselves to an arrangement whereby goodwill, collective well-being and integrity, they are able to fashion an arrangement that puts Barbados first and their sectoral interest afterwards.

Mr. President, it is the internal question that we are faced within the industrial relations environment. Should we go as some of our neighbours in the region and have a legalistic framework for settlements of disputes and arriving at collective agreements? If we do, would we not find ourselves in the same position as Trinidad and Antigua where people would have individual grievances for 14 years and where the employers and workers may bilaterally say, let us forget the courts and meet outside of the courts and privately settle our differences?

If you depend on the courts, it is like when Senator Haynes decided that he was no longer going to be a gentleman in the game and he was going to depend on the Umpire. I know that I hit the ball and I hit it straight in the other man's hand. It is no longer a game of gentle persons. It is a game where the Umpire decides.

Mr. President, there are some times when we have to rely sometimes on the Umpire and sometimes we have to depend, for some issues, on the court. I believe that Senator Bolden, when he was speaking, may have been looking to areas where people lose their birthrights because some of what they are able to achieve by the assistance of this body might very well be lost to them if the courts are not there for them to have some access. So, possibly there is room for discussion but in the broader context of Social Partnership, I would venture to repeat what I said before. The voluntaristic nature of this exercise must be preserved and maintained at all cost.

Mr. President, I agree with Senator McClean who said that what we are addressing here are rules and engagements that were looked at in several different ways by other people. Sir, what we are saying is that this is not a plan of action. This is not a detailed blueprint for what will take place regarding the various sectors of the economy in every instance. It is supposed to be an instrument that establishes a framework where people should consider themselves empowered to embark on action plans. Sir, a strategic way is the way that Senator Sir John Stanley expressed it.

In that context we should wish to answer another question. Senator McClean raised the question why we were disparaging in our reference to small businesses. I would wish to say to him and anyone else who may have felt the way he did, that business was all brought together but the small business representatives wanted peculiar and special mention within the text. They insisted on it.

We felt that since we were, for the first time, bringing them onboard and they, as employers, taking greater part in the exercise, we should accommodate them. It was not intended to disparage them but rather to accommodate them. Unfortunately, if one is not totally familiar with what has been the background to some issues, one is likely to make errors of that sort.

Equally so, the suggestion was made by Senator Odle that we have now brought onboard the NGOs. I think that Senator Collymore was going in that direction. I wish to make reference to first Protocol, Section 6.1, which says:

“A Social Partner may invite persons or institutions to participate in any meeting if that partner deems it desirable to do so in the interest of advancing the objectives of this Protocol.”

Sir, there are several NGOs and not all of them would have specific relevance to an issue that is under discussion. We must not forget that what binds this Partnership together is the institution of work. When we bear in mind that the issues come out of that institution of work, we ought to be in a better position to understand fully what is happening.

Sir, Senator Collymore spoke of the environment and I want to refer to Chapter 7 paragraph 20. The environment was mentioned because we were careful to recognise that in the pursuit of sustainable development, a balance must be struck so that any improvement in the quality of life will not take place through the exploitation of natural and environmental assets, thereby, jeopardising the social and economic development of future generations.

Sir, we did speak to it and we tried to cover as many bases as we could, always seeking to speak to a better and healthier environment for the moment and the future.

Mr. President, I mentioned that the First Protocol was signed on August 24, 1993 and it was titled: “Prices and Incomes Policy”. In addition to the names that I mentioned, I think it should be important for us to recognise that significant roles were played by Messrs. Maurice King and Philip Greaves, not only in this instrument but in the work leading up to that particular arrangement.

Sir, when Senator Murray reminded you of his moment in the sun, he might have reminded you that there were some business persons who may have been carried away by their rhetoric because what they were saying was that business houses were being encouraged to take their money away from Barbados. The view was that Mr. Lloyd Sandiford, now Sir Lloyd, was an errant school boy, and they used other disrespectful language, and that the economy could not recover under his leadership.

Sir, Messrs. Maurice King and Phillip Greaves assisted in the exercise, with the then Prime Minister Sandiford in the background.

The trade unions were part of an exercise which said to those errant persons whose action was leading to disaffection in Barbados, we said to them at one of the Foreign Exchange Committee meetings where Sir John Goddard and I were Vice Chair Persons, and for our sins we had to work with Maurice King to plan those meetings, that those persons who had encouraged disrespect for the leadership of our country had to make a public statement in which they would indicate their support for the Government of the day, including the Prime Minister, and which they would indicate that the future of Barbados was assured with or without the current Prime Minister, and that they were satisfied that he was no danger to the economy and that the economy would recover.

Sir, I am pleased to say that such a statement was written and published. I believe that it went a great way in reassuring the minds of those who were packing their suitcases with foreign currency to be exported.

We take great credit for the work that was done at that time, including helping to change the minds of those people who felt that what was required was a change of leadership. We did what was required and put our heads together and were able to find solutions to our problems and were able to get the IMF to understand that the role that they could play would be good as long as it understood that we, the Social Partners, knew what was best for Barbados. We knew what was best for our people not only now but for the future.

Sir, for example, we rejected the notion of increasing the number of children in a classroom to 50 students to one teacher, which was part of the remedy they had in addition to removing the possibility of free medicine at the hospital. We said that what we were experiencing was something that would pass. When we were platformed to take over and move ahead, we insisted that we had to be able to do so with a healthy and educated Barbados.

We were not going to allow them or anybody else to give us 50 students in a classroom and end up having a country of idiots who may have passed through school but would not know what school was. Sir, to their credit they understood the seriousness of our position and they backed away and we were allowed to keep our classroom sizes to approximately 30 students each.

I am pleased that we were able to have that experience. I am satisfied that we did the right things. I am satisfied that by working together and putting our individual interest behind the interest of the country, rather than in front of, we were able to do well.

I recall that before we brought the Government into the picture, we asked ourselves, how can we help one another in moving forward? We answered ourselves by telling the employers that there are going to be layoffs, but if you would reduce those layoffs to the smallest common factor, there will be increases in prices, but if you would agree that you will not increase those prices beyond price rises that were created overseas, then we will be happy with you. We would give you an assurance that notwithstanding that everywhere around the world where the IMF had invaded a country, the result was chaos and a complete disorientation of the society. We pledged ourselves to help to keep our society stabilised and a labour market relationship that was sound and we delivered.

Sir, sometimes where employers failed to have the right prices, we knew that we could call on Sir John, and we did so on several occasions, and he spoke to the particular stores or supermarkets and the prices were reduced.

Asides.

SENATOR C. L. TROTMAN: We were not "Sell-out-slabs", as some people from another political Party would say and we did not deserve that kind of insult. Mr. President, some people do not have the level of intelligence to understand when they are being helped and sometimes they put their foot in their mouths and suck their socks.

Asides.

SENATOR C. L. TROTMAN: Sir, we are of the view that we were able in drawing up the instrument of the first Protocol to step out on the right road, a road that acknowledges that harmony in labour management relations was paramount, a road that recognises that tripartite, Government, employers, workers' unions, as equalled in a relationship is paramount, underpinning that, the function of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), particularly where the ILO speaks to the freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively.
4.35 p.m.

That is sometimes why we get so sad where we can find even now in the year 2002 we can have ex-patriot managers coming to Barbados and getting rid of workers wrongly, because they are the leaders organising under the freedom of association. They get rid of them – sometimes the only man who is doing a particular mechanical job – on the claims that they are restructuring but the technical or mechanical instrument has not been removed. Somebody as a casual worker comes in to do the work.

Sir, even at the same time that we speak about the need to understand the tremendous job that was done under the Protocol, we serve notice that this Protocol Four is not an

instrument that removes the need for respect of the trade union movement, or by extension towards organisations, because, in some instances, employers have been able to come to our assistance when we have had recalcitrant employers like that one of whom I have just spoken. We might have to go a little bit on the road to a warpath if that kind of insidious behaviour is allowed to continue in this country.

Today there is still the basis of the ILO under Conventions 87 and 90. Today there is still a commitment to voluntarism and today there is an acknowledgment of the success of previous efforts. There are only a very few people who do not understand and recognise the success.

"Little Rick", a calypsonian, using his political licence, raised a very interesting question and his question has to do with whether the social partnership and the Protocol are of any value since wages are still low and people still lose their jobs. That is a good question and he answered it when he said that the answer lies in the future. Well, I think we have had the future. We have had ten years of history and that has been enough for us to be able to make some very significant determination whether we took in faith in 1991 when we reached out to employers against whom we had much to be angry about, and employers who might have been equally angry with the trade union movement, but we decided together to embark on a programme using Government's assistance to recover Barbados from the invaders.

Sir, I recall frequently when we would go to meet the Government Minister of the day, including the now departed Minister Blackman, that from time to time we would have to send a message saying to the Minister, "Tell him that the employers' delegation today includes the President of the Coalition". In fact, on many occasions we were a joint delegation going to speak to the issues that confronted Barbados at that time because the employer was a problem of the worker, and I do not only speak about the profit level. I speak about the survival of the companies and the survival of jobs in this country.

Sir, I say that because I need to repeat that the situation has not changed so much that we should forget. We are still today concerned, for example, with the future of the garment industry and the effect that a garment industry's complete loss would have on jobs if Trinidad can import garments from China, rebrand them in Trinidad and send them to Barbados where they are then sold using the CARICOM privileges for trade when they come extra-regional. That is our problem and not just the garment industry's problem or the employers' problem, or the Government's problem.

It is the partnership that makes us speak even more strongly than the employers have done publicly on this

issue. Whereas some of the employers may see some garment industry members as competitors, we see them as providers of jobs which argue to our continued well-being. I urge people to be able to recognise the value of that.

Sir, when we were dealing with the Cable & Wireless people just about two weeks ago, it was not Prime Minister Arthur alone who met the Cable & Wireless might and power. It was not the President of the Congress of Trade Unions alone who was there, but the Director and leader of the Private Associations of Barbados, Mr. Allan Fields, was also present. There was a unanimous show of support by the Social Partnership for a position that said to Cable & Wireless that you are wickedly wrong to the extent that we will not permit you to continue along those lines.

It is because we have been united in this as, indeed, in other issues that Barbados has been able to stave off the worst forms of the efforts by the greedy and rampant to trample on our integrity as a people and take from us the little that we still have remaining.

Sir, I urge all members of the public to understand that this Social Partnership can serve us more in the future. This does not mean that employers will not seek to maximise profits, but it gives us an opportunity to tell some of them when we get the evidence that in their effort to maximise profits, they have to understand that they must obtain a social conscience. They must exercise a corporate responsibility. We can tell them so within the partnership. We could not tell them before because we were not even on speaking terms. Sometimes they have reversed themselves on decisions.

Sir, we have had employers who wanted to lay off people. I do not wish to mention these employers. They are local employers. Since the Partnership says that before you can make anybody redundant one has to meet the Social Partnership and explain what one is doing and why, a number of companies have come back to us and have said that we have looked again and, whereas we were going to layoff 65, we now can keep 35 of those. We have found a new way to deal with the 35 persons.

I venture to say that it is because we have had goodwill from persons within the social partnership at all levels. Yes, we will be criticised from time to time because we are not perfect. There are some who will argue that we have surrendered some aspects of what we used to do before. Perhaps that is true because when you have entered into a relationship where you are putting your individual interest at the second place, then there have to be times when, in fact, you might surrender what was your original objective. We do not apologise for having done that.

Sir, I would like to review and recap some of those things which I suppose one can argue that people have lost, but it depends on how one is looking at what. Mr. President, the workers may be said today to be much more disciplined than they were before as a direct consequence. They are more efficient and we are still working on that. They are more productive and they are less wasteful. They are less prone to knee-jerk responses at the level of work. They are less self-centred and more nation centred. They demand, however, more information, mutual respect and equitable share of the benefits of growth.

One last thing I would wish to say is this. They have insisted that this Protocol should be so structured, and we have agreement on it throughout the protocol, that during the period of the Protocol labour shall not be required to vary any benefits and conditions which it currently enjoys unless it is for the general improvement, or unless by any such variation labour will be assisting in effecting the long-term improvement in the conditions of those employed and create jobs for the unemployed.

Mr. President, I am perfectly aware that I am running out of time and I thank you very much for your patience. I thank the Senate for supporting this particular Protocol and I am sure that it is going to redound to the credit of this country.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, it gives me really tremendous pleasure to be able to conclude the debate on this very important and historic issue. I think really when one looks at the entirety of the debate today and the level and quality of the presentation by all who spoke, I think that it can be said to represent Barbados' best where persons have risen to the task who have seen themselves as statesmen or stateswomen in their own right and have caught the ideals and whole ethos behind the Protocols. They have done themselves and Barbados proud and they have also done a tremendous service to the Barbadian society.

Sir, I think that one of the most important attributes of the Protocols has been the creation of a situation where it can fairly be said that where the industrial climate in Barbados is concerned, and the practices associated thereto, that we have a kinder and gentler and more understanding and humane approach to these matters.

I am sure all of those Honourable Senators who would be tempted to see the Protocol as it is codified as mere words with no real teeth or bite that the cement which flows among all of the sections and nefarious interests that make up the Social Partnership, while they reflect lofty goals and objectives and even perhaps ideals, they were all rationally considered by the Social Partners in a rational, dispassionate

and objective manner. Most of all, Sir, while they may not have legal authority, what they have is moral persuasion and the very invaluable attribute of a person giving one's word and keeping it. This is a ladies and gentlemen agreement where people have signed protocols and you know that it will be kept with all things considered.

Sir, after listening to Senator Trotman's very enthralling account of his involvement with the Protocol, this brought to mind the glaring need for there to be a written account of the emergence and evolution of the Protocols, not in an abstract manner as a journalist where you are looking at the aims, objectives, achievements, *et cetera*, but somebody who can chronically deal with it without basing it on public statements and public pronouncements.

It should be somebody of the likes of Senator Sir John Stanley or Senator Trotman and some from the political directorate at the time who would have been part and parcel of the whole evolution and the fashion of the Protocol so that they could give us the inside story coming from credible sources. They would be able to provide us with very invaluable insights. It would be enlightening and revealing to be able to read this data.

Sir, when I heard some of the anecdotes referred to by Senator Trotman as to some of the interventions that were made, I thought that those accounts should be known to the public and not just the generalisation dealing with productivity, stability or job security but show the human side of the developments of how people got involved and took practical steps to bring about a solution. I think this would help to make them have a greater appreciation of what has gone on. That also reminds me, Sir, that far too long Barbados' important social, political and economical history has been left unrecorded.

I think the society is being robbed very severely by the absence of these important parts of our national heritage to inspire not only the current generation but the future generation. In a place like Britain or the United States, there would have been somebody writing some account giving their insight of their account of what transpired. It would be an account of how the society has been able to work and how it has been able to fashion itself overtime.

Sir, while Protocol Four is a vast improvement which is much broader and deeper than the previous three, I think we also understand that much work still needs to be done and that we have to be ever vigilant and careful to guard the principles that have inspired and energised the Protocols and ensure that these principles are not eroded or undermined or any way threatened.

Sir, I want to assure persons like Senator Trotman and Senator Sir John Stanley Goddard and all the others like

Sir Lloyd Sandiford, Phillip Greaves, *et cetera* who would have played integral parts in this aspect of our history, that history will be more than kind to them. I think that history will be fair and generous in assessing their role.

I just want to call on Barbadians to stop being so hyper-critical, not hypocritical, of ourselves where we peep under ourselves and watch every little thing that we do and try to dissect it and tear it apart in a way that does not happen when we are dealing with issues or concepts that come from outside. I think we have to be able to accord our own people the same generosity of spirit when we seek to evaluate various events in our history.

Sir, my final words would be that the Social Partnership is what really stands between gains and chaos, instability, social and political disorder, and economic unrest. I can only say that against that background and the fact that they have been able to staunch the flow of these forces that long live the social partnership. In that regard, I think that Barbados will be better off for generations to come.

I, therefore, move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: President, I beg that this Sitting be now suspended for 15 minutes.

The question that the Sitting be suspended for 15 minutes was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
4.55 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Senate is resumed.

ORDER NO. 4 – A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE BORROWING UNDER THE SPECIAL LOANS ACT, CAP. 105 OF THE LAWS OF BARBADOS OF THE SUM OF \$7 580 441.10 FROM NSG EXPORTS LIMITED FOR THE PURCHASE OF VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT FOR THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORT

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, in bringing this Resolution to this Honourable Senate today, I am sure that all Honourable Members are aware that this sum is for the general networking of this country. This Resolution is to provide a far more ready improvement of which I will later discuss. We know that many new roads are being constructed, especially around Bridgetown.

These roads have been most disturbing to many individuals who are complaining about the dust and traffic problems but we know that this road improvement will go to the good of the country in the not too distant future.

Mr. President, Government has recognised that even the existing roads need to be refurbished because of the many potholes, *et cetera*. To this end, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport has invited tenders from suitably qualified firms for the supply and delivery of suitable vehicles and equipment, including spare parts.

The Ministry of Public Works and Transport has also requested a package which includes the training of mechanics and operators. These invitations were published in newspapers between September 18 to October 24, 2001. Tenders were received from four firms: Courtesy Garage Limited, McEneaney Quality Incorporated, Plantrac Engineering Limited in a joint venture with Barbados Shipping and Trading Limited (BS&T) and NSG Exports Limited.

Both Courtesy Garage Limited and McEneaney Quality Incorporated were non-conforming since neither has submitted a valid Certificate of Incorporation. This then left the Ministry with two tenders to evaluate. Both Plantrac Engineering Limited and NSG Exports Limited have indicated they would offer training in respect to the mechanics and operators, for two days per week for each type of equipment. They both complied with a request to have overseas personnel brought into Barbados to conduct such training for five working days.

Mr. President, after the evaluation of these tenders, the Ministry has supported and has recommended that NSG Exports Limited be granted the contract. NSG Exports Limited was offering better terms with an interest rate of 4.85 per cent as opposed to 7.5 per cent which was being offered by Plantrac Engineering Limited. If Government had awarded the contract to Plantrac Engineering Limited, it would have been US \$5 212 922 as opposed to NSG Exports Limited which came to US \$5 027 398, a difference of approximately US \$400 000.

Mr. President, some of the equipment to be procured are: dump trucks, steel wheel rollers, compressors, bobcats, paint trucks, large dump trucks, backhoes, water tankers, grab cranes, sewage trucks, curb machines, pothole patches and trash compactors, *et cetera*.

The Ministry of Public Works and Transport has already embarked on a road maintenance programme and has divided the programme into 13 zones, each with an officer in charge to oversee the programme. There will also be decentralisation of these equipment where the whole island

would be divided into four regions. It is expected that this equipment would be distributed throughout the island to these various regions.

There will be the St. Michael's region, which is responsible for all of the St. Michael areas. The northern region would be Prospect, St. Lucy and St. Peter. In the Scotland District, there is the old Haggatts Factory which would be responsible for the St. Andrew, St. Joseph and St. Thomas areas. The south/central region would be responsible for the St. John, St. George, St. Philip and Christ Church areas.

Sir, it is felt that this would, in the not too distant future, lead to a marked improvement in the roads throughout the island.

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

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I must say that from the outset, I am a little worried by this loan. First of all, NSG Exports Limited is a company coming out of the United Kingdom. Sir, when having a loan coming before us, it is normal for the Resolution to state the currency in which the loan is being secured. Sir, in a document that is written in Barbados and where one is not seeing any currency listed, it would be assumed to be Barbados currency but we have learnt it is not safe to make assumptions regarding some of these matters.

Therefore, the first thing I would want to know is, in what currency is this loan stated because it would have implications for our debt portfolio whether it is a local or foreign debt.

Secondly, this loan is for work to be done in a Ministry where there have been questions with respect to the tendering process in another area of that Ministry, namely the Transport Board with respect to insurance for its buses. In that case, the lowest tender was not the one that was awarded, and to date, the Minister has bluntly refused or I dare say arrogantly refused to...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Please rephrase that, Senator.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Sir, I would withdraw the word arrogant. The Minister has bluntly refused to give an explanation to the people of this country anything about the award of that contract. Therefore, when I see a loan of this nature, I have to worry.

Sir, I think the red flag has been raised when the Honourable Minister mentioned that two well-established companies in Barbados did not qualify because they did not submit Certificates of Incorporation. Sir, I am sure those two

companies pay VAT to the Government. I am sure that they have sold other types of equipment to the Government before.

Therefore, it is strange that there are two well-established companies in Barbados where everybody knows of their operations, that would be disqualified from a tendering process because they did not submit valid Certificates of Incorporation. I think it is a spurious reason and one needs to ask the question whether this was not merely a ploy to disqualify some of the possible contenders in the tendering process. It certainly raises a number of questions.

Sir, NSG Exports Limited has certainly, in recent times, become very prominent in supplying vehicles and equipment to Barbados. Sir, while thinking of it, it is said this company has taken up from what the Crown Agents used to do. It is interesting to hear the Minister saying that it is a kind of modern-day crown agent.

I would have thought that by now we would have moved into a situation where we could get away from that kind of arrangement because this supplier/loan situation, in my view, is not necessarily the best thing in which we should be involved. When there is a supplier/loan arrangement, the same person who is supplying the equipment is lending the money to buy the same equipment. I would hope that we are the ones who have set the specifications for that equipment and are very clear what are those specifications.

We should also be very clear as to the kind of equipment we are getting, that it would not be second-hand or reconditioned equipment because, on the one hand, Government is telling people with modest means that they cannot bring second-hand vehicles into the country, while on the other, Government would be spending millions of dollars in bringing in reconditioned vehicles as well. Sir, I hope that is not the case and questions have been raised because of other equipment and vehicles that have been brought in through a similar arrangement.

Sir, this is what could be described as a sweetheart deal for the company because it is in the position where it could make a profit on the equipment that is being sold and also earn interest on the loan. This is a very good business arrangement for the supplier of the equipment. Sir, I would hope that my fears are unfounded because if these fears are valid, then one would think the taxpayers of this country would be in for a rough ride.

The loan is by way of a supplier/credit at a total cost of \$10 255 891.92; fifteen per cent of contract price being paid against the sellers demand for the sum by fax and 85 per cent equal installments at an interest rate of 4.85 per cent – I assume that as per annum – and a finance charge of 5.75 per cent of the loan.

Sir, my question is, to whom is this finance charge being paid? Is it to the same supplier of the equipment and of the loan that is also earning the 4.85 per cent interest on the loan, plus 5.75 per cent of the loan and a finance charge? I think these things need to be spelt out so that we know precisely what is happening with respect to this loan.

Sir, in my view, this Document, unless one is going to get answers from the Honourable Minister, would be incomplete because if we are going to be asked to approve a matter such as this, certainly we need to know exactly what it is we are approving because the people of Barbados would hold us accountable for our actions.

Sir, I would like these things to be addressed by the Honourable Minister. I would like to reiterate that I am a little uncomfortable with this loan and hope that my fears are unfounded.

I thank you, Sir.

SENATOR C. LeR. TROTMAN: Mr. President, I had not hoped to speak on this matter but I think I better do so. I believe that Senator McClean has, in fact, raised very important issues and I support his concerns totally.

Sir, I am of the view that there has to be enough room for concern by us if we are being told that established companies in Barbados were unable to satisfy officials at the Ministry of Transport...

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: On a point of order. Mr. President, I hear the Honourable Senator referring to the officials of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. These Documents were evaluated by the Tenders Committee and the two contending tenders were referred by the Tenders Committee to the Ministry of Public Works and Transport.

Mr. PRESIDENT: That was a point of explanation rather than a point of order.

SENATOR C. LeR. TROTMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. President for the clarification.

Sir, I still make the point that it is a matter of some concern for me that there is an institution in Barbados that finds that two very well-established companies that are operating in Barbados over many years of service, can today fail to qualify on the grounds that they have failed to produce Certificates of Incorporation.

Mr. President, this leads me to believe that these two companies had produced certificates but those certificates were not valid. Sir, this raises the further question, what certificates would they have produced that would constitute

invalid certificates if they were in operation for the length of time in which they were operating? After all, they are not a new company or a company outside of Barbados of which we had no previous knowledge of or association with.

Therefore, the question that stands out in our minds is, what could there be that puts us in a position where Barbadian companies become second companies to non-Barbadian companies, in circumstances which are so beclouded? And this is a major issue. I do not think that we must be led or feel that anyone who raises these issues is not raising very pertinent comments to the overall advantage of the protection of this country.

There are several other things that one needs to raise but once that is recognised as a point of departure, then it means that we have to be particularly checking and satisfying ourselves. If I cannot be satisfied about a matter that gives support to taxpayers' money, then I cannot give support to any vote that relates to that because I have a responsibility to my members that whenever I vote for or against an issue, I do so knowing that my conscience has dictated to me and not to my wish to accommodate any particular interest of anyone else.

Sir, I am obliged to Senator McClean for taking the further point. What is there about \$10 million that we have to borrow from this company?

Asides.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: I know that it is a cricket ball, that is why I have used it. It swings in ways that people do not quite understand. When one thinks that it is an off swinger, it is an away swinger.

Sir, \$10 million to a company that is going to charge us three times the amount? What is it that we are talking about? Surely, without being frivolous, we ought to be able to raise that very comfortably here on the local market, at very much less cost to ourselves. Why is it necessary for us to go in this direction? Furthermore, Mr. President, I have a very grave problem which is associated with the Ministry of Public Works and Transport in its recent history of the ordering of heavy duty vehicles. They have constantly come to this country, the buses in particular, yet here we have found that, to all who are knowledgeable, it looks as though the buses have a road history of thousands of miles but are yet new.

Furthermore, one has gotten the impression from time to time that their lengths have been cut off. When they come here, the agents who use them find that we are not able, so they say, to keep them roadworthy because we do not have equipped and competent mechanics when, in fact, it is that

the specifications that have been used are not the true specifications, particularly for our clients.
5.35 p.m.

Take, for example, the Mercedes buses which were ordered recently and the complete confusion surrounding those buses. The expatriate people claimed complete innocence and said that Barbadians could not read their handbooks and instructions.

Mr. President, we have a problem of trying to be clear that in any arrangement there is a very clear position equally and well understood by all about what is ordered, why it is ordered, and the conditions under which it is being ordered.

I understand that from time to time when people go overseas they can only make a judgement on the basis of what they are told about the material. If someone believes that subsequent to that time there is no reason for having a re-examination of what transpired simply because officers looked at it, then we will have a problem.

I am saying there is a need for clear, explicit answers to the problem and if there are no explicit answers, I will not be able to support the item before the House.

SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD: Mr. President, I had not planned to speak on this issue but Senator McClean raised some interesting points which Senator Trotman elaborated on, then raised other interesting points and the point that concerns me, as I understand it, is that two well-established, reputable local companies, McEneaney Limited and Courtesy Garage did not qualify.

Sir, I want clearly to state that I used to be a Director of Courtesy Garage but I am no longer associated with them but it seems to me that there is an apparent lack of transparency if the only reason given is that they did not provide a certificate to prove incorporation.

Sir, I have my reservation about this for the reasons I have expressed.

I thank you.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. President, there are reasons for every rule and I would like to think there are also good reasons for making those rules. For us to believe we can arbitrarily change the rules of the game would be to send the wrong signals.

Sir, all players know the rules of tendering and one may argue that long-established firms would know the rules better than the new entrants on the market. The tendering rules that Government employ are to protect everyone, the member of

the tender's committee, members of the public and members of the firms who intend to tender and those rules have been there for a long time and we have to respect them.

Sir, Government has to make sure when it is purchasing equipment that it has the best price in terms of the equipment and the cost of the equipment. Also, the best price does not necessarily mean the cheapest price because we want to buy a Mercedes or a Suzuki. When a tender is put out, everybody who has responded to the tender should know the specifications and the Tenders Committee must ensure that the rules are followed in this respect. It is unfortunate that two well-established firms did not qualify but the rules of the Tenders Committee must be followed.

Two firms submitted price lists for the equipment and the Government was able to choose the firm which offered the best interest rate and the best price. Sir, people talk about the finance charge but for every loan there is a finance charge. Even when you get a mortgage, a finance charge is applicable and you must balance the interest rate against the finance charge because one person might have a good interest rate but a high finance charge, so a long-term view has to be taken to balance any saving in interest with the finance charge.

Do not forget that the finance charge is a one-off charge whereas the interest rate goes on for the length of the mortgage. Sir, I believe that when all is taken into consideration that Government has got the best deal.

Sir, one of the biggest problems we have with equipment, is maintenance and the correct use of the equipment because unless the person operating the machine is properly trained in the use of it and to detect when things go wrong, we will always end up with the sort of problems which we historically ended up with where equipment does not last as long as it should.

A component of this deal is that the company is going to engage in training mechanics and operators for the equipment and this is very important. The manufacturers will send personnel here as part of the contract price to ensure that the operators understand the equipment, appreciate what to look for and how to ensure that servicing of the equipment is done properly.

Sir, Government must be commended for this because it is all well and good to buy expensive equipment but it has to ensure that the other components which go with the proper use of the equipment are put in place. For example, the Fire Service has a service contract and every year people come from overseas and service all the fire trucks. Sir, both the public and private sector should engage in these sort of activities and ensure that there is a training component when equipment is purchased.

Sir, equipping depots will mean a lot for the improvement of the road system in Barbados and these depots will be engaged in maintenance of the road because over the years we have not paid enough attention to this aspect.

Sir, the depots were not properly equipped in the past. Very often workers did not get the materials in time or had the necessary transportation and days would go by with workers having no work to do because of the lack of support structures. We are now fully equipping all the depots and we expect to see a great improvement in the maintenance and care of roads which, in the long run, will be to our benefit. If we can do small things like fixing pot holes to keep our roads longer, we will be able to build more tenantry roads for the communities where people have no roads to their houses.

The Prime Minister said that it is a right for every community to have a paved road and if existing roads are kept in good order, we would have more funds available to carry out the task of building more roads. Sir, this Government is on the right track because it is paying attention to the small things.

Sir, I understand the reservations of some Members but it is not the Ministry of Public Works and Transport but the Tenders Committee and the Ministry of Finance who have experience in these matters who have agreed that the Government has chosen the best of the tenders which were submitted. The Government has ensured that the Law, as it relates to tenders, is preserved and that all the best traditions are observed as regards this matter.

Sir, I have no problem with supporting this Resolution and I commend it to this Honourable Chamber.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, I will start off by expanding on the history and sequence of events surrounding this matter.

The facts are that advertisements inviting tenders from suitable qualified firms for the supply and delivery of vehicles including spare parts, training of mechanics and operators were published in the daily newspapers commencing September 18, 2001 for closing date of October 24, 2001.

Tenders were received from four firms, Courtesy Garage Limited, McEneaney Quality Inc., Plantrac Engineering Limited in joint venture with BS&T Motors Inc. and NSG Exports Inc.

Sir, the records indicate that Courtesy Garage Limited and McEneaney Quality Inc. were non-conforming since neither submitted a valid Certificate of Incorporation. Members seemed flabbergasted that companies as reputable

as these two major ones could not make a mistake and not supply something as basic and simple as a valid Certificate of Incorporation.

Sir, when these notices are published, persons are invited to collect documents with detailed specifications showing the documents to be provided. The fact that these two reputable, long-standing firms have failed to supply all the documents has happened on several occasions and, therefore, failed to qualify.

Sir, the Tenders Committee is not made up of public servants in a particular Ministry, the Prime Minister's office or a Minister's office. It is the same Tenders Committee that existed when the Democratic Labour Party was in power and that existed for years using the same process each time.

Sir, people have been known to get to the Tenders Committee late. People may rush to submit the tender by 4 o'clock an afternoon, get caught up in traffic, miss the deadline and failed to qualify. People forget to put in various things.
5.55 p.m.

Sir, people do not remember to put in various things. Some firms have had their documents prepared by inexperience or careless employees who have missed enclosing the necessary documents which should be submitted. This is not the first time that this kind of thing happened. Therefore, it should not be said that a firm like McEneaney Garage or Courtesy Garage could not make a mistake.

Sir, if it were Government it would be said that is the norm for the public sector but not the private sector, the mighty, perfect private sector. I have to remind you again that ENRON and Worldcom were private sector companies and all kinds of "mistakes" have been made by them. Sir, the private sector is not beyond reproach. There have inefficient, good, and careless employees just like the public sector. We should look at the facts and human existence as it is.

In addition, this company, NSG, which persons are concerned about went through the complete process of tender. Sir, many people seem not to be familiar with this company. However, in March 2000, this company completed a deal for US\$6 974 230.39 to provide goods for Her Majesty's Prison, The Royal Barbados Police Force, Barbados Defence Force and the School Meals Department of the Ministry of Education, so it is a valid process that these persons have conformed with.

Therefore, I think it is unfair to attempt, wittingly or unwittingly, to soil the reputation of the conforming firms, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, even though

this Ministry was not directly involved, or the Transport Board. This is not a fly-by-night organisation that came into Barbados to do a deal and it was made possible through some excuse of someone not having a valid Certificate of Incorporation. The valid Certificate of Incorporation was part of the clearly spelt out requirements for all tenders to submit. Therefore, no one should be castigated because some other firms did not meet the requirements.

Sir, this situation reminds me of a bank called "Citicorp" that won bids in Barbados. Citicorp would submit bids and when they were successful in their bids, the local banks would quarrel about the outcome. However, the local banks would not submit any bids, but would sit back and quarrel because another bank attempted, succeeded and won the bid. There is a tender process to follow and the records indicate that this tender process which was in existence for a long time has not changed. It is the same tendering process that we inherited.

Mr. President, some firms that submitted incomplete tenders, which might seem to be unimportant, in order to be fair to everyone, these "unimportant" minute details or requirements have been included in the specified requirements when the tender was collected by those who sought to qualify for tender. I think that it is a case of two big companies making mistakes but mistakes occur every day in businesses.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Sir, there is no need for any thought of underhand dealings. This issue is a straightforward issue that has followed standard procedure. Therefore, I have no hesitation in giving it my fullest support.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I rise to close the debate on what I thought would have been a simple Resolution, but it seemed to be very contentious. However, I feel that I must respond to a few questions posed by two Honourable Senators.

Sir, I want to restate for the benefit of Senator McClean that NSG was the lowest bidder, by US\$400 000. Senator Murray outlined the whole tender process for Honourable Senators. Sir, the Tenders Committee made the decision on who would be awarded the tender. I do not know of any Members of Government that sit on this Committee. It was an open tendering process.

Sir, Senator McClean referred to the tender as a sweetheart deal and that NSG is going to make a profit on the loan. The tender was opened to everyone and it was evaluated. Plantrac Engineering Limited and NSG were two tenders that were considered.

The question of finance charges was raised and I must inform Members that Plantrac had a finance charge of 3.4 per cent and their interest rate was 7.5 per cent, NSG's interest rate was 4.85 per cent. These are some of the things that I want to reiterate for you.

Sir, Senator Trotman alluded to the fact that you have to be careful with equipment that is being sourced. He implied that there were some old buses that were brought into Barbados on the pretense that they were new buses. I do not need to go into that.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Sir, Honourable Senators would have known that specifications were developed within the Transport Board when buses were going to be acquired. It involved mechanics, drivers, one of the drivers was one of chief henchmen within the Barbados Workers' Union.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Please, please, please withdraw that word, Senator.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: I withdraw it, Sir.

One of his chief assistants and supporters within the Barbados Workers' Union and also the Democratic Labour Party.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Sir, there was also an engineering consultant who was involved in this process. The Honourable Senator knows all of this because he was involved in the process. When they were going to Brazil to have discussion with the company, Senator Trotman was asked for a recommendation who should go as an engineer.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Senator Trotman knows all about the whole mechanism. He knows that they went to Brazil, saw the buses when they were at the stage of the chassis, they returned to Brazil when the buses were completed. The same chief driver, confidant and advisor was there and drove the first new bus in Brazil. He returned to Barbados and said that he was very pleased with the process and that this was the first time he has had such an input and that he never thought that he would have been involved in a process as important as this.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Sir, now we are hearing today that the buses were old buses. Sir, my training was in medicine. They had an engineer with 25 years of competence, advised and recommended by Senator Trotman, and a driver who have been working with the Transport Board for over 20 years. Sir, could they not say at the time what was a new bus or an old bus at that time?

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Sir, I hope that they are not tricking Senator Trotman.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, please.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Sir, whether they were old or new buses, I figured that when they were being serviced, the least that could have been done is that the new manuals that came with buses should have been used by the mechanics and not be locked in the offices of the Manager of the engineering company that was servicing these buses.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, all I am going to say is Mercedes has been bringing buses to Barbados as far as I know, from the time I was at school, over 30 years ago, and were highly recommended. As a matter of fact, they said a bus BM100 was a recommended model to be used in Barbados, which had been developed and worked on by the mechanics and drivers of the Transport Board, who were all members of Barbados Workers' Union and I believe that they still are members.

Mr. President, with these few remarks, I beg that this Resolution do now pass.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator McClean since yours was the only voice that I heard, if you would wish it to be recorded that you voted against, I would ask the Clerk to do so.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have already given the result of the decision. The Resolution has been passed and I have asked that Senator McClean's dissent be recorded.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, this brings us to the end of our business for today and I move that we do adjourn *sine die*.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, if permitted, I would like to make some brief comments on the motion to adjourn.

Recently, we heard of the economic difficulties that Dominica has been encountering, problems which are reminiscent of what Barbados experienced in 1991/1992. I am always speaking in support of regional integration. I am heartened by the move by the CARICOM Heads of Government to establish a Regional Stabilisation Fund, (RSF), which will be used immediately to assist Dominica and any other countries in the future that may suffer economic hardship.

I believe that this is a very positive sign for regional integration and cooperation. It demonstrates that there are things we can do but we fail to do, perhaps, out of fear or uncertainty but when circumstances demand that we take action, we can find the will to do so.

Sir, I would like to use this opportunity to register my congratulations to the Heads of Government and my support to Heads of Government of CARICOM for the positive move they have made to establish this Regional Stabilisation Fund, which can only redound to the benefit of all Caribbean Countries.

Recently, the European Union established a similar fund for the relief of those countries which have suffered flood damage. The idea of regional cooperation is one which we must always support and I would like to lend my full support to this move by the CARICOM Heads of Government.

I would also like to mention that this is not an issue that I have discussed with my Party colleagues and I am making this comment purely as an individual and not necessarily on behalf of the Democratic Labour Party.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Before I put the question, let me say that when the Senate rises, we will begin a short recess of approximately four or five weeks. I hope that Senators will enjoy this short rest from their parliamentary duties and will return refreshed and reinvigorated.

The question that the Senate be adjourned sine die was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly.
6.12 p.m.

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