
THE SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1999 – 2004

THE SENATE

Wednesday, December 18, 2002

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Wednesday, 18th December, 2002, at 11.00 a.m.

PRESENT

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

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

Senator the Hon. J. X. WALCOTT, 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 SYMONDS, 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 D. D. MARSHALL, LL.B (Hons.), L.E.C.

Senator K. D. SYMONDS, LL.B.

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

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

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 the Rev. L.W. B. ROCK, M.Div.

Prayers were led by Father Errington Massiah.

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Senate is in session.

PAPERS

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

1. The National Biodiversity Strategy and Plan for Barbados.
2. Annual Report of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council for the period April 1, 2000 to March 31, 2001.
3. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Caribbean Gift and Craft Show) Order, 2002.
4. Value Added Tax (Refund) (Barbados Children's Trust Incorporated) 2002.
5. Report of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund for the Quarter ended September 30, 2002.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 45(2) and 21(2) be suspended for the remainder of today's Sitting so that we will debate certain Bills which were debated in the Other Place yesterday, which have to be completed before the end of this calendar year.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Mr. President, I am not 100 per cent sure but we have just got something here called the Exempt Insurance (Amendment) Act, 2002, which was not circulated. Therefore, I would suggest that we need to

suspend Section 45(3) in addition to Section 45(2). Section 45(3) says that you shall not read these Bills unless they are circulated.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, I am advised that the Bill has been printed and circulated. There is no reference to time in Section 45(3).

The question that Standing Orders 21(2) and 45(3) be suspended for the remainder of today's Sitting was put and agreed to in the affirmative.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I beg to give notice of the following Bills and beg that they be read a first time.

1. The Financial Administration and Audit (Amendment) Bill, 2002.
2. National Insurance and Social Security (Amendment) Bill, 2002.
3. A Bill to amend the Landlord and Tenant Act, Cap. 230.
4. A Bill to amend the Land Registration Act, Cap. 229.
5. The Insurance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, 2002.

RESOLUTIONS

1. To approve the compulsory acquisition by the Crown for the parcel of land situate at Cottage in the parish of St. George in this island for the public purposes of housing development, road improvement and the provision of public access.
2. To approve the compulsory acquisition by the Crown for the purpose of a parcel of land situate at Westbury Road in the parish of St. Michael in this island for the public purpose of facilitating construction work on the Bridgetown By-Pass Road Improvement Project.

ORDER NO. 4 – TO MOVE THE PASSING OF A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE EDUCATION (PROGRAMME OF ADULT EDUCATION) REGULATIONS, 2002

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, this Resolution provides for the regulation of the Programme of the Adult Education Act, which was passed in this Honourable Chamber in June, 2002. This Resolution now serves to provide for these regulations.

It speaks specifically to three schools which will be involved in the project, namely: Springer Memorial, Christ Church Foundation and St. James Secondary. It speaks to the variety of courses that will be offered in this education programme. To name a few of them: industrial technology, modern language, sciences and computer-related skills. It also speaks to the kind of registration fees that will be applicable.

I also note at that time there was much concern expressed about the management of these projects. In these regulations, the Boards of those schools are now responsible. The Boards' duty will be either to appoint the Principal, the Deputy Principal or the Head Teacher to be in charge. Attention is also drawn to Sections 10 and 11 which deal with the proper accounting procedures which will ensure that financing of the programme will be properly kept.

Essentially, these are the regulations that will go along with the Education (Amendment) Act, 2002, which was passed in this Honourable Chamber. I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, the matter of adult education in this country, in my view, needs to be addressed in a much more serious manner than what we have seen in recent times.

We constantly keep hearing of changes in our education system and in many respects we cannot see any continuity. Very often we hear that the Ministry of Education will pursue a particular policy. Something else then comes up and we hear of other changes and go in another direction with the emphasis being placed onto something else.

Recently there has been talk about specialist schools. This is what I mean when we keep jumping from one thing to another. At one point, we are saying the goal was towards EduTech 2000 and that the goal was to ensure computer literacy in people. Unfortunately we have not identified exactly what those skills are going to be used for. It is amazing that we can hear these ideas being put forward to the public without any clear explanation as to exactly what we want to do.

Sir, the late Tom Adams made a statement when he said that a revolutionary concept cannot work in non-revolutionary framework. I would like to add to that statement that neither can a revolutionary concept be executed with a conservative mind set.

What we are seeing is a series of comments and policy statements which give the appearance to be revolutionary. We are told that everything is revolutionary and that we are going to have this great revolution in our education system but, at the end of the day, we hardly see any significant changes.

We still have not yet addressed the problem that was highlighted by a former minister of education which said that only 30 per cent of the students of this country leave secondary schools with any formal certification.

Unfortunately, the manner in which it was suggested that problem be addressed was to introduce what was referred to as a Certification Board which would have been responsible for ensuring that students leave schools with certificates.

My concern was that there was not enough emphasis placed to ensure the standard of the students, to the extent that they could be considered eligible for certification. There seems to be the idea that students must leave school with certificates, therefore, the question arises as to why are we educating people? I think we have to spend some time getting away from partisan political approaches to this matter and to seriously address the question as to why are we educating people. Are we doing it so that we can say that so many persons have left school with certificates or are we doing it so that they could fit into a national developmental framework?

What I am saying is that, in my view, we have not yet clearly established what are the developmental goals of this country and how they tie into the education system. We keep hearing about plans for things but, in my view, we have not yet seen the larger picture as to exactly where this country is expected to go in the years to come.

When we consider that with liberalisation in all areas and the possible impact of governance on countries such as ours, we need clearly to address some of the problems with which we are going to be confronted. For example, we have seen where the United States of America has submitted to the World Trade Organisation a set of proposals on our education where they need to have access to our system in the same way as a national would. Sir, if we consider the manner in which our system could be overwhelmed by countries such as the United States of America, we need to pay closer attention to what we are doing with our educational system.

When one looks at the White Paper on Education Reform, "Preparing for the 21st Century", published in July, 1995, there are a number of schools mentioned that are to become specialist schools. What they have said is that they have identified the strengths of these schools and that these schools would concentrate on these strengths.
11.30 a.m.

I think what has been overlooked is that the strength of a school in 2002 may not be the same strength of that school in 2005 because the strength of a school is usually

determined by the staff at any point in time. There may be a good teacher in a particular area and, therefore, the school will do well in that area. For example, if people think of a specialist school at this point in time they will clamour for St. Leonard's Boys' where the teaching of Spanish is concerned because of the performance of children in Spanish there which is largely the result of the staff and their interest in Spanish.

Sir, if we talk about specialist schools there must be a system in place which allows children to transfer from one secondary school to another but this does not exist presently in Barbados.

In fact not even the mind-set exists in Barbados at this point in time because I would challenge anyone...

SENATOR THE HON. Dame PATRICIA SYMMONDS: Mr. President, on a point of order. There is certainly a system of transfer in all the schools which has been going on for many years and continues to be done. Of course, it cannot be widespread because of numbers but there are cases where children, because of their ability, are able to be transferred.

I say so unequivocally especially for the school where I taught because every year we had transfers but an examination would be given to see if these children could enter the school.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, we cannot say that an exception is a rule. At this point, within the system of transfer, there are special circumstances under which children are allowed to transfer as was pointed out in the interruption.

Sir, I am not speaking of special circumstances. I am saying that there is no system in our schools at present which would clearly identify that a student is strong in a particular area and, therefore, that student will be transferred as a rule to another school. Sir, our system does not cater to that and the mind-set of the people of Barbados is not geared for it either.

I challenge anyone in this Chamber or outside of the Chamber to tell me which parent, with a child at Harrison's College, Queen's College, St. Michael's or Combermere, would transfer his child to any of the so-called newer secondary schools because it has a programme that they believe the child could do.

Sir, the matter of special schools go deeper than this because not many of our students by the time they have reached the end of secondary school know exactly what they want to do. I say that without contradiction because I see students at University of the West Indies in a degree programme not yet sure what they want to do when the

degree is finished. In fact, the University of the West Indies is concerned about the regularity with which students seek to transfer from one faculty to another.

If students are not sure what they want to do when they end their secondary school career, how are these children going to be put in a specialised area at such an early age. We should be concerned with ensuring that all our students do the core subjects and that they have the tools that will permit them to go into whatever field they desire. We need to provide a strong, basic education for our people.

SENATOR THE HON. Dame PATRICIA SYMMONDS: Mr. President, on a point of order. In all schools there is a core curriculum that must be followed by all students. Any specialisation or options are only allowed after the students have reached a certain level as we call it now. Sir, we do not talk about forms now in case Senator McClean does not know that.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, we have to ensure that students have basic education that would allow them to move into whatever area they deserve. In my view, it does not make sense to talk about a child at age 16 specialising in business studies but we have been so caught up with fads that we have diminished our educational system considerably and are now producing students who are not as capable of taking advantage of the facilities available to them as students in former years. We still end up having a number of students who leave secondary school but lack the basics in even language skills. We are concerned with teaching specialised subjects in schools but students lack the basics in language and numeracy. Anyone who deals with post-secondary students will tell you that is the major problem in this country at this point in time.

Sir, we need to pay greater attention to ensuring that students have the basics rather than fancy sounding programmes designed to impress people.

Sir, I agree with the late Tom Adams when he said that a revolutionary concept cannot work in a non-revolutionary framework. Sir, the framework of our education system, which in my view, is not ready for these great radical changes that people want to suggest. I think that as people, who themselves have benefitted from our own system of education, with tried and proven methods, we now have people with little or no experience in the field of education trying to push ideas down throats of those persons who know what the system should be.
11.40 a.m.

In my view, we are seriously damaging the education system in this country and we are turning out students who do not have those skills which are required to take them further.

There was time when we heard people boast of the fact that they are people with what we would call a sixth standard education, who knew extensive pieces of poetry, could quote passages, knew history, mathematics and who could become productive people. Yet, in this age when we are spending millions of dollars on education, we have people who are leaving, not only without certification but people who could hardly read and write.

Sir, yet, they have gone through the primary and secondary school system which means that there must be something radically wrong with what we are doing. Therefore, I believe that we need to turn away from some of the fancy things that we want to do and get back to the basics so that our students can become productive citizens in this country.

Mr. President, I think that it was Sir Arthur Lewis who mentioned that a good brain is not all that you need. He said that he saw a lot of people with good brains who turned out to be totally useless but it was the attitude and application that were showing.

Sir, I think that one of the things that we need to do is to find a way of reaching our students. We are losing a lot of people. I think that we have lost a generation already and we are looking at losing another one because we are not concentrating on providing our young people with the skills that are required and instilling in them the attitudes which are required if they are going to be successful in this country.

Sir, I think that we need to turn away from some of the partisan notions that we may have and consider that when we are talking about educating the people of this country, that we are talking about the future of this country.

There are many things that were proposed in the White Paper on Education which, today, we hear nothing about. We heard a lot about curriculum reform and those persons who are in the school system will tell you that not much has happened in that area. We hear about a special committee being set up which will be responsible for determining persons who would be appointed to Senior Teacher positions. What has happened to that? Sir, you do not hear much about that any longer.

The Barbados Union of Teachers from as far back as the 1980s, when I was Vice President of that union, was asking for a Teachers Service Commission. There has been the suggestion that it was possible but what has happened to the discussion in that regard? I believe it is time that, even if there is not a full Teachers Service Commission, there needs to be a special body which can look at the professional development of teachers and the training of teachers. All of these things have been mentioned but what is happening to them?

Why is it that so many of our teachers are willing to take the risk to go to what is known to be a hostile environment in other countries in school systems and leave many years of experience behind them and are prepared to lose out on their pensions?

Recently there was a notice in *The Official Gazette* of a position of a graduate teacher who just left the service. There are people who have over 20 years experience in a job and are prepared to give that up and leave, something must be radically wrong. We, therefore, need to pay greater attention to the way we treat our teachers and the training of our teachers. It is unfortunate that the decision was ever made by a previous Barbados Labour Party Government to stop the extensive training that was being done at Erdiston Teachers College and significantly reduced the level of training for teachers at that institution. Sir, what is being done at Erdiston Training College is a mere shade of what used to happen at Erdiston Training College, and everybody knows that.

Sir, if we really want to improve our education system, we should be spending more time examining what has gone wrong and seeing how we can correct it, rather than trying to implement new things and putting those new things on top of a system which has certainly, everyone would agree, deteriorated considerably. In spite of the increased expenditure in education, one cannot say that we are truly getting the results that we would expect.

Mr. President, all the regulations that would be introduced to deal with this adult training, I think it is unfortunate that we still have to spend so much money in adult education on people who have gone through the system and failed to make use of it at that point in time and now need to have more money spent on them.

Sir, the truth is, there are people who have gone through secondary school, free of cost, played the fool, and now their parents have to pay money for them to go to private institutions to do what they could have done free of cost.

We have to find out why it is that our students are not prepared to take advantage of the opportunities that they have while they are in secondary schools and be able to make use of the facilities that are provided rather than going through school, wasting primary and secondary careers, ending up without certification, basic skills and then their parents or the Government having to pay money to provide for them what was provided before.

Sir, I hope that we will take a serious look at what is happening to our education system that we can produce more productive citizens in this country.

I thank you, Sir.

SENATOR THE HON. Dame PATRICIA SYMMONDS: Mr. President, I would like to begin by saying what I have said, not only here but publicly in other fora, that we have one of the best education systems in the Caribbean and, perhaps, in the world. Naturally there will be flaws as there are in any system but we have much to be proud of.

There is a saying that, 'there is none so blind as they who will not see'. I would like to add that 'there is none so blind as those who cannot see'. I am not sure whether Senator McClean is really as knowledgeable about the education system as he claims to be but certainly from my 40 years in teaching and my 16 years in...

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: On a point of order. Sir, I would prefer if the Honourable Senator does not try to give me titles which I do not have. I have never, at any point in time, claimed to be more knowledgeable than anybody else. I am a citizen of Barbados and I am observing what is happening. I am speaking as a person who is concerned about what is happening. I am not trying to speak as an expert. She is an expert, not me.

Thank, you.

SENATOR THE HON. Dame PATRICIA SYMMONDS: Mr. President, I am speaking about what I know and what I know to be an irrevocable fact.

I would like to mention a few, Mr. President.
11.50 a.m.

Sir, from way back in the 1970s, there has been a philosophy of education. Certainly, when I was a member of the National Curriculum Development Council, there were committees set up by the late Rudolph Goodridge. He was an excellent Chief Education Officer and there were philosophies drawn up behind both the secondary and primary programmes and those have persisted up to this day. Each child matters. This emphasis on education reform is something very significant, very scientific and it has been highly acclaimed by educators and experts.

Sir, when it comes to the curriculum, there are certainly obvious reforms. The parents know about them and they are able to procure guides. Sir, never in the history of education have parents been as informed, as they are today because whenever there is any change or innovation, the parents are informed and consulted. Certainly, Sir, when it comes to conflict resolution, introduction of foreign languages and values education at the primary level, the students are progressing in many ways.

Certainly there will be children who will leave school without taking advantage of their opportunities. It has always been so and it probably will always be so, in spite of

the motivation of the many very well trained teachers that we have in the system at both the primary and secondary levels.

Sir, Senator McClean left out a very important point which is that years ago, education generally started in the home where the parents and members of the extended family were there to start teaching them the alphabet, values and how to read and write so that very often, when they went to school, they could already count and read. This is not happening today for reasons which I will not go into at this time.

Sir, there is another important point, yes, we have to educate people to fit into a national framework. We are also educating people, with an emphasis on building character, and that is something we should always remember.

Sir, dictation has been reintroduced, so there is an emphasis still on the basics and core subjects, as I said before. Sir, when it comes to poetry, yes, there has been some concern about that and now, literature and poetry are being taught throughout the secondary schools. In the past some people left school without knowing how to read or write, but this is not happening in this age.

Aside.

SENATOR THE HON. Dame PATRICIA SYMMONDS: Senator McClean was talking about what is happening presently. I understand that one person who is now taking advantage of the Adult Education Programme is one as old as 52 years, so some of these people would have left school long ago.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, on a point of order. I think the Honourable Senator is misleading this Chamber. The bulk of the persons in these programmes, will be persons who range in age from 20 to 30.

SENATOR THE HON. Dame PATRICIA SYMMONDS: Actually, the age is from 18 to 25, so even that Senator McClean is not sure of, but I am saying they may range up to age 52 but, Sir, I do not think that is the point.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. Dame PATRICIA SYMMONDS: Sir, we must not forget EduTech, although I will not waste time on that now, but EduTech is extremely vital in this education age.

Mr. President, I refer now to the Adult Education Programme. These courses are very successful and the teachers are doing an excellent job. I wish to refer, particularly, to Mr. Orville Amy, a well-known educator with

whom I have worked and Ms. Antoinette Mayers. The curriculum consists of literacy and numeracy. They also emphasize oralcy and show students how to separate facts from ideas and listen to the points made by other persons.

There are, in some instances, lessons which have to be very basic, where they have to start learning the alphabet, syllables, prefixes and suffixes and this comprises a cross section of people. Sir, some are drop outs and others, I am sure Senator Rickinson will be pleased to know, including nursing assistants who show such potential that they have been encouraged to go on and do the CXC, in order to pursue a full nursing course. There are presently five persons who are going to take the CXC Basic in June 2003.

Significantly, there are many more women taking advantage of this opportunity and, of course, this makes me very pleased. Mr. President, these women are open to suggestions and help. They are explicit. They do their home work and they improve very quickly. The ratio is 10 to one and there are young men who seem embarrassed about joining the classes, if they cannot be taught privately, or on a one-on-one basis, and this is something which concerns me.

Mr. President, I think it is unfortunate and it needs attention. I know everyone is concerned about the fact that there are boys on the block and boys who are being marginalised and dropping behind the girls. Sir, one of the challenges of this Programme, is to make it attractive and non-threatening to both genders. I think more publicity would help, such things as jingles which they are having for the disabled.

There are some sponsors for the Programme. The University of the West Indies and the Life of Barbados have sponsored students and they are to be highly congratulated. There are firms with employees who do basic tasks and show potential and they enroll them. I think others should follow their example. Some who have had this advantage have gained promotion. So employers can help by assisting workers with day release or a few hours a day.
12.00 noon

In addition to financial constraints, there are also social constraints which they will have to look at.

In addition to functional literacy and numeracy skills there should be entrepreneurial skills such as marketing and practical skills such as arts and craft and tiling, which some of the students have expressed a wish for, and things like basic profit and loss.

I also think that whatever kind of education they have, it should have a liberal aspect and social skills. Senator Rickinson will agree with me on that as she always supports

me on that. There must be the skills that give students a civilising influence otherwise the skills that they acquire can be used for nefarious means. Therefore, it is very important that whatever they do, there should be some sort of emphasis on liberal education and liberal skills.

With those few words, Mr. President, I totally support this Resolution and hope that more young men in our society will join the adult education programme because it is very important to be able to communicate and to use whatever skills they possess. They should also be encouraged to put aside any feeling of embarrassment or inferiority and take advantage of these very good courses.

Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, whenever I hear Senator McClean speaking on certain issues particularly education, especially his presentation here this morning, it reconfirms in my mind why the Democratic Labour Party has never regarded a Manifesto as a social contract. After listening to Senator McClean waxing warm and wide about this issue without any specifics and blaming the Barbados Labour Party for all of the perceived ills in the educational system as it now stands, one would never believe that his party has had control of the affairs of this country for 23 of the last 41 years and that they had more than ample opportunity to do something about the same educational system.

Sir, having heard what Senator McClean said about the educational system and the criticisms which he is seeking to heap upon the Barbados Labour Party, one would have thought that the things which he is criticising the Barbados Labour Party for not doing would have been amply represented in his party's Manifesto. But when one turns to pages 21 and 22 of that same Manifesto one sees a lot of platitudinous approaches to education. There is no revolutionary approach that he is talking about but there is a lot of generalisation. For example, they talked about:

1. "Remove 'floating classes' from the system. Every student in every school should have an allocated classroom.
2. Upgrade and refurbish the School Meals Department. Improve the system of storage and delivery.
3. Bring back discipline and respect to the classroom."

These are things that are important but which in themselves do not represent any clear path for the development of the educational system in Barbados.

He also sought to blame the Barbados Labour Party for doing many things at once. He said that he kept hearing about things but that nothing is being seen. He said that we keep trying to move from one thing to the next without achieving anything. Sir, he also said that we should try to find out what has gone wrong with the system rather than try to implement new things.

It seems to me that the problem with Senator McClean and his party is that they do not seem to be able to think about more than one thing at a time. As they say in the streets, they cannot chew gum and walk at the same time because they say that we are doing too many good things at one time and that we are doing EduTech and Curriculum Reform at the same time.

When one observes the educational system as advanced by the Democratic Labour Party one will see that it is very one-dimensional. They have not yet got past the expansion of free secondary education and school meals which are their major highlight. Sir, we are doing a multiplicity of things at one time because the world is a dynamic place and we cannot afford to be focussed on doing one thing at a time and allow ourselves to lag behind while the rest of the world moves ahead.

Senator McClean also said that nothing revolutionary is being seen as we have promised, but what about EduTech? When he did mention EduTech, he was critical of it. Sir, a couple days ago in the newspapers Prime Minister Denzil Douglas of St. Kitts was very bountiful in his praise about our EduTech system to the point where he is calling on the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Caribbean Development Bank to adopt a similar approach to the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) countries in order to bring their population up to scratch to be able to cope with the world as it is today with the technological explosion and the demands that are being placed on work as against the past.

Sir, this reflects a traditional respect which the rest of the region has always had in Barbados' educational system. Senator Symmonds is quite right when she said that while our system is not perfect it is still a highly praiseworthy system and a system that is being emulated and admired from many abroad as has happened in the past. This is a traditional activity and we are still very much in that position. However, rather than seeking to give us some kind of credit Senator McClean wants to make it seem as though nothing good is happening in the educational system and that it is grinding to a standstill.

I also read in the Press that we are producing world class students who when they sit their exams are among the top-ranked students in the world. While it is true that they might be seen as the high-flyers or the great achievers the

point is that if the system was that flawed, even though it might be difficult for so many of those people to emerge so quickly or in such numbers that could never happen which is very noteworthy.

Senator McClean barely alluded to the real gist of this matter when we talked about adult education. Adult Education is not something which should be the recourse of those who as he had said wasted their time and the resources in the system. Adult education comes at a time very often when people reflect on their life and make the decision that they want to pursue another career path to develop themselves. Education, as he has often said, is an ongoing lifelong process.

12.10 p.m.

Why should people be seen as abject failures because they choose at another period in life, having gone through the system. The system has always "failed" people. It has not always been that every child who is leaving the school system has left with five or six "O" Levels. That is an idealistic position and, therefore, one cannot blame the system as the sole determining factor as to the reason people have not achieved during their time at school. There are several factors such as: the home environment; the lack of motivation; distraction or people not knowing exactly what they want.

Some people felt that life is a lark and that school was just fun time but then some people – maybe not enough as reflected by the numbers who go to the University, *et cetera* – then come to the realisation that they have to make something with their lives and therefore take corrective measures.

This is something that has been recognised by the Barbados Labour Party, not only in this instance but in the 1950s when there were the Evening Institute, the St. Leonard's School, the Technical Institute, *et cetera*, which were the focal points where people did evening classes to advance their careers. People then went onto become doctors, electricians, plumbers, engineers, *et cetera*.

Sir, one should not see this as the repository of persons who have failed or have been abandoned by the system. There is a diversity of factors which will cause people to go back to further educate themselves.

The point is that what we are seeking to do is to provide such an environment or system. It is then up to persons to take advantage of it. It is like cricket; there is a significant structure for the development of cricket but since we are not producing cricketers like we have in the past, it is not to say that there is no opportunity. The society has changed. People have other interests and, therefore, we have to recognise that while, at the same time, try to cater to the needs of the people.

Sir, one of the things that Senator McClean either has not seen, heard of, or failed to mention, is the fact that one of the most revolutionary things will be the emergence of the College of Barbados which would seek to transform Barbados education system to a different level. There is a group of eminent persons who are working to put together such a plan.

This College will do what the Cave Hill Campus; the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic; Erdiston Teachers College and the Community College have done for Barbados. This Resolution will bring them all together within a framework which will allow for greater efficiencies and better management of resources. It will create an integrated system where people entering it would know that they could move from one part to another and where qualifications and standards be recognised, mutually respected and rewarded. To me that will present a new way of education in Barbados and this Government is working on it. While we are working on it, does it not mean that we have to produce a generation of persons who are computer literate? The rest of the world is not waiting. They are now demanding computer literate persons in the world. Therefore, in the same way that we were providing persons who were literate in numeracy, we now have to provide persons who are literate in computer technology.

We in the Barbados Labour Party are not lost. We have a clear picture as to what we seek to do with the educational system in Barbados but life is a dynamic process. Education itself is dynamic. Therefore, we at times will have to put emphases on one part as against the other because we have to reflect the dynamism of the situation and not be cast aside by history and left on the sidelines looking on.

Sir, I am anxiously awaiting to see what Senator McClean would propose or what his Party would come with in the next Manifesto. This Manifesto is a sham where education is concerned. It makes no real contact with the real needs of the educational system. Persons could talk about Errol Barrow forever. We in the BLP respect Errol Barrow. We have made him a National Hero. If we did not respect him or his contribution to Barbados, we would not have done that and, therefore, no one has to preach to us about his contributions to Barbados. What we are calling upon is for the DLP to come out of the Errol Barrow's past, get onto the present and hopefully move onto the future. I thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Thank you, Mr. President. I do rise to support this Resolution to approve the Programme of Adult Education.

It is very important to me because as an educator and someone who is still involved in education for nursing personnel, I think that it forms the basis of any society to be

able, not only to educate the young but also older persons or those persons already in the workforce who need to upgrade their skills in order to get new jobs or some other form of employment.

What concerns me is that some people have not been able to recognise the importance of adult education or continuing education. I am very glad that Senator Symmonds has mentioned the nursing assistants who have been involved in this programme. What I would like to say is that some of them have had to use their own time. Some employers and persons in senior positions would not see it fit to assist the nursing assistants by giving them time to attend classes. Some employers or persons in senior positions also try to frustrate the efforts of persons in other areas. For example, the Nursing Association and Nursing Assistants of Barbados (NNAB) has two seminars a year and there are endless problems in trying to get nursing personnel released to attend those seminars. Some people have to hide or to ask for day off, in order to attend some of these courses.

Aside.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: It is not the one provided by the Ministry of Health but it is also important that people recognise the importance of such continuing education to the health development of the country.

The nursing assistants attend these courses because they either want to enter the nursing assistant's programme or the general nursing programme. They find that they are constantly blocked by the senior nurses who do not understand the importance of continuing education.

I work in the Ministry of Health. In fact, the Ministry of Health even helps to pay for continuing adult education but in regards to the nursing personnel, they are not even given the time to improve themselves. Senior nursing personnel seem to believe that as long as someone is a health aid, that person should remain a health aid for life.

I have spoken to one of the Senior Administrators of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and have said that a health aid does not always remain in that position. If that senior administrator were to visit the United States of America, they would see that, due to continuing education, health aids do work their way up towards administrators of hospitals.

The health care system cannot progress as long as there are blockers in senior positions in nursing. They must understand that we are living in a dynamic world and everyone needs further education.
12.20 p.m.

Mr. President, we have a serious problem in the nursing profession because they look down on people when they try

to improve the health care system. Sir, I say that in one breath but at the Psychiatric Hospital they are interested in promoting education. They take the health aides, enter them in the nurses assistants programme and then into the Mental Health programme but the administration at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is very backward where continuing education is concerned.

Mr. President, I am glad that computer technology is part of this adult education programme because whatever field you go into now you must be able to use the computer. Even if you are a mechanic you need to know how to operate the computer because when I take my car to the garage to be serviced, the first step is to put it on the computer. This is why I support the Ministry of Education for introducing computer technology in the schools.

Sir, when I tried to insist that at the School of Nursing at the Barbados Community College nurses should do the computer technology programme I was overruled at the time. They told me that it was not compulsory for nurses to do computer technology. Sir, people do not seem to understand that the future of health is dependent on having computers in hospital.

Mr. President, there is no vision and I do not know how we will educate people to have the correct vision because the system is blocked and we are being kept in the 1800. Sir, the health care system is backward and no board can improve it because there is a backward culture at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and they should be encouraged to go to these adult education classes. Mr. President, I think the Queen Elizabeth Hospital should be closed down, let us start all over again so that things are done in the correct way.

Mr. President, mention was made of the University College of Barbados and I want to plead with the persons responsible for planning to tell us exactly what they are speaking about as I do not fully understand it. I know about the University of the West Indies and the Barbados Community College but I need to have more information about the University College of Barbados. Also, I want to know if we have the necessary teachers to teach everyone to have a degree.

Sir, as part of the adult education programme, I would like to see the Barbados Community College restart the pre-health programme. Previously, persons wanting to attend the health sciences could attend a pre-health programme in which they could qualify if they did not have the CXC's necessary to enter the various health science programme but, unfortunately, the programme was stopped and I hope it can now again be included in this programme because it prepares a cadre of people, who do not have the basic CXC's, to enter pharmacology, lab technology, nursing *et cetera*.

Mr. President, people go to school and for some reason they do not see the need to learn until after leaving school when they try to get a job and cannot get one. Sir, there are many reasons why people do not take advantage of the education offered by Government. They may be late developers but many of these children later on become doctors, lawyers and nurses.

Sir, I am aware that computers cannot teach persons to read and that we must go back to the basics because people must be able to read, spell, write and count since these are the basic requirements. I am also glad to see that dictation has again been started in our schools.

Sir, our men are embarrassed to go into the programme but we have to bend over backward, cater to them and allow them to continue their education because we do not want to humiliate our male counterparts because enough problems exist already and women have gone way ahead of men where education is concerned. Therefore, tuition should be arranged for those men to assist them to become qualified if they are embarrassed to sit in groups with the females because we want our men to be masculine and not feminine. Our men need to feel wanted and not to feel as though they are being laughed at. We need to look at this seriously because we should never emasculate our men. Sir, this country should bend backward and help our male counterparts.

12.30 p.m.

Mr. President, I would like to end by encouraging all schools to agree to have Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA). I heard people on the call-in programmes complaining that a school would not allow the formation of a Parent-Teacher Association programme.

Parent-Teacher Association programmes can only help the schools and the children. It is up to the headmistress of the school to guide that programme and use it wisely in order to help and improve the school and the education of her wards.

I think that it is very backward for people not to allow parents to form an active Parent-Teacher Association so that they can find out what is happening in the school. This can help with the development of the school and they know what their children are doing.

Sir, we cannot in one breath say that education started at home and the parents are supposed to do certain things at home and when the parents ask for the formation of a Parent-Teacher Association, they are turned down. It does not work like that. Sir, you have to encourage Parent-Teacher Associations throughout Barbados and they have to be active and be used wisely.

Mr. President, I would also like to see the zoning of schools. Some students do not do very well at school because they have to take two buses in order to get to school. By the time they reach school, they are tired and distracted. I would like to see people going to school as near to where they live as possible or where their parents work in order to assist the children to be more attentive at school.

Mr. President, the time has come for us to introduce zoning fully. I know that there is partial zoning but I would like us to introduce full zoning because it would help our education system.

Sir, with these remarks, I support this program.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. President, I rise to make a contribution in this debate purely based on the contribution made by Senator Murray who is a shining example of why this Administration has lost its way in terms of not being able to carry this country in the right direction.

Sir, while education for children will ensure a future for Barbados, adult education will encourage that we make the rapid adjustments to deal with the current needs of this new world.

Sir, I say that because while we can talk about Edutech turning out approximately 1 500 students a year, if so many, there are the 100 000 workers in Barbados that need to be retrained to deal with the whole question of efficiency and productivity. It is in this context, therefore, that we have, as a country, to come up with a national policy on adult education. To sit and listen to an Aside in which the Senator was suggesting that nurses do not need to be given anytime to study, then it does explain the position that the goodly Senator is in.

SENATOR P. C. GODDARD: On a point of order. I cannot recall any Senator on this Side making the statement that nurses or anyone should not have time off for adult education.

Mr. PRESIDENT: That is a valid point of order. Senator Mascoll, an Aside does not form part of the record and certainly the Chair did not hear such an Aside.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Precisely. It cannot be disputed.

Mr. PRESIDENT: You cannot attribute it to an Honourable Member.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I said that it was an Aside. I did not attribute it to any Honourable Member. Therefore, if I am not supposed to hear Asides and I hear an Aside, how can someone refute what I am saying? I do not understand that. If I am supposed to withdraw that, I withdraw.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, Senator Murray said that the difference between the Democratic Labour Party and the Barbados Labour Party is that the Democratic Labour Party, in those early days, chose one issue to deal with and was unidimensional whereas this Government has chosen to be multidimensional. Therefore, it has chosen a multiplicity of issues to deal with at one time to carry forward the educational process. That explains exactly why I am saying that this Administration has lost its way.

Sir, to suggest that in order to deal with the issues in education you need to have a multiplicity of issues at all, is really a misrepresentation of what we have to do in Barbados. As I understand it, this administration has admitted that only 30 per cent of all students leaving school are certified.

Therefore, there are 70 per cent who come out of secondary school with not even one certificate. As a result of that, I suppose, we had the White Paper on Education and a whole set of objectives listed that we are preparing our citizens for national building, reevaluating the role of education in a new national strategy and other matters.

Sir, to hear an individual who has such preeminence in this administration, who is always across the media, making presentations and representing the Government and being so prominent, while other ministers would wish such coverage, to hear him make these kinds of comments, simply demonstrates the state that we are in as a country.

Sir, the other thing is, as it relates to national policy, the Social Partnership needs to be taken to another level in Barbados. The Social Partnership should not be simply about what is the difference between $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1 per cent on this side that is the employers' side, and what is believed on the employee's side.

I think that the Social Partnership has reached the stage where it now needs to go beyond mundane stuff and look at broader national issues.
12.40 p.m.

It is in that context, Mr. President, that I want to take this Parliament back to the year 1961, when the idea for the Barbados Workers' Union College was conceptualised. It came under the banner of adult education and, in fact, I am suggesting that at this stage, we need to look carefully at how we can have a national policy that permits employees to go off for some specified period of time and get additional training that is relevant to the workplace.

In that regard, there will have to be some degree of consensus between the Government, the unions and the employees. Now, I am suggesting, therefore, that if you look

at the future and what it is that we have to grapple with as a country, then there is now a definite need for retraining our adult population, especially the working population, at a massive scale.

Sir, no incremental contribution of 1 per cent or 2 per cent of the workforce every year, can transform the attitudes within the workforce and, therefore, provide the kind of efficiency and productivity that is required for us to make the quantum leap necessary to cope with this new economic order.

Sir, if that is accepted, then, the question becomes one of appreciating the link between the two sectors in Barbados, that is, the public sector and the private sector. I have, on a previous occasion, attempted to explain to this Parliament that in order for there to be efficiency gains and productivity gains in Barbados, there has to be a closing of the gap between productivity achievement in the private sector and the public sector. It is simply because the private sector of Barbados or any other country, has to play a facilitated role, for the most part, to the private sector needs in its day to day operations and work environment.

Now, we have had under this administration, recognition that the Government should not find itself in certain areas of economic activity, and even though the words are stated in the Budget of this year, where the Government said that it did not intend to invest in hotels, it still invested very heavily in that area. We need to come to the position, exactly, where our limited resources have to be expended and in whose interest these resources should be expended.

Now, I would not go in the direction that is expected of me for fear that I intimidate. This is not the time to intimidate those on the Other Side and, therefore, I will stay within the realm of the adult education.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, as it relates, therefore, my point is that if you change technologies across the private sector within the distribution, retail, manufacturing, tourism and the offshore sector, and you engage in different management techniques that permit some degree of productivity to be achieved, and you do not have an even faster rate of growth of productivity and efficiency within the public service, we are going nowhere, because at the end of the day, in order for the public sector of Barbados to survive, it has to extract its resources from the private sector.

If the public sector remains inefficient and unproductive, it therefore means that it has to extract even more resources from the private sector, and this is a point

that has to be understood by this Administration. This Administration has not yet even come close to appreciating that if they lag behind the private sector as it relates to efficiency and reform, then because of the capacity of the Government to tax, they will then overtax to the extent that they become a drag on the private sector of Barbados, and that has been the case.

Sir, that explains, why in fact, notwithstanding all the rhetoric and talk in Barbados, we have been unable to control the level of taxation in Barbados, the way in which we intended, as far back as 1994.

Therefore, I am saying to you that the overall objective of any educational system has to be seen within the context of national development. Therefore, you cannot separate education from national development. In fact, it is nothing new I am coming up with and, therefore, to understand that this issue is holistic and all embracing, is a must. It is recognised in the written words, in the white paper, that we are evaluating the role of education in the sphere of national development but we do not seem to understand where to go from there. This is why I am satisfied that this Administration has lost its way. It is incapable, at this stage, of understanding and appreciating where to carry the country.

Sir, we then hear a lot of discussion about the need for a new university college. What new university college do you need in Barbados at this stage?

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: You do not need it. You need to be able to get the University of the West Indies in a position where it can expand its role and become even more participatory in the affairs of the private sector. You cannot get the Barbados Community College operated at this stage. You cannot, because I am aware that there are students at the Community College who would have taken exams and have to wait for two years for the exam results to be known.

I am aware that there is an individual at the Barbados Community College who should have received a scholarship taking architecture and was denied that scholarship because of the lack of proper organisation at the Barbados Community College.

I am aware that there is a breakdown in terms of organisation and administration at the Barbados Community College. Therefore, if you cannot get even the Barbados Community College managed and you cannot provide adequate resources at the University of the West Indies to allow them to expand and increase their roll intake where it becomes even more meaningful in the affairs of Barbados,

then how could you be even considering a university college in Barbados? It is unnecessary and it is, again, part of the fad. It is again part of this Administration's approach to the whole management of the affairs of Barbados that you focus mainly on public relations, without giving thought to the bigger issues.

This Administration has gone adrift. This Administration, as we speak on adult education, has been unable to maintain the Barbados Youth Service, which has gone into decay and decline and that has to be considered part of adult education. Sir, this Administration has failed to function in the area of the Barbados Youth Service. It has failed to function. There is misery in St. Lucy and you are talking about adult education when the major part of adult education, and it has been admitted by Senator Symmonds that the focus here is for ages ranging from 18 to 25 and it was a serious admission because what it did, is that it supported the position taken by Senator McClean that the younger the age group, the more relevant...

SENATOR THE HON. Dame PATRICIA SYMMONDS: Mr. President, on a point of order. I did not say that was the focus. I said the ones applying for the courses were between the ages of 18 and 25. I even went on to say that there is one as old as 52 years.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, please.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. President, in an attempt to deal with the issue being raised by Senator McClean, she went on to support his position because it was, and listen, the policies always come through in this Chamber, because the issue is that if the majority of individuals taking adult education are beyond age 35, it means that they would have come out of a Democratic Labour Party era. I repeat. If the majority of persons taking adult education now are only age 18 to age 25, then they are the products of the Barbados Labour Party era and that was the discussion here. 12.50 p.m.

Therefore, in an attempt to prove Senator McClean wrong, Senator Symmonds went on to say that the age range concentration in this adult education programme is between 18 and 25 years. This, therefore, means that these individuals would have left school within the last couple of years.

SENATOR THE HON. Dame PATRICIA SYMMONDS: On a point of order. There is great difference between what one concentrates on and who takes an interest in something. I did not say that was the focus. I said that those were the people who for the most part were taking advantage of the course.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: That matter is peripheral to the wider debate, therefore...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Let us not get bogged down.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Let me make my more substantive point which is that the Barbados Youth Service should constitute a major part of the adult education programme of Barbados. If what has been said here earlier is true it means that the Barbados Youth Service which is already in existence has now become another failure on the part of this Administration. All Mr. Fix It does is that he talks and then when you look at the results you see an F being placed in the grade column because this is all rhetoric and nothing comes out of it.

You then have the whole question of curriculum reform. Sitting on the Curriculum Development Council is a former minister of the Democratic Labour Party, Mr. Keith Simmons, but when you sit here and listen to Senator Murray you would think that the whole process of education only started in recent years.

The thing about this Administration is that it has made every attempt so far to try to take away from the Democratic Labour Party and the Right Excellent Sir Errol Walton Barrow that relationship that Barbadians see as a love affair. That is, when you speak of education in Barbados you are talking about the Democratic Labour Party and the revolution of the 1960s. But no matter what the Barbados Labour Party does it will not be able to erase the halcyon days of the Democratic Labour Party, it will never be able to repeat that period and it will never be able to take away from the Democratic Labour Party the fact that social mobility in Barbados came about as a result of the educational policies of the Democratic Labour Party between 1961 and 1976. That cannot be denied and it will never be denied. No one will ever be able to take it out of the history books that the Democratic Labour Party was the political party that lifted the masses of Barbadians out of poverty not by way of largesse but by way of creating opportunities for them to create for themselves opportunities to own land, to own houses, to become businessmen, lawyers, doctors, nurses and whatever.

Therefore, when you look at education in Barbados it has a comprehensive primary, secondary, tertiary and adult education programme formulated under the Democratic Labour Party. So let us not get trapped. Let us, therefore, understand that that period remains the rich period in the history of Barbados where per capita income more than quadrupled and where opportunities to own houses and land were tremendous under the Democratic Labour Party led by the great late Right Excellent Sir Errol Walton Barrow. It cannot be taken away. He is the greatest Barbadian that ever lived. That must be recognized and be said.

Mr. President, when I look at this document here...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Please! Please!

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: ... and look at the whole question of adult education, I have reached the position where again this Administration has failed. We have wasted too much money and continue to waste too much money on this thing called EduTech and there is no doubt about it.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Simply putting computers in certain schools and then to have a few lessons taught will not give the sort of transformation that is required in Barbados at this stage, it cannot. In fact, it might have been a better idea to give each and every household in Barbados a computer because after you have been given a lesson or two in any computer programme you have to find opportunity to practice. It is like having a licence to drive a car and not having the opportunity to do so. You are no better off. I am, therefore, saying that it might have been better for us as a national policy to give a computer to each and every household. As a matter of fact you would not have to do it for every household anyhow because most individuals at certain levels of income in Barbados would have already had a computer but it is those individuals at the bottom of the scale who you would need to give to. It is not a question of strapping. A Bible which is standard has several different interpretations by different religious groups.

What I am saying to you is that an idea is not what you have to destroy. It is the inadequate or the improper implementation of the idea that has been the problem with this Administration. This Administration has failed to execute. This Government has failed to implement. This Government has borrowed ideas from hither, thither and yon and when you look at it and evaluate it, this Government's history would be a legacy of mismanagement from top to bottom. I can quote them *ad nauseam* if I had the time in this Debate. I am saying, therefore, that when you look at it they would have failed again.

You had a Minister of Education who gave the impression that the EduTech programme was a lifelong process for her and that she was engaged in it 'til death do us part. The EduTech programme was everything for Barbados' development because, *sine qua non*, without it we could not survive because it was to be the spine of the Barbadian society in the next ten years, but then without being a Queens Counsel she was elevated to Attorney General and they passed on the project now to identifiably the...

Certain remarks made by Senator Mascoll were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. President.
1.00 p.m.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: On point of order.

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

Mr. PRESIDENT: You are absolutely right. The Standing Orders are very clear. It was out of order. I quote from Standing Order 34 (3):

"It should be out of order to use offensive and insulting language about Members of either House."

I am therefore asking that you withdraw those remarks and that as well, they be struck from the records.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. President. I withdraw the remarks.

Mr. President, the Minister who has least performed or who has most underperformed in this administration. "The inability to be energetic" describes that individual...

Mr. PRESIDENT: You have one minute left.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. President, all I would say is that once again, we are visited in this Chamber with an amendment; an introduction of a Bill; a Resolution; a Motion or whatever it is called, that will make no difference to the affairs of Barbados in the next two to 10 years. I thank you.

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

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

ORDER NO. 8 – TO MOVE THE SECOND READING OF THE LANDLORD AND TENANT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2002

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, essentially this is a simple amendment to Section 35 (1)(a) of the Landlord and Tenant Act, Cap. 230, in effect to give the magistrates greater powers in being able to enforce the law dealing with certain tenants and enabling landlords to recover possession in these cases.

It is long overdue. In 1980, the last annual rental value figure was set at \$2 500 per annum under which the magistrates would have jurisdiction. Since then the property rental value has risen substantially and the levels of rents charged by landlords are more than this. As a result, magistrates do not have jurisdiction in these cases. As a

matter of fact, it would be impossible to find a house for \$2 500 per year, which converts to approximately \$208 per month.

In this situation it has been felt that this Act should be amended to increase the amount from \$2 500 per annum to \$10 000. With these remarks, I beg that this Bill be read a second time.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I do not think we can oppose the amendment to the Act but I am disappointed that, at this time, we are engaging in a slight legal legality with respect to bringing it within the realm of the increased amount with which magistrates can deal. There is no problem with that but I think, as the Minister said, we cannot find any accommodation except that provided by Government where one pays \$200 per month and, therefore, it is a practicable measure. I think what we need to examine is why rents have escalated in the manner in which they have over the years.

Sir, regarding the matter of tenancy and accommodation in this country, recently a Government officer, in addressing the matter of poverty alleviation, has identified accommodation as one of the biggest problems being faced by the people of this country. It therefore means there is extreme competition for housing accommodation and wherever there is competition, the price will increase. This is what is happening in Barbados, because of the high demand for rental accommodation, rents continue to spiral out of the reach of the average person. Therefore, I think it is time that Government not only addresses the matter of providing more accommodation but also addresses the problem to bring a meaningful amendment to this piece of legislation and – I will repeat what I have before asked for – to have some form of legislation in place that deals with the relationship between landlords and tenants in this country.

There are many tenants who are being taken advantage of in this country and, similarly, there are many landlords who suffer at the hands of tenants. Therefore, we need to have legislation which clearly establishes a legal relationship between the landlord and tenant that will be applicable to today's world, otherwise we will have a continuing situation where either party is taken advantage of.

The area in which many landlords inflict greatest harm on some tenants is in the matter of a deposit when renting accommodation. Tenants are asked to make a deposit and the landlord treats it, not as a deposit but as another source of income. There are some jurisdictions where that deposit has to be lodged in an interest-bearing account and, at a specified date, the landlord has to declare what interest has been earned on that deposit.

Mr. President, what happens in Barbados is that a landlord would take the deposit and when the tenant is leaving, whether or not there is something wrong with the property, would refuse to reimburse the tenant that amount. A deposit is not meant to be another source of income for the landlord. It is a security deposit in the event that the tenant damages the property. This is why I use that as one example as to why it is necessary for us, sooner rather than later, to have some form of legislation in place to address the legal relationship between landlords and tenants in today's context. I thank you.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT, the Senate resolved itself into Committee on the Bill. HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Clauses 1 – 2 were called and passed.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT, Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT reported to HIS HONOUR THE PRESIDENT, the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motion of SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Landlord and Tenant (Amendment) Act, 2002.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended for one hour to be resumed at 2.15 p.m.

The question that the Honourable Senate be suspended until 2.15 p.m. was put and agreed to in the affirmative and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly. 1.12 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Senate is resumed.

ORDER NO. 9 – LAND REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2002

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, this Bill seeks to alleviate some of the difficulties being associated with the sporadic registration of land within

Barbados. Over the years it has been necessary to suspend Sections 14 and 15 of this Act. This was done in 1990, 1993, 1999 and 2000. The systematic approach to the process conforms to all the requirements under Section 14 but registration was piecemeal, haphazard and unpredictable. It is difficult to coordinate the entire system and over the years this has proven to be problematic.

The advice is that we should not revoke these relevant sections completely but they should be put in abeyance for such time when the resources are in place to accommodate the Section.

This Amendment is essentially to provide some reduction in the difficulties associated with the registration of land in Barbados.

With these few remarks, I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I cannot say whether I will support the Bill or not because other Senators and myself are at a distinct disadvantage because we were only given notice of the Bill today, December 18, 2002, and which merely states that the Act was amended by deleting certain sections. We do not know what the original Bill said or what the new section will read so it is impossible to address the matter.

Mr. President, if we are to deal with a matter which is presented the same day, the Bill should at least say what it read before and what is now to be deleted. I do not think that Senators know what they are to debate.

Mr. President, I thank you.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. President, this brings to the fore problems which have arisen in the registration of land in Barbados from time immemorial. In 1970 myself and Sir Harold St. John recommended to Government that a new system of land registration should be introduced in this country and we were told that the new system would be completed in 10 years.

I remember the late Errol Barrow publicly saying that lawyers were robbing people and charging too much for conveyancing and that this new system would reduce the cost of conveyancing. Barbadians still believe that land conveyancing is too expensive and that Attorneys-at-Law charge too much for them. Recently, I heard an Honourable Member from the Other Place saying that conveyancing was expensive because Attorneys-at-Law held up the transfer of title.

Mr. President, as a practising Attorney, you would know that this is not true. To this day, anyone who wants

to buy land in Barbados and must get a mortgage will find that the mortgagees will ask for proof of title which can take you back as much as 60 years.

People should be told that if every conveyance was registered as it is, Barbados would end up having more land than the size of it. They plan to go back to the benchmark in St. Thomas, resurvey the entire island and because of that decision, anyone who applies for a mortgage now, the mortgagee is insisting that the land be re-surveyed if the title is more than 20 years old. Sir, this will make conveyancing even more costly.

The question of registration of title guarantees the purchaser a title which is secured by Government. When there is no registration of title, the matter is left up to the Attorney-at-Law, acting for the purchaser, the one acting for the vendor and the Attorney-at-Law for mortgagee and each step of the way takes much time and money.

Mr. President, lots are registered in the newer developments which are published in the Official Gazette but in the older developments the land must be re-surveyed. It would be beneficial to all if we could have registration of title completed in the shortest possible time because it expedites the sale and transfer of plots, gives certainty to leases, relieves frustration and takes blame away from Attorneys-at-Law.

Mr. President, while I support the Bill before the Chamber this should be some guidance for those responsible that this needs attention.

I thank you.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put and agreed to.

COMMITTEE

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT, the SENATE resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Senate is in Committee.

Clause 1 was called and passed.

Clause 2 was called and passed.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one

Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motion of SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Land Registration (Amendment) Act, 2002. 2.25 p.m.

ORDER NO. 7 – FIRST READING OF THE NATIONAL INSURANCE AND SOCIAL SECURITY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2002

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, we all know that Barbados has been experiencing some demographic population changes and, indeed, our health profile is now taking on that of a developed country, having the noncommunicable diseases, hypertension, diabetes and obesity. We also have the problem of an ageing population occurring in many developed countries.

Indeed, Barbados is highlighted as one of the countries, in terms of per capita, the number of known geriatricians, that is the number of people who are over the age of 90, Barbados is only second to Japan per capita for some of the known geriatricians per 100 000 people. Sir, I think that this is commendable.

Over the years we have put the necessary infrastructure in place, both parties during Government, in making sure that we have a quality of health care and a high standard of living for our people.

In this regard, the National Insurance which was set up 35 years ago is still essentially on a strong setting. It was, indeed, quite forward thinking, in those days when it was set up in 1967, but we have to look to the future. Indeed, having said that it is on strong footing, one cannot just rest on their laurels and assume that everything would be fine in the future.

Mr. President, the Ninth and Tenth Actuarial Review of the National Insurance indicated that a change would be necessary to avoid a complete collapse of the system by the year 2032.

Today, there is the ratio 3.4 contributors to every pensioner in Barbados. If the *status quo* remains, by the year 2060 this ratio 1.3 to one pensioner, Sir, that is not so hard to believe, to think that those, who would be around in 2060 would have been born and attending school in Barbados and as a result of this, the National Insurance thought it necessary to set up a subcommittee to look at the whole process of National Insurance Reform and how we plan to supply and maintain this institution in Barbados. With extensive consultation, the public had a tremendous input into this area of consultation.

Some people mentioned Chile as an example. It was thought that this would not be applicable in the Barbadian setting and certainly we were not in favour of the idea of the privatisation as exists in some countries, as this was found to be prone to disaster in some countries, especially some of the South American countries.

Sir, this left the National Insurance with a number of options. One would be to maintain the benefit levels at which there would have substantially increased contributions. Another option would be to reduce the benefits and to maintain the contributions at the same level, that is, you pay the same amount but you have reduced benefits. A third option was to look at gradually increasing the age of retirement with a small increase in the contribution. After much discussion, it was favoured that an integrated approach with, perhaps, a modification of these options would be the ideal one for our setting.

As a result of this, the proposals which the National Insurance Scheme thought best for the most structure of the survival of this institution. It was proposed that National Insurance should increase at the rate of 1 per cent a year for 4 years to be shared equally between employer and employee that is 0.5 per cent by the employer and 0.5 per cent by the employee. In the case of self-employed persons, they would pay the entire 1 per cent.

Sir, it was also proposed that the standard National Insurance retirement age be increased from 65 years to 67 years and this would commence in 2006. The age of retirement would increase by 6 months every four years. That standard age of 67 would be reached in the year 2018.

It is also proposed that there should be some flexibility of retirement so that people would be allowed to retire between the ages of 60 and 70. Obviously, those who opted to retire earlier would be given an actuarial reduced pension and vice versa for those who chose to retire at age 70.

Sir, at present a person can receive a pension up to 40 per cent after only 10 years of contributions, that is at an accrual rate of 4 per cent a year. This is also being changed. The new rates will now be 2 per cent for the first 20 years and thereafter 1.25 per cent per year to give a maximum pension of 60 per cent.

In addition, the definition of the final insurable earnings is proposed to be changed to the average of the best 5 years as opposed to that which is presently 3 years.

In addition to these proposals to strengthen and maintain the viability and sustainability of the National Insurance system, it is Government's intention that the National Insurance Act be amended to ensure that the Board is made up of representatives of the Government, trade

unions and the private sector. This Bill, essentially, and the Statutory Instruments would provide for the various legislative requirement emanating from these proposals.

Sir, I commend this Bill to this Honourable Chamber and seek its support, bearing in mind the importance of the National Insurance, the importance of its viability and sustainability, not for us, but for our future generations of Barbadians.

Sir, with these few words, I want to move that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: Mr. President, I join this debate with a sense of history. For one reason that I am probably the last remaining public officer who participated in the development of the National Insurance Scheme and have seen changes made to it through the years when I also participated. Sir, for the record, I was a member, and I still am, because the subcommittee is still meeting which examined the review of the National Insurance Scheme.

Mr. President, let me say how I feel about the National Insurance Scheme. I think that it is the greatest institution developed in Barbados since Independence. It is great because as a social institution it covers most, if not all of the disadvantaged people in the community, the elderly, orphans, widows, sick, maternity cases, injuries *et cetera*.

It is not only as a social institution. It is also a very vibrant and economic institution. As a source of capital for investment in the various sectors. I think that it stands second to none.

One thing I think we need to recognise, is the great contribution of those persons who were responsible for managing the Scheme over the years. I think that when you look at what happened in other Caribbean countries, Jamaica, Trinidad, South American countries, Bahamas and further afield, you will know that we were lucky to have had good management. This must divide that management between political administration and those persons who were responsible and the staff and Board of the National Insurance Scheme.

I know of a case in Jamaica where National Insurance pensions have not been raised for the past 20 years and the value of a pension received 20 years ago cannot pay a light bill.

Sir, I would not mention Antigua because that might not have been a typical social security scheme. We have these problems which we have not encountered. Hence, the requirement to review the Scheme was logical following of what has happened before.
2.35 p.m.

Sir, I would also say that when you look at the insurance, in terms of the maximum insurable earnings which started in the year 1967 at \$50 a week, and by the year 1991, reached \$715 a week, the scheme comprehends fairly substantially, the large majority of the earnings of the working population, which is estimated to be between 75 per cent and 80 per cent the total earnings of most of our working population.

Sir, that leads me to what I consider a prophetic utterance by the late Mr. Errol Barrow, who in the year 1969, wrote a telling minute to us who were responsible for doing the civil service end of things, directing what the policy would be and what was necessary to build up the scheme and the timing for changes, so that the scheme would build up to the point where it would not be eroded, if you introduced those changes in an untimely way.

Sir, that minute which I searched for and cannot find, I think should be compulsory reading for public officers and politicians, who have anything at all to do with the future. Now, those necessary changes from 1969 commenced in 1971. The first change was the total involvement of casual employees in the national insurance scheme, as the only source of their pension, except for a gratuity. By 1974 the Workman Compensations Act was scrapped because the national insurance was then making provision for injury on the job, *et cetera*.

In 1975, the high point was the inclusion of other public workers in this pension aspect of the scheme when it was decided, having regard to the constitution that any worker, joining the public service at any level after the first of September 1975, would have his national insurance eligibility taken into account, in determining his public service when eligible for pension, and that covered another 70 per cent of the public service at that time.

Further decisions were taken and implemented since Mr. Barrow ceased to be Prime Minister between the years 1976 and 1986. The important one, was this whole question of the widows and children pension. Male officers in the public service were required to pay 4 per cent at first and then 2 per cent of their gross income towards the provision of some pension for their dependence, which would be widows and eligible children. The decision was taken in the year 1976 and implemented in the year 1978, that this scheme should not cover new entrance into the public service from the year 1978.

Mr. Adams quite rightly expanded the inclusion by the year 1985, when he determined that the age of retirement should be the same for people in the public service, as it was and still is, for persons who were eligible for pensions under the National Insurance Scheme. Sir, the bringing of those two together, insured that at that point, most people will only

get, as an ongoing pension, the national insurance pension which, in most cases, will be greater than what they would have got, if they were depending fully on a public service pension.

Sir, looking at that sort of development, the present changes that have been proposed were a logical extension of that Program for other reasons, the main one being the demographic changes which were occurring in Barbados: the fact that people were living 20 and 25 years beyond retirement, the fact that the numbers of old people had increased to the point of about 12 per cent, that is above age 65, of the national population. Sir, also the fact that with all these old people, 33 000 at present, drawing on the National Insurance Scheme, and living so long, the Scheme could be in trouble, if that level of an increase of pensioners continued without some adjustments.

Sir, for the records, as far as I can recall from the investigations which we carried out, there are now about 33 000 pensioners. Eighteen thousand who are receiving contributory pensions, 12 000 non contributory pensions who will continue for a long time being paid from the National Insurance Scheme. Although the Government will pay for the new non contributory persons, it is expected that the number of 12 000, on the basis of past experiences, will not reduce significantly in a hurry, and that was the experience when the scheme was made to carry the cost of non contributory pensions twenty years ago.

I think that it was thought then, that the numbers would have reduced so significantly that in a decade or so, you would see a lesser number of people receiving pensions from the insurance scheme as non contributory beneficiaries.

The fact of population change manifested itself, not just the other day but long ago. This is why I said the decision in the year 1985 to extend the age of retirement to 65 was a well informed and very wise decision, given the population change that was occurring.

Now, there are other reasons for insuring that the Scheme remains viable. Perhaps the greatest one is the existing pensions and payments. The persons who will become eligible for pensions in the next few years, as well as the future beneficiaries, should feel confident that their contributions will not be lost in the way that it has been in other countries.

At the same time, it was important to retain some balance in the deductions that are made from people's income and from the payroll, generally, if people are to be able to do other things with their money. The gradual increase which has been recommended is one way, and a small increase, overall, ensuring that this balance is maintained.

Now, there are other changes that were recommended which I have not seen in the legislation and I think that those changes are important to even out these that have been put here. Let me start first with the composition of the report.

Sir, it has been recommended in Clause 3 that the composition of the Board, in large measure, legislates what exists at the moment. I think the selection of the Board is done on a basis similar to what is recommended in the legislation, and except to make it legal, this will not change the administration of the Board or by the Board, in any great measure.

I think the greatest complaints that one has heard over the years from the National Insurance Board, is its inability to manage and control the staff. This does not change because staff will still continue to be from the civil service and tied, in large measure, to civil service salaries and conditions of service. While the Board might be able, as they have been in recent times, to engage specialists on a contractual basis, this amendment is not going far enough to give the National Insurance Board the authority to control staff and the financing to run the Board.

2.45 p.m.

I would hope that there is some consideration in the near future of this problem because the greatest problem with compliance is that the people who go out and try to get people to pay and to report them are civil servants many of whom are looking to get out of that grade anyhow and rumours have it that they are not as diligent as they ought to be.

I have heard a Minister of Government say that between Broad Street and Arthur Seat, he counted no less than 300 self-employed organisations but when the check was made with those whose names they knew, very few, if any, were contributing to the scheme.

It is my view that compliance should be removed from the Civil Service mechanism and transferred fully to the control of the National Insurance Board so as to make the scheme as efficient as it can be in the future, because although the \$100 million that is outstanding is only a drop in the bucket, some of those people who owe that money are long dead and, therefore, you would not be able to collect from them.

There are two other amendments which I thought should have come hand in hand with these. I recognised the urgency for this amendment but that is an unfortunate aspect of Government activity where everything is done in a hurry. They want to bring this amendment into effect from January 1, 2003, and therefore, they have to go with the Bill now.

I think that the question of indexation of pensions, which was a strong recommendation of the Committee based

on a combination of the index and retail prices and the average earnings in the community for the previous year, would be a fillip to the Government and to the effort to get these new arrangements accepted by the public because if the public knew that pensions were going to be increased on a fixed basis rather than on an *ad hoc* basis and if they knew that it was taken out of the realm of political experience they would be more anxious to accept the changes of the increased contributions if they knew that they would be an indexation of pensions.

There is also the question of insurable earnings. Insurable earnings have remained at the maximum of \$3 100 a month or \$715 a week for 11 years. In the context of the changes in income levels, whether that rise at that time was too high is immaterial, wages have gone up several times since 1991 and if you want to maintain what Mr. Barrow said, which is, that the National Insurance Scheme should become the National Pension Plan where the first expectation of a worker for any pension should come from National Insurance Scheme then it would be advisable to raise the insurable earnings on a graduated basis, not suddenly, in the same way as you are raising the contribution rate and in the same way as it was recommended that indexation should also be introduced. Therefore, in my view, that was an omission of some substance and I hope that this will not be long in coming.

I want to look now at the matter of invalidity pensions. There are nearly 28 000 invalidity pensioners and for compliance purposes, this is easily the most difficult aspect of national insurance management. You cannot tell a man that his back is not hurt or that if he goes out there and uses a hoe or any other implement that he is not an invalid. Invalidity pension is tied to a minimum working period of three years. So a person who has worked for three years and suffers a serious injury which requires him to be a candidate for invalidity pension, will get what is called a minimum pension as if he has worked for ten years. If he worked for 10 years, the present rate is 40 per cent of average insurable earnings for the best three years of work. I believe that will be changed in the regulations because that is one way to control, not the invalidity aspect of it, but the basis of computing the pension. I think it was recommended that you should only get that 40 per cent after 20 years of service. I believe that it would be a lesser period but certainly more than 10 years because if you do not change the invalidity benefit system you will encourage more people to become invalids because if they can get a pension after three years of service while other persons have to wait say 15 years before they can get their basic pension of 40 per cent or whatever percentage it is at that stage then the problem that is now being encountered with invalidity pensions will increase. Therefore, I am advising that this should be looked at very carefully in the very near future to coincide with the changes that are expected to come into effect from January 1, 2003.

Mr. President, all in all, I think that these recommendations before the Senate conform with some of the recommendations made by the Committee and accepted by the Board. I think that the other recommendations should not be delayed. I also think that the composition of the Board and the authority with which the Board can carry out its function needs to be reviewed urgently or else these changes might encourage more loss of contributions to the scheme if compliance cannot be followed up in a very serious way. I am talking about what insurance companies do at the moment where if you pretend to be very sick and let us say that you might go to Trinidad for Carnival and somebody sees you jumping up, you would not get the benefit. These are the kinds of things which compliance in this scheme requires if the scheme is to be a successful one.

Mr. President, I have no objection to the amendments and I think we should give credit where it is due because this is the greatest institution that has been developed in Barbados since independence.

Thank you.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. President, I would not be very long on this but I have to support Senator Collymore on the aspect of the investigations into claims on the scheme. If we are going to investigate the scheme, the Board must operate with even hands in both ways.
2.55 p.m.

What is happening is that people are now going on their annual vacation on Friday and by Saturday morning, they are going to doctors' offices and are sending in medical certificates to cover the period of their annual vacation.

In the institutions that I represent, there has been an agreement that on sick leave, persons will get their full pay and when they receive their payments from the National Insurance, it must be paid back into the company. By utilising this mechanism of taking annual vacation on a Friday, getting a sick certificate on the Monday, these persons do not submit that certificate to the employer. They then return to work on the specified date, which means that they have enjoyed both their vacation with pay and also a sickness benefit payment at the same time. This has occurred on numerous occasions and the two institutions that I represent are at a loss as to how to deal with it.

It has been referred to the National Insurance Scheme Office and they have said that based on the law, they must pay as long as they receive a sick certificate. This is something which I think the Government should seriously investigate, otherwise these little schemes do get out of hand and people do jump on the bandwagon.

Another thing is that in the last number of years, I have met people who have been involved in vehicular accidents who, after being compensated by the insurance companies, very soon thereafter declare invalidity pension and are registered as invalids. I think we are going to have to adopt the American system. It may cost the Insurance Scheme some money but in the long run, it will benefit. There was a situation in the United States where a West Indian who was a policeman in Brooklyn was running after two men one night and slipped into a gutter. When that happened, his colleague advised him not to move.

Some months later I met him at a party. When he came to the party he was all bandaged up. As soon as that policeman got through the door, he asked that the curtains be drawn. I could not understand what was happening but after being there for about fifteen minutes, he begun to unstrap himself and he danced all night. By 3.00 a.m. the following morning, he again re strapped himself, assisted by his wife and left. When I eventually found out what was happening, it was said that he was being monitored for an insurance claim and, therefore, he had to pretend that he is an invalid.

Sir, there are many people in Barbados who are pretending to be ill and are drawing National Insurance contributions but yet could be found in other places. I had a case in which one man had pains in his neck, received money from the insurance company to go to the United States to have a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), done. This man was helped onto the aircraft here in Barbados but was discovered in a basement in Brooklyn dancing. The case was filed in court and is still there because the man would not proceed any further.

I think these are the reasons why the National Insurance Scheme would suffer unless the National Insurance Board creates its own investigative unit. These people must be told what are the parameters. I deem it highly inappropriate that people should claim high insurance benefits, then go on to draw invalidity pensions as in the United States.

With these words, I support the amendment to this Bill.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I want to respond to a number of comments that were raised by Senator Collymore in a very well informed and educational perspective regarding the National Insurance Scheme.

The Government is committed to looking at this institution in a strengthening study and, in receiving the recommendations, plans to meet with trade union representatives, committed to the National Insurance Scheme evolving into an autonomous professionally managed institution.

Regarding issues such as the basis for calculating pensions, the annual increase in pension, maternity benefits, *et cetera*, these are still being addressed. Your point is well taken. Of course, there are problems of trying to implement certain aspects of this Bill before the end of this year.

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

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT the Bill was read a second time.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT the Senate resolved itself into Committee on the Bill. HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Clauses 1 – 5 were called and passed.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to HIS HONOUR the PRESIDENT, the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the National Insurance and Social Security (Amendment) Act, 2002.
3.05 p.m.

ORDER NO. 6 – THE FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND AUDIT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2002

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, the Financial Administration and Audit Act provides for the control and management of public finances in Barbados and also regulates the control and issuing of public money. This Act was commenced in April 1964 and over the years it has had various amendments. It should be said that the Act is a fluid dynamic one and earlier this year it was amended to allow Government Ministries and departments to accept credit cards as payment in settlement of debts.

The present amendment to the Act changes Sections 2, 24 and 38.

The amendment to this Section will now include the word 'semi-monthly payment'. With the advent of Smart Stream persons who were previously paid manually on a weekly basis will now be paid twice monthly and these persons will be paid on the week day closest to the 15th and the last day of the month resulting in 24 payments being made in one year.

The amendment to Section 38 deals with Government's administration which settles indebtedness to the Crown through Crown agents. The Accountant General has confirmed that no Government administration shall settle its indebtedness through Crown agents and it is, therefore, recommended that this Section be deleted.

In addition, there are changes to the Rules that were made at the level of Cabinet and there is an amendment to Rule 39 which is typographical. Also, provision was made for the utilisation of debit and credit cards.

Mr. President, as I said earlier, this is to facilitate this process which is fluid and changes will be necessary as we go into the era of e-commerce.

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

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. President, I rise to make a contribution in this debate recognising that from time to time we need to upgrade legislation and, therefore, I am in full support of the amendments to this Act.

I want to look at some aspects of the Act and to query the application of certain parts of it in the light of recent developments in Barbados. As I said before, I have no quarrel with the amendments but the same way which Government is now seeking to ensure that civil servants are better off, that they will be paid by cheque because of Smart Stream and that they will have more frequent payments, I simply want to query certain parts of the Act.

Sir, in the Budget Speech this year, the Prime Minister made it clear that he intends to use the special deposits at the Central Bank of Barbados to make payments on some expenditure that may occur over the next few months in this financial year. At page 30 of the Financial statement it says:

"In addition, the Government of Barbados does not propose to raise any new commercial issues on the international capital market for the immediate future and we will use much of the proceeds of the \$300 million bond issue of 2001 to finance activities for which additional borrowing would have been required."

In the year 2001 the Government of Barbados borrowed US\$150 million and according to the Financial Administration and Audit Act, the revenue of Government is defined as:

"All levies, taxes, rates, duties, fees, penalties, forfeitures, rates and dues, proceeds of sales and all other receipts of the Crown from whatever sources arising over which Parliament has the power of appropriation including the proceeds of all loans raised."

At Part 2, Section 3 of the Act, it states:

“The public debt of Barbados including the interest on that debt, sinking funds payments and redemption monies in respect of that debt and cost, charges, expenses and incidentals to the management of that debt should be a charge on the Consolidated Fund.”

Mr. President, as far as I can gather from the Act, it means that all revenues, however defined go into the Consolidated Fund of Barbados. Part 2, Section 4 of the Act goes on to say:

“No sum shall be paid out of the Consolidated Fund except under the authority of a warrant under the hand of the Minister or under the hand of some person authorised by him in writing.”

This means that any payment made out of the Consolidated Fund should be approved by the Minister of Finance.

Also in Part 2, Section 4 it says:

“Any sums issued in accordance with Subsection 1 shall be disposed of for meeting the cost of the public services specified by the Appropriation Act for the financial year during which the withdrawal is to take place or for services otherwise lawfully charged on the Consolidated Fund.”

Sir, my understanding of this Section of the Act is that any payments made out of the Consolidated Fund must constitute part of the Appropriation Act for the financial year. In simple language, it should be a line item in the Estimates.

Sir, in order for Government to be able to make payment over the course of the financial year there should be a line item, as we call it, within the Estimates for such funds to be approved and, as I said before, this is usually done in the Estimates debate which we conduct every year in the Senate. In light of the amendments, as I said at the beginning I agree with all of the amendments, given the need to update our legislation with the recent development of technology, but my concern is, if Government borrows any amount of funds, whether it is from local or foreign sources, then there are regarded as revenue under the Financial Administration and Audit Act. Furthermore, for the Government to make payments from the Consolidated Fund, then there should be Parliamentary approval.

3.15 p.m.

In recent times, there was a lot of discussion in Barbados in relation to a private company called Hotels and Resorts Limited (HRL) and it was stated in the Budget Speech of October 2002, and I quote:

“The company is highly geared, having been financed mainly by debt. The Government is, therefore, preparing the company for divestment and has taken the first step by restructuring the debt in an effort to eventually improve the debt to equity ratio.”

Mr. President, I just wish to repeat part of that quotation.

“...and has taken the first step.”

Sir, this therefore means that at the time of delivering the Budget on October 22, 2002, the Prime Minister of Barbados would have already taken the first step in restructuring the debt of HRL but there were no other details given in the Budget Speech.

Mr. President, in a very well-informed Journal of Barbados, a well-noted Journalist said that the Journal understands that debt owed by HRL had already been repaid by the Government of Barbados.

Sir, I said all that to say that the same Financial Administration and Audit Act, which we are seeking to address, is suggesting that in order for any such commitments to be made by Government, the cost would have to be identified in the Estimates of Barbados.

Why is that important in this debate? Given that the Prime Minister said that he intends to use \$300 million Bonds, it is well known that loan which was borrowed in 2001 was sterile in an account at the Central Bank of Barbados. Given that it was, in fact, a loan, it means that it had to form part of the Consolidated Fund of Barbados.

Sir, the reason why I am mentioning this under this Act, is because we well know that the sources of this ...

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: On a point of order. Mr. President, I think that the Honourable Member is misleading this Chamber. If it is sterile, it is put in a special account at the Central Bank. It does come into Government's revenues. There might come a time when the Government, as happened in the past, may take a deliberate action to bring that money out of sterilisation and bring it into the Consolidated Fund. To be sterile means that you do not bring it into the general pool of accounts.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. President, It means that when it is desterilised, it becomes part of the Consolidated Fund according to the good Senator on the Other Side. Therefore, if the decision has been taken to use the proceeds of \$300 million put at the Central Bank in the year 2001, it means that according to the definition given by

Senator Barker, this money now becomes part of the Consolidated Fund when it has ceased to be sterile. Therefore, that provides me with all comfort.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is stating that the money has been taken out of the sterile account. According to my information, there is still a very substantial account at the Central Bank. If the Honourable Member has information that it has come out of the account, he ought to tell us when it came out and how much came out. He also has to tell us what it was used for.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Please proceed, Senator.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, what I can prove before I prove that, is that the Government of Barbados has agreed to pay off the \$30 million Bonds raised on the Trinidad market as at December 31, 2002, representing 7 years earlier than it was supposed to happen. The Bonds issued on the Trinidad market in the year 1999 was supposed to be a 10-year Bond, due to mature in 2009 and the Government of Barbados took the decision to redeem those Bonds on December 31, 2002, about 13 days away from today's date. That provides me with the proof.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. President, as we have noted all along, the Government of Barbados was utilising the Public Enterprise Investment Fund as its source of income to provide for the commitments of the Gems or the Hotels and Resorts Limited, which is the private company that was known.

Sir, if that is so, it means therefore, given the Public Enterprise Investment Fund's statement that was laid here today...

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. President, we were informed this morning by the Leader of the Senate that the Statement for September 2002, was being laid in the Senate. I would wish to have a copy of that statement. I listened to the radio on my way here today and heard the Leader of the Senate say that he has laid the Public Enterprise Investment Fund Statement for September 2002. I wish to demonstrate that the balance in that fund cannot fulfil the commitments of debt to be repaid by the Government of Barbados and, therefore, be a source of revenue for the Government of Barbados in the restructuring of debt at the Gems or the Hotels and Resorts Limited.

Sir, therefore, it is in that context that I had to go through the painful exercise of first identifying what revenue means as defined in the Consolidated Fund of Barbados to

guarantee that revenue includes the proceeds of all loans raised according to the Financial Administration and Audit Act.
3.25 p.m.

It includes the proceeds of all loans raised, whether they are local or foreign. Therefore, if the Government has already started to restructure the debt of HRL and has promised, as of the 31st of this month to do so, in terms of clearing the debt incurred in Trinidad to the tune of \$30 million in principal, without any consideration of the interest and the obvious penalties that would have to be charged, now that the bonds are being redeemed seven years earlier, it means that the source of the revenue cannot be the Public Enterprise Investment Fund.

In that regard, we all know that when the Government utilises this Fund, it does not have to seek Parliament's approval. However, if the Government of Barbados – and it can only be a source out of the Consolidated Fund – has committed the taxpayers of Barbados to the repayment of HRL debt, then it has to come from the Consolidated Fund. It is in that regard that I wish to ask the Government a question. Since HRL is a private company, and since they would not be a line item in the Estimates of Barbados, has the Government sought Parliamentary approval to repay or pay off the bonds owed by a private company called HRL, and if so, when? I would also like to know what is the extent of the interest charged on those bonds and the penalty that the Government has, obviously, incurred in redeeming those bonds, seven years before the date.

This is a very serious matter because as I said, you cannot commit the funds from the Consolidated Fund to the repayment of any private company's loans, and according to the Financial Administration and Audit Act, those funds will have to be approved under the Appropriation Act for the financial year, for such commitments to be made.

I, therefore, am repeating my concerns in the Chamber that I have been allowed, the Senate that protects me from all of the query of whether or not I have any knowledge of, or can prove what I am saying, this Senate allows me to query these sorts of matters. Therefore, I do not have to become a lawyer, I can demonstrate by way of information and research that there is something which has to be told to the public of Barbados. The first thing is that it was never stated in the Budget in any clear cut terms. The amount of funds that the Government would have already utilised in restructuring the debt of the GEMS or HRL, was never made clear.

Sir, what was said is that steps have been taken but it had to be financial dollars to make sense, but nothing was said. All that occurred in that exercise is that 33 questions

were answered by the Government of Barbados. It made no difference to the real matter or the issues of HRL.

The crux of the matter is that we are finding ourselves here in Barbados in a position where taxpayers' money had been used, in substantial amounts, and to make it more ridiculous, the Government has now decided to pay off the debt. It is no longer guaranteeing anything. The actual taxpayers' money is being used to pay off the debt of a private company and we do not have any indication as to how this has been done.

The Government of Barbados does not have to account to the Opposition. The Government of Barbados has to act within the laws of the land and within its most important piece of legislation, the Financial Administration and Audit Act, to conduct the affairs of Barbados. All I am simply asking and all I am inquiring of, is whether or not this Government has followed the procedures identified in the Financial Administration and Audit Act that we are seeking here to amend.

I can tell you because I made this inquiry in public, but it does not make sense to make any inquiries in public because you are asked to provide proof and evidence. When you provide this kind of proof and evidence, there are other things that come your way, in order to stall you from inquiring into the needs of the people of Barbados. Well, nobody will ever be in a position to prevent or stop Clyde Mascoll from inquiring into the affairs of Barbados, on behalf of the good people of Barbados. You can bring ten law suits. It does not matter.

I want to know and I wish, Mr. President, to have a copy of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund. I want to know where the money has come from to pay off the debt owed by HRL. Sir, the Public Enterprise Investment Fund has been a major source of revenue for HRL and out of taxpayers money, to date, the Government has spent \$28.483 million, in cash, out of the Public Enterprise Fund on the GEMS.

The Government of Barbados does not have to account for this because according to the law, they do not have to come to Parliament to seek approval to utilise the funds in the Public Enterprise Investment Fund. All of us know that, but I am saying that the outstanding balance of \$9.8 million, is insufficient to allow the Government to utilise this source to write off debt for HRL – a syndicated loan of \$37 million and some other small loans before, and now, a \$30 million bond in Trinidad, with interest and penalties due at the end of this month, 31st December, 2002. I just wish to know where has the money come from and – I repeat – given the fact that HRL is a private company, how can it be that the Government is utilising funds from the Consolidated Fund of Barbados to make such payments on behalf of HRL.

Mr. President, this is a major bone of contention. The Government has sidestepped the requirements of the Act to seek such approval and to make a line item. Sir, all I am saying is that we on This Side, need to know what is happening with the public fund which is the taxpayers' money.

3.35 p.m.

If the Government is saying in the same Budget Speech that the Government never intended at all to get involved in investments in the hotel sector, they need to explain to the people of Barbados what is happening in terms of the rescheduling of the debt of the GEMS Project. The people know what happened at Eastry House already. They know about all that happened at the GEMS Project.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: That is not the important thing. It is being done in stages. We now want to know what is happening with the restructuring. This is a Government that has made clear-cut statements about its policy. This is a Government that talks about accountability and transparency. This is a Government that makes everybody in Barbados feel that they cannot question or touch anything that they do. All of a sudden now the cats are among the pigeons and we are seeing all kinds of disturbances.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I do not want to be thinking, I do not even want to be wishful, all I want is the truth. I want the truth on what is the position re the use of funds from the Consolidated Fund.

Mr. President, I will end on this note. The Financial Administration and Audit Act that is being amended today I approve but I am querying the more important contents of this Act which has to do with the use of the funds from the Consolidated Fund because it really has to be explained because at page 73 of the Budget Speech made earlier this year the Prime Minister said and I quote:

“Mr. Speaker, it has never been the intention of the Government to enter the hotel business but merely to salvage those heavily indebted properties to the Barbados Development Bank.”

It was never the intention of the Government to get involved in the hotel business but it has not only got involved, it has been involved now to the tune of almost \$200 million because when the estimate of \$190 million was put in the public domain, the \$20.7 million loss that was incurred by Hotels and Resorts Limited (HRL) for the year 2000 was unknown. The GEMS of Barbados lost as much as

\$20.7 million in the financial year 2000 and given the state of tourism last year the losses must be higher because there had been all kinds of discounting of rates, all kinds of contraction and travel and all kinds of lowering of occupancy while the Government incurs all kinds of expenses as it relates to Hotels and Resorts Limited.

Therefore, Mr. President, I rest my case. I have made a very clear-cut argument for the reasons why the Consolidated Fund has been used to clear the debt of HRL without seeking parliamentary approval.

I thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Sir, I would like to begin my presentation by dealing with the substantive matter before the Chamber which has to do with the amendments to the Financial Administration and Audit Act which are much needed in order to protect both the integrity of the system and to enhance it.

I want to deal specifically with that aspect which makes provision for what is called the semi-monthly payment of wages to public workers. It has to be established that this process has been underway for almost a year now and that from all reports it is working quite well. This semi-monthly payment of wages was not something that was just thrust upon the unsuspecting workers in the Public Service but was a part of a carefully thought out policy which involved extensive consultations with the representatives of the workers and the discussions with the workers themselves, so they were well prepared for it.

Therefore, the concerns I have heard expressed that the workers whom this would affect are not being prepared for it and that they are not being put in a position to manage it, is both very inadequate and patronising because this implies that persons at a certain level of the society do not know how to manage their own affairs and that only certain people at the higher educational level can manage their affairs. In other words, people who are accustomed being paid every week would now have great difficulty in managing their affairs by being paid every two weeks. Sir, this is patronising and undeserving because Barbadian workers have always shown that they have sound and prudent management of their affairs whether it be weekly, monthly or whatever.

Sir, the wicket was laid and there was preparation for this initiative. As a matter of fact in order to make the system run smoothly, the Government gave an advance payment and then recovered it later on. So it did not result in the kind of dislocation and discomfort to persons as has been speculated it might as though it was starting today when it was in existence for quite sometime.

Sir, this kind of payment and the amendments to the Act will help in the overall thrust by Government as part of its wider public sector reform efforts to improve the management of its financial resources. As a matter of fact, the last set of amendments to the Financial Administration and Audit Act took place last year. These things are needed to modernise the system and to make them more efficient and more responsive to the demands of this dynamic environment in which we live.

This also means now that government departments can now use credit cards to procure goods and services up to a maximum of \$20 000. There was a point in time when credit cards were unknown to the central government as a facility. Public officers will have their own private and individual credit cards but government departments could not expedite its business by using credit cards. That is now possible through this amendment. These credit cards can be used up to a maximum of \$20 000 but there are built-in safeguards because approval for obtaining a card by a government department or ministry must first be obtained from the Director of Finance and Economic Affairs. So a government department or a ministry cannot apply for a credit card willy-nilly and seek to utilise it.

In addition, the heads of departments and ministries are responsible for ensuring that the credit card is used only with their expressed authorisation and to ensure that it is kept within a secured place within the department so that people do not have access to it at their beck and call. That, therefore, minimises the opportunities for any attempt to misuse the card or to use it in ways for which it was not intended.
3.45 p.m.

The card can be used: to guarantee overseas hotel accommodation; to reserve travel tickets; to make deposit in respect of official functions; for the purchase of books, periodicals; for the purchase of subscriptions and course fees.

I would like to make specific mention to the question of guaranteeing hotel accommodation. There is no question in modern day business practices that one does not just call to make a booking but one needs to provide credit guarantee. In the past what would have happened is that when a minister of government wanted to secure hotel accommodation, an officer who works in an overseas mission would have had to make that booking, using his or her credit card number. When that minister arrives, the person who would have made the booking would then have to be reimbursed. Now missions themselves have the ability to do that on behalf of Government which means for a better way of doing business. It has also prevented a number of uncomfortable situations where, in the past, people have arrived at these accommodations to find that no booking

was ever made. Sir, these are some of the things that are being undertaken in order to improve the efficiency of the system.

One of the major initiatives came about in 1996 with the introduction of the Smart Stream System. It was long recognised that Government needed to have access to and to provide timely and accurate information in order to make the decision-making process more efficient. Therefore, in 1996 as part of the wider public sector reform initiative, the Government undertook a plan of improving efficiency of monitoring, controlling and reporting on its financial activities.

The major focus of this initiative was the computerisation of the tax administration and public expenditure activities in the public sector. The public sector expenditure management project is mainly concerned with the computerisation of the Treasury Department, related financial accounting and management activities of Government.

The software package chosen for this computerisation effort was the Smart Stream Project Suite, hence the popular name.

The smart stream project brings efficiency to a number of areas of Government's financial activities. Smart stream financials, for example, assists the management of the task and information of processes associated with the various activities; provides a complete financial management system; organises certain fundamental activities that reflect the business being conducted by each department or Ministry. This serves to enhance the productivity in the accounting process and allows for user access to analyse financial information more effectively.

This system provides the capability of preventing the user from spending in excess of either the voted amount as laid out in the annual estimates or the financial warrant as determined by the minister. As a result, one of the major objectives of Government has been significant improvement in its ability to manage its funds and to control its expenditure. I am glad to see that it has been achieved through this system.

Another aspect of the system that has improved is in the procurement of goods and services, which was largely done through the Department of Central Purchasing. That process was slow. There was a lot of paper work to be done.

With the smart stream system it meant that items being purchased could be channelled through the Central Purchasing Department. All items being purchased through the Central Purchasing Department, from the writing of requisition to the provision of a Local Purchase Order is

done on line, thereby reducing the number of repetitive tasks that had to be completed.

In addition, it meant the availability of certain historical data and trend analyses on both the purchased item and the vendor's performance.

It also meant there is increased security in the cheque-printing activities to allow for greater reconciliation of bank account statements. As requests for payments are entered into the system, an automatic check is conducted to ensure that funds are available both in the annual voted amounts and the finance warrants for processing the transaction. This serves to prevent ministries and departments from overspending their amounts, as had obtained in the past. I am sure this is a welcomed addition for the taxpayers of Barbados and makes for greater efficiency.

The smart stream process has also enhanced human resource management so that each post in the Government and the payment of such a post is now better managed and controlled. In addition, people can be paid much more safely since departments can now enter payroll changes directly into the system and check the accuracy of that information against the payroll.

The smart stream system has also integrated the payroll system with the personnel function. It means that the Personnel Department can now have a record of things such as job assignments, leave or qualifications on its staff, therefore improving the process. There are a number of benefits being gained from the computerisation of the system. It brings more people into the information management process; it provides faster and more management use of information; it provides heads of departments and managers with the ability to determine the major activities that each location performs; it eliminates, to some extent the repetitive task through the introduction of electronic documents; it allows for easier and timely reconciliation of accounts and other stored data; it improves the service that is being provided to customers and other stakeholders of the public sector by reducing turn-around time, which means that more speedy and accurate information can be provided.

It also allows for the introduction of a number of innovative ways of managing human resources. It improves the reported capabilities through the use of electronic reporting system. There is now a degree of flexibility to which department managers can now access information.

Overall there has been considerable change to improve the management of Government's finances. These amendments are another aspect of that ongoing process as Government seeks to make its operation more responsive and more customer-focussed. Rather than simply focussing

on procedures the idea is to satisfy the customer while, at the same time, making the system more efficient, responsive and safe.

I welcome these initiatives and look forward to other types coming in the future, to enhance the other activities of Government. I thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to support this Bill that is before us. This is yet another example of Government modernising and bringing a system up-to-date. Sir, that is part of the course of this administration. We have always ensured that the public sector is being put in a position where it can effectively and efficiently do its job.

There are a number of issues to which I would like to respond, especially as it relates to sterile accounts. This is nothing new. We have to remember the circumstances when this money was borrowed last year. That is the events of September 11, 2001. The Government took the decision, which was endorsed by all right-thinking persons, to borrow this money for precautionary reasons. We decided that it was to be put into a sterile account which means that the country would have the foreign exchange equivalent but the money would not be brought into Government's revenue at that point.
3.55 p.m.

The Prime Minister in the last Budget made the important statement that since the money was there we would not engage in any more borrowings, that the fund deposited at the Central Bank of Barbados would finance Government's operations and this prevented us from borrowing overseas during the present fiscal year.

Sir, if the Honourable Member checks he will see that every month an account of the special account is given in the publication.

Mr. President, the Public Enterprise Investment Fund is important because each quarter every Honourable Member of this Chamber is given a copy of the Report of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund. We received one today relating to the quarter ending September 30, 2002 and every item of expenditure from the Public Enterprise Investment Fund is given in the document as required by the law.

Sir, under the Public Enterprise Investment Fund Act, the Accountant General, under whose purview the Act falls, gives an account that indicates where the money comes from under the section 'Net Receipts and Other Receipts' and also how money is spent.

We must note that Hotels and Resorts Limited is not the only private company that has received funds from the Public Enterprise Investment Fund. Other companies that received funds were Needhams Point Holdings Limited,

Fund Access, the National Sports Council and the Tourism Loan Fund because the Government uses this fund as a vehicle for investment in the private but publicly owned companies. These companies are referred to as private companies because they are not statutory corporations but function under the general aegis of the Companies Act so in that sense they are private companies but are still owned by State.

Sir, there is accountability of these companies through Government's many agencies including the little-used Public Accounts Committee under the chairmanship of the Leader of the Opposition.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Yes, the Public Accounts Committee is not run by any Minister or the Prime Minister but is a Committee of Parliament whose Chairman is the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. President, we expect that Her Majesty's loyal Opposition would do its job. We have not heard that the Government has frustrated the Committee and that it is not able to function. Sir, if that was so, they should report to the general public that things are going wrong, that they are seeking to investigate the problems and that they are being frustrated by the action of the Government.

Sir, they have not said that they have any problem because everything is above board. Government is not spending money in secret, everything is done in full view including the investment in Hotels and Resorts Limited and even the worst detractors have admitted that it is a very good concept.

The President of the Democratic Labour Party said that the GEMS was a good concept so I do not understand the fuss now. It is crucial that the question of accountability must always be the order of the day and accountability is assured because a report comes to Parliament every quarter on the Public Enterprise Investment Fund.

Sir, time will show that the investment in GEMS was a good one. We do not accept the criticism because we know that the hotels on the south coast need upgrading and, as a result of the investment made on the south coast by Hotels and Resorts Limited, there is a general move towards upgrading properties on the south coast.

The Government, through the same Public Enterprise Investment Fund is now involved in the rebuilding of the Hilton which will dominate the landscape in that part of the island.

Sir, if we mind our detractors, we would do nothing but we will not get into that state of inactivity because we

are not afraid. We know what we are doing and we will ensure that whatever is done will be able to stand the test of public scrutiny. We will let the Public Accounts Committee get on with its work in an unfettered and unhindered way because we do not believe that anything should be done in secrecy.

Sir, the records of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund show that to date we have spent \$28 million in Hotels and Resorts Limited and when we look at the indebtedness *vis-a-vis* their assets, the picture looks good.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Yes, if you compare assets and liabilities, it is a very good investment. Sir, the public can rest assured that the management of the finance of this country can stand up to any reasonable test.
4.05 p.m.

One of the things this Government has done over the past eight years, is to ensure that fiscal responsibility is the order of the day. The same Act requires us not to run the ways and means level above 10 per cent of estimated revenue.

Sir, I was in this Chamber, on the Other Side, when this Act was broken routinely, not once but on many occasions. The then Government came to Parliament to raise the limit from 10 per cent of revenue to 17 ½ per cent. To add insult to public injury, they sought to break the limit that they imposed.

Mr. President, I must remember this because it resulted in thousands of Barbadian families not being able to look after their needs. I cannot forget that as a result of the breaking of this Act, it caused untold misery in the Barbadian economy and for three or four years we suffered economic decline. When I hear that we slipped in our rating since 1992, I say, that may be so. Is it not the results of those years, 1991-1993, when an 'economic hurricane' ripped through Barbados? The breaking of this Act then caused a catastrophic occurrence in this land.

Sir, one of the first things we did when we were returned to office in 1994, within a year or so, we went back to this same Act and carried the limit back to a sensible level of 10 per cent, which was operating for decades. We did what was necessary to ensure that this Act was not broken. Sir, not only that, we ensured that the fiscal deficit was always kept to a minimum; so much so that when the events of September 11 occurred, our economy was so well managed, that we are still in shock because our foreign reserves did not fall.

Sir, borrowing has been a part of our management system for years, since Independence. The point is, because we managed this well and we followed the spirit of the Financial Administration and Audit Act and we have kept good discipline, we were able to borrow to make sure that our resources do not fall. Even in those difficult times when we went to the economic market for the loan, in a short period of time we had several reputable firms that were willing to lend us the money. We then had the luxury of being able to choose which financial institution we would borrow from.

Sir, a year after the events of September 11, our reserves are still strong, unemployment is on a decline and tourism is rebounding because we made sure that we followed the Act, which we are here discussing, and we paid attention to discipline.

Mr. President, we went through a crisis and we did not have to send home 3 000 public workers.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, in 1991, under less severe circumstances, we did not send home 3 000 workers.

Sir, we have nothing to be ashamed of. We see this Act as one that is necessary and one which brings discipline to the management of the economic affairs of the country. On this side, we know that we have to make some minor changes to the Act in order to bring it in line with reality and this is what we have done.

I heard the comment being made that to pay people weekly is going to cause financial hardship. I do not necessarily agree with that because Barbadians are accustomed to managing their affairs in a correct manner. Some people might even prefer to be paid every two weeks in order that they could make larger payments on their bills. I do not accept that point as being a substantive point. Being paid every two weeks is going to make life easier and it is going to make the administration of the accounting department more manageable.

I thank you.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: The point has been made that the Government has agreed to repay \$30 million and evidence has been presented, which demonstrated that the source from which these funds could be paid without Parliamentary approval, this is from the Public Enterprise Investment Fund. It is impossible to pay it from this source because they only have \$48 million left in the account so you cannot pay \$30 million out of it.
5.15 p.m.

Sir, if you have arranged to pay this \$30 million by the end of this month, certainly, some explanation needs to be made. Sir, that is only the principal and, obviously, if you are going to repay the bonds earlier, you will have to pay interest, and some penalties will be incurred as well.

What is the source of the funds for repayment or settling of these bonds, and if you are going to pay it back, do you require Parliament approval? This is what we would like the Government to address and tell the people of Barbados. Sir, if you are talking about transparency and accountability, then let the people of Barbados know precisely what is happening in such important events.

Clearly, the fluctuation of this Fund has been amazing. We have gone in the course of about two years, from the Fund being at \$99.8 million at one point, to \$9.8 million. When you look at the areas in which the expenditure went, it seems as though the Government has been using this Fund as some sort of slush fund. Whenever you want to pay out some money without the people of Barbados knowing what you are doing with it, you dip your hands in this Fund. This is a fund which was criticised severely...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator McClean, are you speaking to the Bill before us? I have allowed a fair amount of latitude in this debate. In fact, a tremendous amount of latitude, but you have not laid any foundation on which you are referring to the Public Enterprise Investment Fund.

In other words, I am not sure if you are speaking to the Bill which is before us.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, the Government Members sought to respond to a point raised and in my view, they have not done so successfully.

I do not have to go any further. We have made the point. They have failed to respond and I am just asking them to come clean with the people of Barbados. Let us know, precisely, what is happening with respect to the repayment of the money for HRL.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Thank you.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I move that this Bill be now moved a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT, the Senate resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN in the Chair.
COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1, 2, 3 and 4 were called and passed.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to HIS HONOUR THE PRESIDENT, the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Financial Administration and Audit (Amendment) Act, 2002.

ORDER NO. 10 – THE INSURANCE (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL, 2002

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, this Bill seeks to amend the Insurance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill. The original Act took effect in August 1998 and it essentially allowed for the creation of qualifying insurance companies. These qualifying insurance companies had to show that at least 90 per cent of their gross revenue is from insurance premiums which originated outside Barbados and, similarly, 90 per cent of the risks associated with these companies also originated outside Barbados.

Sir, the Canadian affiliate's rules in the year 1995 were amended and it was held then, that Canadian exempt insurance companies were not residents in Barbados, as they were not subject to a most comprehensive tax regime in Barbados. Hence, they could not benefit from the exempt surplus treatment within Canada. In order to maintain our attractiveness to these Canadian companies, the Insurance Act, Cap. 310 was amended to meet these requirements, that is, of the Canadian affiliates rule.

However, this applies only until December 31, 2002. According to the present Act, Barbados and Canada have not concluded their negotiations in this regard. I certainly expect that these negotiations will continue in May, 2003 after the Federal Spring Budget. In the light of these developments, the amendment now seeks to extend this Act from December 31, 2002 to December 31, 2003.

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

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT the Senate resolved in Committee on the Bill, HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

The Schedule became the Schedule to the Bill.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to HIS HONOUR Mr. PRESIDENT the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Insurance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2002.

ORDER NO. 3 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN
OF THE PARCEL OF LAND SITUATE AT
PARISH LAND IN THE PARISH OF
ST. PHILIP IN THIS ISLAND FOR
THE PUBLIC PURPOSE OF
HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

SENATOR THE HON J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, this Resolution seeks permission of this Honourable Chamber for the Government to acquire 16.7 hectares of land at Parish Land in St. Philip for housing development.

This land forms part of lands that originally belonged to Oughterson Plantation which consists of 42 acres of land. A small percentage of this land was made a tenantry, while the remainder is made up of rab and pasture lands. By a Will of 1662 of one Richard Carpenter, the Vestry of St. Philip and its successors in office were left in Perpetual Trust to manage and distribute the proceeds from this land among 20 poor persons in this said parish.

Sir, this land has been successively administered by the Vestry of St. Philip, the Southern District Council, the Interim Commission of Local Government and finally, by the Collector of Taxes in St. Philip, under the Ministry of Finance.

There are no known direct descendants of Richard Carpenter who could lay claim to the proceeds of this Estate. The Government in 1971 had consented that after the last lease had expired, that the Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC) would manage the said land. However, the ADC, after accepting the original conditions of the lease, then decided that it would be feasible to rent these lands at the stipulated price of \$1 000 per year, since it was discovered that only approximately 20 acres of the 42 acres of the land were arable.

4.25 p.m.

As a result, the Barbados Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) is no longer in charge of the land and the Land Tax Division of the Ministry of Finance in St. Philip is now entrusted with this responsibility.

A decision was taken in July 2000 that the land should be compulsorily acquired so that the qualified tenants could purchase the lots at 10 cents per square foot and this would be paid to the Accountant General and any residual land would be vested in the National Housing Corporation (NHC) for housing development. This area comprises some 25 households, 22 of which are owned by the individuals living in them and approximately 10 of these households pay rent for the land. The majority of the people, over 78 per cent of them, have been living in this area for more than ten years and it is felt that in these circumstances this land should be made available to these people. This venture is all part of Government's housing plan.

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

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

ORDER NO. 12 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN OF
A PARCEL OF LAND SITUATE AT WESTBURY
ROAD IN THE PARISH OF ST. MICHAEL IN
THIS ISLAND FOR THE PUBLIC PURPOSE
OF FACILITATING CONSTRUCTION
WORK ON THE BRIDGETOWN
BY-PASS ROAD IMPROVE-
MENT PROJECT

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, this Resolution seeks to compulsorily acquire a parcel of land measuring 233.3 square metres at Westbury Road, St. Michael to facilitate construction work on the Bridgetown By-Pass Road Improvement Project. The survey of the land has been done and the specifics are attached.

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

SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD: Mr. President, I support this Resolution but I want to comment on something that the Minister of Physical Development and the Environment said recently which I thought was very positive. She commented on the need in terms of housing to build higher because of the limited land space of this country. She also said that it was important that we pay more attention to the planting of trees on the landscape whether Government is acquiring land for residential development or for the expansion of highways.

I think that Housing development must be seen as more than just the construction of houses. It must be seen as creating communities with the proper planting of trees and shrubs and providing open spaces for children to meet and play and for the adults to recreate together which is everything that a community requires. You hear so much about the 'boys on the block' and I suspect that one of the reasons for that is because they are no places where they can meet to recreate together.

We have already seen how the placing of potted palms in Bridgetown has beautified the City. I just hope that they would not be vandalised or used as garbage disposal bins. A provision has been made to water those palms to keep them looking fresh and clean and they do make a tremendous difference to the appearance of Bridgetown and I commend the Government for it. There is also the planting of palms from the Sir Garfield Sobers Roundabout going east almost up to the airport. These things are very important if we really want to live in a civilised setting. Function is one thing but the aesthetics are equally important.

I want to commend the Government for doing this and I want to commend the Minister for encouraging not only housing development but seeing housing development as part of the community development.

With those few remarks, Sir, once again I support this Resolution.

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

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

ORDER NO. 11 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN OF
A PARCEL OF LAND SITUATE AT COTTAGE
IN THE PARISH OF ST. GEORGE IN THIS
ISLAND FOR THE PUBLIC PURPOSES OF
HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, ROAD
IMPROVEMENT AND THE PRO-
VISION OF PUBLIC
ACCESS

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, this Resolution seeks the approval of the Senate to compulsorily acquire 4.5 hectares of land at Cottage, St. George for housing development, road improvement and the provision of public access.

This is part of an acquisition which started last year. There were three portions of land which were required and this forms the third one. Two have already been acquired and this will be the third one to be utilised for housing development in St. George.

The relevant survey has been carried out and with these few remarks, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Mr. President, I know this is just the end of the acquisition up at Cottage. It finishes off that area of good agricultural land which is put into housing.

I mentioned before when we first acquired it a couple years ago that I have very serious concerns about the drainage in this area at Cottage because the natural drainage is down at the back of St. Augustine's Church which runs into a gully but the gully opens out flat when it gets into Market Hill just to the east of the service station. That area has been built up wrongly because over the years people have built houses on it. It was not much of a danger when it was in agriculture because the water was absorbed by the soil and the crops but now that we are turning it into concrete I have serious worries that if we get a rainfall in excess of 5 inches of rain that we will have a serious problem of drainage. Therefore, I believe that we should dig some large soak-away, a dam or some kind of a hole in the ground because I do not think that suck-wells are going to be adequate for this kind of water run off that is going to occur after we finish the whole housing development.

That brings me on to the question of the whole land use because this land is shown in the National Physical and Development Plan as agricultural land. This National and Physical Development Plan was laid in Parliament which we got a copy of. It was laid since 1998 and in a couple months it would be five years since this Plan was presented. We paid a lot of money for this Plan and it is supposed to be revamped every ten years and we have had five years in which nothing has happened. It is just sitting in Cabinet because Cabinet has not approved it.
4.35 p.m.

According to this Document we have received today, Cabinet has not approved it. It is sitting waiting for an approval so that we can debate the issue. We were supposed to have had Town Hall meetings. We had something when it was in draft but since it had been amended, it has never seen the light of day.

Following that, we paid another large sum of money for something called the area development, which specifically dealt with the rural areas. Everything was done in the reverse – the Area Development Plan should have been done first, then fed into the Physical Development Plan. A lot of money was spent on it. That was a very useful document but I have never seen a copy of it. In fact, I was once asked to be a consultant on that plan but then I was informed that they said I could not, that they would not accept any advice from me.

We need guidance. Everybody in this country is crying out. I do not know how the Town Planning Department

has been able to operate within the last five years. They are operating with a plan that has not been approved by Parliament. It is not an official plan and could be easily challenged. Can someone give me an explanation as to why we have refused to put this plan into action? We speak of a National Park as a major part of the plan. People who own land in that area know what is happening. Thank you, Mr. President.

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, this brings us to the end of Government's Business for today, indeed, for the year.

I wish to thank the staff of Parliament particularly the Clerks, the Stenographers, the Marshals, the Security, the Police, the clerical staff and, of course, the caterers, not only for their help today but for their support, their diligence and their helpfulness during the past year. I want on the behalf of my colleagues, to wish them and their families a very Blessed Christmas and a Blessed New Year.

To you, Sir, my colleagues and other Senators, I wish on the behalf of the Government of Barbados, to extend God's richest blessings to you all and wish you the very best wishes for the New Year.

As a physician, I also want to caution you about over-indulgence, not only in alcohol but also in foods during the festive season. You must remember that overindulgence is overindulgence of any kind.

I also want to say that I look forward to a new year in interacting with you all in doing the people's business, which promises to be a very eventful year.

I now beg to move that this Sitting be adjourned *sine die*.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. President, on behalf of the Opposition, I rise to wish other Senators a very happy and rewarding Christmas and a prosperous New Year. In fact, I do look forward to a very long term. I very much enjoy how the debates in this Senate have been heating up and I can see them getting even more excited in the coming year. Therefore, having had a good year in the Senate, which was extremely well presided over by Mr. President, I can say that the future looks bright.

SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD: Thank you, Mr. President. May I, on the behalf of Independent Senators, support the sentiments which have been expressed by the Leader of Government's Business and the Leader of the Opposition, to you and to other Honourable Members of the Senate, all persons who service the Senate so capably, all the best wishes for Christmas and for the New Year. I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Before putting the motion, I would like to thank the Senators who have spoken for their kind remarks and best wishes.

I too would like to thank all Honourable Senators for the contributions which they have made towards the smooth functioning of the Chamber and for their support.

We have been very seriously cautioned by Doctor the Honourable Leader of the Senate and I think we will take it very seriously. There is also the promise from him and also from Senator Mascoll for an eventful year ahead of us. I think from our various perspectives, we look forward to that.

I would like to extend to all Honourable Senators; your families; the Clerks; members of Staff; the Press and all those who make the work we do much easier, all the blessings of Christmas. I hope for all of us, a happy, healthy and productive 2003.

The question that the Honourable Senate do now adjourn sine die was put and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly.
4.45 p.m.

CONTENTS

MINUTES

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Wednesday, 18th December, 2002 at 11.00 a.m.

PAPERS

Senator the Hon. J. X. WALCOTT 1

6. The National Biodiversity Strategy and Plan for Barbados.
7. Annual Report of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council for the period April 1, 2000 to March 31, 2001.
3. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Caribbean Gift and Craft Show) Order, 2002.
4. Value Added Tax (Refund) (Barbados Children's Trust Incorporated) 2002.
5. Report of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund for the Quarter ended September 30, 2002.

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE
BUSINESS OF THE SENATE**Senator the Hon. J. X. WALCOTT 1**

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER

Suspension of Standing Orders Nos. 21(2) and 45(2).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Senator the Hon. J. X. WALCOTT 2

6. The Financial Administration and Audit (Amendment) Bill, 2002.
7. National Insurance and Social Security (Amendment) Bill, 2002.
8. A Bill to amend the Landlord and Tenant Act, Cap. 230.
9. A Bill to amend the Land Registration Act, Cap. 229.
10. The Insurance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, 2002.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 4 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE EDUCATION (PROGRAMME OF ADULT EDUCATION) REGULATIONS, 2002 MADE BY THE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR EDUCATION ON THE 12TH DAY OF AUGUST, 2002 UNDER SECTION 59(2)(a) AND (d) OF THE ACT 2

Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, 2; Senator LeR. H. McClean, 2, 4; Senator the Hon. Dame Patricia Symmonds, 3, 12; Senator the Hon. G. S. H. Murray, 7; Senator Mrs. P. E. Rickinson, 8; Senator C. A. Mascoll, 10; Senator P. C. Goddard, 10.

ORDER NO. 8 – LANDLORD AND TENANT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2002 14

Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, 14; Senator LeR. H. McClean, 14.

COMMITTEE

Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, 15.

ORDER NO. 9 – LAND REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2002 14

Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, 15; Senator LeR. H. McClean, 15; His Honour Senator C. L. Bolden, 15.

ORDER NO. 7 – NATIONAL INSURANCE AND SOCIAL SECURITY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2002 16

Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, 16, 20; Senator B. R. Collymore, 17; His Honour Senator C. L. Bolden, 20.

COMMITTEE

Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, 21.

ORDER NO. 6 – FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND AUDIT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2002 . . . 21

Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, 21; Senator C. A. Mascoll, 21; Senator T. E. Barker, 22; Senator the Hon. G. S. H. Murray, 25.

COMMITTEE

Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, 29.

ORDER NO. 10 – INSURANCE
(MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL,
2002 29

Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, 29.

COMMITTEE

Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, 30.

ORDER NO. 3 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE
CROWN OF THE PARCEL OF LAND
SITUATE AT PARISH LAND IN THE
PARISH OF SAINT PHILIP IN THIS ISLAND
MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN
THE SCHEDULES TO THIS RESOLUTION
FOR THE PUBLIC PURPOSE OF HOUSING
DEVELOPMENT 30

Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, 30.

ORDER NO. 12 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE
CROWN OF THE PARCEL OF LAND
SITUATE AT WESTBURY ROAD IN THE
PARISH OF SAINT MICHAEL IN THIS
ISLAND AND MORE PARTICULARLY
DESCRIBED IN THE SCHEDULE TO THIS
RESOLUTION FOR THE PUBLIC
PURPOSE OF FACILITATING
CONSTRUCTION WORK ON THE
BRIDGETOWN BY-PASS ROAD IMPROVE-
MENT PROJECT 30

Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, 30; Senator Sir
John Stanley Goddard, 30.

ORDER NO. 11 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE
CROWN OF THE PARCEL OF LAND
SITUATE AT COTTAGE IN THE PARISH OF
SAINT GEORGE IN THIS ISLAND AND
MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN
THE SCHEDULE HERETO FOR THE
PURPOSES OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENT,
ROAD IMPROVEMENT AND THE
PROVISION OF PUBLIC ACCESS 31

Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, 31; Senator C. K.
Laurie, 31.

SUSPENSION 15

ADJOURNMENT 32

Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, 32; Senator C.
A. Mascoll, 32; Senator Sir John Stanley
Goddard, 32; Mr. President, 32.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

BARKER, Senator T. E.
BOLDEN, His Honour Senator C. L.
COLLYMORE, Senator B. R.
GODDARD, Senator P. C.
GODDARD, Senator Sir John Stanley
GOLLOP, His Honour Sir Fred
LAURIE, Senator C. K.
MASCOLL, Senator C. A.
McCLEAN, Senator LeR. H.
MURRAY, Senator the Hon. G. S. H.
RICKINSON, Senator Mrs. P. E.
SYMMONDS, Senator the Hon. Dame Patricia
WALCOTT, Senator the Hon. J. X.

