THE

SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2003 – 2008

THE SENATE

Wednesday, August 24, 2005

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Wednesday, 24th August, 2005, at 11.00 a.m.

PRESENT

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

Her Honour Senator Dame Patricia SYMMONDS, D.B.E., G.C.M. (Deputy President)

Senator the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH, G.C.M., B.A., (Econ. & Hist.) Dip. Pub. Admin., M.S.C. (Financial Studies), J.P. (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Leader of the Senate)

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

Senator the Hon. J. E. D. WILLIAMS, B.Sc. (Hons.), M.Sc., M.B.A., J.P. (Minister of State Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Civil Service)

Senator Sir ROY TROTMAN, K.A., M.A.

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

Senator the Hon. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON, S.C.M., B.A. (Spec. Hons.), M.A., LL.B. (Hons.) (U.W.I.), F.L.A. (Gt. Brit.), L.E.C.

Senator R. W. GRANT, B.A. (Econ.), G.Dip., M.A. J.P. (Parliamentary Secretary Ministry of Tourism and International Transport)

Senator the Hon. Miss L. V. EASTMOND, LL.B. (Hons.), LL.M. (Minister of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development)

Senator I. St. C. LINTON

Senator G. P. B. NICHOLLS, B.Sc. (Hons.), LL.B. (Hons.)

Senator Miss P. E. PARRIS, J.P.

Senator G. P. I. GOODING-EDGHILL

Senator Miss. S. C. V. HUSBANDS, B.A. (Hons.)

Senator F. J. STUART, B.A., LL.M.

Senator Dr. D. S. LOWE, Ph.D., Dip. Theology, B.A., MED, ED.D.

Senator the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLOW, G.C.M., B.A. (Hons.) (Dunelm)

Senator Dr. F. L. CHANDLER, Ph.D., B.Sc. (Hons.)

Senator R. O. Marville, B.A. (Hons.) M.A. African Studies, M.B.A.

Prayers were led by Father Errington Massiah.

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Senate is in session.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I am commanded to lay the following documents:

1. Report of the Supervisor of Insurance for the year 2002.

2. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Betty Russell) Order, 2005.

3. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Agricultural Development Fund) Order, 2005.

4. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Barbados Association of Retired Persons Inc.) Order, 2005.

5. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Aerosols Limited) Order, 2005.

6. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Curacao Laboratories (Barbados) Limited) Order, 2005.

7. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Estate of Lillian Hinds (Deceased) (Woodville House)) Order, 2005.

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11. Shipping (Incentives) (Island Safari (Barbados) Limited) Order, 2005.

12. Forensic Procedures and DNA Identification (Fees) Regulation, 2005.

13. Annual Report of the Barbados Port Authority for the year 2003.

14. Environmental Levy Order, 2005.

15. Excise Tax (Rate of Tax) (No. 2) Order, 2005.

16. Excise Tax (Rate of Tax) (No. 3) Order, 2005.

17. Report on the Audit of the Accounts of the Severance Fund for the year 2003.

18. Report on the Audit of the Accounts of the Unemployment Fund for the year 2003.

19. Annual Report for the Transport Board for the Financial Year 2003-2004.

20. Annual Report and Financial Statements of Hotels and Resorts Limited for the Fiscal Year January 1 to December 31, 2001.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to give notice of the following Bills:

1. Income Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2005.

2. Value Added Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2005.

3. Export Promotion and Marketing Fund Bill, 2005.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg that the following Bills be read a first time.

1. Roman Catholic Bishop of Bridgetown-Kingstown (Amendment) Bill, 2005.

2. Income Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2005.

3. Value Added Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2005.

4. Export Promotion and Marketing Fund Bill, 2005.

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

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 2 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE SECTION 5 OF THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT, CAP. 228 IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN OF A PARCEL OF LAND SITUATE AT MOUNT NO. 1, MOUNT STEPNEY IN THE PARISH OF SAINT PETER IN THIS ISLAND FOR THE PUBLIC PURPOSE OF CONSTRUCTING A REPEATER STATION FOR THE ROYAL BARBADOS POLICE FORCE

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, this matter before us is a fairly straightforward and simple one and it should not detain us unduly long. The intention here is to provide a Repeater Station at Mount No. 1, Mount Stepney, St. Peter, so as to allow the Royal Barbados Police Force to be in a better position than currently exists.

Sir, at the moment there is great difficulty for persons in the parishes of St. Lucy, St. John, St. Joseph and St. Philip to communicate with their respective stations and Operations Centre because of the absence of such a facility. This is part of a proposal which this Senate considered sometime ago, to upgrade the telecommunications operations of the Royal Barbados Police Force. The Government is going to acquire this land for the establishment of a Repeater Station, which, when completed, would facilitate better communication between

persons in the Royal Barbados Police Force, especially those who are out in the field, either on foot or patrol by vehicles, could communicate easily with the stations.

Sir, therefore, I beg to move that this Resolution be passed.

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

ORDER NO. 3 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT, CAP. 228 THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN OF A PARCEL OF LAND SITUATE AT ASHBY AVENUE NO. 3, OISTINS IN THE PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH IN THIS ISLAND FOR THE PUBLIC PURPOSE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACCESS ROAD

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, this matter is a long outstanding matter which resulted from the acquisition by the Crown of a parcel of land at Welches, Oistins, for the relocation of persons who were affected when Highway 7 work was being repaired. There were six lots in the particular area. The original owner of the land, Mr. Barnett, continued to retain ownership of Lots 1 and 2, while the Crown took ownership of Lots 3, 4, 5 and 6. It turned out though, Mr. President, that while Lots 4, 5 and 6 are easily accessible from the Highway that Lot 3 is landlocked and the persons on that Lot can only have access to it by passing through Lots 1 and 2, which are owned by Mr. Barnett.
11.30 p.m.

The intention of this Resolution is to acquire the portion of land from another landowner, Ms. Vita Blackman, so as to create an access from the Highway to Lot 2, and it is simply an effort to make sure that the persons on Lot 3 can access their property easily.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Mr. President, I think it is noteworthy that the State is seeking to alleviate any difficulties these residents may have in accessing their homes from the Highway 7 thoroughfare and it is, in fact, a good thing that the level of sensitivity relative to residents who, from time to time have difficulties because the land or lots on which they reside may be locked into other arrangements.

What comes to mind, Mr. President, is that there are a number of individuals, not only in the Christ Church area but in other areas who are having similar difficulties. I am aware that the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission are doing what they can to ease some of these situations. I want to extend the appeal further to urge Government to be mindful that there are persons out there who are having these difficulties and that once these circumstances are brought to the attention of the Government, whatever needs to be done, within reason, will be done to alleviate this stress.

It is not easy when people are constructing nice homes and then have difficulty in getting to them. Whether or not they try to get there by foot, sometimes people want to prohibit them from crossing their lots, and by motor vehicle is even more difficult.

I do not want to be specific in locations but there are a couple of locations that I am quite sure, the good Minister, the Leader of Government Business is aware of and we would want to urge that all that can be done within the spirit of this particular Resolution be done to ensure that those problems are alleviated for the ordinary citizens of Barbados.

Mr. President, I thank you.

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

ORDER NO. 4 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE GUARANTEE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF BARBADOS OF THE PRINCIPAL AND INTEREST NECESSARY FOR THE REDEMPTION OF THE BOND ISSUE BY THE QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL BOARD IN THE SUM OF TWENTY-FIVE MILLION BARBADOS DOLLARS

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, as you are aware, under the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Act, Chapter 54, the Board of the Hospital is authorised, subject to approval in writing from the Minister of Finance to borrow money from a source and upon such terms and conditions with respect to the borrowing as the Minister responsible for Finance stipulates, for the purpose of meeting the Board's obligations or performing any of its functions under the Act.

The Hospital, as you know from September 1, will be functioning as a Board and the present arrangement is that unlike what took place previously, the Hospital will now be retaining any fees which it obtains from the sale of its various services. It will also be able to borrow from time to time, if it so desires, to support its operations of one kind or another.

I am sure that the Members of the Board will use that authority wisely and will borrow when they have the capital projects and they will not just borrow willy-nilly. As you are aware, the mere fact that the Government is guaranteeing the repayment of the loan makes it a contingent liability on the part of the Government, so that if there is any problem with the repayment, the responsibility falls to the Government as the guarantor to make sure that everything is in order.

The purpose of the loan is to assist with the upgrading of the Hospital. All of us from time to time speak about what needs to be done at the hospital out of a desire, of course, to see that the premier health institution which we have in the country is kept in a state that will allow it to provide the best possible service to the people of this country. Therefore, I am sure that we will be supportive of any effort to upgrade the facilities there.

The bulk of the money is going to be used to upgrade the imaging facilities of the Hospital which have to do with X-rays, CT scans and things of that nature. There is going to be some construction work as well to do with the upgrading of the Outpatients Clinic and such areas. If you see the numbers of persons who attend the Outpatients Clinic of the Hospital in a year, it is such a huge number that I am sure it will take many people by surprise.

Therefore, it is clear that it performs very vital services to the persons who have to use it and any effort to make that area more accommodating to those who have to use it, is welcome. As I said, the bulk of the money will be used to upgrade the imaging facilities at the Hospital. The construction work is going to be in areas such as the Outpatients Clinic. This is part of the upgrading of the facilities of the Hospital.

As you know, there is presently in place, a study being undertaken by a group which is looking at the whole redevelopment of the Hospital and, over time, we will all be seeing a significant improvement in those facilities there.

The terms of the loan are set out in the Resolution before us. The loan is $25 million and it is being obtained from CITICORP Merchant Bank Limited. The repayment period is seven years. The rate is fixed at 4.9 per cent and, of course, it is subject to increases as LIBOR changes. The principal is to be repaid at maturity. The Government is asked to guarantee the loan.
11.40 a.m.

Mr. President, I am happy to support this Resolution because I am satisfied that the money is going to be used for a worthwhile purpose and I am sure that all Senators would agree with that, therefore I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: Mr. President, I do not intend to delay this Chamber on this Resolution having regards to the fact that just a few weeks ago a fairly expansive debate took place in this Chamber on the hospital and I do not think there have been any qualitative changes of too significant a nature which might have occurred between when that debate took place and today.

Mr. President, I think there may be differences of philosophy between the Government and the Opposition as regard what should or should not happen at the hospital, but I think that Both Sides agree that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is our treasured tertiary care institution and that it is to that institution that we all have to appear when exposed to any of the thousands natural shocks to which human flesh is aired, so there is no merit in making the Hospital the target of weekly or monthly controversy.

Mr. President, the Hospital has been there for some time and we accept that it has to be upgraded. The equipment has become worn and the range of its services has expanded tremendously during the course of its life and it is only natural that from time to time resolutions of this kind would have to come before Parliament to facilitate improvements and replacements at the Hospital.

Mr. President, I accept the assurance of the Minister that the Bds $25 million being borrowed would be sensibly and prudently spent and that we will all be the better off for this expenditure. Of course, we are aware that there has been some tumult at the Hospital over the last few months having regards to the fact that it is in transition from one structure of administration to another, but we all hope that tumult would soon be over and that all at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital will be able to settle down very soon to the business of caring for those who come within the jurisdiction and superintendence of it.

Mr. President, we do not oppose this Resolution. We look forward to the timely or the soon upgrading of the facilities of the Hospital. I believe I heard the Minister say that quite a large portion of the funds would be used to upgrade the imaging facilities at the Hospital which is an area of critical importance to the dispensation of effective tertiary health care. Therefore, we look forward to the upgrade and the improvement of the capital requirements of the hospital.

With those few words, Mr. President, I should like to assure the Government that the Opposition has no objection to the Resolution.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, before I move the passing of the Resolution, I just want to give Senator Stuart and others the assurance that the Hospital is on its way to settling down. My information is that after all the elections that took place recently that the majority of persons have agreed to go with the Board and that there is no situation where any section of the Hospital would not be adequately covered. Of course, there would be some vacancies because there are some persons who have decided not to go with the Board, so the Board of the Hospital would then be able to take steps to fill those

vacancies. However, indications are that there is a large enough number of persons to make sure that all the sections of the hospital would be adequately covered, so I think that all should go well with it.

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

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 5 – ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP OF BRIDGETOWN-KINGSTOWN (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2005

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, this matter is a fairly straightforward one. Previously, the arrangement with the Roman Catholic Church was such that Bridgetown, Barbados and Kingstown, St. Vincent were joined together.

This Bill that is before us is seeking to put into effect a decision, which was reached as far back as 1990, when the two dioceses were separated. It is no longer the case where it is now Bridgetown-Kingstown, it is now simply Bridgetown. Therefore, the amendment before us is simply seeking to remove the word Kingstown from the existing legislation. On that basis, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: Mr. President, once again I see nothing of great moment in the amendment before this Chamber. I think the Minister has made clear the thinking behind the amendment to the Bill.

Mr. President, I just want to say that the Roman Catholic Church has made a mighty contribution to the development of this region. It is not the dominant Christian denomination in Barbados for historical reasons that have to do with the colonising power of Barbados and the hot and sometimes very bloody issues that were fought out on English and European soils in the contest between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. It first made its presence felt in what we know today as the Latin American region in the 15th Century and seeped, as it were, into the English-speaking Caribbean as the colonising practices and the colonising deals of European powers were worked out from time to time. Mr. President, however the Roman Catholic Church got into Barbados, it has made a massive contribution to the stability of this country and, of course, has a very significant and disciplined following here in Barbados. It still wields a lot of influence across the world as the recent developments around the replacement of Pope John Paul II would have indicated. Sir, as a denomination, it still resonates across the world and that the Vatican is, as it were, a separate state in international law, to which ambassadors are sent by nation states, is an indication of the authority that is still being wielded by the Roman Catholic Church across the world.
11.50 a.m.

Sir, here in Barbados I am impressed by the fact that, as an established Church, it has been able to attract as many young people as it obviously does and to reach out into the society by offering social and educational programmes that re-enforce and parallel the efforts being made by the State to ensure that stability reigns in Barbados.

Mr. President, this amendment as indicated, seeks to separate the Diocese of Kingstown and Bridgetown and that too should come as no surprise. I believe the Bridgetown Diocese has grown and has become more sophisticated and can therefore justify a separate existence from the collaborative arrangements that existed between Bridgetown and Kingstown historically.

Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to express gratitude to the Roman Catholic Church for the contribution which it has made to the stability of Barbados and hope that it would continue to grow from strength to strength. I am aware that there have been in recent times, some questions about the rigidity of some aspects of its theology, but in a world torn by as many volcanic changes as we have been witnessing, that there is a church prepared to stand for what it believes, which challenges those whose quest is for stability to stay with it, rather than to behave in a kind of communionic way, adapting itself to every different change or wind of doctrine.

Sir, there is something to be particularly respected about that and I particularly enjoyed the debate that followed the accession of the new Pope Benedict XVI, when questions were raised about the inflexibility of a Roman Catholic doctrine, that there were persons in the Catholic Church who were prepared to stand and say that the Church was not here to adapt itself to what was happening in the world, as much as it was here to provide guidance and leadership to the world.

Mr. President, of course, there are limits to which that can go but it is still to be respected that with all the changes taking place around us, that there is an institution prepared to stand for something and to challenge people to walk with it.

Mr. President, with those few words, I conclude by repeating that the Bill has our support. I am obliged to you.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg that this Bill, be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH the Senate resolved itself into Committee on the Bill. Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: This Senate is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 – 2 inclusive were called and passed.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, MADAM DEPUTY PRESIDENT reported to HIS HONOUR the PRESIDENT, the passing of the Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Bill, be now passed and be cited as the Roman Catholic Bishop of Bridgetown-Kingstown (Amendment) Act, 2005.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. PRESIDENT, I beg to move that this Honourable Senate do now adjourn until Monday, 29th August, 2005, at 11.00 a.m.

The question that the Honourable Senate do now adjourn until Monday, 29th August, 2005, at 11.00 a.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly.
11.58 a.m.

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SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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Standing Order No. 45(2) was suspended for the remainder of the Sitting.

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