

THE SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2003 – 2008

THE SENATE

Wednesday, December 16, 2005

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Friday, December 16, 2005, at 11.15 a.m.

PRESENT

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

Senator the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH, G.C.M., J.P., B.A. (Econ. & Hist.), Dip. Pub. Admin., M.Sc. (Financial Studies) (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 Ministry of the Civil Service)

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

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

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

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: This Senate is in Session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HER HONOUR MADAM DEPUTY PRESIDENT

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I have an excuse for absence from Senator Dr. Chandler.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

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

1. Annual Report of the Insurance Corporation of Barbados Limited for the year 2004.
2. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Deutsche Bank Securities Inc.) Order, 2005.
3. Excise Tax (Rate of Tax) (No. 4) Order, 2005.
4. Value Added Tax (Refund) (Innotech Services Limited) Order, 2005.
5. Value Added Tax (Refund) (Hide & Seek Leisure Limited) Order, 2005.
6. Sugar Industry (Sugar Workers' Provident Fund) Order, 2005.

7. Report on the Social Investment Fund for the Quarter ended September 30, 2005.
8. Annual Reports of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation for the years 1999, 2000 and 2001.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Madam Deputy President, I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 22(1) and 45(2) be suspended for the remainder of this Sitting.

The question was put and agreed to.

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Madam Deputy President, in order that our business may move in an efficient manner, I beg to move that we elect an Acting Deputy President for this Sitting. In that context, I beg to move that Senator Newton be elected as the Acting Deputy President for this Sitting.

The question was put and agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Madam Deputy President, I beg to move that the following Bill be read a first time:

The Arts and Sports Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2005.

The question was put and agreed to.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 2 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE GUARANTEE BY THE CROWN OF THE PRINCIPAL AND INTEREST NECESSARY FOR THE REDEMPTION OF THE BOND ISSUE TO THE BARBADOS WATER AUTHORITY IN THE SUM OF \$150 MILLION

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Madam Deputy President, as you are aware, Section 19 of the Barbados Water Authority Act, 274A provides that from time to time, Parliament makes guarantee loans to that Authority. The Resolution before us is seeking approval for guarantee to be provided by the Government in the sum of \$150 million over a 25-year period. These funds are being provided by the Barbados National Bank Financial and Trust Corporation and as indicated in the Resolution are to be used to refinance existing debt and to finance the capital works of the Authority.

Madam Deputy President, according to the information before us, out of the \$150 million, that \$100 million would be used to finance existing debt. The objective is to improve the cash flow position of the Authority by using this financing because the interest rates are lower than those which are now attached to the existing debt. Madam Deputy President, that will give the Barbados Water Authority an opportunity to improve its cashflow position and engage in its normal activities in a more efficient manner.
11.20 a.m.

In addition to that, the \$50 million will be used to support the very important capital programme which the Barbados Water Authority is currently putting in place to improve its operations and to provide a better service to its clients.

Sir, as you know, Barbados is one of a number of countries which are described as water-scarce countries. It is well-known to all of us that we do not have any rivers from which we can obtain water to provide for our various uses. We have to depend on the underground sources. Therefore, the annual rainfall is very critical in terms of whether we have large quantities of water available. As a result, during the dry period of the year, we tend to have a problem with water and a number of areas of the countries sometimes suffer difficulties.

Sir, what makes the situation worse is the fact that over the years we have seen a significant increase of the activities in the construction sector, therefore, a growing demand for water. That is compounded by the fact that for many years, we as a nation have practiced the wastage of water. I am sure that all Honourable Members present can recite examples where we observe wastage on a regular basis.

Recently, I was taking an early morning walk and I saw a gentleman wetting his plants in his flower garden. I watched him for about fifteen minutes apply water at full blast to a particular plant. No doubt, in the belief that the more water used the better it was for the plant, when in truth and in fact we know, that is not true. It would probably do the plant more damage than anything else.

Sir, there he was applying this water without any worry, because we have it at this point in time in abundance, so it does not matter. That is the normal thing.

Madam Deputy President, when the water for whatever reason is not available and we have to catch it from other areas in buckets, we will discover that those of us who stay in the bath or run a shower for an hour will now be able to complete that task in five minutes, using a fraction of the water that we otherwise would have used. Even when we have to pour a little water to the plants we do that

cautiously. Madam Deputy President, it is a pity that we do not check to see if the plant does better then than it would when we apply large quantities of water.

Madam Deputy President, sometime last year, I made a visit to the processing hall of the Bridgetown Fishing Complex and I saw a spectacle there that shocked me. I am still wrestling to get it stopped. I saw in the processing hall pipes running at full steam. I enquired from the attendant what was going on and he told me that this has been the habit for years. He said that if the market is open at 6 o'clock in the morning, the processors turn on the taps at full blast and they run from 6.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m., or when the market closes.

Madam Deputy President, all day long the water is running full blast and I questioned this practice. In that particular case the Government pays the bill, while the individual pays a very small fee for using the facility per day. I then enquired of him if that did not do more harm to the fish and he said that he was of that view. Barbados is the only place in the region where this practice happens. All the other countries, apparently, had water saving devices, which you press when necessary, for a controlled amount of water. However, for some strange reason our folks have got into the habit of allowing the water to run all day long and all night long; if you make the mistake of keeping the market open, all night long as well.

Madam, that is wastage. Added to the problem of increasing activity in construction, therefore an increase in the demand for water, we have the issue of wastage which makes the task of the Barbados Water Authority more difficult. These are things that we will have to deal with through an appropriate educational programme to explain to persons that we have to conserve the water, not necessarily because it is scarce but because we do not need to use that amount to carry out our normal task. This is an issue we have to struggle with and which we have to correct to bring some ease to the Barbados Water Authority.

Madam, added to those two problems, the Barbados Water Authority has another challenge. Most of the mains across the island have been there for many years and are now in a bad state and have to be replaced. The Barbados Water Authority is systematically trying to get rid of all the old mains. It is a mammoth task and it is going to take them a long time to get it done. It is a task that they have to deal with. They have developed a plan to deal with it over time.

Madam, from the point of view of the consumer, the consumer would wish to see that task completed in the shortest possible time, and that places added pressure on the Barbados Water Authority to get on with its work.

Madam, the mere fact that most of those mains are old and disintegrating, often creates another problem. This is the

problem that the Barbados Water Authority has with the loss of water. There are different figures which are given by different persons as to the amount of water that is lost. I am not going to try to determine which is correct but from my investigation, water systems across the world do suffer some kind of loss I believe it is incumbent on those responsible for the management of the Barbados Water Authority particularly in the context where we are a water-scarce country, to make sure that we lose as little as possible. That is something they have to address as they seek to install new mains across the country and to put in place new management systems.

Madam Deputy President, I have to deal with the issue of water loss, particularly when we remember that we have to pump the water from underground, as a result there is a huge electricity bill.

Madam, in this day and age where the price of oil has skyrocketed, it becomes necessary for the Barbados Water Authority to get on with its work to reduce the loss of water, reduce the cost of providing the water and it will be able to provide more water, to provide a more consistent supply to persons across the country who are now experiencing difficulty.

Madam Deputy President, the Barbados Water Authority has developed an augmentation programme to augment resources. Every now and then you see, for example, that somebody living in the northern part of the island is having difficulty in obtaining water. That is occurring at a time when the plant at Spring Garden is providing excess water.
11.30 a.m.

The difficulty there is that the mains which are needed to carry the water from the reservoir at St. Stephens into the north are not there. The Barbados Water Authority has, meanwhile started on a programme laying some mains on the west coast. They have made good progress with that and the plan is to redistribute some of that water into the north.

The Barbados Water Authority is doing redistribution work in other areas. For example, in the augmentation project, they are putting in some additional mains between Westbury Road and Lewis Gap. There is a project dealing with a 6-inch main at Spring Garden to Fontabelle. There is a project in Paddock Road to Dayrells Road. There is the west coast project to which I referred, 25 000 feet of 16-inch main, which is in progress now. There is a project dealing with an 8-inch main on Highway 2A to the Lancaster junction. There is a Bagatelle development, where they are putting in a 4-inch main and that is largely to deal with a problem which those persons in the surrounding areas have experienced over time with discoloured water, rust coming from the aged pipes.

Then there is a project dealing with 10 000 feet of 8-inch main at Connell Town to Checker Hall, St. Lucy. There is the upgrading of the 3-inch main to a 6-inch main between Colleton to Six Men's in St. Peter and there is the upgrading from a 3-inch main to a 4-inch main between the Lighthouse Road to Maycocks Development in St. Lucy. There is a 4-inch main being put in at Maycocks. This gives some idea of the work which the BWA is carrying out, in order to bring relief to persons in those areas where persons have been suffering from the deficiency in the supply of water.

The BWA is also looking at making use of the technology to manage its business. As you know, they have operations all over the country. They have mains throughout Barbados and they need to move from the present system where they try to manage what is happening manually to the use of electronic means to do that, so they are now having discussions with potential suppliers to put in what they call a SCADA system. This simply means a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition system, which would allow them to know what is happening across the country on the different mains, at an earlier time than they know.

Presently, they have to depend on people noticing it and drawing to their attention because there is loss of water due to a breakage. They now want to move to the point where in a few seconds, they can know there is something wrong on this main on this part of the island.

They are also having discussion with potential suppliers about the Geographical Information System, which would allow them also to manage what is happening at the different places across the system. They are looking at other ways of improving the efficiency of their operation, so that they can become more up-to-date in managing their affairs.

Therefore, Madam Deputy President, I consider it absolutely important that the Barbados Water Authority is provided with these additional funds, not only to do the refinancing of the existing debt and reduce the amount of interest which they now pay monthly but also to allow them to engage in the capital works which are so necessary.

Madam Deputy President, if you look at the Resolution before us, you will notice the terms of the financing arrangements. As I said, the loan is to be repaid over a 25-year period. There is a moratorium on the interest for the first three years and a moratorium on the principal for the first five years.

Therefore, that arrangement would further boost what is happening, in relation to the management of their cash flows. The first two years, the interest rate would be 4.90 per cent per annum. The next five years, 5.25 per

cent per annum. The following five years, 5.80 per cent. The next five years, 6.40 per cent. The next five years, 6.85 per cent, and the last three years, 6.95 per cent. Therefore, there is an effective interest rate over the time frame of 5.7 per cent, which is a very good arrangement.

I think this is a Resolution which we should all support because all of us are interested in the improvement of the operations of the Barbados Water Authority. It now has its challenges as outlined, and while it currently provides a relatively good service, all of us want to see it reach the stage where there is no bad service and there is no part of the island which will have any difficulty outside of the normal, because as much as the Barbados Water Authority tries, there will be the occasion when a pipe will get broken because of some activity on the road, movement of traffic. The idea is that as soon as that happens, it will be repaired quickly and services are restored and during the time when the services are down, that the people are provided with an appropriate alternative, so that they can still have access to the water.

Madam Deputy President, above all, when the Barbados Water Authority has put its house in order, we still have to deal with the issue of wastage because even though we are currently described as a water-scarce country, the evidence shows that with better conservation practices and better use of the water that, in spite of the additional demand coming from the increased activity in the construction sector, we can meet our requirements. It is the wastage that adds to the problem and creates a lot of the difficulties, in terms of water scarcity.

Madam Deputy President, with those remarks, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Stuart.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: Madam Deputy President, I should just like to make a very brief intervention in this debate. The Resolution calls on this Chamber to approve the guarantee by the Crown of the principal and interest necessary for the redemption of the bond issue, in the sum of \$150 million, which is to be used for the purposes of the Barbados Water Authority.

The BWA, of course, has had its many challenges in recent times, as Senator Griffith just indicated. The experiences of householders and businesses in Barbados, over the last few years, so far as a reliable water supply is concerned, have not been at all happy. It has not always been so because we have known the BWA, to have better days during its 25-year life. It came into existence in the year 1980 as part of a plan which had been introduced by the Democratic Labour Party in the 1970s, when the Bridgetown Sewerage Project was agreed to with the Inter-American Development Bank. As a precondition for the loan with the Inter-American Development Bank, it

was required that a separate water and sewerage authority be established. It was established in 1980, and so for the last 25 years, it has been responsible for the management of Barbados' water supply.
11.40 a.m.

Madam Deputy President, in recent times, various challenges have combined to lower the standard to which Barbadians have become accustomed from the Barbados Water Authority.

Madam Deputy President, we are called upon today to approve this Resolution, which will increase the public debt by a further \$150 million for the Barbados Water Authority. Madam Deputy President, I have a concern. In order for Parliament to be properly informed in its deliberations and in order for legislators to be sure that they are doing the right thing and not in any way shortchanging the public of Barbados, it is necessary for legislators to have, at their disposal, timely and relevant information.

Madam Deputy President, under the Barbados Water Authority Act, the Authority is required, within five months of the end of every financial year, to produce audited accounts and an annual report to the Minister responsible. If my information is correct, and I have no reason to believe that it is other than correct, because the Minister is required to lay the report in Parliament, for the last five years this Parliament has had withheld from it the courtesy of annual reports from the Barbados Water Authority.

Nonetheless, we are supposed to come here today and listen to the bellyaching of the Government over the state of affairs at the Barbados Water Authority when we have no information before us to guide us in our deliberations. Obviously, Members of the Cabinet would have the information because they are in a privileged position, but certainly neither Senator Lowe nor I, and I am certain the independent senators are in no better position, can boast possession of that kind of information to allow us to make a dispassionate judgement on the value of the Resolution at present before the Senate.

I think that this is reprehensible, having regard to the fact that the taxpayers are ultimately going to have to foot this Bill because if the Barbados Water Authority is having all these problems, which Senator Griffith just described, it is highly unlikely that it would be able to pay back these moneys. Therefore, the taxpayers are going to be saddled with a bill of \$150 million and this Parliament is underwriting that responsibility without any information at all at its disposal coming out of the Barbados Water Authority.

Madam Deputy President, in my respectful submission that is wholly unsatisfactory and that kind of laxity or

inefficiency, make your choice, raises questions because all of us in public life know and even those not in public life know that wherever there is laxity or inefficiency somebody somewhere is benefitting from it. There are persons practically in every facet of the human experience who have a vested interest in inefficiency and financial laxity. That is why it is important for the Board of the Barbados Water Authority to keep this Parliament properly informed of what is going on in its business so that when legislators come to make decisions, as huge as the one we are now called upon to make, they can make those decisions on the basis of possessing up-to-date and relevant information.

Madam Deputy President, I want to place on record my profound dissatisfaction with the Authority in respect of its compliance with the Law of Barbados, as contained in the Barbados Water Authority Act, which requires it to have laid in Parliament annual reports, which have been withheld from this Parliament for five years.

Madam Deputy President, we hear about all the problems the Barbados Water Authority has. We are supposed in this case to walk by faith and not by sight and to close our eyes and support this Resolution for \$150 million. That is totally unsatisfactory and I want to place the Democratic Labour Party's disgust with that kind of conduct on the public record.

Having said that though, Madam Deputy President, I listened to the Minister very carefully as he made clear that there is some wastage in the system. He described Barbados as a water-scarce country. I suppose at a highly theoretical level that is true, but it is also true, according to a study done here around 1996 by Stanley Associates, that Barbados loses 60 per cent of its water through its distribution system.

Therefore, I can make common calls with the Minister in terms of calling, not on the Barbados Water Authority, but on Barbadians to conserve water. However, the problems of the distribution system have to be addressed. I suspect, based on what the Minister has said, that these problems will be addressed in part by the replacement of some of the aged mains which are at present afflicting the Barbados Water Authority and its ability to discharge its responsibilities to the public.

Madam Deputy President, I believe that in a previous debate in this Chamber some of these problems were laid at the doorstep of the Democratic Labour Party, when it was claimed that we came to office in 1986 and found some \$20 million or \$25 million in a Barbados Water Authority account, took it from the account and put it in the Consolidated Fund. That is true. I remember very well the Press conference held by the then Prime Minister, the late Right Excellent Errol Barrow, when he announced that

he was going to do it. However, that Consolidated Fund is not in Tokyo, Azerbaijan or Vanuatu, it is here in Barbados.

This Government, of all the governments of Barbados, has had more revenue at its disposal than any previous government. Therefore, if 18 years ago, the Democratic Labour Party took money from the Barbados Water Authority account and put it in the Consolidated Fund for the service of the island, a revenue-rich government like the Barbados Labour Party Government of 1994 to the present, is well placed to repay the Barbados Water Authority if it comes to that.

Asides.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: I do not want to hear about that because the money was not taken up and spent wildly, it was put in the Consolidated Fund for the service of the island of Barbados.

11.50 a.m.

Madam Deputy President, as far as I am concerned, the aged mains of the Barbados Water Authority are contributing massively to a 60 per cent loss of water in its distribution system, and I hope that as these aged mains are replaced, this loss of water would become less evident.

Madam Deputy President, the other point one has to make, which has already been made by Senator Griffith, is that over the last few years, there is a large number of construction activity taking place in Barbados. Of course, in this regard, more pressure has been put on the authority, to supply these areas with water, than at any other time in its history. Madam, despite this fact, this is where forward planning comes in, if these problems are to be creatively confronted. The authority has to modernise its operations, to recognise the changes taking place around it. It has also to look at the demands for its resources and put mechanisms in place, so that it can respond to those demands. The Barbados Water Authority cannot be asking consumers to pay punctually for water or otherwise to have it disconnected, but then the service it is providing would be as unreliable as it is, in certain parts of the country, particularly in St. Joseph. I noticed quite recently, if media reports are to be believed, that people in certain parts of St. Peter were not having access to water.

Madam Deputy President, the fact that we now have what I would call a golf course culture taking shape in Barbados, has certainly convinced the average man or woman on the street, that having to surface these golf courses, has put strain on the water supply that would not have otherwise been there. That is why plans for the establishment of a golf course in St. Philip have caused

people in that parish to raise questions. Madam, one of the first questions raised was, how is it going to affect the reliability of their water supply.

Madam Deputy President, it is genuinely believed that this expanding golf course culture in Barbados is placing strain on the water supply, that would not otherwise have been there. Madam, I think that forward planning is required in that regard, so that the anxieties of members of the general public could be allayed and their fears could be put to rest.

Madam, recently there has been an increase in water rates, which, under the Act, the Board has the power to recommend to the Cabinet such increases. Madam, how long this situation is intended to continue, nobody knows because one of the services to be regulated by the Fair Trading Commission, under the Utilities Regulation Act, is the water service. Madam, that piece of legislation came into effect in early 2001 and four years later, water is still not brought under the Fair Trading Commission, so that the accounts of the authority can be properly analysed and evaluated and its performing to the best of its economic and financial ability, put in place.

Madam, I should like to hear from the Honourable Member what plans the Government has for bringing the Barbados Water Authority within the ambit of the Fair Trading Commission, as is contemplated by law, so that the country would not have to depend on decisions of the Cabinet, such as was the last decision to raise water rates in Barbados. We hope that there could be open discussion on the state of affairs at the Barbados Water Authority, setting out a frank evaluation of its accounts and its efficiency and that rates be put in place which would reflect a balance between the needs of the public and the needs of the Barbados Water Authority.

Madam Deputy President, therefore, as far as the Barbados Water Authority is concerned, we have a number of challenges to meet. I sincerely hope that the provision of this \$150 million would go some substantial distance to solving some of the authority's problems.

Madam, I think I heard it mentioned elsewhere that about \$50 million of this money is supposed to be spent on equipment, *et cetera*, while \$100 million is supposed to be used for the refinancing of the authority's debt. I hope that when the curtain comes down on this whole issue, that the authority would have demonstrated that the faith that we are placing in it today, by supporting this Resolution, was justified. Madam, on the other hand, we cannot continue having to be exposed to these cries from the heart by the Barbados Water Authority, when it is not keeping its side of the bargain, by providing this Parliament with information by which we can be more surely guided.

Madam Deputy President, we are not opposing this Resolution. I think I have put the Opposition Party's concerns in the public domain and with those few words, I am obliged to you.

SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD: Madam Deputy President, I have to say that I share many of the concerns expressed by Senator Stuart, one being the lack of information which has been provided to this Honourable Chamber from the Barbados Water Authority.

Madam Deputy President, I would like to know the reason. I would like to think whether that reason is about its inefficiency or its negligence but that information, for whatever reason, is being deliberately withheld.

Madam Deputy President, water is too important a commodity and the fact that it is so important means that there is no way we could oppose this Resolution, because the 280 000 Barbadians depend on a good water supply. Therefore, anything that we can do to assist the Barbados Water Authority to improve that water supply, we are duty bound.

Madam Deputy President, as has been said here, Barbados is a water-scarce country. It has been estimated that the leakages in the distribution system are approximately 60 per cent. It is not only the high cost of water leakages but also the high cost of the fuel to pump that water, which is then not supplied to homes.

Madam Deputy President, persons who listen to the call-in programmes, I think would agree with me that breakages in the water mains and pipes are probably the most popular items on the call-in programmes. Other items come and go, for example, we had the 40 illegal Indians here for Cricket World Cup 2007, that lasted for almost two weeks. Other items rise and become 'nine-day' wonders, but when it comes to the supply of water, there are discussions week after week, because this is a great concern to Barbadians.
12.00 noon

This leakage did not start overnight. Sir, as has been said, the mains are old but successive Governments have neglected to maintain the mains. I am told that some of them go back over 100 years but surely, Governments have to take a long-term view to ensure that the mains are properly maintained so as to reduce the leakage to households, hotels and other businesses.

Madam Deputy President, recently I read that it is estimated that between 60 to 63 gallons per day are used by residents of Barbados, that approximately 179 gallons per day by tourists and that must take into account the golf courses to which reference has already been made.

Madam Deputy President, every household in Barbados now has water and the stand-pipe is a memory from the past. We are grateful and pleased that everybody has running water in their homes but the Manager of Engineering at the Barbados Water Authority recently said that:

"We have reached the limit, we have taken out as much water from the ground as we can".

Sir, that is a serious danger signal from someone in a position to make that serious comment.

Madam Deputy President, I think we have to pay more attention to conservation because it is essential to protect the economic future of the island. The most obvious place to tackle up front is the problem of leakage. The leader has referred to the replacement of mains especially in the northern part of the island, that is a start but it has to be maintained and spread throughout the island, to bring that leakage down. Madam, none of us knows the correct figure but if 60 per cent is correct, it has to be reduced.

Madam Deputy President, there are other areas of conservation like keeping wells and sucks clean because there is such a massive runoff of rainwater now. As has been said, we do not have rivers so we are dependent on catching the rainwater. Madam, as agricultural fields diminish and there are more tar roads and parking lots, you can see the water running off. You can see it running off Government Hill or any area where there is an incline when there is heavy rainfall. It does not run into wells or sucks but into the sea where it is lost to us forever. Madam Deputy President, somehow or another, we have to be able to catch that water. In my opinion, there should be a system of inspection of the sucks and wells in the fields. This is where the water is collected to run into the underground aquifers from which we pump the water for our own consumption.

Madam Deputy President, recently there was a report of beautification of the gullies to create nature trails, which is a wonderful idea but have we looked at damming certain selected gullies so that the water is collected there and then challenged into sucks and wells to feed the underground aquifers. We have to do everything humanly possible to maximise the saving of water in this little island.

Madam Deputy President, we have desalination at Spring Garden and at Sandy Lane but it is very expensive, especially if you are desalinating seawater. If you are desalinating brackish water, it is much cheaper but it is another source we must look at. Madam, another source we must look at is the system of meters because it is a wonderful idea in theory to meter every household so that people pay for the water which they consume but unless the meters are monitored, we are fooling ourselves.

Madam Deputy President, I have been receiving bills from the Barbados Water Authority for several months even though I was not using water. I have phoned and written to them several times and finally someone was sent to replace the meter. I suspect that with all the silk in the water that the meters get clogged and do not function. I am only one case but I have discussed it with other people and I am surprised at how many of these people have had similar experiences. Here is it many of us are using water that is not properly built and, therefore, the Barbados Water Authority is losing revenue which it cannot afford. There must be some system put in place that can inspect these meters regularly.

Madam Deputy President, I have not seen any recent audited financial statements of the Barbados Water Authority but it is my understanding that in the financial year 2003/2004 that there was an operating loss slightly in excess of \$20 million, which is now in the league of the Transport Board.

Madam Deputy President, this small island with its scarce financial resources, such losses cannot be maintained by any statutory corporation and talking about Government guarantee is not solving the problem. It is only a temporary solution with a fundamental problem because such offers are not sustainable. Like the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and certain other statutory corporations, the solution to these fundamental problems can only come from better management, higher level of accountability and greater public awareness.

Do we as Barbadians really understand how important water is to us or are we just taking it for granted? We assume that water would always be there, pure and perfect so we ignore pollution. We talk about people settling on Zone 1 areas but their waste will contaminate the underground water supply but for political or other reasons we think that it is okay and that people must find a place to live. Of course, people must find a place to live but they must not live on Zone 1 because that water is to service the entire island.

Madam Deputy President, I hope there is some programme by the Barbados Water Authority and other Government institutions to highlight the importance of a good, clean water supply firstly, for us who live in Barbados and secondly, for the tourists on whom we depend. I do not only mean for golf courses because the tourists come here to play golf, relax and swim in their pools. We may think it is the life of the rich and famous but our livelihood depends on that because it earns foreign exchange and if we have to offer these services to these people, so be it.

Madam Deputy President, we need to be more aware that we have to protect our water supply. We have to start by dealing with the problem of leakage in the distribution

system and then the conservation of water, which is now being wasted.

Madam Deputy President, I thank you.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Parris.

SENATOR Miss P. E. PARRIS: Madam Deputy President, I rise to support the Resolution before us today. I do so knowing that the funds from this bond issue would assist the Barbados Water Authority with the cash situation within the organisation. It would also be refinancing the debt owed by the Barbados Water Authority of \$100 million and assist with other financing in its capital works and other initiatives being undertaken by the Barbados Water Authority. Madam Deputy President, the services of a reputable accounting firm were employed to evaluate the submissions from three financial institutions. The Barbados National Bank Financial Corporation was selected and the Barbados Water Authority's financial requirements were taken into consideration.
12.10 p.m.

I am satisfied that we are getting value for our money. The interest rate is competitive. It is at 5.7 per cent per annum. The Leader of Government Business has already outlined to us the interest rate over the twenty-five year period.

Madam Deputy President, most of us are aware of the difficulty that residents in the north of the island are experiencing with regard to water shortages. There are mains, which supply the water in these parts of the country, which are very old and are in need of replacing. We know the importance of water and are aware of the demands on the water supply. Construction continues but the demand is greater than the supply. We have to install mains which will take the desalinated water from Spring Garden to persons living in the north of the island. This will cost the Barbados Water Authority \$14.5 million. When this is done, the residents in these areas will be relieved. These persons are now forced to complete their household chores at 12 o'clock and 1 o'clock in the morning. It is only during that time of the day that water is supplied. Sir, we can see that there are benefits for the residents of these areas.

Madam Deputy President, I am sure that employers who have employees living in these areas would welcome the laying of these mains; they will no longer hear the morning excuse of lack of water for lateness or absence. This would be welcomed by employers.

Sir, I said earlier that the demand for water continues to grow. Customers need to make a greater effort to conserve water. There are methods we can use to assist with the

conservation of water. Some householders completely ignore leaking taps. There are persons who wash cars daily with hoses, instead of buckets which would conserve water. They are not considering the savings from using less water.

Madam Deputy President, you would agree with me that we in Barbados are fortunate and can boast of having the best quality water in the Caribbean. The role of the Barbados Water Authority in maintaining the quality of water should not be taken lightly. The Barbados Water Authority is responsible for vetting the standard and ensuring that this quality is maintained. They provide a water supply service that complies with the World Health Organisation guidelines. These guidelines speak to the bacteriological and chemical water quality compliance requirement.

The Barbados Water Authority and the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) conduct samples to test public wells and some private wells on a monthly basis. The water quality within the distribution system is monitored by the Barbados Water Authority; now we recognise the importance of the Barbados Water Authority. The monitoring of the distribution level is to ensure that the water reaching the public is safe from harmful organisms. Again, this is accomplished with the use of the Chlorination Assistant, employed by the Barbados Water Authority. Sixty-four samples are taken weekly to test the quality of the water.

Madam Deputy President, the Barbados Water Authority is aggressively collecting outstanding arrears from the public of Barbados. However, I am appealing to the Barbados Water Authority that when they are collecting arrears or disconnecting service from persons who are in arrears, to treat the large businesses and small householder in the same manner.

Madam Deputy President, for example, a small householder who owes \$200 for water is disconnected without any hesitation, while there are big businesses who owe the Barbados Water Authority in excess of \$5 000 or \$6 000 and are not disconnected. I think that the Barbados Water Authority needs to be aggressive in its approach, treating all persons equally, while collecting outstanding monies, which will assist them as they continue to provide a higher level of service to the public.

Madam Deputy President, we heard the cries of the residents of this country who experienced water shortages. This Resolution speaks to their relief and to assist the Barbados Water Authority to provide a higher level of service; therefore, I have no hesitation in supporting this Resolution, because I know that citizens of this country will benefit. I urge all Honourable Senators to do the same.

I thank you.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Linton.

SENATOR I. St. C. LINTON: Madam Deputy President, I rise to support the Resolution that is before this Honourable Chamber. I want to take a brief review of the history of the Barbados Water Authority, not only for Honourable Senators, but for the public to understand, the difficulties, problems and development of and supplies of water in this country. We have to express thanks to the Barbados Water Works for having pipe water to homes across this country.

I grew up in a community where the standpipe was the place for several things, family feud, fights, and a place where people met. Only the main highways in Barbados carried water throughout the island. Most of us had to fetch water from the standpipe. I remember times when the water just dripped and there were lines of people at the standpipe waiting for water. I travelled from where I lived in Bank Hall, pass where you live, down to White Park by the Modern High School and travelled back with a bucket of water on my head.

12.20 p.m.

Today, most of us in Barbados have running water. Truly, when we discover the difficulty that the Barbados Water Authority has today, we must examine it carefully. There is a lot of talk about management and all that but let me say today that we have to thank those workers at the Barbados Water Authority. Where there is a problem of broken mains, they have to go through rain and sun, night and day, even searching in the cane fields to repair them, so that we can get water to use in our houses.

I want to go further because I heard Senator Stuart make the point that the various reports have not come for five years. This is true but I also heard him short-changing the reality of what happened in 1985. I remember the previous Minister under a Barbados Labour Party Government, Victor Johnson, had identified the fact that the Barbados Water Authority had serious problems with the mains running through Barbados.

I also remember an incident with a business place in Roebuck Street, where an underground 16-inch main passed, and somebody took a rocking engine to get fixed or stay overnight and the rocking engine sunk into the ground. They then discovered that the 16-inch main had a rotted area where most of that water was being lost.

Madam Deputy President, in order to finance the back-raise in 1986, the Government went to every department, schools, Boards and everywhere and took out those funds and put them in the Consolidated Fund. The \$25 million that Senator Stuart talked about was used to replace some of those broken mains which still exist today.

I would like Senator Stuart to tell me what they did with it, because it did not give the Barbados Water Authority the opportunity to replace those broken mains which still exist, that even when the rain falls, the weight of the earth breaks them.

Let me go on because I do not want to speak for too long. I just want to put a few facts on the table. This \$150 million is important now, but the \$25 million would have been important then, but let us look at the benefits. One hundred million dollars of this money is to be refinanced, rolling over the debt at a lower interest rate. Is this bad management? The benefits of the other \$50 million, which would be the existing debt because you are rolling over the hundred, so the additional debt of the Barbados Water Authority would be \$50 million, if my mathematics is still good.

It is said that 60 per cent of the water is leaked. I would categorically say that is untrue because you would be saying that we are only existing on 40 per cent of the water that comes through the mains. At the same time, if 60 per cent is going back into the ground and then the intellectuals of water tell me that you do not have any in the ground, how do you get out 100 per cent and you are losing 60 per cent going back into the ground.

The benefits would be like this. When you lay and relay these mains, you will save money on labour. You will also save money on electricity that you use to pump the water. As long as you get the systems up and running and the pipes are not breaking and losing water, it will be a saving of the same monies you will be using.

Let us face the fact that there was surely neglect; but not replacing those pipes in 1986 was the greatest neglect that happened in Barbados, when it comes to providing people with water so do not come laying the disgusting behaviour at the foot of this Government. It is the Democratic Labour Party, which Senator Stuart talked about, which did that wrong.

I am simply saying another benefit would be, if you get the amount of water as they say, I would say 30 per cent or 40 per cent might be lost, but not 60 per cent but that water would be now in the system, and we will save money by not having to pay as much money for the water from the desalination plant.

Senators, we should look at the objectiveness of this particular Resolution and the money that is going to be used, and for the purpose that it is to be used. In addition to that, there is a plan now to clean up the water from the sewerage plant and use it for agriculture, where the agriculturalist should be a position to buy some cheap water from the

Barbados Water Authority. We will also be able to put in a system where there can be trucks taking that same water and wash down the streets of Bridgetown. This will be a saving. This is money that will be gathered to assist the BWA in meeting its financial arrangements.

In my view and my understanding of economics – I have not been trained in economics but I understand it quite well – the Barbados Water Authority, through these savings, will meet the loan commitments. If management functions well and collects the funds that are owed to them, there will be no question of the BWA needing money from the Consolidated Fund. It will be put in a position to finance its operations by these variations and from these benefits that will come as a result of this Bill.

It is time that Members of Parliament, in the Other Place, look at positive variations in the economy of Barbados and recognise that if we do not exercise prudence and proper management at this time by putting the various areas of our economy in a position to meet the challenges that are coming at us like a storm, we will be cutting down one another as politicians and political parties.

Again, it is time for us, both Government and Opposition to be objective in our approach to the management of Barbados. Yes, we may speak about the failings, but we must not allow the failings and the difficulties that we meet cumber us from being positive and having correct development according to our own ability. We must not spread discontent and dissatisfaction in the community. This money will do well in providing the necessity for the usage of water in Barbados.

12.30 p.m.

In future years, technology and different new ideas will come up and perhaps we may need to have another desalination plant. The point is that we are surrounded by the sea and water in Barbados should never be a problem. We make it a problem by wasting it.

Madam Deputy President, I am simply saying that this Resolution is perhaps the best ever to provide water for the usage of Barbados.

I thank you, Madam Deputy President, as I support this Resolution.

SENATOR R. O. MARVILLE: Madam Deputy President, I wish, on my own behalf, in my usual brief manner to make a few points on the issue of water in Barbados in terms of the \$150 million being requested for the Barbados Water Authority. I have very little interest in the partisan debate. I assure you.

Madam Deputy President, since water was piped in Barbados in the late 1800s, it has always been problematic. There was a question as to whether it should be a profit

bearing issue or not. The Bridgetown merchants seized on the best water and insisted it should have been a profit bearing issue and Government was left to provide for the others. When that particular effort failed, Government took over and we have not been void of problems either during that period or since. I am not by any means suggesting that we do not have an adequate water supply or that we do not have good water. We have consistently had problems of management in terms of the workers at the Barbados Water Authority, and I would really recommend that management read Dr. Chan Kim's Book "Blue Ocean Strategy" which is a good management tool for everybody.

I would suggest that there are other problems in terms of moneys and what is demanded for water. Senator Goddard looked at the issue of water meters functioning or not functioning. There is a constant misuse of water by individuals. Senator Griffith pointed out how this is done. As it relates to the issue of the water running constantly at the fish market, I would like to suggest that if we have a fish market right next to the sea the proper thing would be to have salt water pumped into the system for the purpose of cleaning the fish and the fresh water be used only for the purpose of drinking.

Madam Deputy President, it would seem to me that 60 per cent wastage – and I am not going to argue with the experts when they tell me 60 per cent because I want to believe it is 20 or 30 per cent – is a great deal more wastage than any individual can perpetrate. I would suggest that we do need an awareness programme that make people understand how valuable the water is, how much it cost to produce and have them at least respond to that particular issue either by making them pay for what they use or by some continued education programme. It would seem to me to be totally unnecessary to use water in the way that most of us do. I personally turn off the shower when I am soaping because there is absolutely no need for the water to be running at that time. This is because I have lived in places where water was really scarce. I am tended to say that I do not know that there is any scarcity of water in Barbados or us being a water shortage place if we could waste water like that.

Madam Deputy President, the second thing about that is that it is really quite amazing how we do not react to things. About a decade ago I said to an engineer at the Barbados Water Authority, "You know the British who laid the system have had some very serious problems with water loss." They figured they were losing about 40 per cent of water at the time. They used technology that they had of blowing some plastic piping into the system which sort of patched the thing up and they were down to a loss level of about 10 per cent. He said, "yes, that is true, but we do not have any losses of any considerable nature." When the test was actually done we were way past the British loss.

Madam Deputy President, if there is a problem, the question is do we fix it and how quickly do we fix it. I am not sure that piecemeal replacing of the pipes is going to do the job within the next ten years. We would continue to lose water while our demands on water would still be escalating. This is a very serious issue because I have heard somebody saying, "that everybody is building new houses, where are they going to get water from. This was somebody who had a house for 40 years who was saying they think we should stop the building of these houses because that is going to take away their water. Madam Deputy President, that is not the issue, the issue is there is water, we have to conserve it and we have to use it wisely.

Madam Deputy President, I am really very upset by the way in which a lot of the water is used. You see neighbours who wash two cars three or four times a week with a hose, they cannot be bothered to do it. Their cars are more important than anything else, so they have to be constantly washing them. They are not going to pay some kid in a garage \$7 to wash it with a bucket, they have to wash it with their hoses, this is part of a status thing. I do not think we can continue to accept that sort of situation. We are in a deficit and we really need to fix the deficit as quickly as we can. We cannot talk about building and where we are going to get the water from, we have to try and provide for it.

Madam Deputy President, Minister Griffith as well as Senator Goddard mentioned the absence of rivers in Barbados. I should make the point that there are rivers, waddies and underground rivers. I do know that we do have some underground rivers. With respect to over ground rivers, a month ago, I was trying to get into a part of St. George and I crossed a pond at the Bussa Roundabout, and I must have gone over three rivers that night on what was called a road. It seems to me that a lot of the systems, beside the mains, are not working. If that water was either conserved in ponds or run off properly into wells that are leading back into the water system, we could do better.

Madam Deputy President, I am not really interested in what sort of political debate we are going to have on this, I would support this because I want to see a better performance in the area of water. Let us face it, since we have had water all the time, we have no appreciation what it is like not to have clean drinking water. I would wish any one of you Honourable Senators, and I have done it, to be in an area where you have to go out and find water and boil it before you could think about drinking it, it is only then that you would understand, and I would wish the same experience for the public in general.

I thank you, Madam Deputy President.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Madam Deputy President, I want to give my wholehearted support to this

Resolution, which invites this Chamber to agree to Government guaranteeing a loan of \$150 million for the Barbados Water Authority to carry out important work. Madam Deputy President, we are all aware of the importance of water, for after all, mankind is made up of 98 per cent water.

12.40 p.m.

Madam Deputy President, one of the things I wish to highlight with regards to this particular Resolution, is the question whether or not water is seen as a social or economic good as this is a very important consideration. Madam, I wish to say that we have not touched on the issue of paying an economic price for water, which is part of the real issue. Should the State continue to subsidise water usage or should every consumer, in terms of manufacturing, commercial or residential, pay an economic price for this commodity? Madam, as far as I am concerned, the question is open for debate.

Madam Deputy President, my preference is that there must be some element of subsidy. Madam, if you could remember, when the rates were raised this year, that was an important part of the consideration, where Government had ensured that those who use less water, the increase to them would be significantly less than that of the heavier users.

Madam Deputy President, if that is so, then we have to expect that the Barbados Water Authority must have some element – hopefully small – of subsidy by the State, once we perceive that water is a social good and hence must be treated differently from other good.

Madam Deputy President, it is important that we understand these things because we are hearing much talk about the price of water, but the issue is that there is a heavy element of subsidisation of water in Barbados. Therefore, to me it serves an important social purpose, one to which I am sure Honourable Senators on This Side would commit themselves.

Madam Deputy President, therefore, the State is here today guaranteeing this bond issue of \$150 million. One of the reasons why the State is guaranteeing this bond issue, is that it allows the Barbados Water Authority to be able to borrow money at a low interest rate. The mere fact that Government is guaranteeing this bond issue would mean that any commercial enterprise, which is lending the Barbados Water Authority these funds, will know that the element of risk would be significantly less, given that the loan is a charge on the Consolidated Fund. In addition, given this country's excellent record in terms of repayments, *et cetera*, any lending institution would queue up to lend Government money, especially if there is an element of guarantee by the State, because they know their money would be safe.

Madam Deputy President, there is another twist in the tail, so to speak. The international organisations are now going to look at us and would want to put this as part of Government's debt. Madam, despite all we are doing here for the good of the country, we would then hear the spokesman on the Other Side, when they find the time to do the people's business, complaining bitterly about the size of the national debt, without understanding the difference between public debt, national debt or public guaranteed debt, *et cetera*.

Madam Deputy President, we have to put the Barbados Water Authority in the position where it can service this level of debt. Therefore, it could only do that if serious measures are taken to ensure that everybody pays their water bills. Madam, I am concerned that people still see water as a give-away good because of the fact that people will pay their electricity bills, telephone bills, MC-TV bills, cell phone bills, then if money is left after all that, they would pay their water bills.

Madam, this bond issue before us today for this \$150 million is a 30-year debt, which the Barbados Water Authority has to service. Therefore, to be able to do that, it has to ensure that the funds are there to continue servicing this debt.

Madam Deputy President, if we claim that we want to have an efficient water supply, which is a necessity for Barbadians and for our economy, then everyone has to ensure that they understand the need for them to honour their obligations towards the Barbados Water Authority. We must not allow the Barbados Water Authority to reach the stage where it was at in 1994, when we first took office.

Madam Deputy President, I accept readily that we are here to govern and have been governing for the past eleven years. We, therefore, cannot put the blame on anybody else but the Democratic Labour Party for the mismanagement of the country because we know that before taking over office in 1994, the Democratic Labour Party had mismanaged the economy. At that time, we told the people that we were going to put wrong things right, which we have done. For example, unemployment is down to a very low level, while investments are going on at a rapid rate. Therefore, we also have to make sure that the water situation is good.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Madam Deputy President, we are not going to say what they did. We know that they have mismanaged the country. We know that they have paid for that mismanagement and will continue paying for it, until they repent.

Madam Deputy President, we, on This Side, know that we are here to govern and that we are not going to blame the

present situation of the Barbados Water Authority on anybody else. It has now become our responsibility to correct their wrongdoings, which we are here doing. Madam, part of the problem is that the Barbados Water Authority was never in a position to undertake massive capital works that were needed, to ensure that the brown water problem in some areas of Barbados, for example, in the Bagatelle area, would be alleviated and that people in St. Joseph and St. Thomas would not suffer in the same way in which they have been suffering for the past few years.

Madam Deputy President, in this regard, the engineers at the Barbados Water Authority must be commended for coming up with such a programme. All they needed was the political will and the tool to get the programme started. This Resolution today, not only allows them to propose those solutions but also to execute them, for the benefit of the people of this country.

Madam Deputy President, it is with gladness that I support this Resolution. Once again, Government is demonstrating that it is on top of the situation and therefore, notwithstanding the situation in relation to the Inter-American Development Bank, if it is going to take this bond issue of \$150 million to get this water situation under total control, then Government has to do that.

Madam Deputy President, by and large, we have a very efficient water distribution system, where virtually people in every part of Barbados have access to safe drinking water. Madam, another thing which people do not realise is that when visitors come to Barbados, they feel safe drinking Barbados tap water. On the other hand, when they go to England, they are afraid to drink tap water and would prefer bottle water.

12.50 p.m.

Sir, anytime I go to a restaurant, I ask for 'Bowmanston Special' and those who are older would understand what I mean.

Madam Deputy President, while I am on the topic of water, I want Barbados to respect the zonal characteristic of our land. There is reason why Zone 1 is Zone 1 because that is where the water flows quicker, the aquifers are in that area. It is important that we do not do any activity on land which would impact negatively on the integrity of our water.

Sir, previously we thought that human settlement was the main source of pollution but it has now been shown that agriculture is a very important source of contamination of our water system because of the use of pesticides and herbicides. Sir, I see people with two blades of grass using pesticides in a spray can without thinking that it could impact negatively on the water supply.

Madam Deputy President, agricultural activity is a factor that we must not neglect in terms of water safety. This is why we have to respect the zonal characteristic of our island and make sure that there is no activity which is injurious to the quality of the water. Madam, Barbados is so small that we have to ask ourselves if we are using all the correct technology to enable us to effectively use all our land in Zone 1 and Zone 2.

Madam Deputy President, this is a good example. Can we afford to have vast acreage in areas like Trents that cannot be used or should we not be using technology in terms of building sewage systems that would enable us to use land which was previously unavailable for housing and other activity in order to enable us to use some of that land for other purposes? Madam, that is something that we have to examine. I do not know that we can afford to have large acreage of land taken out of use. As I said before, Zone 1 is unsafe for human habitation but, at the same time, we have to limit agricultural activity on Zone 1. It is a question that we have to examine in detail and with some seriousness because we cannot afford to have vast tracks of land unused for any economic purpose.

Madam Deputy President, I want to commend this Resolution to this Honourable Chamber knowing that it shows that Government is wide awake to its obligations and responsibilities to ensure that service is available to the good people of this country.

Madam Deputy President, I am obliged to you.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Madam Deputy President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 1.55 p.m. today.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to and Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

12.55 p.m.

RESUMPTION

MADAM DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is resumed. Senator Husbands.

SENATOR Mrs. S. C. V. HUSBANDS: Madam Deputy President, it gives me great pleasure this afternoon to support the Resolution before the Senate of \$150 million to be made available to the Barbados Water Authority, an important and vital part of the social services that is offered to Barbadians. It is essential to all Barbadians and their activity.

Madam Deputy President, when a Government is planning for the benefit of its citizens, it is important that proper long-term and medium-term plans are in place to allow us to make the best use of our resources and to maximise that benefit to all citizens in a way that is meaningful to individuals and the country as a whole.

However, one of the trends I have been a little concerned about recently in the public domain, is the tendency of persons to disbelieve information that is put in the public domain. Often when people are confronted with information they dislike, it is easy to dismiss, without providing, for the benefit of listeners, alternative empirical evidence that demonstrates the truth.

Madam Deputy President, Barbados is a water-scarce society, and though it is difficult to believe, because for many years we were able to turn our taps for piped water. Barbados is categorised as a water-scarce country primarily because of its rainfall, pressured by the demand for water by the number of citizens for which it provides. A study done by the International Water Management Institute ranks Barbados with places like Kuwait, Singapore, Bahrain and Jordan, as one of the water-scarce societies in the world. Water Management is probably one of the biggest challenges facing the world, not just places like Barbados.

Madam Deputy President, it is estimated that around 2025, we will have close to 1.8 billion people who will be challenged to find water with the quality and quantities necessary for the proper sustenance of life. Therefore, we need a project to increase our available water supply by approximately 20 per cent, if we are going to continue to meet the needs of the people in the world. It is a very serious problem, Barbados is not the only country that has to tackle this problem, a number of other countries will have to look at sustainable water resources.

In terms of the challenges we are facing, I know, from the time I was a child, that water was always readily available. I did not grow up in the times when we had challenges with water. Barbados historically had challenges with water, as it was a water-scarce society. Since the 1800s, that scarcity created a massive problem for rural and urban dwelling, as well as agriculture, especially sugar, so generations of Barbadians from time to time have had to deal with the issue of having good water available to them.

Madam Deputy President, historically, we are indebted to one of our Governors, I think his name was Sir Herbert Greaves. He looked at the problem that existed in Barbados in the 1800s and early 1900s. Part of the problem, the use of pond water by the rural residents, while the residents of urban Barbados used a place called Beckles Spring, which came from the Bay Estate. That method of providing water

for early Barbadians resulted in dysentery, typhoid and water-borne diseases, so, Sir Herbert Greaves took a decision to save Barbadian citizens and agriculture. They looked at ways to ensure more water and cleaner water for Barbadians. Madam Deputy President, a number of standpipes were installed.
2.10 p.m.

In the late 1800s, there used to have private water companies that used to provide water for Barbadians. The then Governor Greaves felt it was not in the best interest of Barbadians to have it managed privately, but that was how the Government's Water Authority was born. He felt it was important for people to be able to access clean drinking water and it should be distributed across the Nation, so that we should be able to preserve as much water as we could and for people to have a constant supply whether it was rainy or dry weather. This started Barbados moving towards a sustainable water management programme.

Therefore, from then, all Governments had to tackle the matter of water management. They had to look at things like harvesting; processing and ensuring its cleanliness; problems of distribution; disposal and wastage; so it is not a problem that suddenly cropped up on Barbados recently. Back in the 1800s they were using something like 5 000 gallons a day, then, gradually it went to 4 million gallons, then it went to 23 million gallons, and it went to 33 million gallons. Therefore, over the years the Department had to find better ways of increasing and safeguarding the water supply.

While today there are a number of problems with the Barbados Water Authority, and it is so easy to just see it as an institution that may not be managed the way that you would like, I do not think we have given the BWA the credit for the kinds of service it has provided over the years with changing conditions, dwindling resources, increasing demand and climatic challenges that have affected their source of water.

The way we dealt with water over the years, has also changed because each successive Government dealt with it the way that they knew best at that time, given existing resources and knowledge. For example, for a long time, we never knew that pesticides and fertilisers used to filter into the water system and could be harmful to humans and so, we had a lot of indiscriminate use of that. After a long time, we sank pit toilets into the earth and disposed of our waste that way, not understanding that eventually some of that began to impact on the quality of our water supply.

Therefore, over the years as we have learned, we tried to take our knowledge and translate it into our water management programme and sought to upgrade on a regular basis wherever we could to help to improve it and make it better.

There were times, of course, when people did not always do what was necessary and so you had some lapses and you got some impact on the water system. By and large, the constant adjustment to the needs of water for the population has engaged the attention of Government.

We need a comprehensive water management system because in the past, it tended to be seen as purely a Government function, not recognising that citizens have a tremendous responsibility to play in the whole process of water.

There is a need in Barbados for an effective management system because we have farmers who use that water for agriculture whether it is planting or for animals. Consumers need to use it for their daily lives, also our golf courses, tourism and manufacturing. Cruise ships have to take on a great deal of water, which they get from here and if we are going to attract more cruise ships, we have to deal with the water problem to ensure that we can service them. All of these are parts of our economic landscape and it is vital that we are able to service them effectively.

This means that if we are going to manage our water system, we have to keep changing with the demands and needs that occur from time to time, in order to make sure that we safeguard our future. For the Government, it may mean looking at things like the acquisition of new technology and being able to develop a very modern, well-managed water authority.

When Canada and New York were faced with the problem of ageing distribution systems because they had a great deal of leakage, they had to change all of that pipe system. The cost was horrendous and the inconvenience was also another challenge to communities and so, they looked at developing new technologies. I believe Senator Marville mentioned one of them, where they started looking at the insertion of plastic pipes into the old existing pipes that would then secure the water into the system. They also looked at other technologies such as parallel drilling to help minimise the inconvenience and the amount of road they would have to dig up.

These are all things, for example, that the Barbados Water Authority would have to look at in terms of new technology to be able to identify what are the things we could afford and what would give us the very best, in terms of our existing needs to be able to improve our water management.

If we are going to change that distribution system, it is going to be very important for us as citizens to understand that it is going to cause some inconvenience to us. If we have to dig up all that pipe and lay new pipe, there is going to be

disruption in service and traffic. Therefore, I think it is important for us as citizens to understand the whole process and recognise the part that we need to play in order to make it happen.

One of the things that Government has been doing and it was mentioned earlier, in terms of changing the pipe mains, is putting in the SCADA system so that we can do better maintenance checks on what is happening with our system. We have the desalination plant. We spent a great deal of money trying to put in the sewerage plants on the south coast and on the west coast, so that we can begin to manage and treat to the disposal of our wastage in a much more efficient manner. There are the recent changes to the cost which allow us to use what they call, the user pay system, to make a more equitable arrangement in terms of who pays for water, based on your particular use. All of these are things that the Government has sought to put in place as part of its water management programme.

I think there are some things that need to go further. I remember a few years back, Madam Deputy President, there was an excellent programme that was put out by the GIS, which did an entire series on water management and water wastage, educating Barbadians about their habits and how those habits impacted on that water problem. I really believe that we need to bring back such a programme and, again, begin to alert Barbadians to the role they need to play.

I do not need to go over what others said in terms of the ways in which we have wasted water. I think that Barbadians need to be made aware that they need to be more alert about how they manage water on a daily basis. This is the only way we are going to conserve what we have and ensure that everybody gets.

We hear the cries across the Nation, in St. Joseph, St. George, St. Thomas, St. Lucy, St. Peter. I think this is because over the years, we were not accustomed of not getting water, so it really caused a lot of disruption to people to adjust to the fact that when they turn the pipe, they do not always get the water that they expect. As I said, I think an education programme is going to be necessary to educate Barbadians that we all have a part to play in the management of our water resources.

What are some of the things we need to do to be able to help manage this problem? Along with the education to Barbadians, I want to draw the attention of the Senate to the fact that this year, the Rural Development Commission brought in specialists to demonstrate how to build huge tanks. They are relatively inexpensive and they introduced them into Barbados to alert the farming community that with all the runoff water and water collecting in wells from the rainfall, *et cetera*, that we may not be using as well as we should, we need to look at storing that water and using it for agricultural purposes.

We also have the situation where we started looking at encouraging Barbadians to get water tanks attached to their homes because the climatic conditions are changing in the world. Therefore, we are going to find ourselves at times even more challenged in the future, to obtain the quantity and quality of water that we would like, and so, it is going to need agriculture to change some of its practices and citizens to change some of their practices.

It may involve some level of expense, but it is an expense that we have to take on because water is so necessary to our everyday lives. Therefore, it is important, with all of the new construction that is taking place in Barbados, that people include, as a part of their building plan, not only their solar panel but also a water tank. This is the direction that we need to go in if we are going to be able to develop a good water management system to aid Barbadians.

2.20 p.m.

The other challenge that we have is in terms of how are we going to get citizens to recognise how we dispose of garbage and waste is important. It is not only the individual citizen. Over the years, the individual citizen has become more careless with how they manage their personal disposal of garbage. We need to get back into the schools, we need to have littering fines and we need to enforce those fines so that Barbadians begin to take seriously the whole matter of keeping their environment clean because all of that helps to block the drains and contributes to the flooding that occurs, *et cetera*.

Madam Deputy President, we also need to look at how businesses dispose of the waste from their own activity. Many of them are not aware or not responsible enough to check to see how their waste is being disposed of, whether it is creating harm to the environment or creating a problem for our quality of water. These are areas that we need to look at.

Madam Deputy President, in terms of farming, we have to look at the types of fertilizers and pesticides we use. We may need to change to other things that are less harmful to the water in order to preserve the quality of the water which we enjoy. These are some of the things that I believe we need to do. I do not think that we could any longer be indifferent. This happens for those of us who every time we turn on the tap, water is there and so we tend not to remember that water is a problem for the country and so some people will continue to waste while some others find themselves challenged to be able to get water in the kind of way that they would like.

Madam Deputy President, I firmly believe that for small countries like Barbados, water should remain as a social service. I know that there are trends going on across the world where there is more and more privatisation of things that governments normally would do. This puts

increasing pressure on small economies like ours that have to borrow money. There is increasing pressure by the big international agencies for us to do away with a lot of the things that we as Barbadians take for granted that a Government will do.

Madam Deputy President, one of the things we have to do is to seek to preserve our ability to be able to provide water as a social service for all Barbadians. The only way that could happen is if as Barbadians we begin to see the connection between Government's revenue which is impacted on by how we produce in our daily work and by how we function and work when we are executing Government contracts. Our everyday productivity affects Government's revenue and Government's revenue affects its ability to respond to those social services needs such as water. Therefore, if we want to safeguard the future, I think it is important for Barbadians to understand that they need to improve how they work and improve Government's ability to raise revenue so that we can continue to make sure water is available for all Barbadians at all times wherever they live in this country. The other thing that I think is very important is if we are going to make adjustments to the rates. From time to time this would become necessary because nobody knows what the future would bring and conditions would change and when those changed conditions occur we have to keep responding to them.

Madam Deputy President, I want to commend the Government for the tremendous effort they made in the last rate adjustment to try to safeguard the vulnerable in the society and to protect those who are not the ones who use a great deal of water and to try to create a more equitable distribution in terms of payment for persons who use a lot of water versus those who do not.

Madam Deputy President, the other matter that I think is very important – it was mentioned by a few Senators already for the day and I just want to re-emphasise it – is that we pay for our water. Part of the challenge that any government will have is when its revenue does not come in as quickly as it should. This hampers its capacity to be able to respond in a timely manner to implement things that are all for our benefit. Therefore, I think that Barbadians need to see that Government cannot provide free water, they have to be able to pay their way.

Madam Deputy President, if we are paying a subsidised rate, the least we could do is to make sure that we pay it. Therefore, it is really important that the collection of those fees continues in a sensitive manner so that we are able to collect the revenues, having taken \$150 million, so that we are able to repay this loan in the future.

Madam Deputy President, I want to commend the Government for the programme of changing the mains. Again, the public relations is going to be very important

to this because whenever you have to create inconveniences in the society, people do not always think through the implication of everything that you are doing and so they become very discontented without understanding that you are seeking to do something to better their lives. Therefore, the public relations is going to be very important to keep people abreast of what we are changing and when we are changing it.

The Barbados Water Authority and the other utility companies are trying to work better together so that when they are digging up a road, they would try to deal with all the utilities at the same time. I think this is very important especially going forward, given the amount of work that we are going to have to do.

Madam Deputy President, as a country, our health and our economic welfare depend on us developing a good water management system, not just on Government's policy but on our behaviour as citizens. I really want to emphasise that we must have that education so that every Barbadian is aware of the things they need to do, the things they need to start doing and the things they need to stop doing in order to make sense of our water resource in this country, so that it can continue to serve us, our children and the future of the Barbados economy.

I am obliged to you, Madam Deputy President.

SENATOR R. W. GRANT: Madam Deputy President, I join this debate to give full support to this Resolution to approve the guarantee by the Crown of the principal and interest necessary for the redemption of the bond issue for the Barbados Water Authority in the sum of \$150 million.

Madam Deputy President, I would wish to compliment the staff at the Barbados Water Authority for the work which they have been doing given the challenges which they face with respect to the existing distribution system, the state of the water mains, the problems of leakage and the existing technological equipment that they now have.

Madam Deputy President, I think that the management and staff of the Barbados Water Authority need to be complimented. We recognise that there are challenges. We accept that things are not perfect. Part of this \$150 million is to help to put us on the path of ensuring that we could provide a better water distribution system. As the Honourable Leader of Government Business would have indicated, \$100 million is to facilitate the refinancing of debt at a lower interest rate and the other \$50 million is for use with respect to capital works.

In addition, I would also wish to compliment the Barbados Water Authority on the quality of water that they provide to the citizens of Barbados. At times, Madam

Deputy President, I have to travel and when I do, I never drink water from the tap. I do that in Barbados because the quality of our water is extremely good. Therefore, I feel that we need to compliment the staff at the Barbados Water Authority for the tremendous work they are doing. Madam Deputy President, I understand why there is so much concern about the availability of water. In essence, the human life is very dependent on water. If we had to, we would be able to exist, I believe for some time, without clothing. We would be able to exist without shelter, and to some extent without food, but we certainly could not exist without water for any considerable length of time.

2.30 p.m.

Madam, the fact that in relation to the supply of water provided by the Barbados Water Authority and the fact that there are no issues of contamination with respect to our local water supply, I believe that the Barbados Water Authority should be complimented.

Madam Deputy President, it is also my belief that one of the reasons there continues to be the challenges with respect to the supply of water, has a direct relationship to the successes which we, as a country, have been achieving. It also has a direct relationship to the level of development, which has been taking place in Barbados, particularly over the last eleven years.

Madam Deputy President, I heard the Democratic Labour Party's senior spokesperson making light reference to the \$25 million that was taken from the Barbados Water Authority. Madam, I think the Honourable Senator referred to it lightly because he would not wish, on this occasion, for us to properly reflect on the fact that the removal of that money from the Barbados Water Authority, has significantly contributed to some of the financial challenges which the authority now has.

Madam Deputy President, I concede that is not unlike the Democratic Labour Party to give the impression that they are without fault, while, in the past, whenever they had the opportunity of governing, they had continually taken actions which were detrimental and impacted negatively on the lives of ordinary Barbadians. We remember well that in the same way they took that money from the Barbados Water Authority, they took the 8 per cent from the public servants of this country.

Madam Deputy President, I understand very well the kind of financial approach which the Democratic Labour Party has. They would wish to say that all of the problems relating to the supply of water resides with the Barbados Labour Party, but they have failed to recognise that significant developments have been taking place in this country, which have resulted in significant demands on our water supply.

Madam Deputy President, eleven years ago when the Democratic Labour Party was in Government, there were no 16 cruise ships homeporting in Barbados, neither was there significant construction activity taking place throughout Barbados. In fact, eleven years ago, the challenges were significantly different but because of the level of success that we, as a Government, have been able to bring to this country within the last 11 years, part of that has resulted in the greater demand on the availability and use of water for our economic development.

Madam Deputy President, I want to make another point in relation to the attitude of the Democratic Labour Party, because I heard a comment made by Senator Stuart that Barbados is now a golf course culture. Madam, with your permission, I would like to say that only this morning, the Minister of Tourism and International Transport would have spoken about a PGA golf tournament, which is taking place in Barbados in 2006. Madam, I am only referring to the issue of this golf course culture because again I want to speak to what I consider to be political hypocrisy, because if I can recall correctly, the Westmoreland Golf Course would have started under the Democratic Labour Party Administration.

Madam Deputy President, I remember too that there were significant discussions in this country relating to the use of land at Kingsland Estate and in St. Philip, but the problem is that the Democratic Labour Party is somewhat annoyed, upset or jealous with the significant work and successes of this Government. Madam, this issue of ensuring that we facilitate the challenges which exist at the Barbados Water Authority, demonstrates the level of commitment which we, as a Government have, when it comes to the affairs and the management of this country.

Madam Deputy President, we take our responsibility very seriously. We recognised that over the years there has been rapid development, particularly in the north, south and central parts of the island. Madam, in the north, in the parishes of St. Philip, St. George and St. Joseph, I know what I am referring to because over the years, there has been housing development which requires and has put a greater demand on our water resources. Therefore, we are essentially talking about a system that physically was not structured to meet the type of demands that we have today.

Madam Deputy President, we can all talk about the challenges that exist. As a Government, we not only recognise the challenges, but consider it our duty to take the necessary measures and action to rectify the challenges which exist. The fact that there are persons in Barbados, who, when they turn on their taps, do not have water available at pleasure, becomes a concern to us as a Government. We are, therefore, taking the necessary measures to ensure that we deal with those challenges.

Madam Deputy President, one of the difficulties relates to the fact that the Barbados Water Authority is not today utilising the type of technology that is necessary in this type of environment. As the Honourable Leader of Government Business has indicated, part of the \$50 million aspect of the bond issue will now allow the authority to start looking at that aspect.

2.40 p.m.

Madam Deputy President, this \$150 million bond issue creates the opportunity for the Barbados Water Authority to restructure its finances which would positively impact on the operations of the Authority.

Madam Deputy President, there are some districts where the water goes off. This is not a deliberate action by the Barbados Water Authority. When water goes off in a particular district, Barbados Water Authority has to be notified and then they seek to identify and determine the problem to determine whether this problem is in relation to the mains, the pumping stations or whether it is a problem of an electrical nature.

Madam, the ability to use the available technology and to provide for technological advancement of the Authority would make it a lot easier for the Barbados Water Authority to determine what is happening to be able to be constantly evaluating and determining the needs to shut off valves and redirect the supply of water.

Madam Deputy President, for me it is a pleasure to support this Resolution. It is a Resolution that is of critical importance because it provides for the restructuring not only of the debt but with respect to the Barbados Water Authority as well. At the end of the day, it provides for an enhancement in the quality of service being provided, Barbadians will be provided with the availability of water and the utilisation of technology which would be to their overall benefit.

Madam I am obliged to you.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Lowe.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Thank you, Madam Deputy President. I did not intend to get myself involved to any significant extent in this debate but, Madam, you would agree that it is difficult to sit and hear my colleague, Senator Grant, whose political burst and maturation occurred in the bosom of the Democratic Labour Party level such statements about the role of the Democratic Labour Party, that can now be used to explain what is happening at the Barbados Water Authority.

The truth of the matter is that we on This Side do not underestimate the invaluable role that the Barbados Water Authority plays in this country. Whether one chooses

to define that role as an economic or social good, I am not too sure that the distinction is necessary.

Madam Deputy President, the fact remains that the Barbados Water Authority is an important system in this country that all of us would want to see do well as is with any other functioning arm or sub-arm of Government. The Democratic Labour Party takes very sober thought in what it chooses to say as a means of supporting wholeheartedly, as a means of sound advice or as a means of dismissing any of the proposals advanced by the Government for which it seeks our endorsement as a part of the legislative body.

Madam Deputy President, it continues to worry that after 11 years of governing, that anyone could say that the Democratic Labour Party should become part of the explanation of the dysfunction of any system of Government. Madam, 11 years ago, the Democratic Labour Party took \$25 million and secured it in the Consolidated Fund for which it was used to advance the services at all levels of the country wherever the need was identified.

Madam Deputy President, the truth of the matter is that the last 11 years, this Administration has boasted of economic growth and returns comparable to no era in the history of this country. Therefore, any explanation as to any area as to any element of dysfunction in the Government, I would like to believe that the public understands, perhaps better than some do, that the Government has to find explanations that are commensurate with its own policies and actions. I would like to believe that to be the fact. Therefore, I would want to suggest that at the end of this debate that this Chamber sends a strong message to the Barbados Water Authority that in as much as Government is going to continue to give its support, that there are some accountabilities that must be answered to.

Madam Deputy President, it is not that the Opposition does not understand the importance of water. The Senator who just took his seat spoke, about those elements which are essential for life. We know that any analysis of human growth and development suggests that water, food, a sense of belonging, sexuality and all those elements are critical to healthy human development and growth. Madam, the Senator who just took his seat rehearsed with such clarity what happened and what did not happen but I wish the Honourable Senator had indicated that the Barbados Water Authority has not submitted a report as it is required to do in the last five years, if that is any indication of the level of management at the Barbados Water Authority. We believe that the \$150 million is an important contribution to its operations but we also believe that they have a responsibility to manage the authority in a manner that would suggest to the public of Barbados who would have to eventually foot the cost, that they are accountable to the systems that have been established and are doing their business according to adequate and regular regulations.

Madam Deputy President, I do not know why people get so worked up about the Democratic Labour Party and use that as a shade to block out the realities of today which is 11 years later. Madam, let us ask why the reports have not been submitted. We also need to ask whether the Government should allow this particular Resolution to move through without insisting as a form of accountability that the Barbados Water Authority lay before this Parliament the reports that would have given us an opportunity to examine how they have been managing. Madam Deputy President, if those on the Other Side feel that we are extending our argument beyond reason, then that is their fortune or misfortune. For us, we would have expected that any entity that benefits from the funding of any source before it seeks to be funded further, would have had to suggest, through its reports, this is what we have done.
2.50 p.m.

Do they know that the Barbados Water Authority has just purchased scores of new vehicles? Madam Deputy President, I mean scores. There are Vitaras, Isuzus, single and twin-cab vehicles. There were so many vehicles at Simpson Motors lined up recently, when I passed by, I thought they were ducks in a row. I have not heard any Honourable Member who attempted to justify...The passage of this Resolution asked a question about the distribution of the money. Not in general terms but in specific terms, because they have not submitted a report.

Madam Deputy President, adequate and efficient management start with the administrative management of any organisation. If we are talking about efficiency in operations, we have to talk about efficiency as it relates to the management of the Barbados Water Authority.

I do not profess to know, with any deep knowledge, what transpires the Barbados Water Authority, but I do know that any Administration that allowed the Barbados Water Authority to function for five years without a single annual report cannot be considered as functioning effectively and efficiently. If that level of accountability is not practised, that might help to explain why there is so much inefficiency in the operational management of the Barbados Water Authority.

Madam Deputy President, all we are saying is that if we are expected to stand behind the Barbados Water Authority, we want them to be transparent in how they do their business and we want them to be accountable to the systems of Government that they are supposed to be accountable to.

Madam Deputy President, is that an unreasonable request? I do not believe so. At the end of the day, if you give me \$10 and you ask me to spend it in a certain way and I bring back a receipt, the purpose of bringing the receipt back is to verify that I have so spent that money

according to the request and according to the agreement. We have not seen it.

Madam Deputy President, the message that I would like to be sent from This Side of the Chamber is, yes, the Barbados Water Authority is a vital institution and it deserves to have the support of the State to ensure that it alleviates some of its struggles. I am also sending the message that we expect the Barbados Water Authority to follow the rules, to be transparent in its business and to be accountable across the systems. That cannot be an unreasonable request from This Side of the Chamber.

I do not particularly pay too much attention to John the Baptist. The last time we heard about him, he was in the wilderness eating locust and dressed in a manner indicative of being deserted. Any John the Baptist who rises on his feet in this Chamber, if he were to come here, could only speak to his journey in a system where he resides, because he may have found comfort. I am saying if John the Baptist were to come here, because he may find comfort in another place, could he be so critical of the things that he would have preached when he was in the wilderness.

Madam Deputy President, there are serious issues. The issue of waste management has surfaced in this debate. I would not say what was said before but I would say that there are three areas of wastage in the Barbados Water Authority, in my view. There is water waste, and it is not only through water underground leakage. There is above the ground leakage too.

Madam Deputy President, as a matter of fact, in so many cases there is the evidence of leakage, but when the Barbados Water Authority is contacted, sometimes it takes them over a month to get to the location. That is a fact. I can give you the location. In Callenders Court a pipe was leaking for over a month until the road became mossy, at least half an inch thick. I can tell you that and anyone who wants to deny it can go to Callenders Court and ask the residents. After urging, calling and working on that issue, the Barbados Water Authority finally showed up and fixed it. That is only one example.

Madam Deputy President, I passed through Chancery Lane recently and the truth of the matter is, I saw a pipe burst that was spouting at least ten feet in the air. I do not mind the jeering, the reality is, at the end of the day my children, relative or myself will have to join with other taxpayers of Barbados to pay this bill. Therefore, for me, it is very important that we look at the issues and not just the peripheral emotional stuff, that others may want to sound off. Madam Deputy President, there is wastage at the water level, not only in terms of water leakage, but wastage of man hours.

I congratulate the members of the Barbados Water Authority who are doing a fantastic job in seeking to keep the water supply of Barbados pure and accessible to all Barbadians and visitors. You have to agree that if you are not producing reports that is the first indication that there is inefficiency in administrative management. I believe that there needs to be some insistence on the part of Government that a cleaning of house be done, relative to upgrading people's skills, especially in the supervision area so that they could get production out of the workers of the Barbados Water Authority that they are capable of doing.

Madam Deputy President, again, I do not believe that to be an unreasonable request. I am not going to suggest that scores of workers lime on the job. I am not going to suggest anything of the sort, but I am suggesting that during the passing of this Resolution, that the Honourable Minister responsible for advancing Government Business in this Chamber, makes a commitment to insist that the Board of the Barbados Water Authority shows some improvement in managing its workers and their productivity to reduce the stress and strain that consumers are experiencing on a daily basis.

Madam Deputy President, there is the area of customer service. If we are talking about fixing, we do not fix entities by giving them more money. You do not fix people by just giving them advice. You have to train them, declaring that the Mission of the organisation is X and the actions of its people must be to deliver the Mission. That is what we have to say. Therefore, if we are talking about efficiency, we are not only talking about efficiency in water supply because I believe that part of the deficiency may well have to do with the inefficient management of the services of the Barbados Water Authority. Maybe, there is a link that can be drawn between the two.

Customer Service is important. I know that from time to time we encounter experiences with the Barbados Water Authority where people are charged more than they are supposed to pay; where there is no meter reading for months and yet a bill is received. All of these deficiencies impose very strenuous situations on people who are seeking only to get a drink of water. That is all they want.

Madam Deputy President, there is the area of financial management. It is very good that the Government has decided to advance this Resolution. It is very good that the Opposition, although it would be careful to lodge its concerns, understands the importance of the Barbados Water Authority and is prepared to join the Government in supporting the effort to help solve some of the problems at the Barbados Water Authority.
3.00 p.m.

Madam Deputy President, what really troubles me is that in as much that we realise the endeavour is credible, we have to correct the things that may be causing the problems. If not, a year from now, the Government may well come back for another \$150 million.

I am saying that the only way the public and this Chamber will know what is happening at the Barbados Water Authority relative to its fiscal policy, relative to its human resource management and relative to its accountability standards and its good governance standards, is when we see a report that tells us what has been happening there.

If there were to be one central message sent from the Opposition to the Barbados Water Authority, it is that they need to clean up their act and ensure that the public is kept apprised of what is happening through transparent policies, good governance and strong accountability standards.

As I promised, I would not be long and I am finished.

Thank you very much.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Gooding-Edghill.

SENATOR G. P. I. GOODING-EDGHILL: Madam Deputy President, I will be very brief but I could not allow the opportunity to pass and allow Senator Lowe to give the public the impression that despite the annual reports from the Barbados Water Authority (BWA) not be submitted that there has not been an audit.

Senator Lowe perhaps is too inexperienced in dealing with these matters but he would be aware that when you are going to any funding institution, you must present your latest financial report. It is true that there has been an audited report, which has been concluded for the financial year 2004-2005.

I would not want Senator Lowe to give the public the impression that the Government and in particular, the management at the Barbados Water Authority...He spoke at length about management and the deficiencies at the Barbados Water Authority, but it would be unfair for me to allow Senator Lowe to pull down the BWA.

I think we should commend the Barbados Water Authority for their work. They have done an outstanding job in terms of the west coast mains project. They have instituted excellent public relations. Generally, Barbadians can see that there has been a substantial effort in improving the response time to customer queries. This is no mean feat to be accomplished and for that, we have to congratulate the customer service initiatives led by the Barbados Water Authority.

The west coast mains project will continue to provide additional services to those in the north of the island, not only the hotel sector that, obviously, would rely significantly on a consistent water flow, but it is important that those who are experiencing some difficulty in the northern parts of Barbados will also get some relief, as a result of the project.

Madam Deputy President, I believe that the issue of financing has been alluded to already and where the money is going. The Government has taken its financial interest at heart. It has financed a loan, and you have a situation where \$100 million is being refinanced in an attempt to reduce the cost of borrowing. Clearly, this is an act on behalf of the Government, which is very interested in the people of Barbados.

On that brief note, Madam Deputy President, I want to join other Honourable Senators in supporting the Resolution before this Honourable Chamber.

I am much obliged.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Madam Deputy President, I thank all Senators for their respected interventions. In bringing this debate to a close, just let me make a few statements. I will carry on from where Senator Gooding-Edghill ended. While it is a fact that the Barbados Water Authority has not complied with the requirement that it should lay before Parliament annually its financial statements, one must not move from that position to the one which says that we cannot deal with this Resolution.

The Resolution before us is quite clear as to what is its purpose. The purpose is to use the \$150 million in the way that I indicated when I introduced the Resolution. There is existing debt and whether or not the financial statements have been laid, the debt already exists. It is not an issue where you are now trying to borrow the \$100 million. The better interest rates to clean up existing debt and put this new debt in that position, so you refinance \$100 million and you are still at \$100 million. It is that simple.

Therefore, you do not need the financial statements to decide on that. You need to know that the interest rates on that are higher than what you are getting and that you are improving the cash flow position of the company by substituting high cost debt for lower cost debt. In this case, you have a moratorium on the interest payment for three years, so that is a further benefit.

Therefore, one must not mix up the two things and to convey the impression that we cannot deal with this simply because the financial statements are not here. However, I agree with the view that they should be here and I really have no excuse to make for the Barbados Water Authority or any Government institution in that respect. They are required

to produce their financial statements and to present them to Parliament and all of them, without exception, have the obligation to do so and that is my message to the Barbados Water Authority and to all the Government agencies. I am not going to make any excuse for them in that respect.

However, this is not going to prevent me from dealing with the issue before me because it is of such a nature that I can deal with it and I can support it because any effort to reduce the cost of the debt needs to be supported. As far as the additional \$50 million is concerned, I outlined to the Senate the capital projects which fall under the Water Supply Augmentation programme, where the bulk of the money is going to be used.

In fact, I will say that even if those financial statements were here, they would not tell us how that \$50 million was going to be spent. All of us know that the Financial Statements tell about a situation at a point in time. It does not tell us where we are going. I took the time to identify all of the Water Supply Augmentation projects to explain why it was necessary for the money to be provided, so that these projects can be implemented and, therefore, deal with some of the issues.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: No. When Senator Stuart spoke, in his enthusiasm, he went to the extreme to using words such as the bellyaching of the Government. The Government is not bellyaching. I said that there are a number of challenges, which all of us know exist, such as the issue of the increased activity. By the way, I will say this, Barbados has to decide whether it is going forward, standing still or going backward. You cannot expect to go forward and then do not encourage investment to take place and economic activity to follow.

Therefore, it is not a question of simply talking about the golf course culture and those things. We are either going forward or we are not going forward. If we are going forward, we have to plan for the economic and social development of the country. This will mean that yearly, we will have new projects coming on stream, which will put demands on our existing resources, including water and that is a challenge.

3.10 p.m.

It is no bellyaching by the Government because we are happy that we are getting the type of investment that would allow us not only to put the economy on a sustainable growth path but to further bring down unemployment as we seek to eradicate poverty from this country. I agree that we have to be forward thinking and that is what we are doing. All I am saying is that it is a challenge which adds to an already serious problem. That is why we want to put the Barbados

Water Authority in a position that it can respond to the challenge. We do not expect that we would hold up investment simply by saying that water is not available. We want it to be available that is why the Barbados Water Authority must deal with the leakage. I do not mind if it is 20 per cent, 5 per cent or whatever it is, in my view they must address it.

I am not going to make any excuse for them by saying that it is less than 60 per cent or anything like that. Whatever it is, we cannot afford to let it go down the drain, we have to bring it to the minimum and eliminate it if possible. I do not want anyone to tell me that other people around the world have not been able to eliminate it.

In a small country like ours with a limited amount of resources we cannot afford the luxuries that some of those more developed countries with large amounts of resources can afford. Therefore, whatever the water loss is, my advice to the Barbados Water Authority is to take steps to bring it to the minimum.

The other issue is the wastage because of misuse by people. We have to get our people to understand that they cannot continue to waste the water the way they do. Madam Deputy President, how is it that when there is a water shortage, one is able to wash a car with a bucket of water. I use a bucket and sometimes I have water left over if I filled the bucket. I do not need a hose but you see people with the hose running while they are rubbing the wheel or something like that and the water is going across the yard. We do that and we have to stop that. We have to conserve the water so that we can use it in other ways to assist with the development of the country and we have to educate the people to that. That is not bellyaching, that is a question of facing the reality. We are too wasteful when it comes to water usage and we have to deal with that.

The Barbados Water Authority has to deal with the other issue, that of improving its efficiency. That is why I made reference to the SCADA system and the GIS system which they are contemplating installing now so as to bring better management to bear on their operations.

Madam Deputy President, I heard Senator Lowe saying something that I hear a lot of people with. It puzzles me why they just make half of the statement and stop. That is, that this Government has had access to more revenue than any other government. Madam Deputy President, that is a fact because the economic activity that has taken place during the time when this Government has been in position has been superior including the Value Added Tax. The VAT is part of the revenue and that is a fact but that is not the whole equation. You do not take revenue and stop.

If one looks at the expenditure, at the various social infrastructural projects that have been put in place and

things of that nature, one would also see that this Government that has access to more revenue than any other government spend more to develop the services of the country than any other government. That is the issue. It is not a question of simply having access to more revenue and stopping. When one puts it that way, even if one does not intend it, one conveys the impression that all Government did was to collect money. If one looks all around one would see all the infrastructural development and so on that have taken place. This Government collected more money because the system yielded more, the activity has been there.

Madam Deputy President, I dealt with the introduction of the VAT so I know it very well, I have not forgotten it yet. The VAT comes on the basis of imports and on the basis of the economic activity that takes place in the country, so the higher the economic activity, the more the VAT would yield, it is as simple as that. That is evidence that there is activity taking place in the country.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: These things that are factual are usually very simplistic. One does not need any high science to know what is the truth, that is how the system works. The VAT has been collected and the money has been used for the development of the country. If one looks at all of the indices, one would see where Barbados is in relation to countries around the world. We cannot gainsay it. Whether one wants to dispute it or not, or whether one is jealous of it or not, development has taken place and that cannot be disputed.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Madam Deputy President, we must not fool ourselves. Barbados has been served well throughout its history by successive Administrations and it has done exceedingly well as a small developing country. It is our turn to take credit for what has happened under our watch and we will take it.

Madam Deputy President, the Barbados Water Authority has its problems, I am not making any excuse for it. All I am saying is that it is making an effort to overcome those problems. We need to put it in a position to do so and we then need to hold it accountable.

I support that view that they must present their statements so that we can see over time what is happening, but at the same time that should not prevent us from providing the resources that would allow it to get ahead with the programme that all of us know needs to be put in place. That is the installation of the mains down the West Coast so that the excess water that is being provided by the desalination plant can now be passed beyond the receiver

that is St. Stephen, and move in to the north and be redistributed to those areas that now have shortages. That is the intention behind putting in place the new West Coast mains because while the water can move from Spring Garden to St. Stephen, the way the present system is, it cannot get from there down to St. Lucy.

There are also the other projects that are taking place in St. Lucy and other parts of the country, such as Paddock Road and Dayrells Road, so that we can shift around water from one point to another. Where there is excess, we can move it to areas where there is a shortage. This is what this money is about. We need to put the Authority in a position to do that and then ask them to move on with the job and hold them accountable for doing it.

Madam Deputy President, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 3 – ARTS AND SPORTS PROMOTION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2005

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Madam Deputy President, in my view, this matter is one that should not detain us unnecessarily long. You would recall that earlier this year the Government took the decision to pass the Arts and Sports Promotion Fund Bill, which provided the legal framework for the creation of an arts and sports fund. That legislation now exists.

3.20 p.m.

Madam Deputy President, under that legislation, the Accountant-General is responsible for managing the funds. However, at the time, the legislation made no provision for an advisory committee to the Accountant-General as to how the fund is to be used. Madam, this amendment before us is to provide for the establishment of such an advisory committee to the Accountant-General on how the fund is to be administered.

Madam Deputy President, in the Schedule to the Bill, Honourable Senators will see the constitution and the functioning of that Committee. The Committee is to be made up of the following persons:

1. The Chairman is to be the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance;
2. The Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office;
3. A representative of the National Cultural Foundation;
4. A representative of the National Sports Council;

- 5. A person engaged in the arts of Barbados; and
- 6. A person engaged in sports in Barbados.

Madam Deputy President, the duties of the Commission are set out in the Schedule.

Madam Deputy President, basically that is what this amendment is seeking to do, so that the Act can then be administered to the benefit of persons engaged in the arts and sports areas and activities. Madam, in setting up the fund in the first place, the Government did so on the basis that this is an area which provides a number of excellent opportunities for the individual engaged in these activities, to make a decent living and also to promote the development of arts and culture in the country.

Madam Deputy President, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Madam Deputy President, we are in full agreement with the Honourable Leader of Government Business that there is no need to detain the Honourable Chamber on this particular matter. Madam, I believe in the last debate, I would have been one of those persons who would have insisted strenuously that there needed to be those systems put in place, to ensure that the purpose for which the fund is established, is met and that there is a system of accountability, so that fiscal prudence and good management of the fund can be obtained.

Madam Deputy President, we endorse the Resolution before the Honourable Senate and wish the Committee well.

I thank you.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Madam Deputy President, I beg to move 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 of Supply on the Bill. SENATOR THE HON. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

SENATOR THE HON. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: This Senate is now in Committee of Supply.

Clauses 1 – 4 were called and passed.

The Schedule was called and passed.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, SENATOR THE HON. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON reported to Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT, the passing of Bill in Committee of Supply, and Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Arts and Sports Promotion Fund (Amendment) Act, 2005.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Madam Deputy President, that brings us to the end of Government’s Business for today and I believe for the year. In the circumstances, therefore, it is left to me to thank you and all Honourable Senators for their contributions today and throughout the year, and to extend to all Honourable Senators and their families, a blessed Christmas. I would also like to indicate that I look forward to a New Year in which we will have more work to do, than we have done this year, but I am confident that I can rely on the usual co-operation and assistance from all Honourable Senators.

Madam Deputy President, I also wish to take this opportunity to thank the Clerk and Staff of Parliament for their unstinting support and assistance throughout the year. I wish them and their families a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year. I hope they would have a good rest at Christmas and be prepared for the extra work that we have in mind for them during the New Year.

It has been a pleasure working with all of you during the past year and I look forward to another year of activity.

I thank you.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: Madam Deputy President, I should like to join the Honourable Leader of Government Business in saying thank you to you and to all Honourable Senators, for the pleasure and stimulation which you all, in your various ways, have brought to my colleagues and me, over the past year. I wish to extend the compliments of the season to all Honourable Senators and to extend my very best wishes for the year 2006.

Sir, over the past years, certainly for long as I have been in here, put at the disposal of this Chamber a robust impartiality, exemplary alertness and also a commendable understanding when that was necessary. This has made our efforts in this Chamber all the more enjoyable and easy. 3.30 p.m.

Madam Deputy President, I should also like to thank the clerks and the members of staff, those visible and those not so visible, for their cooperation and assistance over the past year. I have said before that they are the lubricant for

our otherwise creaking efforts in this Chamber. I think they are about to now enjoy a well-deserved rest from their labour. I rather doubt it, but just in case they are glad to see the backs of us for the next few weeks, the Standing Orders deprive them of a voice on this occasion, so if they have those feelings, they must nurse those guilty secrets in quiet complacency.

Madam Deputy President, on behalf of my colleagues and myself, I would like to extend my very best wishes to Your Honour, the substantive President and to all fellow Senators for the season and my very best wishes for the year 2006.

Madam Deputy President, I am obliged to you.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Before I put the motion for adjournment, I too on behalf on the President and on my own behalf, I wish to thank our leader and the Leader of the Opposition in This Place for their very kind remarks

and to wish all Honourable Senators a blessed Christmas. I wish to express my gratitude to all of them for their cooperation. I wish to thank the Clerks, all members of staff and the media for their contribution in making this session an exciting and successful one.

I look forward, God willing, to working with you again in the new year. I hope you would all have a blessed and restful or not so restful Christmas but also a happy and rewarding New Year. Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Madam Deputy President, I beg to move that this Sitting be adjourned *sine die*.

The question that the Senate do now adjourn sine die was put to the Senate and agreed to and Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly.
3.35 p.m.

CONTENTS

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Wednesday, December 16, 2005 at 11.00 a.m.

PAPERS

Senator the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH 1, 2

1. Annual Report of the Insurance Corporation of Barbados Limited for the year 2004.

2. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Deutsche Bank Securities Inc.) Order, 2005.

3. Excise Tax (Rate of Tax) (No. 4) Order, 2005.

4. Value Added Tax (Refund) (Innotech Services Limited) Order, 2005.

5. Value Added Tax (Refund) (Hide & Seek Leisure Limited) Order, 2005.

6. Sugar Industry (Sugar Workers’ Provident Fund) Order, 2005.

7. Report on the Social Investment Fund for the Quarter ended September 30, 2005.

8. Annual Reports of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation for the years 1999, 2000 and 2001.

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTING OF THE SENATE

Senator the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH 2

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Standing Orders Nos. 22(1) and 45(2) were suspended for the remainder of the Sitting.

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Senator the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH 2

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Senator the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH 2

The Arts and Sports Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2005.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 2 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE GUARANTEE BY THE CROWN OF THE PRINCIPAL AND INTEREST NECESSARY FOR THE REDEMPTION OF THE BOND ISSUE IN THE SUM OF \$150 MILLION 2

Senator the Hon. E. R. Griffith, 2, 21; Senator F. J. Stuart, 4; Senator Sir John Stanley Goddard, 7; Senator Miss P. E. Parris, 8; Senator I. St. C. Linton, 9; Senator R. O. Marville, 10; Senator T. E. Barker, 11; Senator Miss S. C. V. Husbands, 13; Senator R. W. Grant, 17; Senator Dr. D. S. Lowe, 18; Senator G. P. I. Gooding-Edghill, 21.

ORDER NO. 3 – ARTS AND SPORTS PROMOTION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2005 23

Senator the Hon. E. R. Griffith, 23; Senator Dr. D. S. Lowe, 24.

SUSPENSION 13

ADJOURNMENT 25

Senator the Hon. E. R. Griffith, 25.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

BARKER, Senator T. E.
GODDARD, Senator Sir John Stanley
GOODING-EDGHILL, Senator G. P. I.
GRANT, Senator R. W.
GRIFFITH, Senator the Hon. E. R.
HUSBANDS, Senator Miss S. C. V.
LINTON, Senator I. St. C.
LOWE, Senator Dr. D. S.
MARVILLE, Senator R. O.
STUART, Senator F. J.
SYMMONDS, Her Honour Senator Dame Patricia